WEB OF LIFE

**adapted from The Forest Foundation's "Forests Today, Tomorrow & Forever"

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

HOW ARE ALL THE ORGANISMS IN A FOREST CONNECTED TO EACH OTHER?

Producer: organisms that create their own food, using energy from the sun for photosynthesis
Consumer: organisms that cannot create their own food, and must consume other organisms for energy
Decomposer: organisms that absorb nutrients from non-living material and waste from living organisms, then recycles the nutrients so they can be used again by plants
Herbivore: animal that eats plants
Carnivore: animal that eats other animals
Omnivore: animal that eats both plants and animals
Food chain: pathway that food is transferred from one feeding level of organisms to another
Food web: interconnected food chains within an ecosystem

Think about a forest ecosystem.
Brainstorm a list of some of the members (living organisms) of a forest ecosystem:

_____

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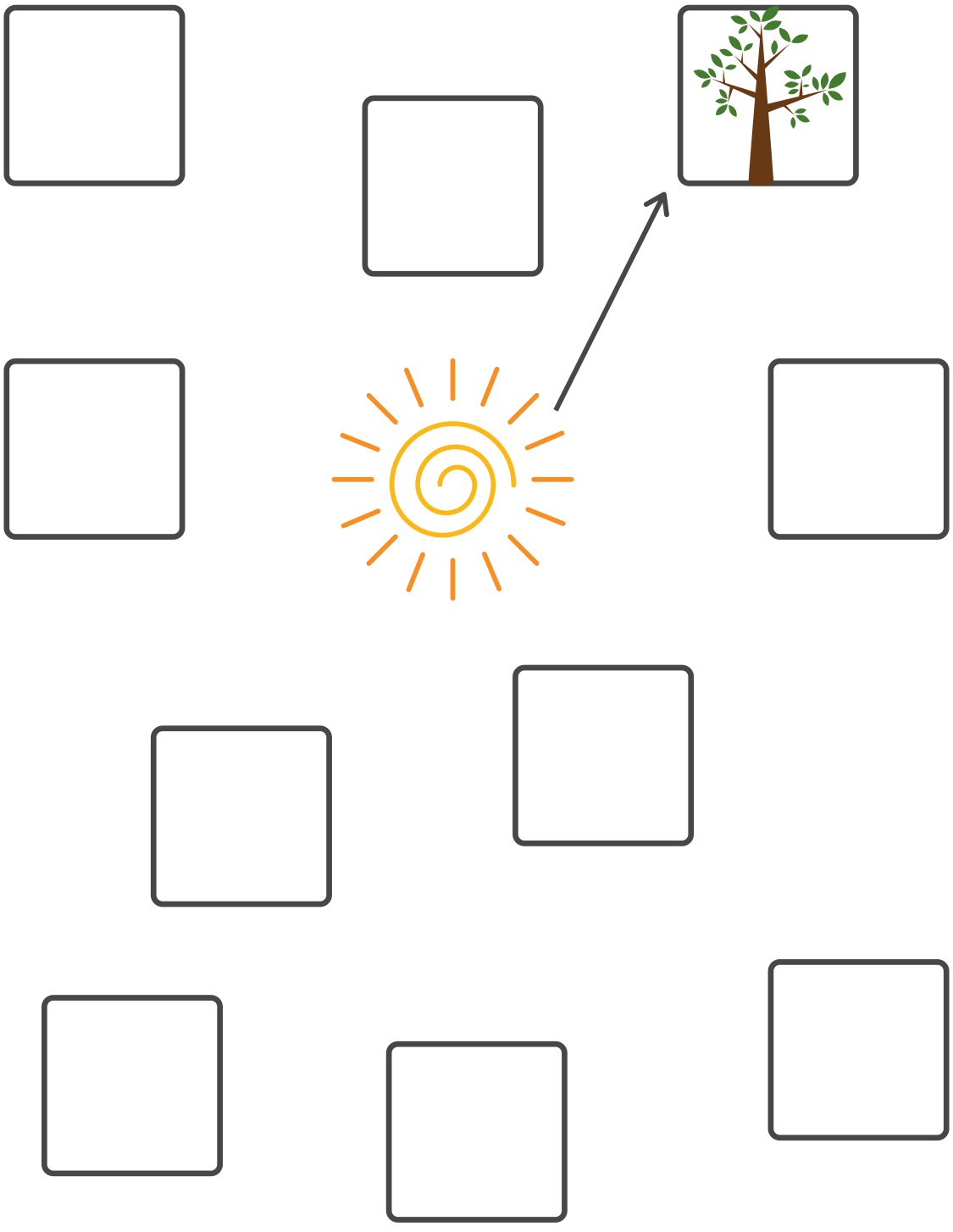
Complete the food web below by adding the names or drawings of forest organisms into the boxes. Indicate whether these organisms are producers, consumers, or decomposers, and if they are herbivores, carnivores, or omnivores.

Draw arrows to show which way the energy flow goes.



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Family Food Web

In an ecosystem, individuals are deeply connected to their community; The success of the individuals depends on the success of the community AND the success of the community depends on the success of the individuals. This means changes that happen to one part of the ecosystem will also impact everything connected to it.

Materials:

- ball of string

Instructions:

1. Assign every member of your family a role in the forest community (producer, consumer, decomposer, etc.). You can also use stuffed animals or toys to substitute organisms if you need more individuals in your forest - you will still get the idea!
2. Do some research to determine where the organisms live, what they eat, and what eats them.
3. Give the ball of string to one of your producers. Have them hold the end of the string and pass the ball to the organism that eats it. Share some information about your organism when you have the string.
4. Then that organism passes it to the organism that preys upon it.
5. Pass the ball to the decomposer, which recycles nutrients back to plants.
6. Continue until everyone is connected.
7. Discuss what happens if an organism was removed from the food web? What about if an organism was added?

When one tugs on a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

JOHN MUIR