

In this unit, students will continue to build their knowledge about animal habitats and taking care of the earth.

What's the story?

Students will learn about **food chains**, the **balance of nature**, **changes** to the environment, and how to **protect the environment**.

What will my student learn?

Students will read about **producers**, **consumers**, and **decomposers** in food chains. The Reader for this unit contains a selection of readings that focus on **ecosystems** and the balance of nature. Students will also explore how the environment changes both naturally and as a result of human actions. Finally, they will read a biography about **John Muir**.

Throughout the unit, students will write **Ecologist's Journals**, in which they will **summarize** what they have learned, **apply** the concepts that they have explored during their reading, and **extend their knowledge**.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. What is a producer? Give me an example of one.
Follow up: What is a consumer? Give me an example of one. What is a decomposer? Give me an example of one. What is the most important decomposer?
2. What is a food chain?
Follow up: Can you describe one of the food chains in the Mara National Reserve? What happens if a part of the food chain disappears forever?
3. How was the Petrified Forest created?
Follow up: What are the effects of flooding? Is flooding a natural change or a human change to the environment? How do you know?
4. What are some examples of human changes to the environment?
Follow up: What are some examples of environmental damages that have been caused by humans?
5. What are some things we can do to protect the environment?
Follow up: What are some things that you already do?