

# How Do Organisms Obtain and Use Food?

## Science Words

Say each word quietly to yourself. Then read the meaning.

Read the tip to help you remember.

**nutrients** [NOO•tree•uhnts] materials used by living things for growth and for other life functions

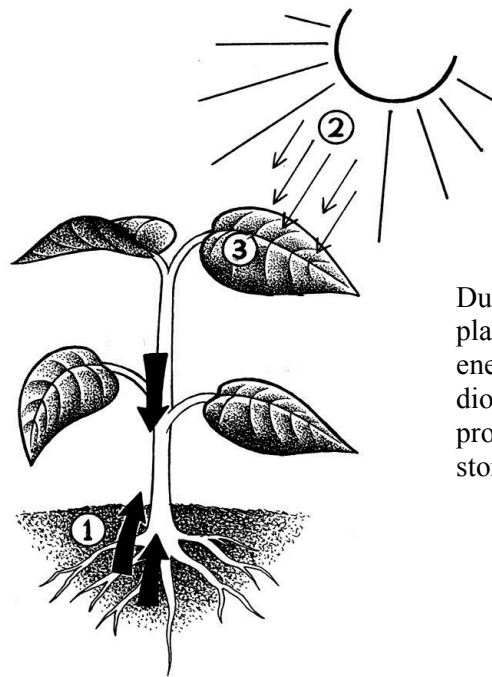
The vowel sound in the word *food* and in the first part of *nutrients* is the same. Animals get the *nutrients* they need from food.

**producers** [pruh•DOO•serz] living things that make their own food

*Producers*, *produce*, and *plant* begin with the same sound. *Produce* means to make something. Plants are *producers* because they produce their own food.

**photosynthesis** [foh•toh•SIN•thuh•sis] the process producers (plants) use to make their own food

*Photosynthesis* and *photograph* begin the same way. You need light in order to take a photograph. Plants need light in order to do *photosynthesis*.



During photosynthesis, plants use water (1), energy (2), and carbon dioxide from the air to produce sugar, which is stored in the leaves (3).

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**energy** [EN•er•jee] the ability to do work

In science, when you do work, you use a force to move an object. So, shooting a basket and peddling a bike are work. *Energy* is being able to do these kinds of things.

People and animals get *energy* from eating food.

**decomposers** [dee•kuhm•POHZ•er] living things that get energy by breaking down wastes and dead plant and animal matter

*Decompose* contains the word *compose*. When you compose something—a story or a piece of music—you put things together to make something. *Decomposers* take things apart by breaking them down.

**consumers** [kuhn•SOO•merz] living things that eat other living things

*Consumer* and *consume* are in the same word family.

You may have heard someone say, “I can’t believe how much spaghetti he can consume!”

*Consume* means eat. *Consumers* consume plants and animals as food.

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## Science Concepts

**Read the Ideas more than once. Do your best to remember them.**

1. People, animals, and plants need nutrients for growing and living.
2. Most plants are producers; they make their own food in a process called photosynthesis.
3. Plants use water, carbon dioxide from the air, and energy from sunlight for photosynthesis.
4. During photosynthesis, a plant's cells change water, energy, and carbon dioxide to sugars.
5. The sugars, which are a plant's food, may be stored or used for growth and other plant needs.
6. Consumers, like people and animals, do not make their own food; they eat other living things.
7. Some animals eat only plants, but others eat plants and animals.
8. Scavengers, like vultures and worms, eat dead plants and animals.
9. Decomposers, like mushrooms, feed on what the scavengers leave behind.
10. Decomposers get energy by breaking down wastes and dead plant and animal matter.