Grade 5 Science, Unit 3

Energy and Matter in Ecosystems

Overview

Unit abstract

In this unit of study, students develop an understanding of the idea that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water. Using models, students can describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment, and they can explain that energy in animals' food was once energy from the sun.

The crosscutting concepts of energy and matter and systems and system models are called out as organizing concepts for these disciplinary core ideas. In the fifth-grade performance expectations, students are expected to demonstrate grade-appropriate proficiency in developing and using models and engaging in argument from evidence and to use these practices to demonstrate understanding of the core ideas.

Essential questions

- How does matter cycle through ecosystems?
- Where does the energy in food come from and what is it used for?

Bristol–Warren, Central Falls, Cranston, Tiverton, and Woonsocket, with process support from The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin

Written Curriculum

Next Generation Science Standards

5. Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

5-LS1-1. **Support an argument that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water.** [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on the idea that plant matter comes mostly from air and water, not from the soil.]

The performance expectations above were developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Engaging in Argument from Evidence Engaging in argument from evidence in 3–5 builds on K–2 experiences and progresses to critiquing the scientific explanations or solutions proposed by peers by citing relevant evidence about the natural and designed world(s). ▪ Support an argument with evidence, data, or a model. (5-LS1-1)	**LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms** ▪ Plants acquire their material for growth chiefly from air and water. (5-LS1-1)	**Energy and Matter** ▪ Matter is transported into, out of, and within systems. (5-LS1-1)

Connections to other DCIs in fifth grade: **5.PS1.A** (5-LS1-1)

Articulation of DCIs across grade-levels: **K.LS1.C** (5-LS1-1); **2.LS2.A** (5-LS1-1); **MS.LS1.C** (5-LS1-1)

Common Core State Standards Connections:

ELA/Literacy –

RI.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. *(5-LS1-1)*

RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably. (5-LS1-1)

W.5.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. (5-LS1-1)

Mathematics –

MP.2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively. *(5-LS1-1)*

MP.4 Model with mathematics. *(5-LS1-1)*

MP.5 Use appropriate tools strategically. *(5-LS1-1)*

5.MD.A.1 Convert among different-sized standard measurement units within a given measurement system (e.g., convert 5 cm to 0.05 m), and use these conversions in solving multi-step, real world problems. *(5-LS1-1)*

5. Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

5-LS2-1. Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on the idea that matter that is not food (air, water, decomposed materials in soil) is changed by plants into matter that is food. Examples of systems could include organisms, ecosystems, and the Earth.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include molecular explanations.]

The performance expectations above were developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Developing and Using Models Modeling in 3–5 builds on K–2 experiences and progresses to building and revising simple models and using models to represent events and design solutions. ▪ Develop a model to describe phenomena. (5-LS2-1) --- ***Connections to Nature of Science*** **Science Models, Laws, Mechanisms, and Theories Explain Natural Phenomena** ▪ Science explanations describe the mechanisms for natural events. (5-LS2-1)	**LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems** ▪ The food of almost any kind of animal can be traced back to plants. Organisms are related in food webs in which some animals eat plants for food and other animals eat the animals that eat plants. Some organisms, such as fungi and bacteria, break down dead organisms (both plants or plants parts and animals) and therefore operate as "decomposers." Decomposition eventually restores (recycles) some materials back to the soil. Organisms can survive only in environments in which their particular needs are met. A healthy ecosystem is one in which multiple species of different types are each able to meet their needs in a relatively stable web of life. Newly introduced species can damage the balance of an ecosystem. (5-LS2-1) **LS2.B: Cycles of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems** ▪ Matter cycles between the air and soil and among plants, animals, and microbes as these organisms live and die. Organisms obtain gases, and water, from the environment, and release waste matter (gas, liquid, or solid) back into the environment. (5-LS2-1)	**Systems and System Models** ▪ A system can be described in terms of its components and their interactions. (5-LS2-1)

Connections to other DCIs in fifth grade: **5.PS1.A** (5-LS2-1); **5.ESS2.A** (5-LS2-1)

Articulation of DCIs across grade-levels: **2.PS1.A** (5-LS2-1); **2.LS4.D** (5-LS2-1); **4.ESS2.E** (5-LS2-1); **MS.PS3.D** (5-LS2-1); **MS.LS1.C** (5-LS2-1); **MS.LS2.A** (5-LS2-1); **MS.LS2.B** (5-LS2-1)

Common Core State Standards Connections:

ELA/Literacy –

RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently. *(5-LS2-1)*

SL.5.5 Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes. *(5-LS2-1)*

Mathematics –

MP.2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively. *(5-LS2-1)*

MP.4 Model with mathematics. *(5-LS2-1)*

5. Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

5-PS3-1. Use models to describe that energy in animals' food (used for body repair, growth, motion, and to maintain body warmth) was once energy from the sun. [Clarification Statement: Examples of models could include diagrams, and flow charts.]

The performance expectations above were developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Developing and Using Models Modeling in 3–5 builds on K–2 experiences and progresses to building and revising simple models and using models to represent events and design solutions. ▪ Use models to describe phenomena. (5-PS3-1)	**PS3.D: Energy in Chemical Processes and Everyday Life** ▪ The energy released [from] food was once energy from the sun that was captured by plants in the chemical process that forms plant matter (from air and water). (5-PS3-1) **LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms** ▪ Food provides animals with the materials they need for body repair and growth and the energy they need to maintain body warmth and for motion. *(secondary to 5-PS3-1)*	**Energy and Matter** ▪ Energy can be transferred in various ways and between objects. (5-PS3-1)

Connections to other DCIs in fifth grade: N/A

Articulation of DCIs across grade-levels: **K.LS1.C** (5-PS3-1); **2.LS2.A** (5-PS3-1); **4.PS3.A** (5-PS3-1); **4.PS3.B** (5-PS3-1); **4.PS3.D** (5-PS3-1); **MS.PS3.D** (5-PS3-1); **MS.PS4.B** (5-PS3-1); **MS.LS1.C** (5-PS3-1); **MS.LS2.B** (5-PS3-1)

Common Core State Standards Connections:

ELA/Literacy –

RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently. *(5-PS3-1)*

SL.5.5 Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes. *(5-PS3-1)*

Clarifying the standards

Prior learning

The following disciplinary core ideas are prior learning for the concepts in this unit of study. By the end of kindergarten, students know that:

- All animals need food in order to live and grow. They obtain their food from plants or from other animals. Plants need water and light to live and grow.

By the end of grade 2, students know that:

- Different kinds of matter exist, and many of these different kinds of matter can be solid or liquid depending on temperature. Matter can be described and classified by its observable properties.
- Different properties are suited to different purposes.
- A great variety of objects can be built up from a small set of pieces.
- Plants depend on water and light to grow.
- Plants depend on animals for pollination or to move their seeds around.
- There are many kinds of living things in any area, and they exist in different places on land and in water.

By the end of grade 4, students know that:

- The faster a given object is moving, the more energy it possesses.
- Energy can be moved from place to place by moving objects or through sound, light, or electrical currents.
- Energy is present whenever there are moving objects, sound, light, or heat. When objects collide, energy can be transferred from one object to another, thereby changing the objects' motion. In such collisions, some energy is typically also transferred to the surrounding air; as a result, the air gets heated and sound is produced.
- Lights also transfer energy from place to place.
- Energy can also be transferred from place to place by electrical currents, which can then be used locally to produce motion, sound, heat, or light. The currents may have been produced to begin with through the transformation of the energy of motion into electrical energy.
- The expression "produce energy" typically refers to the conversion of stored energy into a desired form for practical use.
- Living things affect the physical characteristics of their regions.

Progression of current learning

Driving question 1
Where do plants get the materials they need for growth?

Concepts	Practices
• Matter is transported into, out of, and within systems. • Plants acquire their material for growth chiefly from air and water.	• Describe how matter is transported into, out of, and within systems. • Support an argument with evidence, data, or a model. • Support an argument that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water. (Emphasis is on the idea that plant matter comes mostly from air and water, not from the soil.)

Driving question 2
How does matter move among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment?

Concepts	Practices
• Science explanations describe the mechanisms for natural events. • A system can be described in terms of its components and their interactions. • The food of almost any kind of animal can be traced back to plants. • Organisms are related in food webs in which some animals eat plants for food and other animals eat the animals that eat plants. • Some organisms, such as fungi and bacteria, break down dead organisms (both plants or plants parts and animals) and therefore operate as *decomposers*. • Decomposition eventually restores (recycles) some materials back to the soil. • Organisms can survive only in environments in which their particular needs are met.	• Describe a system in terms of its components and interactions. • Develop a model to describe phenomena. • Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment. (Assessment does not include molecular explanations.) (Emphasis is on the idea that matter that is not food—such as air, water, decomposed materials in soil—is changed into matter that is food. Examples of systems could include: – Organisms – Ecosystems – Earth

• A healthy ecosystem is one in which multiple species of different types are each able to meet their needs in a relatively stable web of life. • Newly introduced species can damage the balance of an ecosystem. • Matter cycles between the air and soil and among plants, animals, and microbes as these organisms live and die. Organisms obtain gases and water from the environment and release waste matter (gas, liquid, or solid) back into the environment	

Driving question 3
How can energy in animals' food be traced to the sun?

Concepts	Practices
• Energy can be transferred in various ways and between objects. • The energy released from food was once energy from the sun, which was captured by plants in the chemical process that forms plant matter (from air and water). • Food provides animals with the materials they need for body repair and growth and the energy they need for motion and to maintain body warmth.	• Describe how energy can be transferred in various ways and between objects. • Use models to describe phenomena. • Use models to describe that energy in animals' food (used for body repair, growth, motion, and to maintain body warmth) was once energy from the sun. Examples of models could include: – Diagrams – Flowcharts

Integration of content, practices, and crosscutting concepts

In every habitat and ecosystem on Earth, plants and animals survive, grow, reproduce, die, and decay. What happens to the matter and energy that are part of each organism? Where does it come from and where does it go? In this unit of study, students make observations and use models to understand how energy flows and matter cycles through organisms and ecosystems.

Students should first understand that plants acquire their material for growth chiefly from air and water. Students will need opportunities to observe a variety of plants over time. As students document plants' continual need for water and air in order to grow, they recognize that this evidence supports the argument that plants acquire their material for growth chiefly from air and water (not from soil). In addition, as students observe that plants also need sunlight, they begin to recognize that plants use energy from the sun to transform air and water into plant matter.

Once students understand that plants acquire material for growth from air and water, they need opportunities to observe animals and plants interacting within an ecosystem. Terrariums, such as those built in 3-liter bottles, are ideal for this because they are large enough for small plants and animals to survive and grow, yet easy to build and maintain. In these terrariums, students should observe plants growing and providing a source of food for small herbivores, carnivores consuming other animals, and decomposers consuming dead plant material. All of these interactions may not be observable within a single terrarium; however, a class could use a number

of 3-liter bottles to set up different ecosystems, each with a few carefully chosen plants and animals. This will give students opportunities to observe different types of interactions within a variety of enclosed systems.

When students record their observations of these small systems, it is important that students be able to:

- Identify the living and nonliving components of a system.
- Describe the interactions that occur between the living and nonliving components of each system.
- Develop models (such as food chains or food webs) that describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.

As students continue to observe each terrarium, they learn that:

- The food of almost any kind of animal can be traced back to plants.
- Organisms are related in food webs in which some animals eat plants for food and other animals eat the animals that eat plants.
- Some organisms, such as fungi and bacteria, break down dead organisms (both plants or plant parts and animals) and therefore operate as *decomposers*.
- Decomposition eventually restores (recycles) some materials back to the soil.
- A healthy ecosystem is one in which multiple species of different types are each able to meet their needs in a relatively stable web of life.
- Organisms can survive only in environments in which their particular needs are met.
- Matter cycles between the air and soil and among plants and animals as these organisms live and die.
- Organisms obtain gases and water from the environment and release waste matter (gas, liquid, or solid) back into the environment.

Furthermore, students can conduct research to determine the effects of newly introduced species to an ecosystem.

After investigating the movement of matter in ecosystems, students revisit the concept of energy flow in systems. At the beginning of this unit of study, students learned that energy from the sun is transferred to plants, which then use that energy to change air and water into plant matter. After observing the interactions between the living and nonliving components of small ecosystems, students recognize that energy, like matter, is transferred from plants to animals. When animals consume plants, that food provides animals with the materials they need for body repair and growth and with the energy they need to maintain body warmth and for motion. Students can use diagrams or flowcharts to describe the flow of energy within an ecosystem, tracing the energy in animals' food back to the energy from the sun that was captured by plants.

Integration of English language arts and mathematics

English language arts

In order to integrate the CCSS-ELA standards into this unit, students can use information from print and digital sources to build their understanding of energy and matter in ecosystems. As students read, they should use the information to answer questions, participate in discussions, solve problems, and support their thinking about movement of matter and the flow of energy through the organisms in an ecosystem. In this unit of study, students are also required to build models to describe the cycling of matter and the flow of energy in ecosystems. They can enhance their models using multimedia components, such as graphics and sound, and visual displays.

Mathematics

There are a number of ways in which the CCSS-Mathematics standards are integrated into this unit. Students:

- Use appropriate tools in strategic ways when making and recording observations of the living and nonliving components of an ecosystem.
- Model with mathematics when using tables, charts, or graphs to organize observational data.
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively when analyzing data that can be used as evidence for explaining how matter cycles and energy flows in systems.
- Convert among different-sized standard measurement units within a given measurement system and use these conversions to help explain what happens to matter and energy in ecosystems.

Future learning

By the end of middle school, students know that:

- The chemical reaction through which plants produce complex food molecules (sugars) requires an energy input (e.g., from sunlight) to occur. In this reaction, carbon dioxide and water combine to form carbon-based organic molecules and to release oxygen.
- Cellular respiration in plants and animals involves chemical reactions with oxygen that releases stored energy. In these processes, complex molecules containing carbon react with oxygen to produce carbon dioxide and other materials.
- When light shines on an object, the light is reflected off, absorbed by, or transmitted through the object, depending on the object's material and the frequency (color) of the light.
- The path that light travels can be traced as a straight line, except at surfaces between different transparent materials (e.g., air and water, air and glass), where the light path bends.
- A wave model of light is useful for explaining brightness, color, and the frequency-dependent bending of light at a surface between media.
- However, because light can travel through space, it cannot be a matter wave like sound or water waves.
- Plants, algae (including phytoplankton), and many microorganisms use the energy from light to make sugars (food) from carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and water through the process of photosynthesis, which also releases oxygen. These sugars can be used immediately or stored for growth or later use.
- Within individual organisms, food moves through a series of chemical reactions in which it is broken down and rearranged to form new molecules, support growth, or release energy.
- Organisms and populations of organisms are dependent on their environmental interactions with other living things and with nonliving factors.
- In any ecosystem, organisms and populations with similar requirements for food, water, oxygen, or other resources may compete with each other for limited resources, access to which consequently constrains their growth and reproduction.
- Growth of organisms and population increases are limited by access to resources.
- Similarly, predatory interactions may reduce the number of organisms or eliminate whole populations of organisms. Mutually beneficial interactions, in contrast, may become so interdependent that each

organism requires the other for survival. Although the species involved in these competitive, predatory, or mutually beneficial interactions vary access ecosystems, the patterns of interactions of organisms with their environments—both the living and the nonliving components—are shared.

- Food webs are models that demonstrate how matter and energy are transferred among producers, consumers, and decomposers as the three groups interact within an ecosystem. Transfers of matter into and out of the physical environment occur at every level. Decomposers recycle nutrients from dead plant or animal matter back to the soil in terrestrial environments or back to the water in aquatic environments. The atoms that make up the organisms in an ecosystem are cycled repeatedly between the living and nonliving and parts of the ecosystem.

Number of Instructional Days

Recommended number of instructional days: 20 (1 day = approximately 45–60 minutes)

Note—The recommended number of days is an estimate based on the information available at this time. Teachers are strongly encouraged to review the entire unit of study carefully and collaboratively to determine whether adjustments to this estimate need to be made.