

Energy in the Natural World

READ ALOUD PASSAGE

You already know that moving things have kinetic energy and that stored energy is called potential energy. These same ideas help explain how energy moves through the natural world, including through your own body.

Every living thing needs energy to survive. Animals get their energy from food, but where does food get its energy? Plants capture energy from sunlight and use it to grow. That sunlight energy becomes stored, or potential, energy inside the plant's body.

When an animal eats a plant, it takes in that stored energy. Inside the animal's body, the stored energy is released and becomes kinetic energy again: the energy of running, jumping, breathing, and simply staying warm. Animals that eat other animals are getting the same sunlight energy, just passed along one more step.

This whole path has a direction. Energy flows from the sun, into plants, into the animals that eat plants, and into the animals that eat those animals. Along the way, some energy is always given off as heat, which is why your body feels warm.

That heat eventually drifts away and is lost into the air, and finally out into space. Because of this, living things cannot reuse the same energy over and over. New energy from the sun has to keep arriving every single day to keep the whole system going.

Activity 1

Fill in the blank with the correct word from the word box.

WORD BOX

sunlight stored kinetic heat flows

1. Plants capture energy from _____ and use it to grow.
 2. Energy that is saved up inside a plant or animal's body is called _____ energy.
 3. When stored energy is released as movement, it becomes _____ energy.
 4. As energy passes from the sun to plants to animals, it always _____ in one direction.
 5. Some energy is always given off as _____ along the way.
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Activity 2

Because / But / So Complete each sentence three different ways.

Living things need a constant supply of new energy from the sun because

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Living things need a constant supply of new energy from the sun but

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Living things need a constant supply of new energy from the sun so

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Activity 3

Circle True or False for each statement.

1. **True / False** Plants get their energy directly from the sun.
 2. **True / False** Animals get their energy directly from sunlight, without needing to eat anything.
 3. **True / False** Energy flows from the sun to plants to animals.
 4. **True / False** Living things can reuse the exact same energy over and over, forever.
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Activity 4

Combine the short sentences below into one smooth sentence.

1. · Plants capture sunlight.
 · They store it as energy in their bodies.
 · Animals eat plants to get that energy.

Combined sentence:

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2. · Energy is used for movement and growth.
 · Some of it turns into heat.
 · The heat eventually escapes into space.

Combined sentence:

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