

Name: _____

Date: _____

● Types of Organisms Reading Passage

TYPES OF ORGANISMS

There are different kinds of organisms in an ecosystem. There are plants, animals, fungi and microscopic organisms, such as bacteria, that are found in all parts of the environment. All organisms require energy in order to survive. Energy is used to fuel the processes in the organisms' body. Organisms use energy to move around in the environment, digest food and circulate nutrients in the body. Organisms obtain energy from food. Some organisms make their own food while others must consume plants or animals for food. We can classify organisms as producers, consumers or decomposers by how they obtain food and nutrients from the ecosystem differently.

Producers make their own food. They are also called autotrophs. Autotrophs use energy from the sun to make their own food through the process of photosynthesis. In this process, the organism converts water and carbon dioxide into sugar and oxygen using energy from the sun. The sugar is food for the producer. Oxygen is a byproduct of this process. All plants are autotrophs. Algae are autotrophs as well. Algae are organisms that live in or near water.

Consumers cannot make their own food. Consumers are also called heterotrophs. Heterotrophs feed on other organisms to obtain food. The food provides energy needed to power all the processes in the organism. Consumers feed on plants, animals or the remains of dead or decaying organisms. All animals are consumers. Some bacteria and protists (single-celled organisms) are consumers as well.

Decomposers are *really* a type of consumer. They obtain nutrients from dead organisms. However, decomposers are different from consumers because they break down dead animals and plant material rather than just consuming it for food. They also break down waste produced by organisms. Decomposers are very important to ecosystems. By breaking down dead organisms, they return nutrients and materials into the ecosystem. They also prevent the accumulation of dead matter in an ecosystem. Fungi, bacteria and some worms are examples of decomposers.

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● Types of Organisms Answer Sheet

Questions

1. What do all organisms have in common?

2. Give examples of producers, consumers and decomposers.

3. How are producers different from consumers and decomposers?

4. How are decomposers different from producers and consumers?

5. What would happen to an environment if the environment was void of decomposers? Justify your answer.
