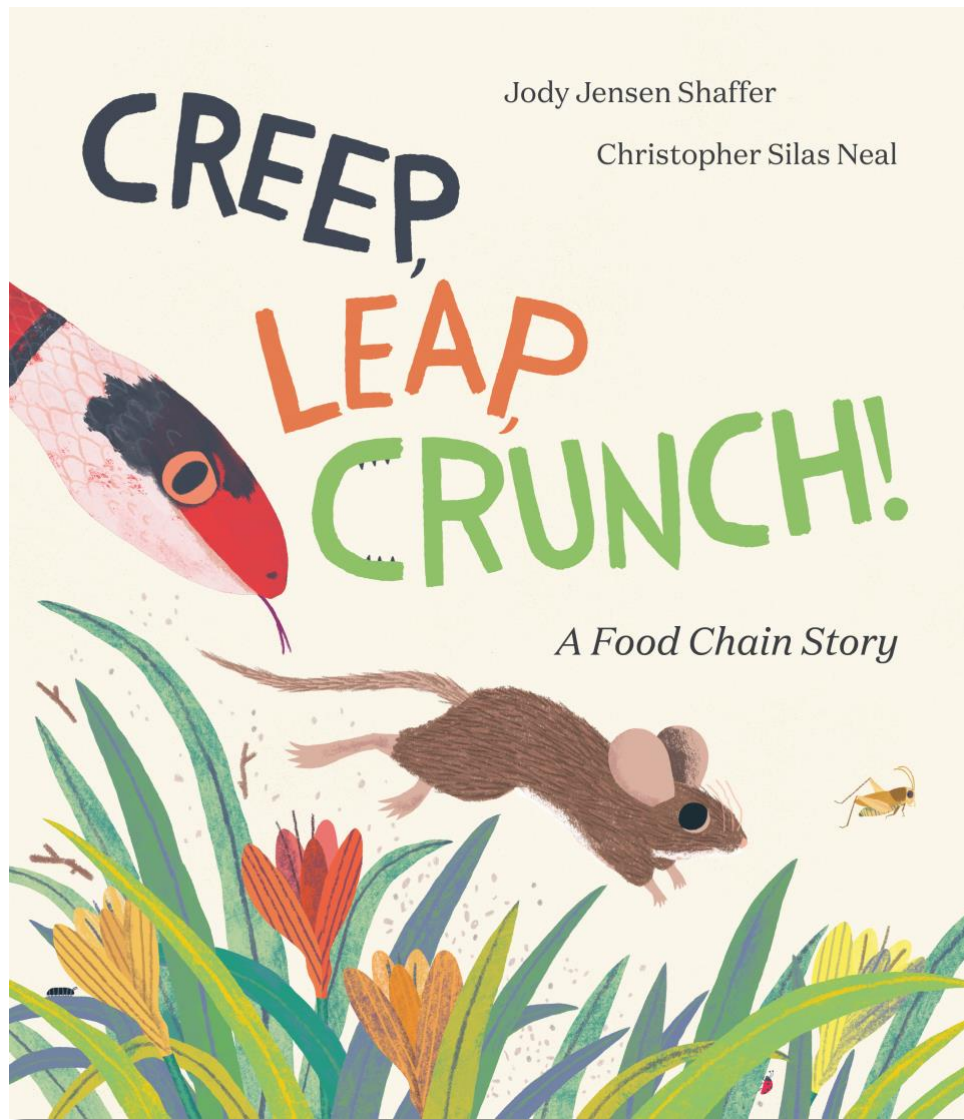


CREEP, LEAP, CRUNCH!

A Food Chain Story

A teacher's guide created by Marcie Colleen
based upon the picture book
written by Jody Jensen Shaffer and illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal



Published by
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Jody Jensen Shaffer
Author, *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*

Jody Jensen Shaffer is an award-winning poet and the author of more than seventy books of fiction and nonfiction for children, including *EMERGENCY KITTENS!*, illustrated by Dave Mottram, *A Chip Off the Old Block*, illustrated by Daniel Miyares, and *It's Your First Day of School, Busy Bus!*, illustrated by Claire Messer. Jody lives in Missouri, but you can visit her online at JodyJensenShaffer.com.



Christopher Silas Neal
Illustrator, *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*

Christopher Silas Neal is an award-winning author and illustrator of picture books, including the Over and Under series with author Kate Messner, which the *New York Times* praised for its "stunning retro-style illustrations." Neal's author debut entitled "Everyone" was praised by Publisher's Weekly as "simple, honest, lyrical." His board book series (Animal Colors, Animal Shapes) received starred reviews from Publisher's Weekly and Kirkus. He speaks about his books, the art making process, and his career at schools, conferences, libraries and book festivals across the country. Neal is a Mexican/European-American artist who lives with his wife and two boys in Brooklyn, NY.



Marcie Colleen
Curriculum Writer

This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a bachelor's degree in English Education from Oswego State and a masters degree in Educational Theater from New York University. In addition to creating curriculum guides for children's books, Marcie can often be found writing books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at www.thisismarciecolleen.com.

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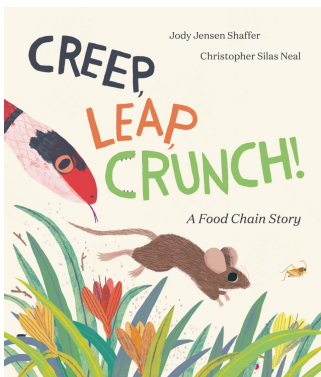
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How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Creep, Leap, Crunch!* is designed for students in kindergarten through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *Creep, Leap, Crunch!* into English language arts (ELA) and social studies curricula. Art and drama are used as a teaching tool throughout the guide.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in ELA, social studies, art, and drama.



Title: Creep, Leap, Crunch! A Food Chain Story
Author: Jody Jensen Shaffer
Illustrator: Christopher Silas Neal
Ages: 4-8
Publisher: Knopf Books for Young Readers (December 12, 2023)
ISBN-10: 0593565525

In this nonfiction picture book, discover how the animal kingdom's food chain takes shape, from the lowly worm to the mighty king of the forest.

*There was a blue sky with a bright shining sun,
A dazzling, life-giving, fiery sun.
The day had begun.*

Follow along as a day in the life of the food chain begins. From the sun that shines on the grass and trees to the animals that feed each other, each element in nature has its place. But what happens when the food escapes? This cumulative story will delight, with a surprise ending that all science lovers will enjoy.

★ "This is an **excellent** introduction to the food chain and will be especially popular among elementary science teachers." —*School Library Journal*, starred review

"A **good and read-aloud-ready way** of introducing an important natural process." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"**Bright, sound-rich rhyming** verse engages throughout as the sun rises, the day progresses, and Jensen Shaffer works her way up the chain." —*Publishers Weekly*

An Outstanding Science Trade Book for Students K-12 – National Science Teaching Association

Table of Contents

English Language Arts (ELA)

Reading Comprehension 4

Reading Nonfiction 6

Writing Activities

Write the Scene 6

Language Activities

Food Chain Vocabulary 7

Exploring Verbs 7

It's Rhyme Time 8

Math

Word Problems 8

A Food Chain Scavenger Hunt 9

Science

Creep, Leap, Crunch! Creature Research Project 9

Food Web: Producers and Consumers 10

Activity Sheets

Word Search 11

Word Search Answer Key 12

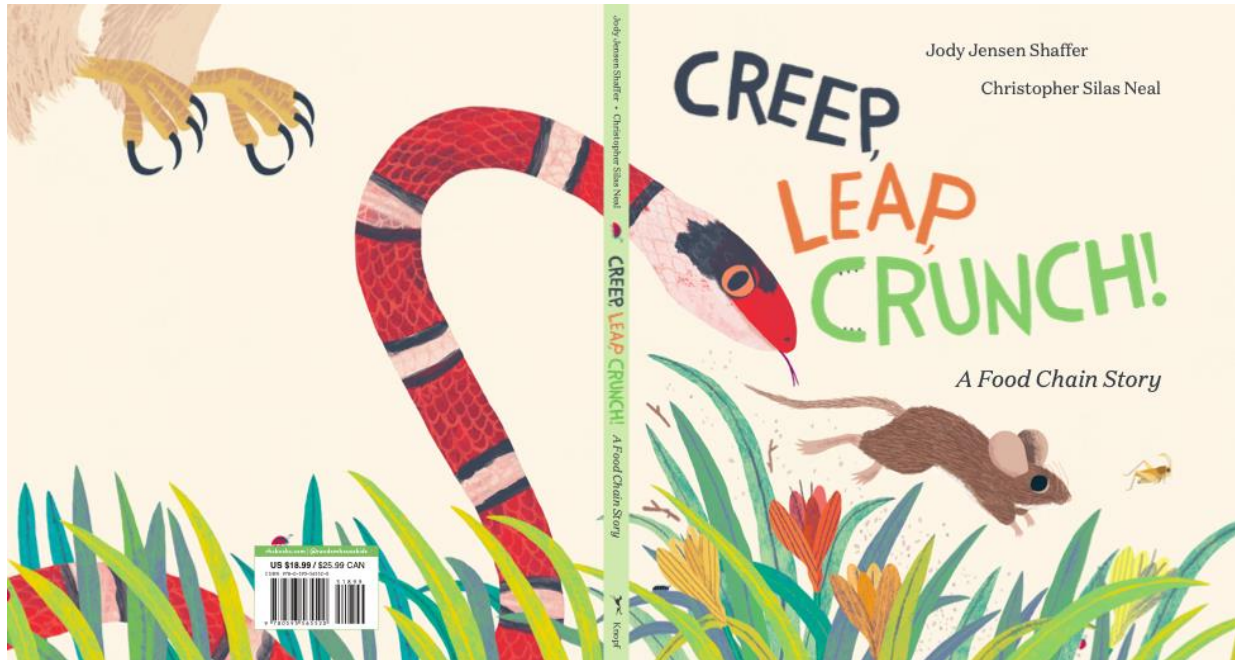
Coloring Page 13

English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Before reading *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*

Look closely at both the front and back jackets.



- Describe what you see.
- How many living things can you find in the illustration? Look closely.
- Can you guess what the story might be about? Explain your answer using details found on the jacket.

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book is about.

- What does the term “food chain” mean? Describe in your own words using examples from the text to support your answer.
- What is at the very bottom of the food chain in *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*?
 - What does it mean to be at the bottom of the food chain?
- What is at the top of the food chain in *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*?
 - What does it mean to be at the top of the food chain?
- Create a visual summary of the food chain as depicted in *Creep, Leap, Crunch!* Be sure to include all members of the food chain.
- Why do you think the author chose to include the “But some days...” text?

- What does the section after “But some days...” say about wildlife and the food chain?
- Why does the bear eat flowers and seeds at the end of the book?
- What do you think would happen if any member of the food chain did not exist?
- Where do you fit into the food chain? Explain in your own words.

Let’s talk about the people who created *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?

Look closely at the illustrations for some fun details. See if you can find:

- A brown bird
- A grazing deer
- Four wiggly worms
- Three climbing ants
- A bumblebee
- Seven white flowers all in a row

Reading Nonfiction

While reading *Creep, Leap, Crunch!* aloud to the class, have students take notes in two columns:

- *Things We Learned*
- *Questions We Have*

Pause before each page turn to add notes to the columns. These columns can either be individual or put on the smartboard and worked on as a class.

Things We Learned (Facts)	Questions We Have	Answers We Found

- Once the story is read, discuss the *Questions We Have* column.
 - Were any of these questions answered as the story went along?
 - If so, ask students to find the answer within the text.

- Record the answer next to the question in a third column labelled *Answers We Found*.
- For all questions in the *Questions We Have* column that have yet to be answered, students will need to take these steps to find answers, either through Internet or book research.
 - Discuss how to find answers to questions through research.
 - Assign students to specific questions to help them focus.
 - Record all answers in the *Answers We Found* column.
- After the answers have been shared with the class, engage in a discussion on research practices.
 - What was the most difficult part about finding answers?
 - Was it easier to find answers on the Internet or in a book?
 - Which source is more reliable, the Internet or a printed book? Why?
 - How can you determine whether to trust a source?
 - What tips would you give someone who is about to do research?
- Read the information at the back of the book.
 - Create an additional chart to document what information in the back matter was included in the story and what information was not included.
 - Why do you think Jody Jensen Shaffer chose to leave this information to the back matter?
 - Choose three facts from the back matter and explain how this information helps increase understanding of the text.

Extension: Design and illustrate posters representing each Fact, Question, and researched Answer based on *Creep, Leap, Crunch!* and display them within the classroom.

Writing Activities

Write the Scene

Choose one of the moments in *Creep, Leap, Crunch!* and create the scene. Use descriptive language to really flesh out the scene. What happens first, second, third, and so on? Be sure to include a beginning, middle, and end.

Language Activities

Food Chain Vocabulary

Creep, Leap, Crunch! and the study of food chains may introduce some words that could be new to students.

producers	photosynthesis	consumers	herbivores
carnivores	omnivores	decomposers	ecosystem
predator	prey	food web	food chain

- While they read, ask students to look carefully for words they do not know. As soon as they come across a new vocabulary word, they should jot it down.
- Encourage the students to use context clues from both the text and illustrations to infer the meanings of any unfamiliar words.
- Look up the unknown word in the dictionary. (Depending on the level of your students, a student volunteer can do this or the teacher can.) Read the definition.
- Use the new word in a sentence.
- Come up with a way to remember what the word means. Using Total Physical Response, students can create an action that symbolizes the word and helps them remember it.

Exploring Verbs

Creep, Leap, Crunch! is a wonderful book to teach action verbs, such as those included in the title.

- Look closely at each illustration in the book and ask students what the creatures are actively doing. Have them answer using only ONE word (climbing, eating, hunting).
- Explain that these action or “doing” words are called verbs.
 - Look closely at the text of *Creep, Leap, Crunch!* Find all the verbs.
 - Why do you think Shaffer used so many verbs in the text of *Creep, Leap, Crunch!?*
- As space allows, have students act out each of the action verbs.

It's Rhyme Time

Re-read *Creep, Leap, Crunch!* aloud. When you get to the end of a rhyming sentence, pause and have the children raise their hands and give the correct rhyming word to complete the sentence.

For example:

*"There was a huge forest
of grasses and trees
that blew in the cool
of a blustery _____."*

Offer opportunities for the children to make up silly sentences using other words that rhyme but don't make sense. Continue with the rest of the book until all the children have had opportunities to rhyme.

Math

Word Problems

For younger students, the use of pictures or props can be helpful in figuring out word problems. Note to teachers: Use the word problems below as inspiration to write your own, based on the illustrations in Creep, Leap, Crunch!

The "There was a huge forest" illustration:

- 1) How many ladybugs do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 3 ladybugs.

Draw 2 more ladybugs.

How many ladybugs are there now?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if four ladybugs crawled away? How many ladybugs would you see?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

The "There was a red milk snake" illustration:

- 2) How many brown, fallen leaves do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 5 fallen leaves.

Draw 4 more fallen leaves.

How many leaves do you have?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if 2 leaves blew away? How many leaves would be left?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

A Food Chain Scavenger Hunt

This scavenger hunt will help students sharpen observational and counting skills.

- Create several slips of paper each representing one of the creatures from *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*
- Number each different creature from 1-6, with 1 being the lowest creature on the food chain and six being the highest. You should have several of each number.
- Hide these slips of paper around the room.
- Ask students to find a set of creatures numbered 1-6 to create a complete food chain, linking them together in a paper chain. If a student sees a number they already have, they must leave it for another student to find.
- The first student to find a 1-6 food chain and complete their paper chain wins.
- Additional activity: This same game can be played with a set pattern of colors or pictures to teach sequencing.

Science

***Creep, Leap, Crunch!* Creature Research Project**

There are several creatures mentioned in *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*

- Cricket
- Deer mouse
- Red milk snake
- Red hawk
- Red fox
- Black bear

Assign each student or pairs of students one of these creatures to research on the Internet.

Information to be gathered must include:

- Type of creature
- What it eats
- What eats it
- Where it lives
- Draw a picture of the creature
- Write 3 words that describe your creature
- Interesting fact #1
- Interesting fact #2
- Interesting fact #3

Once all of the needed research is done, students must create a poster visual with all of the necessary information and present their findings to the class.

Creative Bonus: Research a creature found in the temperate deciduous forest not already in *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*, and add a scene which places this creature in its proper spot in the food chain. Be creative, while staying true to the factual research you have conducted.

Food Web: Producers and Consumers

A producer is a living thing that makes its own food from sunlight, air, and soil. Green plants, the grasses in *Creep, Leap, Crunch!*, are producers who make food in their leaves.

A consumer is a living thing that cannot make its own food. Consumers get their energy by eating food. All animals, such as the grasshopper, bear, and hawk in *Creep, Leap, Crunch!* are consumers.

Take a walk around the school or neighborhood. Create a list of all producers that are seen in the area. Then, create a list of consumers in the same area.

Unlike a food chain which outlines who eats whom, a food web consists of all of the food chains in an ecosystem, such as the area surrounding the school or neighborhood.

Create a visual illustration of this local food web.

Then, choose another ecosystem such as the ocean or desert. Create another visual food web of the producers and consumers found here.



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By Jody Jensen Shaffer

Illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal

Find the hidden food chain words.

V O L U Y T E E R E D T
 C X E E N H P L A N T P
 R M R O G U V B E A R R
 I P M F P N E Y N L I E
 C A I O I G C A R I N D
 K I L X N R N R E S D A
 E U E A P Y O C E T N T
 T A E S G S H A R E E O
 E O E U S N A K E N P R
 N R R N E I W O E H S L
 C F I C I C K O V E A U
 M O U S E V E Y E N E G

PREY

CRICKET

SUN

HAWK

PREDATOR

SNAKE

BEAR

HUNGRY

CREEP

PLANT

FOX

MOUSE



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Answer Key



PREY

CRICKET

SUN

HAWK

PREDATOR

SNAKE

BEAR

HUNGRY

CREEP

PLANT

FOX

MOUSE

CREEP, LEAP, CRUNCH! A Food Chain Story

By Jody Jensen Shaffer Art ©Christopher Silas Neal

