

Section 1.5: Energy & Biomass in Food Chains

Pyramids of Biomass

- That biomass is the mass of living material.
 - That as you move up a food chain, there's less biomass at each level.
 - That to draw a pyramid of biomass you need to draw a separate bar for each trophic level of a food chain, the size of the bars needs to decrease towards the top of the pyramid and be drawn to scale, the order of the bars must match the order in the food chain and all the bars must be labelled.
 - How to interpret a pyramid of biomass, e.g. use one to explain what is happening in a food chain.
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Energy Transfer in Food Chains

- That the source of energy at the start of most food chains is light energy from the Sun.
- That green plants and algae absorb some of the Sun's light energy and convert it into chemical energy when they photosynthesise.
- That green plants and algae store chemical energy from photosynthesis in their cells, and this is passed along a food chain when animals eat the plants and algae.
- That biomass and energy are lost at each stage of a food chain. This is because organisms respire and the energy released from respiration is used to fuel life processes or lost as heat. Also some of the organisms' material is not eaten (e.g. bones are inedible and some organisms die before being eaten) and some energy is lost in waste products (e.g. faeces and urine).