# Jurassic Food Webs

| Ages | Subject | Topics | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7-11 years | Science<br>Art & Design | Food webs<br>Habitats | Film clip, pictures & Top Trump cards from the activity pack |

The Jurassic Coast is internationally famous for showcasing rocks that contain some of the best-preserved marine reptiles, fish and insects anywhere in the world. The fossils preserved in the marine clays and limestones around the Charmouth and Lyme Regis area give us a clue as to how rich and diverse life in the Jurassic seas was. In this activity, children will explore the lives and relationships between strange and mysterious creatures such as Ichthyosaurs, Plesiosaurs and Ammonites. Using **Duria Antiquior** as an inspiration, children recreate their own interpretation of a Jurassic sea, including the animals that would have preyed on each other. This examination of predator, prey, producer and consumer relationships is investigated further in a Jurassic Top Trumps card game.

**Teachers' Materials**

To help children visualise life in the Jurassic seas, try and obtain a copy of 'Walking with Dinosaurs: Cruel Sea' from your local library.

**Practicalities**

Each group in the class will need a full set of Jurassic 'Top Trumps' - type cards to play the game. You could print out several sets, laminate the sheets and then cut them out.

**Discussions**

The Jurassic seas were very challenging environments with a range of predators, prey and more simplistic organisms like algae. Ask the children to research what life in seas and oceans are like today. Apart from the existence of large marine reptiles, is there a similar food web structure with a main predator and smaller prey? Using the 'Top Trumps' - type cards, what animals and plants still survive today that lived during the Jurassic period?

**Extensions and Adaptations**

The 'Top Trumps' activity could be transferred to a PE lesson where each child is given a role to play. Using the categories, children can research their role and how they would behave in the imaginary Jurassic Sea. For example, gastropods and sea urchins would move very slowly on all fours grazing on the seabed and ammonites would be carefully moving (swimming) backwards. Children could examine predator and prey relationships by running after (i.e. hunting) their food.

**Links to Other Resources**

Jurassic Food Webs links well to the following resources:

- How did Ammonites Move?
- How do Fossils Form?
- Survival of the Fittest
- Mary Anning
- Dinosaur Top Trumps