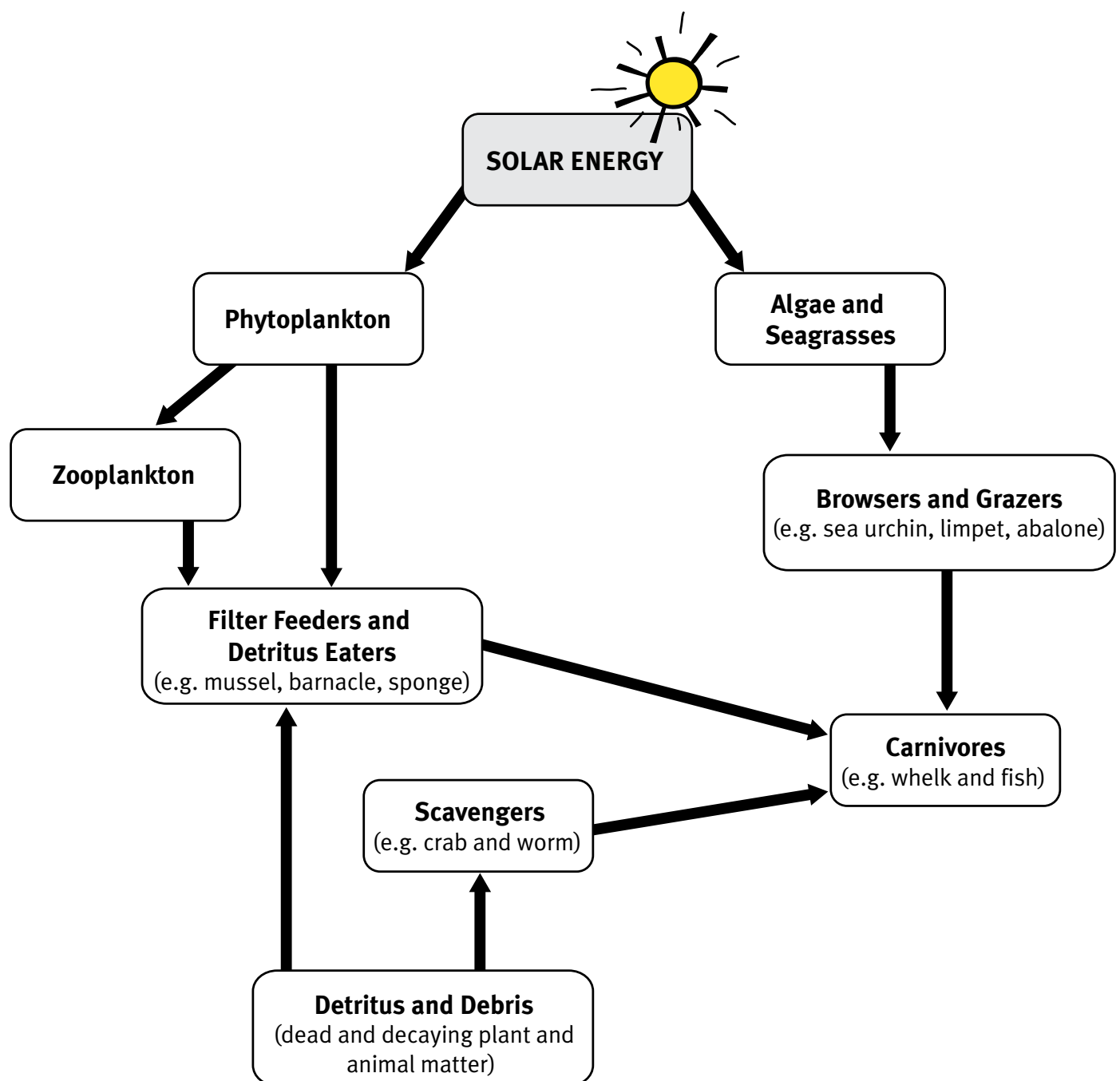


An ecosystem is a community of living organisms (different species) that interact with each other and their non-living surroundings (water, waves, current) in a defined space (beach, rock pool, dune system).

Energy flow through an ecosystem is essential for life. The diagram below demonstrates a simplified view of energy flow through an ecosystem.

Energy Flow Through An Ecosystem



Ecosystem Energy Flow (continued)

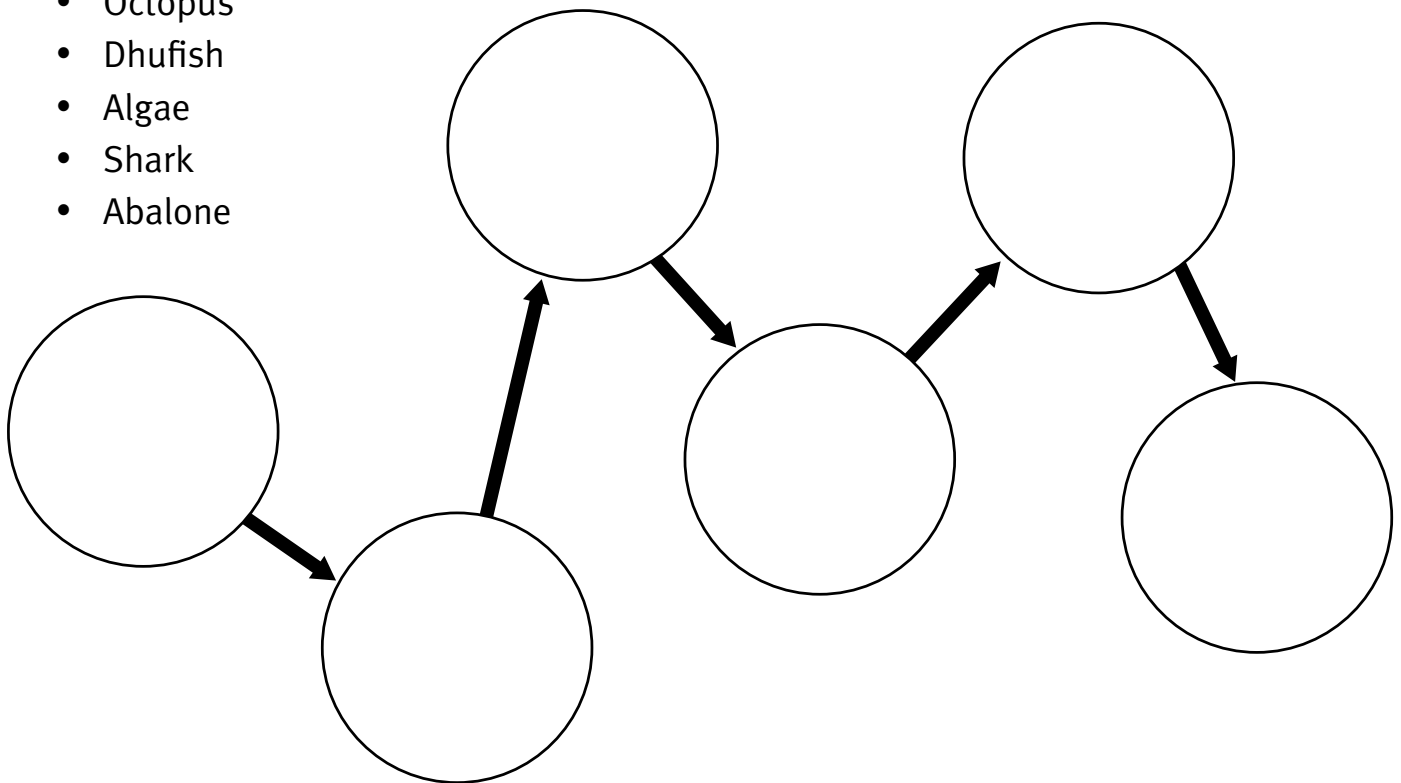
You can explore energy flow through an ecosystem by looking at two steps – food chains and food webs.

What is a food chain?

A food chain is a distinct group of organisms that are interlinked through food source and oxygen supply. The relationship between the organisms can be critical.

Use the organisms listed below to complete the food chain.

- Rock lobster
- Octopus
- Dhufish
- Algae
- Shark
- Abalone



Think about the food chain. If one animal was lost from the food chain due to overfishing or climate change, how would it affect the other organisms in the food chain?

Select an organism you found on your beachcombing field trip – now create your own food chain!

What is a food web?

A food web is several inter-related food chains within an ecosystem. Discuss the features of the [sandy beach food web](#) and the [limestone rocky shore food web](#).

Now try the *Web of Life* activity!