

Wolf Island: Vocabulary and Background Information

A Visit to Wolf Island

Producer	An organism that makes its own food
Herbivore	An animal that eats plants
Carnivore	An animal that eats other animals
Prey	An animal that gets eaten by other animals
Predator	An animal that hunts, kills, and eats other animals
Food chain	A model that shows the transfer of food energy

Wolf Island Background:

The book *Wolf Island* is story based on some events that occurred on an island in Canada. While the island is a real place. Wolves did not get on a raft and ride to the mainland. The way that the wolves return to the island (by crossing the ice) is how the first wolves came to Isle Royale (in 1949). Wolves sometimes still cross the ice to get to Isle Royale, but Lake Superior does not freeze across as often as it used to, due to climate change.

When the wolf population on Isle Royale reached a low of two animals, the National Park Service decided to bring in new wolves to keep the ecosystem healthy. These new wolves came from Minnesota, Michigan, and Canada. Some arrived on a plane and some on boats.

For detailed information go to: [Why relocate wolves to Isle Royale](#)

Food Chains and Webs:



Food chains typically depict the plants at the bottom, plant-eating animals (herbivores) in the middle and meat eaters (carnivores) at the top, with the arrows going in the direction the energy moves. Plants capture energy from sunlight and animals capture that energy from eating plants or other animals, so the arrows go from plants to herbivores and from herbivores to carnivores.

The food relationships of *Wolf Island* are more complicated than a simple food chain can show. Each herbivore may eat a variety of plants. Each carnivore may eat more than one species of prey. When an animal dies and decomposes, it goes back to the soil and helps new plants grow.

A food web is a model that shows how the energy flows a network of interconnected food chains.

Links to descriptions of techniques used in this activity:

[Teacher Toolkit](#) [Think-Pair-Share](#)

[Teacher Toolkit](#) [TPR-Total Physical Response](#)

Exploring the Real Wolf Island

Ecosystem	A community of living things and their nonliving environment, interacting in a system
Food web	A network of interconnected food chains in an ecosystem
Interdependence	All organisms in an ecosystem depend upon each other. If the population of one organism rises or falls, then this can affect the rest of the ecosystem.

Where is Isle Royale?

Isle Royale is an island located in Lake Superior. It is part of an archipelago—a group of islands. The shortest distance from Isle Royale to the mainland is fourteen miles.

What is Isle Royale?

The archipelago of Isle Royale is a National Park. Everything in the park is protected. There are not very many buildings or roads. Animals cannot be hunted, and plants cannot be picked.

It is hard for animals (and people) to get to Isle Royale. Everyone must cross massive Lake Superior. People come on boats or sea planes, but animals must find their own way.

Since Isle Royale is in the middle of a lake, it is different from the mainland. It has a simple and protected ecosystem.

Isle Royale is isolated. That means that it is separated from other land. Everything at Isle Royale is affected by its isolation. It is difficult for plants and animals that live there to come and go. Some of the common species on the mainland like deer, chipmunks, raccoons, skunks, and coyotes are not found on Isle Royale.

Isle Royale Tableaus

Additional information if students have questions while creating their tableaus:

Purple:

- In winter, moose eat balsam fir trees. There aren't many choices of plants to eat in winter.
- In a deep snow it is hard for moose to get around (they sink!) Wolves have big feet and are often able to stay on the surface.
- A healthy moose is too strong for a wolf (or for a pack of wolves). Wolves may watch this moose, but older wolves know that it is dangerous and will leave healthy moose alone

Blue

- In winter, moose eat balsam fir trees. There aren't many choices of plants to eat in winter.
- When there are a lot of moose, by the end of winter they may not be much food left to eat.

Yellow

- Moose can strip all the leaves off a small branch in a single bite.
- Moose calves are small, and their size makes them good prey for a wolf.
- Moose mothers are very protective, and the calves stay close to mama.

Orange

- Wolves are predators of both snowshoe hare and moose.

- To defend themselves snowshoe hare hide or run.
- Aspen trees lose their leaves in the fall.

Green

- Beaver cut down aspen trees to build lodges and dams. They also eat aspen leaves and twigs.
- Wolves cannot catch a beaver that is in the water.
- Wolves are predators of beaver. They know where they live and will wait until they go away from the water to get food or building supplies.

Pink

- Both moose and wolf are active at night
- Moose stand their ground if they are healthy or run if they are old or weak.

Link to descriptions of techniques used in this activity:

[Teacher Toolkit - Tableaus](#)