

FACTivity

Time needed:

One class period

The question you will answer in this FACTivity is:

How does the decline of prairie dogs affect the prairie food web?

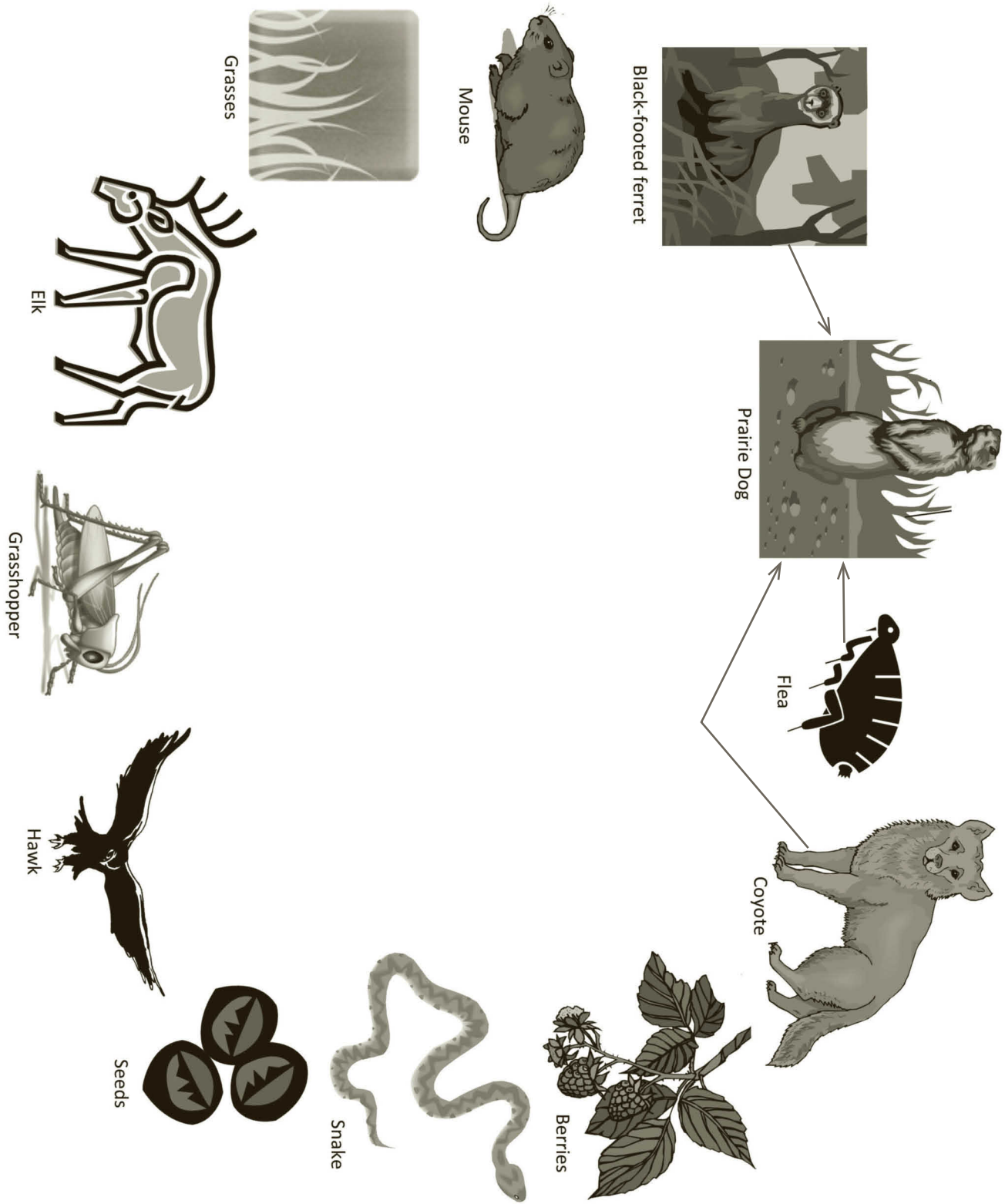
Materials

- “Prairie Dog Days” article
- Copies of the prairie ecosystem food web sheet on page 87, one for each student
- Pencil, one for each student

The process you will use to answer this question is:

1. Look at the animals and plants found in the prairie ecosystem food web.
2. Draw arrows to connect the animals between predators and the prey they eat. The arrow should be drawn from the predator to the prey. In other words, the arrow should point to the thing that is eaten. A few connections have been drawn for you. Reference the “Prairie Dog Days” article if you need help figuring out the connections. If your teacher allows it, you can also work together with your classmates. Note: More than one connection can be drawn between the animals.
3. Using the completed food web, answer the following questions:
 - a. What animal and/or plants are at the lowest level of the food web?
 - b. What do prairie dogs eat?
 - c. What animals feed on prairie dogs?
4. Next, cross out the prairie dog. Placing an “X” over the image represents the decline or removal of prairie dogs from the food web. Using the revised food web, answer the following questions:
 - a. How does the food web change when prairie dogs are removed?
 - b. Will animals that feed on prairie dogs have other food options?
 - c. How will populations change without the prairie dogs? For example, will any animal or plant populations grow or shrink in numbers?

PRAIRIE ECOSYSTEM FOOD WEB EXAMPLE



FACTivity
Extension:

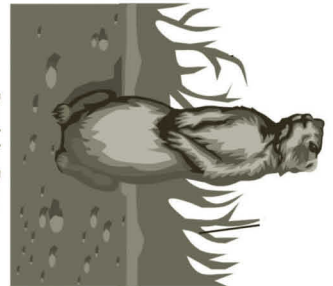
Complete an additional food web removing prairie dogs from the ecosystem. Discuss as a class how the rest of the ecosystem would be affected if prairie dogs were removed from the habitat.

STUDENT NAME: _____

PRAIRIE ECOSYSTEM FOOD WEB



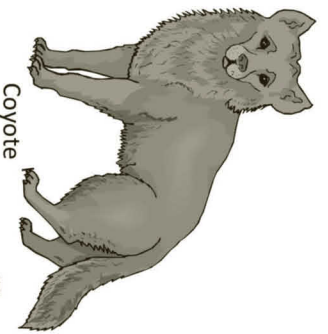
Black-footed ferret



Prairie Dog



Flea



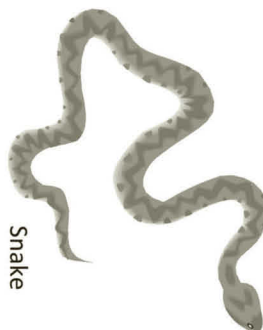
Coyote



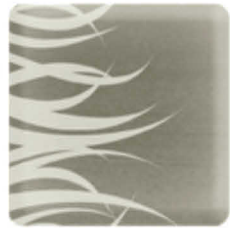
Mouse



Berries



Snake



Grasses



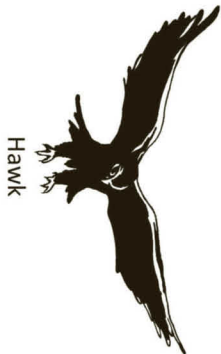
Elk



Grasshopper



Seeds



Hawk