

◇ Unit 2
Strengthen Your Relationships

Building Academic Skills
Science

RELATIONSHIPS

Ecologists study relationships between organisms in a living community. Social scientists study relationships among family members and others in their environment. The disciplines of science and social science have a lot in common.

Directions: Read the following summary of relationships that exist in living communities. After reading, answer the question that follows.

All of the organisms in a given area make up the living community. These include animals, plants, microorganisms, and fungi.

Organisms may be producers, consumers, and/or decomposers. Producers are the organisms that produce food. Consumers are the organisms that get food from other organisms. Decomposers get their food from dead organisms or from wastes of organisms.

Organisms relate to each other in one of two ways. They have either a symbiotic or a competitive relationship.

Those organisms that depend on one another have symbiotic relationships. There are three forms of symbioses: parasites, mutualism, and commensalism. A parasite is an organism that feeds from another organism without killing it. In mutualism, two organisms derive benefits from each other. In a commensal relationship, one organism benefits, and the other is not affected.

Organisms that need the same things are said to be competitive. If the needed resources are limited, competition becomes very great. Usually, one of two things happens. Either one species will die out or be run out, or one will gradually change its needs in order for the two to coexist.

How does the discussion above relate to human relationships? Include specific examples to illustrate your response.
