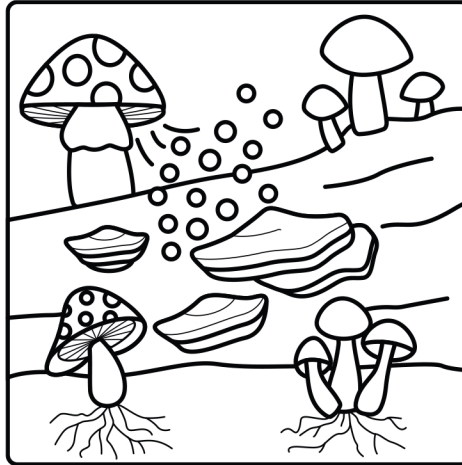
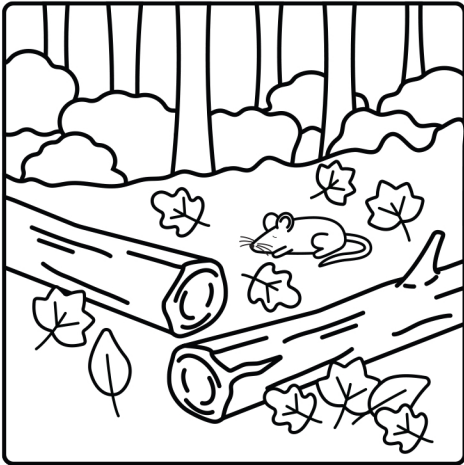


**Word Bank:**

decomposers

animals

soil

matter

Nature's Recyclers: Decomposers

When a leaf falls from a tree or an animal dies, it does not disappear. Living things called decomposers, like mushrooms and other fungi, break the material down into smaller and smaller pieces. As decomposers work, they release nutrients back into the soil. Plants use these nutrients to grow strong and healthy.

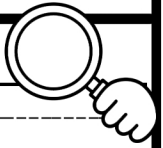
Without decomposers, the forest floor would be piled high with matter that never breaks down.

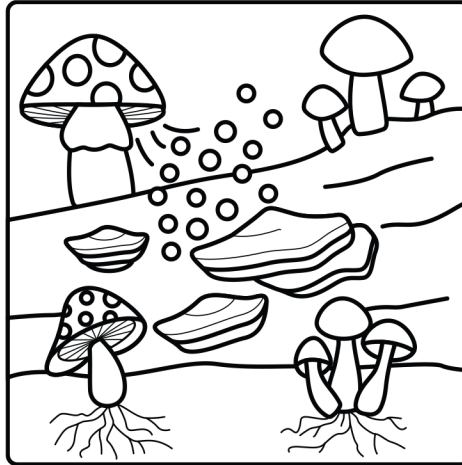
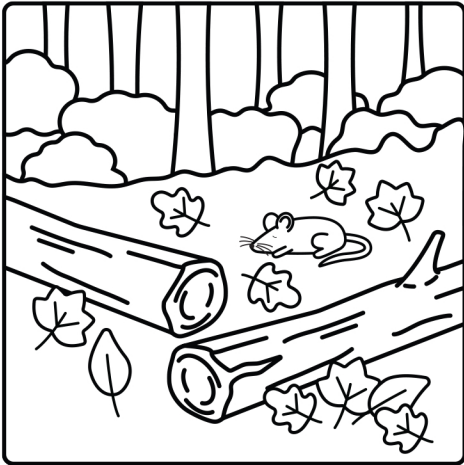
1. What is a decomposer?

2. Name one example of a decomposer.

3. What happens to nutrients after decomposers break down dead matter?

4. What would happen to a forest without decomposers?



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Nature's Recyclers: Decomposers

When a leaf falls from a tree or an animal dies, it does not disappear. Living things called decomposers, like mushrooms and other fungi, break the material down into smaller and smaller pieces. As decomposers work, they release nutrients back into the soil. Plants use these nutrients to grow strong and healthy. Without decomposers, the forest floor would be piled high with matter that never breaks down.

1. What is a decomposer?

A living thing that breaks down dead plants and animals.

2. Name one example of a decomposer.

Mushrooms (or other fungi).

3. What happens to nutrients after decomposers break down dead matter?

They are released back into the soil.

4. What would happen to a forest without decomposers?

Sample answer: Dead matter would pile up and never break down.

