

# Interpreting Data: Diagrams

A **diagram** is a visual way to represent information. Diagrams show many kinds of information, such as the parts of a thing, how something works, or how things relate to other things.

Some diagrams rely mostly on pictures to communicate an idea. Look at this food web diagram. With just a glance, the arrows show that snakes eat mice and are eaten by hawks. Think about how many words it would take to explain each animal's place in the food web. With this diagram, the pictures and arrows tell the story.

## A SIMPLE FOOD WEB

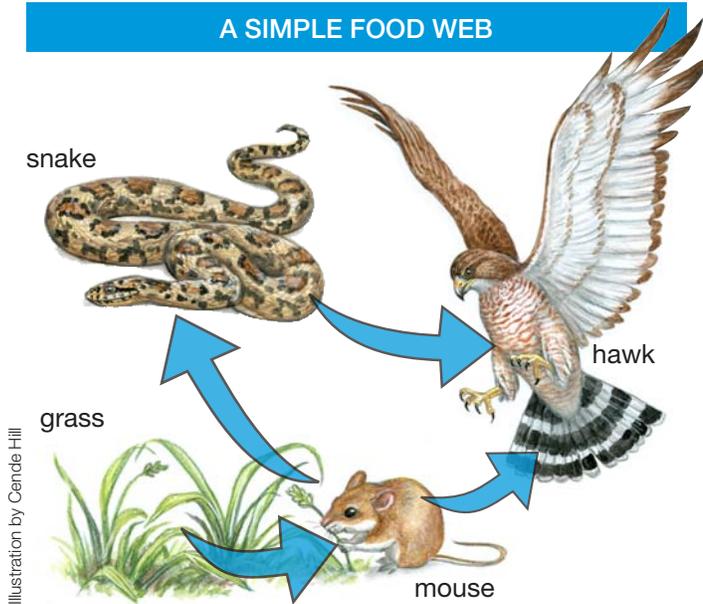


Illustration by Cendee Hill

The top right diagram of a refrigerator uses both words and pictures to show some of the parts involved in cooling and storing food, and how the parts work together. To read this diagram, find **1** and read the paragraphs in numeric order.

## HOW A REFRIGERATOR WORKS

- 1** The refrigerator motor pumps coolant to the compressor.
- 2** The compressor makes the coolant into a liquid. Then the liquid moves through the tubes to cool the refrigerator.
- 3** The coolant passes through the tubes in the refrigerator.
- 4** The coolant takes heat from the inside air and evaporates into a gas. This cools the air inside the refrigerator.
- 5** Then the motor moves the coolant back through the compressor to become a liquid again. The liquid coolant gets pumped through the tubes again for more cooling.

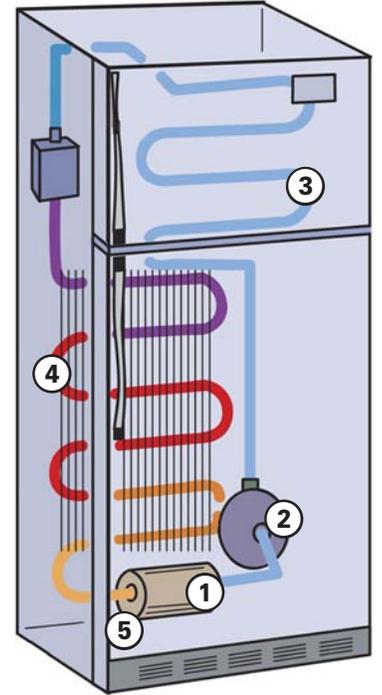


Illustration by Gordon Nealy

This diagram makes it possible to visualize how a refrigerator stays cool—something we cannot see on our own.

Diagrams provide a clear and efficient way for us to get information. They simplify complex information and allow us to see how our world works.

## ✓ Brain Check

- How are diagrams useful?
- Compare and contrast these diagrams.
- Draw a diagram of a frog's life cycle.