

# Decomposer Tag

## Description

Students play a freeze tag game where death tries to tag and freeze the nutrients in plants and animals. The decomposers unfreeze the nutrients trapped in dead bodies, allowing them to return to the cycle of life.

**Grade:** 2-6

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Materials:** Two light colored and one dark colored bandanas.

## Procedure

1. One student is “Death” and wears a dark colored bandana.
2. Two or three students are decomposers and wear light colored bandanas. All other students are plants or animals.
3. Death kills plants and animals by tagging them. If plants or animals are tagged, they are frozen in place until one of the decomposers unfreezes them by running around them three times. The decomposers unfreeze the plants and animals as fast or faster than death freezes them.
4. The game has no natural end. You should let students play long enough to experience the concept, and stop the game well before students get exhausted and/or lose interest.

## Variation

To demonstrate that life would stop without decomposers recycling dead things, you can allow “Death” to tag and freeze the “Decomposers” along with the plants and animals. The game, and life on Earth, ends when everyone is frozen except “Death.”

Source: Marin County Office of Waste Management, 3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 403, San Rafael, CA 94903  
(415) 499-6647