



Lesson Time: 10–15 minutes

Hide and Seek

Background

How do animals stay safe in the wild? Many animals have coloring that is similar to their surroundings. This mechanism, known as camouflage, allows the animal to blend in and “hide” from potential predators. In this lesson, students will investigate the concept of camouflage by taking on the role of predator in a specific environment. Students will experience and discuss the advantage that coloring can provide to an animal in the wild.

“How do **animals stay safe in the wild?**”

Introduction and Modeling

Begin the lesson by talking to the students about the game of hide and seek. What makes a good hiding place? What do you do if you can't find a place to hide where you are completely out of view? Introduce the idea of animals “hiding” in nature from their predators. Ask students why deer and squirrels are brown and polar bears are white. Define the term *camouflage* and explain to students that these are simple examples of camouflage in action. Tell students that they are going to “act out” an example of camouflage.

Objectives & Outcomes

Lesson Objectives: Students will investigate the concept of camouflage through a hands-on activity.

Lesson Outcomes: *Students will be able to...*

- understand how camouflage helps keep animals safe in the wild
- identify with the role of predator

Subject Area Connection: Science

Getting Ready

Teacher Preparation: To prepare for this lesson, cut out small circles or squares of newspaper and white paper.

Materials Required:

- full newspaper sheets
- 10 small squares or circles cut out of newspaper
- 10 small squares or circles cut out of white paper
- scissors

Key Vocabulary

camouflage: a method that an animal may use to blend into its surroundings.

predator: animal that hunts other animals for food.

prey: animal that is hunted by another animal.

Procedure

1. Put students in pairs. Hand out the newspaper and the “animal” cutouts (i.e., the small circles of newspaper and white paper).
2. Students will spread out their newspaper sheet. One student will place the animal cutouts on the newspaper while the other student hides his/her eyes.
3. When the teacher says, “Start,” the student playing the role of “predator” will open his/her eyes and “hunt” for their prey by trying to find all the animal cutouts they can before the teacher says, “Stop.” (The teacher should time the students for about 6–8 seconds.)
4. Students will count how many “prey” they collected.
5. Students will switch roles and repeat the activity.

Discussion Questions

- How many animals were you able to collect?
- Which animals were easy to find? Why?
- Which animals were harder to find? Why?
- How would this activity be different if the background were a sheet of white paper? How would this activity be different if the background were a sheet of green paper?
- Can you give an example of how an animal uses camouflage to protect itself?

Evaluation

Ask students to write down a suggestion for a background that would make it hard to find all of the animals. They should include a reason for their choice.

Tips for Tailoring this Lesson

For Higher Grade Levels

- Ask students to repeat the experiment and collect class data. Students can calculate the average of white and newsprint shapes found.
- Ask students to discuss why some animals have bright markings that cause them to stand out rather than blend in with their environment.

For Lower Grade Levels

- Ask students to design a similar experiment somewhere outside the school. They should choose materials based on the background they choose, i.e., pavement vs. grass.
- Provide students with a white paper frog. Challenge the students to shade the frog with a certain pattern that will allow it to blend in with some part of the classroom. Hide the frogs in the classroom and ask students to find them.

Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

Common Core State Standards:

College & Career Readiness

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Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Anchor Standards for Language

CCRA.L.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

Next Generation Science Standards

Next Generation Science Standards: based on the Framework for K–12 Science Education developed by the National Research Council. Publisher: Achieve, Inc. on behalf of the twenty-six states and partners that collaborated on the NGSS. ©2013 www.nextgenscience.org

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Use evidence to construct an explanation for how the variations in characteristics among individuals of the same species may provide advantages in surviving, finding mates, and reproducing. *[Clarification Statement: Examples of cause and effect relationships could be plants that have larger thorns than other plants may be less likely to be eaten by predators; and, animals that have better camouflage coloration than other animals may be more likely to survive and therefore more likely to leave offspring.]*