

Camouflage

WHAT'S THE Big Idea?

Cycles
Change over
Time

Materials

None

Enduring Understandings

- In order to survive, many animals have adaptations, such as camouflage, to aid their survival as either the predator (the hunter), or the prey (the hunted).
- Camouflage is the coloration or patterns that help an animal to appear to blend in with its surroundings to aid in its survival.
- Some animal fur changes colors in the winter to blend in with the white snow.
- Poisonous, brightly colored creatures provide a warning system to predators: "Don't eat me!"

Who Eats Who?

Camouflage: Adaptation that allows animals to blend in and hide from predators, or to be a well hidden predator that can sneak up on its prey.

Herbivores: Animals that eat only plants.

Omnivore: Animals that eat plants and other animals.

Carnivores: Animals that only eat other animals.

Predators: Carnivores and omnivores that hunt for prey.

Prey: Animals being hunted by other animals for food.

Objectives

- Children cultivate their visual discrimination skills.
- Children discover the meaning and role of camouflage.
- Children role play the predator/prey relationship.

Directions

1. Gather children into a circle. Invite them to look at their clothing. Which child would have the easiest time hiding in the winter woods? Who could hide in a summery flower garden? A muddy spring field? Discuss their color choices and combinations.
2. Have the children go and try to blend in with or match things in the room, the playground, or the forest. See how invisible they can make themselves. Encourage them not to hide behind their object, but rather try to blend in with it. If necessary, use a plastic creature to demonstrate the difference between blending in with the surface and hiding under or behind something.
3. Ask children if they can think of why an animal might want to hide or blend into their surroundings. Discuss the terms camouflage, prey, and predator.
4. After the children have practiced camouflaging themselves, pick one child to be the predator. With his or her eyes closed, the predator counts to twenty as the other children camouflage themselves in the room, playground, or forest.
5. The predator opens his or her eyes and looks around for camouflaged classmates. He or she cannot move, but may turn in circles. The predator calls out names as she spots others. Those spotted must come in and join him or her, but cannot disclose the location of those still camouflaged. The winner is the child closest to the predator who has not been spotted. The winner gets the reward for



great camouflaging, and gets to be the next predator.

6. If the children are so well camouflaged that they can't be spotted, the predator can close her eyes and count to twenty as children move even closer. The predator opens her eyes and begins the process again.
7. When the game is over, process and reflect on the experience with the children by engaging in a conversation guided by the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

- What made it easy for you to camouflage yourself? What made it hard?
- Why do animals use camouflage?
- What would happen if animals couldn't use camouflage?
- What animals would be well camouflaged in winter/spring/summer/fall?

Extensions

- Play camouflage throughout the year. Have children discuss how their clothing changes through the seasons: colors, amount, or type of clothes. How do these clothing changes affect their ability to camouflage? How do the changes in the natural world affect this ability?
- Have the children create a forest creature out of sticks, grass, nuts, leaves, etc. Students then camouflage their creature on the forest floor and have the others try to find it. Discuss findings.
- Use small construction paper squares to set up a camouflage hunt in your room (make some obvious and some hard to find). See how many the children can find. Which were the easiest? hardest?
- Have the children camouflage small lengths of colored pipe-cleaners on top of a brightly colored quilt. Ask other classmates to find them.
- Set camouflage puppets, stuffed animals or rubber creatures in a wooded setting. Then, have the class stalk quietly along a trail and silently count on their fingers the creatures they spot. Discuss findings, go back and try again.
- **What Color Is Camouflage?**
By Carolyn Otto
- **Animals in Camouflage** by Phylliss Linbacher Tildes
- **Twilight Hunt: A Seek-and-Find Book** by Narelle Oliver