



# You Can't Find Me!

**OUTSIDE:** Experience the concept of camouflage and discover its importance

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## CHILDREN WILL:

- Pretend to be animals looking for camouflaged food in the grass
- Discuss how camouflage helps animals hide from their predators

## You'll need:

- Small strips of natural colored yarn, thin ribbon, or colored toothpicks (an equal number of pieces each color selected)
- Chart paper and marker

## Did you know?

One of the many ways animals protect themselves from predators is with camouflage. This activity will allow children to explore the concept of animal camouflage and its importance.

## Teacher preparation:

- Scatter pieces of yarn, ribbon or colored toothpicks in grassy area.
- Create a graph on the chart paper to illustrate the number of each color found by the children.

## What to do:

1. Take children outside and explain that they are going to be hungry birds looking for a tasty worm or caterpillar represented by the material selected (yarn, ribbon, or toothpicks).
2. Encourage children to find as many "worms" or "caterpillars" as possible within a specified time.
3. Give children several minutes, and then have them bring their "lunches." Encourage children to sort their lunch into colors and count the number of each color they found. Then fill in the graph.
4. Talk about the number of worms and caterpillars caught. Refer to the graph and ask open-ended questions like these:
  - Which worms or caterpillars were the easiest to find? Why?
  - Which worms or caterpillars were the hardest to find? Why?
  - How do you think color helps animals?
  - How does the animal's covering help it survive?

## Related children's literature:

Schwartz, D.M., Schy, Y., and Kuhn, D. (2007). *Where in the wild? Camouflaged creatures concealed ... and revealed*. Berkley, CA: Tricycle Press. ISBN-10: 1582462070. This clever "I spy" book shows close-up photos of camouflaged animals and features verse descriptions. Foldout pages reveal the animals.

Walsh, E.S. (2003). *Dot and Jabber and the big bug mystery*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Children's Books. ISBN-10: 0152165185. Dot and Jabber are two mouse detectives who try to solve the mystery of where the creatures in their meadow are hiding.

## Additional learning experiences:

**ART:** During self-selected activity time, put out paint and paper of the same color.

**FIELD TRIP:** Take children on a hike in a natural area. Hide several of the animal cards along the trail. Challenge children to discover the animals. Discuss which animals were easiest to find, which were most difficult to find and why.

**MANIPULATIVE:** Cover three boxes and place a feather on the end of one, a scrap of fur on another, and a scrap of smooth, scale-like material on the third. During self-selected activity time, encourage interested children to sort the animal cards by skin type. Discuss how the skin type helps camouflage the animal in its habitat.

**OUTSIDE:** Teach the children to play hide and seek. As they become experienced with the game, talk about which places are the best to hide in and why. Remember that it is difficult for young children to remain hidden until they are found. Remaining hidden is one of the ways that camouflage keeps animals from being detected.

# activity 3.2 : now you see me. now you don't.

**estimated time** 30–40 minutes

## objectives

Students will be able to

1. Explain how camouflage is a survival tool.

## teacher preparation

Students may complete the first part of this activity indoors, but this is primarily an outdoor activity utilizing the schoolyard ecosystem to understand the concept of camouflage and the importance/usefulness of blending into an environment.

Once students have chosen (or been given) and colored a frog, moth *or* snake template, they must use the same animal template for the second part of the activity.

## materials

Science notebooks

Pencils

Thermometers

Crayons or colored pencils

Two copies per student of at least one of the three *Animal Templates* (frog/snake/moth)

Miscellaneous extra student copies for Wrap-Up/Formative Assessment

Scissors

Clipboards (optional if coloring templates indoors)

## procedure

1. Have students complete their science notebook headings and take and record outside air temperature.
2. If you plan to have students choose their animal template (frog/moth/snake), display each template and have students take their chosen animal template to wherever you plan to have them work (Ex: at their desks; on benches in the outdoor classroom; sitting on the grass and using clipboards; etc.). If supply limitations dictate making fewer copies, have enough copies available to allow two copies per student of one of the three templates *BUT* be sure to include all three templates in the activity. If animal templates are randomly distributed, hand one out to each student. In the second part of the activity, be sure each student receives a clean template of the same animal they had in the first part of the activity.
3. Instruct students to color their frog/moth/snake *any way they wish* using any colors they wish and to cut it out when they are finished.
4. Assemble students outside in their schoolyard/outdoor area and instruct them to:
  - find a place for their animal “to rest”
  - be sure they place their animal in such a way that it will not blow away
  - return to you at a pre-arranged location (within the 3-point line of the basketball court; by the swing set; on the benches in the outdoor classroom, etc.)
5. When students have returned to the pre-arranged location, walk slowly around the schoolyard with them and have them point out the colored animal templates they find. Do not allow students to move them. Once all animals have been located, have students consider the following questions:
  - Q. What are the chances that your frog, moth or snake would survive in this environment?**
    - A. Answers will vary. A frog/moth/snake would/wouldn't have enough water, food, space or shelter (and air) to survive here.
  - Q. What about being safe? Why would or wouldn't your animal be safe if another hungry animal were hunting it?**
    - A. Some students will recognize that the colors of their animal or where they placed their animal would cause it to stand out in the schoolyard and be easily seen by a hungry animal hunting it.

**Q. If you were given a chance to color your animal again, what would you do differently?**

A. Color it so it would blend in better with the colors of the schoolyard. Put it where it would be harder to see. Color it so it would be camouflaged and blend in better with its environment.

**Q. Camouflage is a very useful survival tool for animals. What other animals have you read about in your student book besides frogs, moths and snakes that are camouflaged and blend into their environment?**

A. Answers will vary.

6. Match each student's colored template with a clean template of the same animal. Instruct students to color their frog, moth or snake again. This time, choose a specific environment in the schoolyard ecosystem and color the animal so that it would be camouflaged when placed in that environment.
7. Have students place their camouflaged animals in the specific environments (in such a way that they will not blow away). Invite other teachers, the principal and/or other students to try to find their animals.
8. Discuss the effectiveness of their camouflage attempts and reinforce how camouflage is a useful survival tool for certain animals.

### **wrap-up/formative assessment**

Provide students with one extra animal template to repeat this activity in an area in or around their home for one or more family members to find it. Have students write a short paragraph about the steps they took to do the activity at home and how it worked with the family member(s).





