



Get ready to get wild as we explore how animals use camouflage! We will discover how hard it is to find camouflaged animals, play a game and make a colorful camouflaged animal!

What is camouflage?

Camouflage is a feature that some animals have to help them blend in with their surroundings. An animal's colors, patterns like spots or stripes, body shape and even behavior can help it look like something else. Camouflage helps protect animals from being eaten by predators or can help predators hide so their prey can't see them coming.

Have you ever seen an animal with camouflage before? A grasshopper is a great example. The green, yellow and brown colors of their bodies help them to blend in with grasses. Some animals, like squirrels, blend in with tree bark. Other animals, like ducks, blend in with the edges of ponds. Even though you may not be able to spot them, camouflaged animals are all around us!

Do you think the grasshopper, squirrel and ducks blend in with their surroundings?



Grasshopper



Squirrel



Duck

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Let's Read



Find a comfortable spot and read about the weather! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- *How to hide a Butterfly & Other Insects* by Ruth Heller
- *Camouflage* by Bindi Irwin
- *Where Else in the Wild?* by David M. Schwartz
- *Animal Hide and Seek* by DK Publishing
- *How Animals Hide* by Robert M. McClung
- *Hiding in the Ocean (Animal Camouflage)* by Patricia Whitehouse

You can download digital copies of these books for free from openlibrary.org. Here is how!

- 1.** Go to openlibrary.org.
- 2.** Click the blue "sign up" button on the top right to create a free account. You will be sent a confirmation email.
- 3.** Sign in.
- 4.** Type the book title and author into the search bar.
- 5.** Find your book and click the blue "borrow" button.
- 6.** Don't forget to return your book when you are finished reading it!

Keep going!

Set up an online reading group with some of your friends. You can read the same book, then talk about what you learned, or you can read different books and share cool animal facts.

Camouflage Challenge

How do insects camouflage? Insects have different ways of camouflaging, or blending in, with their surroundings. Some insects, like grasshoppers and aphids, have colors that are the same as their environment. The peppered moth and baron caterpillar have detailed patterns that help them blend in with tree bark or leaves. Insects like praying mantises, katydids and stick insects have bodies that are shaped like leaves or twigs! These colors, patterns and shapes help insects hide so they are not eaten by predators. Let's find out if camouflaged insects are harder to find!

Before you start, you should have:

- Two sheets of white paper and two sheets of newspaper. (If you don't have either, you can use construction paper, or any other paper you have as long as they are two different colors.)
- Scissors
- A timer, or phone with a stopwatch feature
- Optional: A partner

Get started:

- 1.** Cut a sheet of white paper and a sheet of newspaper into 30, 1-inch squares. These will be the insects.
- 2.** Mix all the paper square insects together.
- 3.** Spread the paper square insects out on the remaining white paper sheet or ask a partner to help you. This paper will be where the insects live.
- 4.** Set the timer for 15 seconds.
- 5.** Using just your thumb and index finger (like a bird beak), pick up as many paper square insects as you can, one at a time, in 15 seconds.
- 6.** Count how many each of the white paper and newspaper insect squares you were able to pick up.
- 7.** Mix all the paper square insects together.
- 8.** Spread the paper square insects out on the newspaper sheet or ask a partner to help you. This paper will be where the insects live.
- 9.** Set the timer for 15 seconds and try pick up as many paper square insects as you can, one at a time, in 15 seconds.
- 10.** Count how many of each the white paper and newspaper insect squares you were able to pick up.
- 11.** Try again as many times as you want!

Guiding Questions:

- Did you pick up more squares that were the same color as the environment or more squares of the different color?
- Was it harder to pick the squares out that were the same color as their environment?
- Why do you think so?

Keep going:

Make another set of paper square insects and try this activity with a partner. See who can find the most insects or who can find the most insects that are the same color as their environment in 30 seconds.



More information on insect camouflage:

<https://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/animals/photos/11-amazing-examples-of-insect-camouflage/blending-in>



<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/wacky-weekend/hidden-animals/>



Color-changing Creatures

Can animals change their colors to help them camouflage? There are many animals that can change their color to match where they need to hide. Some examples are cuttlefish, octopuses, flounders and chameleons. These animals can sense colors in the environment and change the color of their skin, and even their patterns to match it. Animals that can change their color might live in an environment that changes, or ones with lots of different colors and patterns around. Think of leaves that change color in the fall, or all the colors in a coral reef.

Check out how octopuses change color here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yE0QqxwyL_8&t=15s

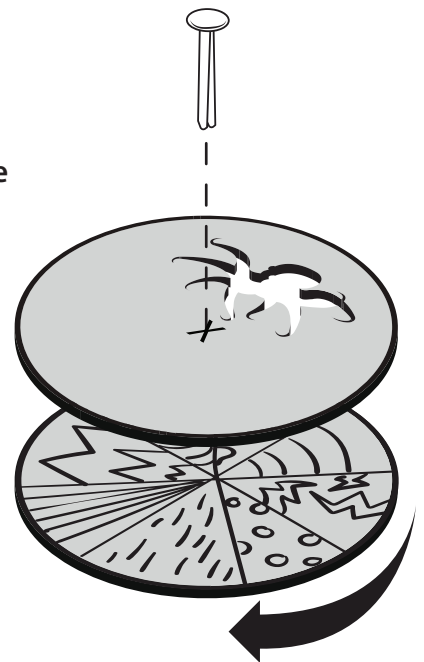
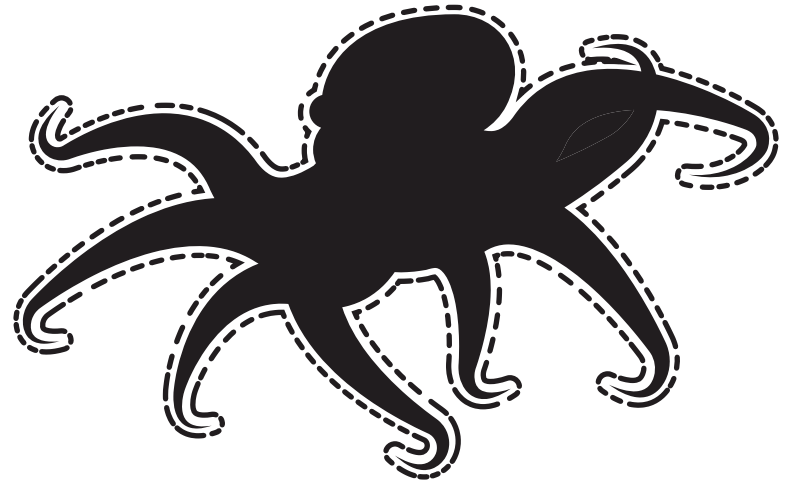


Before you start, you should have:

- Two paper plates or two circles of thick paper
- Scissors
- Crayons, markers or colored pencils
- Tape
- Included octopus outline or an image of an animal (under four inches in size works best)
- Optional: brass fastener

Get started:

- 1.** Print the octopus outline or draw one. You can also find a picture of an animal online or in a magazine.
- 2.** Draw or trace the outline of the animal onto one of the plates near the outside edge.
- 3.** Cut out the animal shape so that there is a hole in the plate in the shape of the animal.
- 4.** Tape any cuts on the edge of the plate and set it aside.
- 5.** Decorate the second plate, with fun, colorful patterns. Make sure to use different colors on different areas of the plate so your animal will change colors.
- 6.** Place the animal cut out on top of the colored plate. Optional: Push brass fastener through the middle of the two plates and loosely secure it.
- 7.** Spin or turn the bottom plate to see the color of your animal change!



Keep going!

You can color the top plate or add paper leaves, rocks or branches to make it look like an environment the animal might hide in.

More information on color-changing animals and camouflage



<https://oceanconservancy.org/blog/2019/10/07/octopuses-change-color/>



<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/reference/color-change-camouflage-animals-explained/>

Let's Play: Camouflage Hunt

Trying to find camouflaged animals can be tricky - they are very good at hiding! Many animals that use camouflage don't have many other ways to avoid being eaten, so it is important they are not seen. This game will challenge you to find camouflaged objects at home!

Before you start, you should have:

- 5 toys or other small objects of different colors, patterns or shapes.
- A partner

Get started:

1. Show the 5 objects to anyone who will be "hunting" for them.
2. Look around your house and find a place where each of the objects could blend in.
3. Place the objects so that they are camouflaged. They should not be in or under something, just blending into what is around them.
4. Have a partner try to find the camouflaged objects. You can give clues if they need help!
5. Switch and have your partner find new places for them to camouflage, then hunt for them.
6. Play as many times you want!

Keep going!

Look through each of the images linked below and see if you can find the animal that is camouflaging.

- Animal 1



- Animal 2



- Animal 3



- Animal 4



- Animal 5



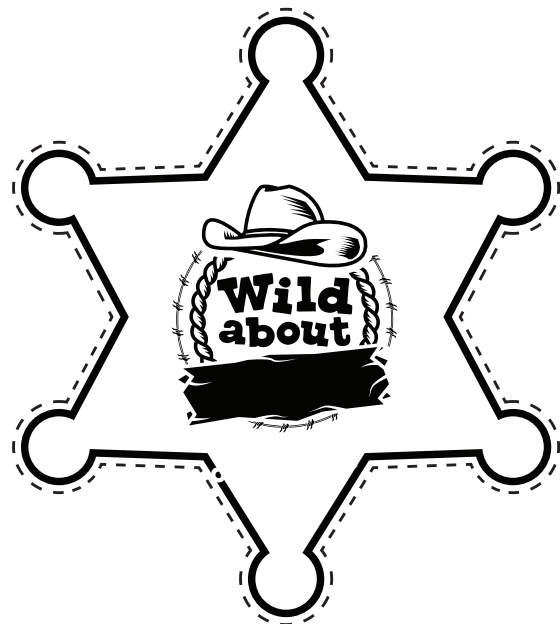
- Animal 6



Way to go Partner!

You've been deputized!

Carefully cut out your badge and wear it with pride!



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