

Hide and Seek

Cross-Curricular Focus: Life Science



In the wild, it often comes down to **predator** and **prey**. There is the hunter and there is the hunted. Organisms want to stay alive. They hide or escape from animals who would like to eat them. So how do they do it? They adapt to their environment.

One very helpful adaptation is called **camouflage**. You may have been surprised at some time by an animal that used camouflage. It blended into its surroundings so well that you nearly missed seeing it. Its coloring, markings or other physical features allowed it to blend in to the area around it.

Animals use camouflage to fool a predator. The hidden animal is not seen when a predator scans an area looking for food. Wild goats, for example, have coats that make them look invisible among rocks. A baby giraffe's coat helps it hide among the grass and trees. A chameleon is a lizard that will change colors depending on the surface it is on.

Camouflage often works the other way around, too. Predators can use camouflage to trap their prey. A predator can attack unexpectedly an animal it wants to eat. The prey animal doesn't see danger because the predator blends into the habitat. A leopard's spotted coat helps it blend in to the background and sneak up on its prey.

Another popular adaptation is **mimicry**. Mimicry is when an animal has the physical characteristics that makes it look like another animal or a plant. Some moths look like a wasp. Predators that don't like wasps will think the moth is a wasp and not eat it.

Name: _____

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

1) What is the function of camouflage in the wild?

2) How do animals use mimicry to protect themselves?

3) What's the difference between camouflage and mimicry?

4) If you were a wild animal, would you rather have the ability to mimic another animal or the ability to camouflage yourself? Why?

5) If a chameleon was on a green leaf, what color do you think it would be?
