



## "Camouflage Creatures"

**AGE:** All ages

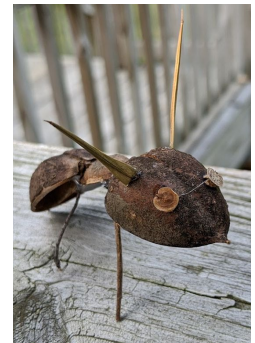
**DURATION:** 15-30 min (crafting only), 30min-1 hr (with camouflage walk)

**GOAL:** To create animals out of natural materials and hide them (in plain sight!) for the group to discover.

**RESOURCE PAGES:** N/a

### Description

Each person will craft their own animal (can be made up!) out of natural materials. Encourage participants to come up with their own name for the creature and other aspects of its life (where it lives, what it eats, and so on). They will then hide it (in plain sight!) on the trail/in the defined area. Once everyone has had a chance to hide their animal, the group can adventure together to try and spot them all. Whenever one is found, the creator will have time to talk about it. If the animal is walked passed - don't say anything! At the end, those that were not found can be revealed by their creator. It's also nice if you go back and point in the general area so the group has another chance to spot it.



### Key Concepts

- Camouflage
- Adaptations
- Awareness and observation
- Naming (using features of the animal or behavior)

### Materials

- Natural objects
- Art supplies (glue, paint, eyes, string, so on)



If there aren't many nuts/seeds/sticks in the area, they can create their creature using leaves and/or grass. They can glue the natural objects to paper and cut their creature out.

### Preparation

- Gather materials
- Have kids gather their own natural materials



### Opening Activities and Safety

Opening circle to discuss key concepts - see "Questions to Pose" below for ideas on how to start. You should guide them freedom to use their own creativity. "Real" animals can be used as examples but the rest should be up to them. When designing their animals, prompt them to think of a name for their animal, where they live, what they eat, what eats them, and how they camouflage.

## Questions to Pose

You can pose questions that help children form their own learning from direct observations outdoors. The purpose of these questions is not to explain or give answers, but to encourage children to listen, observe, inquire, discuss with each other, and arrive at conclusions on their own.

### Questions may include:

- Why might an animal want to camouflage?
- When may they not want to camouflage? (mimicry/look like a different animal, bright colors to say "hey I'm poisonous!", attracting mates)
- How do they camouflage? (see below for types)

## Transitions

After they complete their animal, have them go and hide it within a designated area or trail. Have the kids go at different intervals so they can't see where the others are being placed.

## Closing Activities

Once everyone has placed their animal, the group can adventure together to try and spot them. Whenever one is found, the creator will have time to talk about it (name, where it lives, what it eats, and so on). If the animal is walked passed - don't say anything! At the end, those that were not found can be revealed by their creator. It's also nice if you go back and point in the general area so the group has another chance to spot it.

Discuss with the group which were the hardest to find and why.

## Background

Animals come in all different shapes and sizes and with different adaptations. These adaptations improve their chance of survival and are usually related to the biotic (living) and abiotic (non-living) parts of their environment.

There are four main types of camouflage:

- Concealing coloration
  - Similar color as their background
    - Ex. snowy owl, polar bear, deer
- Disruptive coloration
  - Patterns to break up their outline against the background
    - Ex. leopard, tiger, zebra
- Disguise
  - Similar to another natural object
    - Ex. stick bugs, leafhoppers
- Mimicry
  - Look like other animals that are dangerous or poisonous
    - Ex. Viceroy butterfly looks like the poisonous Monarch, moth with eyespots on wings to resemble an owl

