

# Animal Adaptations

## NEWSPRINT CAMOUFLAGE

### BACKGROUND

Camouflage, also called protective coloration, is a method of concealing coloration that allows an otherwise visible animal to remain indiscernible from the surrounding environment through deception. This enables the organism to “hide” in plain sight, thus aiding in the survival of the prey (from getting eaten) or predator (allowing sneaking upon prey).

The most common form of camouflage is called cryptic coloration, whereby the animal is similar in color to its surroundings. This is found to some extent in most species. Some examples are the earth tones of rabbits, deer and squirrels to match dirt, brush and trees or the countershading (light bellies and bluish backs) of sharks to blend in when viewed from below or above.

Other forms of camouflage include skin and fur patterns to blend in and break up the outline of the animal’s shape — such as the stripes on zebras and tigers — or disguising itself to resemble something either uninteresting or dangerous — such as the walking stick that looks like a twig or the SpiceBush butterfly that resembles the toxic tasting Pipevine butterfly.

The type of camouflage a species develops depends on the environment in which it lives—what is around it in the habitat (both plants, animals and nonliving components) and what time of year it is the physiology and behavior of the animal—whether it has fur, scales or feathers, can fly or run and whether it is solitary or lives in groups whether or not the animal is a predator or prey, such as if the prey cannot see colors, the predator does not have to blend in by color, only by pattern. An animal will not develop any camouflage that does not help it to survive. Consequently, not all animals have the same form of camouflage. As a means of survival, an animal’s camouflage may be even more effective than its other weapons of teeth, claws, beaks, etc, as being entirely overlooked by a predator is preferable to having to put up a fight.

### ACTIVITY: NEWSPAPER SHAPES

#### MATERIALS

Newspaper Classified Ads

Glue Sticks

Scissors

Gather sheets of newspaper classified ads. All black and white is best. Have students cut out shapes from the newspaper and use a glue stick to place the pieces on a large sheet. Have students send in pictures of their newspaper for you to place into a google slides presentation (one slide per student). Share the google slides file with your students and have them pick one or more student’s picture to try to find the shape. They can comment on how hard or easy it was to find the shape for each of the other students’ pictures.