

A Teachers' Guide for Grades 1–4



WHERE in the WILD?

Camouflaged Creatures Concealed...and Revealed

Ear-Tickling Poems by David M. Schwartz and Yael Schy | Eye-Tricking Photos by Dwight Kuhn

About the book

Where in the Wild? introduces animal camouflage through poetry, photography, and informative facts. Many animal species use different types of camouflage as protection from predators. Others, like the coyote, also use it to help them catch their prey. This book demonstrates how camouflage helps predators and prey alike.

Pre-reading

Ask students . . .

Have you heard the word camouflage before? Do you know what it means? What are some of the ways you hide from others?

What is background?

What is foreground?

Why do animals hide?

After reading

Ask students . . .

Which animal did you like best? Why?

Which poem is your favorite? Why did you choose this one?

Have you seen an animal camouflaged in nature? Describe it.

Reading: Comprehension

Which animals change color from season to season?

Name two facts about killdeer.

How many habitats are named in the book? Describe them.

Which animal do you think uses its camouflage best? Why?

Reading: Vocabulary

Where in the Wild? contains several science terms that may be new to students. Ask them for definitions of the following words and to use each in a sentence. Are there other words that are new to the class? Add them to the list.

amphibian
camouflage
defense
habitat
larvae
metamorphosis
nocturnal
predators
prey



Across the Curriculum

Language Arts

Creative Writing and Poetry — The poems in *Where in the Wild?* represent various types of poetic forms. “Spots” and “Silent and Still” are examples of mask or persona poems: a poem where the writer pretends to become the creature they’re writing about and the writer speaks directly to the reader. “Speckled” is an example of haiku: a Japanese poetic form consisting of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables, respectively, and using sensory images that show a connection to nature. “Motionless” represents a concrete poem: a form where the typeface, the arrangement of the letters, the shape of the verse, and the use of white space are all part of the poem.

Each student chooses a poetic form and writes his or her own poem about an animal that uses color camouflage to disguise itself.

Science

Research and Report Writing — Students research and write about how animals not covered in the book use color to blend into their natural environment.

Creating a Habitat — Several different habitats are discussed in *Where in the Wild?* Working in groups of four, students choose a habitat and make a diorama of it, including at least two camouflaged animals in their scene.

Outdoors Observation — Students keep a journal for one week and write down daily observations of animal camouflage in their backyards, parks, or neighborhoods.

Art

Different Media — Using paint, crayons, colored markers, or pieces of colored paper, students create a picture of a camouflaged animal. Discuss how these pictures are different from the photographs in the book. (For younger children, you can create a template of an insect or animal and have them make a background to disguise the figure.)

Movement

Action Verbs — The poems in *Where in the Wild?* use many words to describe movement such as *pounce*, *snatch*, and *slither*. Ask students to name other words that describe movement and write them on the board. Play a game where all students form a circle: one student begins by calling out a descriptive word from the list on the board. The student to the left goes to the center of the circle and performs a movement or action that describes the word. Continue moving to the left until each student has had a turn either calling a word or performing an action. Keep the pace lively.

Or, ask students to make up a dance using several of the descriptive movements and to select appropriate music to accompany the dance.



Related Concepts

Warning Coloration

While some animals protect themselves through disguise that simulates the color of their natural environment, other animals are brightly colored because they taste bad or are poisonous. The bright color is warning the predator not to eat them. Predators usually learn warning colors by trying to eat a brightly-colored animal once, then they do not try again. This is called warning coloration.

Mimicry

In some cases, tasty animals will mimic (or pretend to be just like) the colors of the poisonous animals. They take advantage of the protection offered by the bright colors. This is called mimicry.

Natural Selection

Natural selection is the process that assures the survival and reproduction of animals and insects best adapted to their environment or surroundings. Camouflage is a natural adaptation that allows for “survival of the fittest,” another term for natural selection.

Standards

NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts: ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm

Standard 1

Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Standard 3

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

Standard 5

Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Standard 6

Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

Standard 7

Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

National Science Content Standards for Grades K–4: books.nap.edu/html/nses/6a.html**Standard 2 — Science as Inquiry**

Understanding about scientific inquiry

Standard 4 — Life Science

Characteristics of organisms
Life cycles of organisms
Organisms and environments

National Standards for Art Education for Grades K–4: education-world.com/standards/national/arts/visual_arts/k_4.shtml**Standard 1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes****Achievement Standard: Students**

- a. know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes
- b. describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses
- c. use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
- d. use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

Online Resources

David Schwartz: davidschwartz.com

Dwight Kuhn: kuhnphoto.net/iphoto/main2.htm

Camouflage Game: abc.net.au/beasts/playground/camouflage.htm

This is a game where students choose prey or predator and select appropriate camouflage.

Seeing Through Camouflage: pbs.org/wgbh/nova/leopards/seeing.html

In this PBS interactive activity, students learn about the four different types of camouflage used by animals for protection. Students examine twelve animals to determine which strategy they employ to stay camouflaged.