

Disappearing Act

Grouse or Deer fawns

What you need!

- 2 pieces of dark blue or black construction paper
- Liquid correction fluid (or white crayons or paint)
- A piece of clear plastic the same size as the construction paper (ex. a plastic report cover).
- A friend

Some animals blend so well with their surroundings, they're nearly impossible to see. Only when these animals move, can we detect their presence and shape. Use this activity to compare the camouflage of still and moving animals.

What you do:

1. Cut one piece of construction paper into the shape of an animal. Leave a long piece for a handle.
2. Use the correction fluid or white paint to make a random pattern of dots on your animal and the other piece of construction paper (the background).
3. Place your animal on the background.
4. Place the clear plastic over both the animal and the background. This keeps both pieces of paper pressed together.
5. Try to see the outline of the animal when you are holding the picture at arm's length. If you can still see it, ask a friend to hold it further away.
6. Move the animal using the handle and watch.



Ask yourself:

- Why is it easier to see the animal when it moves?
- What kinds of animals use this technique to stay hidden?
- Are there other ways an animal camouflages itself?
- Why is being camouflaged important to some species?
- Make another one using different animal shapes or camouflage.

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What did you find out?

Many animals have patterns on their bodies to help them to blend into their surroundings. These animals are hard to detect when they're still, but when they move, they are easy to see. That's because human eyes, as well as many animal eyes, contain special cells to see movement, but have a hard time seeing still objects.

Animals use camouflage to protect themselves. Young animals learn to stay still and hidden from predators while their parents are away feeding. Grouse and deer are two species that use this technique. These animals often stay still even when something is approaching them. Some people mistake this behaviour for stupidity, but being motionless really works. In most cases it is humans that are unaware of the camouflaged animals and walk right past them.

Specific Learner Expectations (SLE)

Grade 2 Topic E: Need of Animals and Plants.

SLE 6: Identify and give examples of ways that small animals avoid predators including camouflage, taking cover in burrows, use of keen senses and flight.