

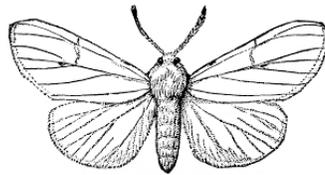
## Camouflage Investigation

(in an outside area)

**This is from the Pajarito Environmental Education Center, Los Alamos, NM**

Start out with a discussion of camouflage and how it helps animals: hiding as defense or as a predator disguise while it hunts.

Students will attempt to fool their classmates by hiding a paper moth in plain view using camouflage. In addition, and ahead of time, you will have distributed 2" pieces of yarn around the area, some in colors that camouflage, some that don't. Or have the yarn "caterpillars" ready to place in an area while the students are working on their moth papers.



(duplicate this)

1. Take students outdoors divided into small groups. Assign a micro-habitat (a shrub, a small area of grass, a tree, a stone wall, etc.) to each small group. Have the students investigate their micro-habitat before they begin to color their moth. The goal is to color the moth with a type of camouflage (color that blends in or color that disrupts the body pattern or a combination of these two) that is represented in the micro-habitat so that when the moths are placed in the area, other students will need to work hard to find them.
2. After students examine the habitat, have them color the moth templates, if they choose, placing their name on the opposite side and then placing the moths in their habitat (they may need tape in order to hold the moth in place). To be fair, the moth needs to be placed on an outer surface, not hidden inside a shrub, for example.
3. As students are busy coloring their moths, quickly distribute the yarn pieces on a small area of grass to use after this activity. (This can also be done earlier, before the activity.)
4. When the students are finished hiding their moths, have them visit the different habitats to try to find each other's camouflaged moths. Use a timer to document which moths were found the quickest and which ones took the longest to find.

5. Gather together when all (or most) of the moths are found and review.

1. Where the students able to find them all?
2. If not, what did the moths that were not found have in common?
3. Were some moths easy to find? Why?
4. What did the moths that were found quickly have in common?
5. If we did this activity again, how would you change your moth?
6. Did anything surprise you about the activity?

A Bird's Eye View –

1. Explain to the students they are hungry robins looking for caterpillars to eat. The yarn represents the top of the caterpillar's body.
2. Students can make a hypothesis about which color is the best for a caterpillar on the ground or on a plant. When the teacher says "go," the students pick up as many "caterpillars" as possible. Allow a few seconds, and then call "stop."
3. Sit as a whole group and count how many of each color were collected.

Discuss