

# Camouflage Critters

**Subject:** Science, Art

**Duration:** 45 - 60 minutes

**Location:** Outdoors

**Key Vocabulary:** Camouflage, adaptations

**Related Activities:** Leaf Hunt; Animal Olympics; Night Sounds; Why Alligators Look Like They Do

**Florida Sunshine State Standards:** SC.4.L.16, SC.5.L.15, SC.6.L.15



## Materials

- Modeling clay
- Red flagging tape

**Objectives:** Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to: a) create their own camouflaged critters, b) discover how insects use camouflage to their benefit, and c) describe the difficulty predators have when searching for food (camouflaged insects).

**Method:** Students will search out pictures of insects, animals, and birds in magazines and observe the benefits of shape and protective coloring. They will create a camouflaged critter from modeling clay.

**Background:** Animals are adapted to their environment in order to survive. For instance, tree snails are protected by their outer shells. Birds like the bittern have colored feathers to help them hide in the grasses. Lizards, like anoles, change color to blend in with their surroundings. Many animals have developed a camouflage adaptation - the ability to blend in with their habitat - which helps them to avoid predators (enemies).

## Suggested Procedure

1. The teacher should mark off two different areas where the students will be working. Make the two areas a short distance apart.
2. Separate the class into two groups. Pass out a small ball of clay to each student.
3. Instruct students in Group 1 to look over area 1, while students in Group 2 look over area 2.
4. Instruct the students to go to their area and create insect-type critters with their balls of clay by using fallen sticks, leaves, or bits of gravel. Instruct the students to create critters that blend in with their environment. Give them about fifteen minutes to work on their critters.
5. Have Group 2 place their critters in area 2. Make sure to tell them they cannot hide the critters. They must be camouflaged in their surroundings. Give them about five minutes to place their critters. At the same time, have Group 1 place their critters in area 1. Be sure to emphasize that neither group can watch where the other group is placing its critters.
6. Ask both groups to step away from their area. Tell the students that they have magically turned into birds and now must find food. Ask them to hold one cupped hand on their stomach (to hold their food). Two fingers on their other hand now become their beak. Group 1 will now have to find food in area 2 and Group 2 will now have to find food in area 1. Count to three for the food search to begin. Give them about two minutes or less for the search.

7. Call time, and have both groups display their food in a designated area. Hold a viewing party, asking students to see if their clay critter was found. Send a “search party” out for any remaining critters. When all critters have been found and the questions below discussed, remove sticks or rocks from clay and return those items to their natural setting.

## Evaluation

Discuss with students why some critters were found and others were not. What special trait or habitat helped camouflage the critters? What insects that rely on camouflage live in the Everglades/South Florida? Camouflage is a type of adaptation. Can you think of any other types of adaptations? (What about fish and sea creatures?)

