Pre and Post Program Activities

Camouflage Insects
Adapted from an activity developed by Richmond.edu

Goal - For students to learn about how insects use camouflage in nature.

Overview - Once students know what camouflage is, you can use this activity to enhance their understanding of camouflage.

Materials you will need:
- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers

1. Ask students what camouflage is. Ask them for examples of camouflage in nature they can remember. Ex, a walking stick on a tree, a white bunny rabbit in the snow (versus in the forest).
2. Have each student in your class color a butterfly/insect pattern that will match something in the classroom, so that each butterfly will be camouflaged. (Do this activity before a break [lunch, recess, etc] so you can hide the insects while the class is out.)
3. When students return, meet them outside the room to tell them they are going to be predators looking for tasty butterflies. The butterflies are resting in different places so they are not eaten by any predators.
4. Allow students in the room, telling them to find as many of the butterflies/insects as they can!
5. Once all insects have been found, discuss as a class where the insects were found (you can ask students to hold up their insect(s) and show the rest of the class where they found it and if/how it was camouflaged well and why they think so.
6. Take your students outside with their insects in the schoolyard and ask them if they can find places to camouflage their insects there. Ask what colors or shapes would camouflage well on specific items (such as a brown picnic table, a red swing seat, the blacktop, etc.).
Extensions-

**Sheet Shake in the Schoolyard!**

1. Place a white sheet under a shrub or briar in the schoolyard.
2. Use a wooden stick or dowel to gently shake the shrub. Slower moving insects should fall to the sheet.
3. Students can collect insects and place them in small jars (re-use baby food jars or other small jars with holes poked in lids).
4. Once collected, students can make observations of insects they collected.
5. Ask questions such as:
   a. Can you see all the body parts (head, thorax abdomen?)
   b. How many legs are on the insects?
   c. Are there creatures in or on the sheet that are NOT insects?

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**Insect Observations in the Schoolyard!**

Once your students have made observations of their made-up camouflage insects, you can take students on an insect scavenger hunt (see below for sample sheet). Unlike some scavenger hunts, instruct students NOT to collect the insects, but to make observations of them.

Safety: Teachers should scout out the area the class will investigate beforehand to check for holes, wasps nests, or other hazards in the schoolyard.
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- An ant
- A bee or wasp
- A fly
- A grasshopper
- A mosquito
- A stink bug
- A butterfly
- A LARVA of any insect
- An insect eating a plant
- A june bug
- A cricket
- A moth
- An insect without wings
- An insect with wings
- An insect with 3 or more colors
- An insect with 1 color
- Insect eggs
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