

Incredible Insects

Pre and Post Program Activities

Camouflage Insects

Adapted from an activity developed by Richmond.edu

Goal- Students learn about how insects camouflage in nature. Use this activity to enhance their understanding of camouflage.

Materials:

- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers

1. Inquire: Ask students: what is camouflage? Ask for examples of camouflage in nature, 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 create an insect with a pattern to match something in the classroom, the goal is that each insect 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 insects. The insects are resting in different places (camouflaging) to avoid being eaten by any predators.
4. Allow students in the room, telling them to find as many of the 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).
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.).



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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 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 make observations of insects.
5. Use inquiry questions such as:
 - a. What do you observe?
 - b. Why is the insect moving like that?
 - c. Can you see all the body parts (head, thorax abdomen?)
 - d. How many legs are on the insects?
 - e. Are there creatures in or on the sheet that are NOT insects?
6. To incorporate math: sort the insects into groups based on a physical feature and then graph and compare.
7. Stewardship! Return all organisms back to their habitat after your class has finished exploring, reminding students that these living creatures have a job/function in their environment.

Citizen Science

Did your students get engaged learning about insects? There are several opportunities for your students to contribute to be citizen scientists as they learn about the insect world.

The Xerces Society has some great tips for contributing to citizen science.

<http://www.xerces.org/citizen-science/>

If you, your students, or parents took any photographs of insects, consider sharing them on social media! #blandynature



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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.

Insect Scavenger Hunt

- 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

