

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY: Camouflage

GRADE LEVEL: Grades 3-7

RUN TIME: Initially to explain background, rules and play will take 15 minutes or more and background and rules do not have to be done together although correlating the rules with real life application to the background is advised. Subsequent games and options can be done in 5 minute increments.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Organism cards, copy of food web, 2 “camouflages”. Camouflages should be soft but easily thrown like a Nerf or soft ball. Preferably one is green and the other is brown.

HIGHLIGHTS: Predator, prey, camouflage, running safety in large group running, chasing, Fleeing, Throwing, Catching, throwing to a moving target (leading).

OBJECT OF THE GAME: Don’t get caught (eaten)

VOCABULARY: Camouflage, prey, predator

SET UP: Designate playing area.

PRIOR TO THE GAME EXPLAIN TO PLAYERS: Explain what camouflage is and how it helps both predators and prey. Go over the food chain and who eats whom. Explain how rabbits need the brown camouflage to be hidden,; green will not help them. Grasshoppers need the green.

INSTRUCTIONS: Select 1 player to be the fox, another to be the snake. For the purposes of this game, the fox cannot catch the nuthatch but do explain that in real life a bird can become the prey of the snake. The snake and nuthatch are the predators. Divide the remaining players into two groups of prey: grasshoppers and rabbits.

The predators will try to catch the prey; however, if a prey is holding the camouflage, they are hidden and cannot be caught. When a player is in jeopardy of being tagged he can ask for someone to toss him the camouflage or someone could toss him/her the camouflage when they see the need arise. Once a prey is caught, they become a predator and the predator becomes that type of prey.

The fox and snake can attempt to intercept tosses of the camouflage. If they succeed, they are now “hidden” and can either tag a player OR toss the camouflage to hit them.

If you see players hogging the camouflage, you may have to put a time limit on how long it can be held. Also, if it is being thrown in a dangerous manner, you may have to limit throws to underhanded tosses.

OPTIONAL PLAYING EXTENTIONS:

A: Predators remain predators and those prey caught are removed from the game.

B: Use 2 or more camouflage of each color.

C: Increase the number of predators. One method is to choose more to start the game. Another is to allow prey to become predators.

DISCUSSION EXTENTIONS:

How did being camouflaged help the prey? The predator? Which do you think is helped the most? Why.

After trying option A: How does the number of prey affect the game? Does it make it easier for the prey or predators? Why?

After trying option B: How does more camouflage help or hinder predators and prey? In real life, what determines the amount of camouflage? What happens when habitat is destroyed or altered by people or nature? (How are grasshoppers in an urban setting at an (dis) advantage compared to rural?)

After trying C:

Allow students to add new rules or options to the game based on their research of organisms. Allow them to form a hypothesis of how this rule/option will affect the play of the game, then run several trials to see if their hypothesis was correct. Make a real life application of the scenario they created.

What is a group of rabbits called? (it is NOT a bunch).