

Hide & Seek

Pasta Predators Game

Museum
at Home
Natural History

“To Camouflage” means to hide or use a disguise. This makes it hard for others to see us. Animals’ colours or shapes can hide them. This lets them blend into the places where they live.

Caterpillars are masters of hiding from all the different types of animal predators that like to eat them. There are lots of examples to see in the museum!

In this game, you are going to pretend to be predators searching for prey. The prey will be fake caterpillars hiding in a habitat. Use your science skills to observe and test how colors, shapes, and patterns can camouflage an animal.

1. Gather together two packets of different dry pasta shapes (e.g. one penne, and one other shape such as shells or fusilli), a timer or watch, a large bowl or container, and coloured markers.

2. First, choose one pasta shape to be the habitat (e.g. fusilli) and one to be the caterpillars (penne). Put the habitat pasta shapes into the bowl.

3. Take 30 pieces of the “caterpillar” penne pasta shapes. Colour them in bright colours using the coloured markers. Scatter these coloured caterpillars in the bowl with the habitat pasta, and mix them in so they are hidden.

4. Set a timer to 30 seconds. On go, one predator has to pick up as many caterpillars as they can find and place them to the side.

5. Time’s up! Count the caterpillar pieces that were found. Then return them to the habitat.

6. Now, repeat the activity but this time also add in 30 plain penne caterpillars (not coloured, so they blend in with the habitat).

7. Time’s up! Count the numbers of bright coloured vs. non-coloured caterpillars that were found.

8. Each predator takes it in turns to complete the challenge!

9. Compare results: Which caterpillars were hardest to find? (Answers will vary, but generally those that blend in with the habitat).

How does this game show how camouflage helps prey?
Answer: Camouflage helps make prey harder for predators to see!

