

COMPANION LEARNING GUIDE

NARRATED BY LIAM NEESON

RUNNING WILD

RETURN TO THE RIVER

THE POWER OF CAMOUFLAGE

FORMAL EDUCATION GUIDE:
2ND – 5TH GRADE

RUNNING WILD

RETURN TO THE RIVER

Key Concepts

- Some animals use camouflage as a way to ambush prey, while others use it to stay safe from predators. The power of camouflage is a tool to help animals survive!
- There are many different types of camouflage in the animal kingdom. Two examples of this are disruptive coloration and background matching.

Procedure

Introduction - The Power of Camouflage!

I am going to begin by asking you a few questions.

Remember, you need to raise your hand if you think you know the answer!

- Have you ever heard the word “camouflage” before?
Nod your head “yes” if you have, or shake your head “no” if you have not!
- Now, what is “camouflage?” What does it mean if an animal is “in camouflage?” Raise your hand to share!
 - **Answer:** “When an animal is in camouflage, it can be thought of as ‘blending-in’ with the things around it. This ‘blending-in,’ or ‘camouflage,’ helps to keep an animal well-hidden when it does not want to be seen!”
- Can you think of an animal who has the power of camouflage?
Raise your hand to share!
 - **Answer:** octopus, salmon, white shark, chameleon, snowshoe hare, tiger, stick bug, and more!
- Remember, animals use camouflage to blend-in with their surroundings, and hide. Why would an animal want to do that? Why is camouflage a helpful power to have?
 - **Answer:** To hide from predators, or to ambush prey.

National Art Standards VA:Cr1.1.2a

Brainstorm collaboratively multiple approaches to an art or design problem.

Vocabulary

Background Matching – a type of camouflage where the color of an animal’s body makes it hard to detect, because it matches and blends-in with the color of its environment.

Camouflage – a tactic some animals use to hide or disguise their bodies, often blending-in with their surroundings.

Disruptive Coloration – a type of camouflage where the patterns on an animal’s body make it hard to detect, because its shape and outline becomes blurred together with the natural patterns of its environment.

Materials

- White Cardstock or Watercolor Paper
- Colored Pencils
- Crayons
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks
- (Optional) Watercolors or Washable Paint
- (Optional) Paint Brushes & Small Cups of Water
- Printed review worksheets

Setup

- Pre-assign student small groups
- Collect enough cardstock or watercolor paper to give at least two sheets to each student.
- Collect enough scissors and glue sticks for each student, or each student group.
- Collect enough crayons, color pencils, or watercolors for each student to have their own set.
- If possible, allot 5-15 minutes during which students can spend time outside to notice and enjoy nature.
- Print review worksheets, and set out colored pencils.



2nd & 3rd Grade Only:

Great answers! Now, different animals sometimes camouflage themselves in different ways.

- For example, a tiger’s power to camouflage comes from the black stripes in its fur. Those black stripes help the tiger to blend in with tall grass when it is hiding at night, waiting to surprise its prey. The tiger uses its **PATTERN** to help it stay hidden when it needs to find food.
- A chameleon camouflages in a different way! A chameleon’s skin changes color to match its background when it needs to hide and stay safe from predators. The chameleon uses its **COLOR** to help it stay hidden when it needs to stay safe from danger.

4th & 5th Grade Only:

Great answers! Now, different animals sometimes camouflage themselves in different ways.

- For example, a tiger’s power to camouflage comes from the black stripes in its fur. Those black stripes help the tiger to blend in with tall grass when it is creeping in its habitat at night, waiting to ambush prey. This type of camouflage is called “disruptive coloration.” Disruptive coloration is when the patterns on an animal’s body make it hard to detect, because its shape and outline becomes blurred together with the natural patterns of its environment.
- A chameleon, however, achieves its own version of camouflage in a different way. A chameleon’s skin changes color to match its surroundings, which is a type of camouflage called “background matching.” Unlike a tiger, the chameleon does not primarily use its camouflage powers to ambush prey, but instead uses it to stay safe and hide from predators.

While different animals may use different types of camouflage, and sometimes for different reasons (like to ambush prey, or hide from predators!), all animals that use the power of camouflage are using it to survive. Camouflage is an awesome animal superpower!



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ACTIVITY

Can You Still See Me? Creatively Camouflaged!

It's time for an animal activity! In just a moment, we are going to begin work on creating some special drawings of animals using the power of camouflage. But first, I'd like a few people to help remind me what "camouflage" means. Raise your hand to share!

- Great answers! Camouflage is a tactic some animals use to hide or disguise their bodies, often blending-in with their surroundings.

We already know that camouflage is all about "blending in." This means that an animal's body and shape CANNOT be harshly outlined against its environment - it needs to hide to survive!

In just a few minutes, I will be passing out some art supplies and you will begin your project. But first, you need to brainstorm at least two ways to solve this design problem: "How do you create a drawing or painting of an animal in camouflage, without making it stand out too much, OR disappear?"

Some important rules for this project are:

- **Rule #1:** You must create the whole animal - not just a pair of eyes! Animals must have a fully complete body that your classmates can look for and find.
- **Rule #2:** You cannot outline your animal's body with a darker color.
- **Rule #3:** You must fill-in the background where your animal is hiding. Remember, this is the environment where your animal is blending-in! The color that you use for the background should mostly match the body of your animal!

Instructor Note: Break up your students into small groups, and encourage them to think of at least two ways to solve the design problem: "How do you create a drawing or painting of an animal in camouflage, without making it stand out too much, OR disappear?"

Did you think of any unique ways to solve our design problem?
Raise your hand to share!



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Can You Still See Me? Creatively Camouflaged! *continued*

Amazing work! Here are a few more examples of ways we might solve this design problem:

- Use the same color for your animal body and its background, but press harder for one and lighter for the other to make the colors slightly different.
- Leave a soft white outline around the body of your animal to create a natural outline.
- **(Highly Recommended!)** Draw your animal on a piece of paper and cut out the shape. Then, glue the shape to another blank piece of paper, and draw your patterns on top!
- **Instructor Note:** Share examples provided.

Now, you have some great ideas on how to solve this tough design problem. Pick your favorite idea, and get to work on creating your camouflaged animal artwork!

- **Instructor Note:** If your students are stuck on what to draw, suggest that they draw a salmon from the Running Wild film! Examples:
 - Tiny “parr stage” salmon with gray/green/gray bodies, and dark bands on their sides. These bands help them to camouflage in their riverbed homes while they are still young.
 - A silvery school of “ocean adult stage” salmon in the ocean.

Amazing work! How did you choose to solve our design problem?
Raise your hand to share!

Many animals use the power of camouflage in order to help them survive.
Remind me one more time - Why is this a helpful power to have?

- **Answer:** While some animals use camouflage as a way to ambush prey, others use it to avoid being detected by predators. All types of camouflage are used by an animal to help it survive!

There are many different types of camouflage in the animal kingdom.
Even just in our own artwork, we have shown different kinds of animals using different kinds of camouflage!



Fun Fact: Some animals use different kinds of camouflage during different stages of their lives. They might use one type of camouflage when they are babies, and another type when they are adults. Salmon are one example of an animal that does this!

“Run Wild” Time

Move the class to an outdoor area for just 5-15 minutes, ideally away from the school playground. Invite them to notice and feel curious about nature a little extra after their time watching “Running Wild: Return to the River”. Encourage them to touch the dirt, grass, twigs, and leaves; feel the warm/cool air on their skin; listen for birds, bugs, and the wind; smell the plants around them; and try to spot insects.

Review Questions

What is it called when an animal has the power to hide or disguise its body?

What is one animal that uses its PATTERN to camouflage?

What is one animal that CHANGES COLOR to camouflage?

Why do some animals need the power of camouflage to survive?

How did you solve the artwork design problem to camouflage your animal without making it disappear?

What is one thing you saw in the Running Wild: Return to the River film that surprised or amazed you?

Name:

Date:

RUNNING WILD: THE POWER OF CAMOUFLAGE!

Some animals have the power of camouflage.
Camouflage is when...

My animal in disguise is a...

My animal is hiding because...

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**RUNNING
WILD**
RETURN TO THE RIVER

A MISSION PARTNERS ENTERTAINMENT GROUP AND DORSEY PICTURES FILM PRESENTED BY THE MAX MCGRAW WILDLIFE FOUNDATION AND ULINE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WILD SALMON CENTER AND TIMASHEV FOUNDATION
MUSIC BY ALEX HEFFES DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANDY MASER TAVISH CAMPBELL EDITED BY JAMES TAGGART SUPERVISING PRODUCER DI ROBERTS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CHRIS DORSEY CHARLES S. POTTER JR.
DIRECTED BY MYLES CONNOLLY NARRATED BY LIAM NEESON



www.runningwild.org

