

## Cool Camouflage

Camouflage is a defense that animals use to disguise themselves. Usually they disguise themselves by blending in with their environment. The arctic fox has white fur in the winter to match its snowy home. The earth colored copperhead snake blends in with the brown leaves and dirt. By blending in with their surroundings, these animals can stay safe from predators.

Some animals don't try to blend in. Instead, they want to stand out. These animals use their coloring to make themselves look like other, more dangerous animals. They trick predators into thinking that they are dangerous too.

One cool example is the Atlas moth. It has wings that look like cobra heads. When it sits on a branch, it looks like two cobras ready to strike. No one wants to come near that!

Another example is the Cyclosa spider. It weaves a special kind of web. When it sits in its web, it looks just like bird poop! Predators flying by will avoid it for sure.

A mimic octopus is usually plain brown. But it can make itself look like a poisonous lionfish to scare off enemies. It can also make itself look like a crab to lure other crabs nearby so it can eat them.

This second type of camouflage is called aggressive mimicry. Mimicry means copying. In aggressive mimicry, the animal is not copying another animal for protection. It is doing it to hunt.

The alligator snapping turtle is an expert at aggressive mimicry. It opens its mouth wide and its tongue looks like a worm. When fish come to eat the worm, the turtle snaps them up.

The Iranian snake's tail looks exactly like a spider. The snake hides in the leaves and sticks its tail out. When a bird comes to eat the spider-like tail, the snake strikes.

If you look closely you might be able to catch an animal trying to look like something else. These interesting adaptations help animals survive as both predators and prey. Nature is amazing!



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do animals *usually* disguise themselves?
  - a. By looking like other animals
  - b. By blending in with their environment
  - c. By eating other animals
  - d. By hiding
  
2. How does the mimic octopus disguise itself?
  - a. It looks like a lionfish
  - b. It looks like bird poop
  - c. It looks like a crab
  - d. A & C
  
3. Which of these animals uses aggressive mimicry?
  - a. Artic fox
  - b. Atlas moth
  - c. Alligator snapping turtle
  - d. Cyclosa spider
  
4. How does camouflage help animals to survive as predators?
  - a. It helps them hunt
  - b. It helps them hide
  - c. It helps them sleep
  - d. It helps them grow

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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