

Camouflage & Defense in the Insect World

Big World of Insects, Spiders & Bugs Series

Subject Areas: Science, Life Science, Biology

Synopsis: Different methods of camouflage and defense are shown including amazing color schemes, imitation of twigs and leaves, bright warning colors, and impersonation. The blue-winged grasshopper provides a remarkable example of camouflage as it blends in with the background to become nearly invisible. This insect is caught by a snake after it moves, causing it to stand out.

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to list and describe several ways that insects have developed to avoid predators.
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to give examples of insects that use camouflage, bright colors, imitation and form as methods of defense.

Vocabulary: Define and discuss the following key terms:

Byword, locust, cunning, camouflage, habitat, predators, species, unique, effective, imitate, combine harvester, flamboyant, impersonate, subterfuge, disguise, blue-winged grasshopper, secure, venom, lair

Pre-Viewing Questions and Discussion:

- 1) How can an insect avoid being eaten? List as many methods of defense as you can think of. Which do you think is the best? Why?
- 2) Can you think of any insects that look like non-living objects like twigs, leaves, etc?

Post-Viewing Questions and Discussion:

- 1) Why does the locust stand out in its habitat?
- 2) What is camouflage? Can you name 2-5 insects that have good camouflage?
- 3) What forms might an insect take to avoid being eaten?
- 4) Why might one insect imitate or impersonate another insect? Give an example.
- 5) What do bright colors tell a predator? Name some insects that have bright colors.
- 6) How does the caterpillar confuse a predator? Do you think this is an effective method of defense?
- 7) How has the blue-winged grasshopper adapted to its environment?
- 8) Why do you think the snake was able to catch one of the grasshoppers?
- 9) What does the female grasshopper do to reject a mate? Where does she lay her eggs?

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Additional Activities:

- 1) Create a chart that shows the different methods that insects have for defense. Include in the chart a picture of the method of defense, and describe how this particular method is effective.
- 2) Create a poster advertising one of the methods of defense shown in the program. Include several pictures or drawings of your chosen method in action and also include reasons why you think this is the best method of defense in the insect world. Your advertisement should be persuasive. Create a logo or motto for your method.
- 3) Write a research paper that describes the differences between venomous and non-venomous snakes. How do these reptiles differ? How are they similar? What different types of venom do snakes have? Are all venoms equally deadly?

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