

Name _____ Date _____

Hiding to Survive

From the icy regions of the Arctic to tropical rain forests, animals find many ways to adapt and survive. All animals have to find food. They have to avoid accidentally becoming a meal for some other animal. One clever way for many animals to survive is by using camouflage.

Camouflage is a kind of disguise. An animal's appearance often hides it from a hungry, carnivorous animal. Camouflage also helps some predators sneak up on their prey. Either way, camouflaged animals use the color or shape of their bodies to make themselves hard to see. These animals amaze us with their ability to trick our eyes.

Camouflage is just one tool that animals use to survive. Many animals remain so still that they seem to dissolve into their surroundings. Some animals, such as bugs, even appear to be something they're not, such as a leaf or a stick.

The zebra of Africa is one of the easiest animals to recognize, with its distinct black and white stripes. The zebra, however, lives on grassy plains. How can its stripes serve as camouflage? When a predator looks at a big herd of zebras from a distance, the pattern of the lines is confusing. For example, the herd will run from a lion. The motion of their stripes makes it hard for the lion to single out one zebra. As a result, all of the zebras may escape from harm.

Camouflage helps the hunter as well as the hunted. Large cats, such as the cheetah, have stripes or spots that help them hide in the grass. This way, they can sneak up on other animals to attack them.

