Where in the Wild? Camouflaged Creatures Concealed… and Revealed
Author: David M. Schwartz
Photos: Dwight Kuhn

Summary: This is a collection of fun, riddle-like poems about naturally camouflaging animals and insects such as the coyote, gray tree frog, fawn, and even the weasel. The poems all have an underlying focus on survival – their camouflage helps them to either escape predators or attack prey. Each poem is paired with an eye-tricking photograph of the animal or insect to display just how effective their camouflage is. The book also contains facts and information on each animal or insect on a flip out page that also points out where they were hiding in the photograph.

Awards Received: 2008 American Association for the Advancement of Science/Subaru Science Book and Films Prize for Excellence in Science Books, 2008 Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K-12 by the NSTA and the Children’s Book Council, 2007 Editor’s Choice Booklist Magazine, 2007 Lasting Connections annual roundup of the year’s best books to tie into curriculum by the ALA, John Burroughs Association Young Readers Award for Outstanding Nature Books for Young Readers, Finalist for the Cybils Award (Children’s and YA Bloggers Literary Award),

Reviews: From Children’s Literature “It is fun, educational, and would lend itself to a variety of uses in a classroom – poems for anytime and especially poetry month, animal studies, habitats and more. Furthermore, it is a picture book that can be used with a wide range of students.” From The New York Times “Poems on the left give clues about the animals camouflaged on the right, in spectacular photographs by Dwight Kuhn. Most of the poems are fun, bouncy rhymes…Where in the Wild? Urges the reader to observe the world more closely.”

Author Information: http://www.davidschwartz.com/

Illustrator Information: http://www.kuhnphoto.net/

Discussion Questions:
  o Pre-reading questions
    ▪ What does it mean for something to be camouflaged?
    ▪ Have you ever seen a deer in the woods? Was it hard to see?
    ▪ Why do you think animals and insects might camouflage themselves?
  o Questions while reading
    ▪ What helps the weasel camouflage itself in the winter?
    ▪ Most of the animals are being very quiet. Do you think even if they were loud they would escape predators with their disguise? Why or why not?
  o Post-reading questions
    ▪ If you were thrown into the wild, how would you disguise yourself?
    ▪ Which of the animals do you think was camouflaged best?
    ▪ What clues did you notice within the poems that gave away the green snake, crab spider, red-spotted newt, etc?
Curricular Activities

- **Reading/oral language** –
  - *Where in the Wild* is highly dependent on context clues. Go through each poem in the book and have students pick out the context clues and decipher what they meant. Then have students discuss the importance of context clues and where else they may be found.

- **Writing** –
  - Each student is given a new photograph of a camouflaged animal and must write a poem about it, just as David Schwartz has done for the ten animals featured in his book.
  - Students rewrite one of the poems based on a picture included in the book.
  - Students write from the perspective of a camouflaged creature hiding from prey.

- **Math/ Technology** –
  - Using an Interactive white board, project images of camouflaged animals and have students come up to find and circle them. Going outside of the realm of this book, think of what else is or can be camouflaged and toss some of those pictures in the mix.

- **Science** –
  - Find the “why” behind the camouflage by exploring scientific articles and learning the nature of adaptation.
  - Utilize your playground space on a day with nice weather! Have students compile a list of “habitats” on the playground/outside, such as the gravel, grass, brick wall of school sidewalk, dirt, etc. These are going to serve as the backdrop to items they think will camouflage well in those habitats. For example, a student might take a green paper clip and stick it up in the grass to camouflage it. Each student should collect their camouflaging items and then the class can spend a lesson outside testing and voting for which worked the best and why.

- **Social Studies** –
  - Learn about the history of the South American Tropical Rain Forest and discuss examples of camouflage

- **Art** –
  - Create a camouflage mask or costume to fit in with a backdrop provided by the teacher. There can be many backdrops, and students could even tie in a story or plot with the costumes to integrate drama into the curriculum.

- **Drama** –
  - See #1 of Art.
  - Students can role play the hunter and the hunted, taking turns hiding in camouflage and keeping still to save their lives

- **Music** –

- **Cooking/food** –
Discuss the kinds of food animals in the book eat. Are any of them edible to humans? For example, people cannot eat flies and bees like the crab spider can, but can eat fruits and vegetables like the coyote. Make a “coyote meal” and camouflage something on the plate using class suggestions and creativity.

- **Physical Education**
  - Invent a game with your class in which there are two teams: Predators and Prey. Tell the prey that they are an animal in the wild trying to hide from predators. Tell the predators that there is prey for them to catch, but they will be hidden. This can be a variation of hide and go seek; better suited for outside playground setting, but could be done in a gym. Discuss boundaries and other rules with your class and let them help form the game!

- **Related Books**
  o *What Color is Camouflage* by Carolyn B. Otto, Illustrated by Megan Lloyd
  o *Claws, Coats, and Camouflage* by Susan E. Goodman, Photographs by Michael J. Doolittle
  o *The Rainbow Tiger* by Gayle Nordholm, Illustrated by Jennifer Frohwerk
  o *How to Hide a Butterfly and Other Insects* by Ruth Heller

- **Other titles by Schwartz**
  o *How Much Is a Million?*
  o *If You Made a Million?*
  o *Millions to Measure*
  o *G Is for Googol*
  o *Q is for Quark*
  o *If You Hopped Like a Frog*
  o *If Dogs Were Dinosaurs*
  o *Where Else in the Wild*
  o *What in the Wild*

- **Other titles by Kuhn:**
  o *The Life Cycle of a Snail* by Andrew Hipp
  o *The Life Cycle of a Praying Mantis* by Andrew Hipp

- **Websites for further study or enrichment:**
  o Open Wide, Look Inside
    - [http://blog.richmond.edu/openwidelookinside/archives/2981](http://blog.richmond.edu/openwidelookinside/archives/2981)  This blog is a helpful resource for teachers and students to find outside sources, books, and websites to help in their camouflage studies.
  o Harcourt School Camouflage Field Book
    - http: [www.harcourtschool.com/activity/camouflage/camouflage.html](http://www.harcourtschool.com/activity/camouflage/camouflage.html)  This website takes the student on a field study complete with a journal, magnifying glass, compass, and photographs to find hidden animals.
  o Beasts Playground
- [http://www.abc.net.au/beasts/playground/camouflage.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/beasts/playground/camouflage.htm) This website allows the student to create their own habitat and environment for animals to be hidden and found.