

Animal Adaptations Game

By Cappy Pugliese, Frank Gigliotti, and Netanya Williams

Presented to the 4th grade classrooms at Natchaug Elementary School in Willimantic, CT on 11/15/2024

Requirements:

- Blindfolds (x6 ish)
- Bells (x20 ish)
- Many acorns (or other collectible nature items)
- Space for the kids to run around

Game summary:

Essentially like tag, except with a twist. Approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the students are taggers (the predators), while the rest of the students are the “runners” (the prey). The predator's goal is to catch the prey and tag them. The prey's goal is to “run” away from the predators (we had the prey hop like bunnies to slow them down for safety reasons), and to forage for food on the ground. We played the game with 3 rounds, changing up the rules each time to reinforce the concepts of animal adaptations.

Prep

- Spread the forage items (in our case we used acorns) around the space where the kids will be playing the game
 - Will need to reset for each round
- May need to set boundaries so the kids do not go too far away
- Explain the rules and then have the prey spread out before the predators are allowed to chase them (count them down before the game begins)
- After each round ends, ask the kids how easy/difficult it was to be the prey or the predator
 - See if they can identify why the round was either easy/difficult for them
- Can change around which kids are the prey/predators each round so they can all get a turn if they would like

Round 1: Predator Advantage

This round the predators will have an advantage over the prey. The predators are faster than the prey (who have to hop), so they are easier to catch. This round went by the quickest for us.

Rules

- Predators chase prey and tag them
 - Lightly tap the prey when tagging
 - Have the prey sit down when tagged
 - Predators are allowed to run this round
- Prey collect the forage items from the ground
- Prey “run” away from the predators and try not to get caught
 - Prey must move around by hopping (makes it easier for the predators to catch them this round)
- End the round when most of the prey have been tagged

Round 2: Prey Advantage

In this round, we pretended it was night time and the predators struggled to see in the dark. However, the prey had an adaptation over them because they were able to see in the dark. This round has the potential to last a long time (since not many prey end up getting tagged). You can either set a timer to end the round or try to eyeball it.

Rules

- Predators are given a blindfold
 - Emphasize safety (no running when blindfolded)
 - Tell the prey kids to be kind and warn the predators if they are going to bump into something

Round 3: Somewhat Balanced

In this round, the predators still cannot see, but now they have a hearing advantage. The prey are given bells so that every time they hop, the bell will jingle and they can be heard. This round can be a toss up if it is actually balanced or not.

We had one classroom where it was balanced and one classroom where it was not. In the unbalanced classroom, the predators were still at a disadvantage (some of the prey were cheating a little bit and not always hopping).

Once again, you can set a timer or eyeball when to end the round.

Rules

- Predators are still blindfolded
- Prey must hold bells which jingle every time they hop
 - Remind the prey that they must hop the entire round, no running
 - Remind kids to be honest and sit down when they are tagged

After all the rounds, we asked the kids questions about what they learned from the activity.