

Seahorse – Camouflage Craft

Learning Level

- PreK and up

Duration

- Variable ~20 minutes

Objectives

- Learners will understand how body color, patterns, and shape aid in camouflage.

Materials

- Seahorse printout, or drawing
- Crayons, markers or colored pencils
- *Optional:* tape

Vocabulary

- Camouflage – helps animals avoid being eaten by making them difficult for predators to see
- Predator – an animal who gets its energy by eating meat
- Habitat – where an animal lives
- Exoskeleton plates – hard parts on the outside of the animal that support and protects its body

Procedure

1. Show learners pictures of several different kinds of seahorses and seadragons (Photos can be found attached).
2. Ask them to describe and identify the different parts of a seahorse, picking out the mouth, fins, body covering (**exoskeleton plates**), and the tail. [Diagram on next page]
3. Ask them to then identify some of the things they notice about the seahorse's **habitat** (or home/surroundings). Encourage learners to identify that seahorses live in water (the ocean) and that there are seaweed, sand, coral, pebbles, and other animals in their habitat.
4. Tell learners that today they are going to make their own seahorse models to show how these animals can use their body color and shape to help them **camouflage** (hide, or blend into their surroundings) to help them stay safe from **predators** (animals that would hunt them for food/energy).
5. Cut out the seahorse silhouette (on next page) or draw your own seahorse silhouette!
6. Your challenge is to camouflage your seahorse to a specific home habitat – for example the “bookcase habitat”, the “fridge door habitat” or even “the recycling bin habitat”. [Tip: pick your habitat first, and then color to match]. What colors or patterns do you need to create on your seahorse to help it hide in your habitat?
7. Encourage your learners to periodically take their seahorse to the habitat of choice and make sure the seahorse blends in – this can be a great way to practice color and pattern matching.
8. After everyone has colored their seahorse, have learners put their seahorses up in the habitat. Option to use tape here for ease.
9. When all Seahorses are up, go on a “nature walk” around the house. Let each learner point out their seahorse and tell everyone about the habitat it lives in.

Discussion Questions

- What would happen if one habitat, for example the “front door” habitat was destroyed? Could the seahorse living there find a different habitat in the house to live?
- Could these seahorses survive without their habitat? Could some live in multiple habitats? [Some animals are special to their habitat and some are not. The ones that are special to their habitat are

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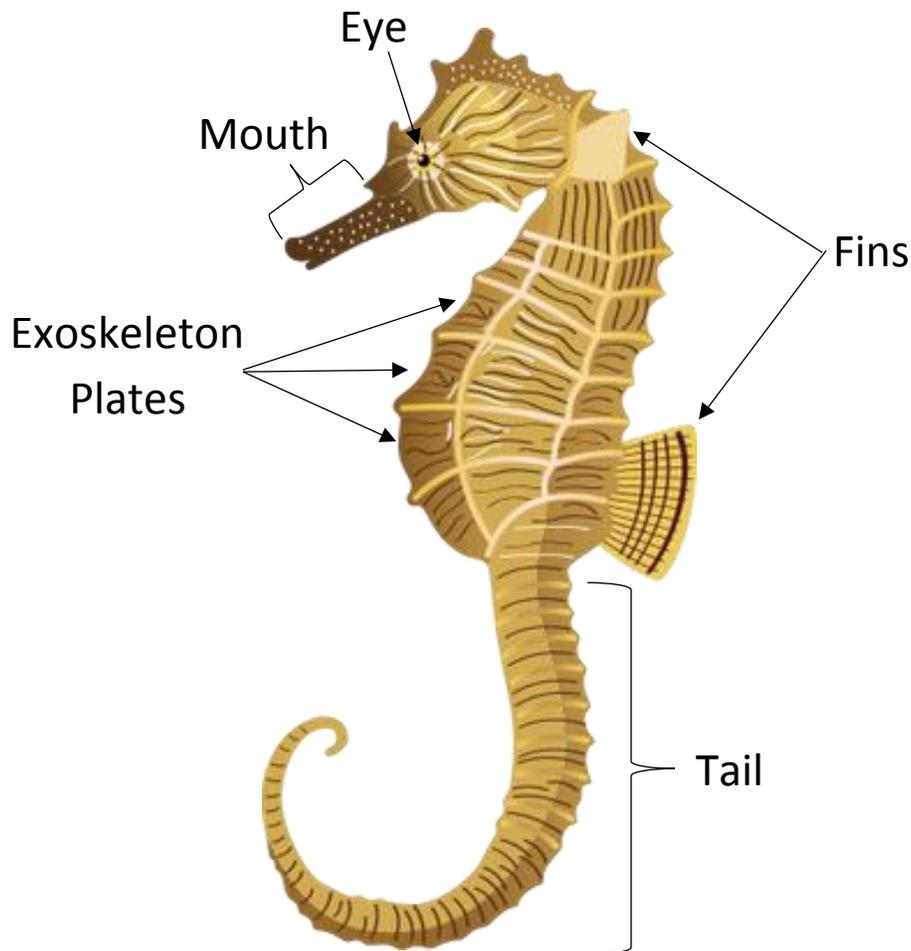
called: **Specialists**. The ones that are not, and can live in more than one place are called: **Generalists**.]

- Seahorses are born with base colors, but can develop some variation over time, do you think they are a specialist or a generalist? Why?
- Using the specialist and generalist categories, which do you think people are? Why?
- Can you think of an example (other than people) of a specialist and a generalist? What do they have on their bodies, or that they can do that makes them a specialist or generalist?

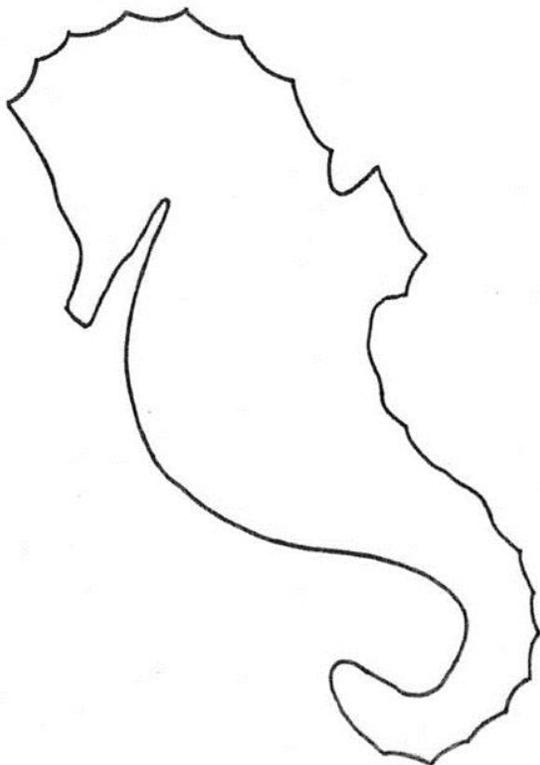
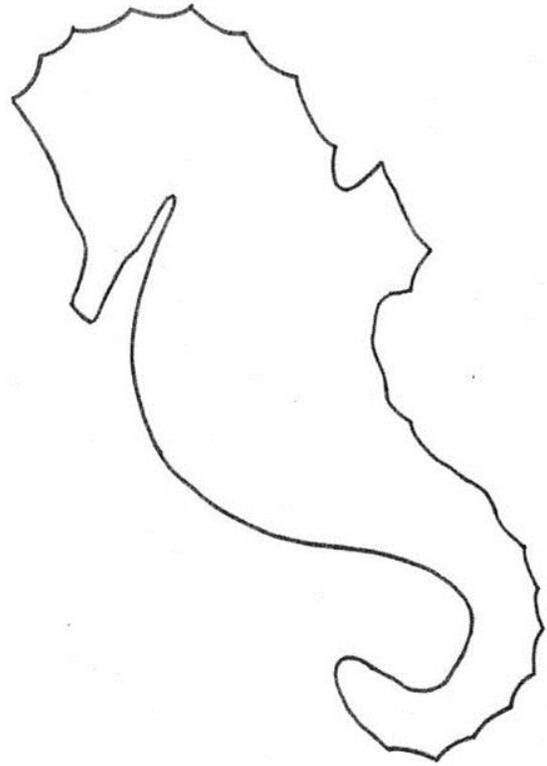
Adaptations and Extensions

- **To make this into a game:** pick one room or space as the designated habitat zone. Have everyone except one person camouflage their seahorse to a spot in the habitat zone. The person who is not coloring a seahorse should not be in the habitat zone. When the people coloring are finished, have them hang up their seahorses to camouflage in the habitat zone. Once everyone feels their seahorse is very camouflaged, invite the person who was NOT in the habitat zone [and did not color a seahorse] to pretend to be a predator, and look for all the seahorses.

Show us your best camouflaged seahorse on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter @NEAq



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Seahorse and Seadragon Images

