



Stay Away from Trouble!



Animals try to avoid a fight—and they certainly try to avoid being eaten! They have many ways to warn off danger or conflict, or to hide from it. Below are some of the things they do.

In this activity, students will pick one of the defense actions and silently act it out, and the others will guess which animal they are representing.

Pass out the list, or write it on the board as you discuss it. Each student chooses who he/she will be. One at a time, students display defense and others guess who they are.

- ▶ Tarantulas flick hairs off rear end, using their back legs. (arms are acceptable here 😊)
 - ▶ Opossums hiss and bare teeth, then play dead if that doesn't work
 - ▶ Skunks stamp their front feet, then spray if stamping doesn't work.
 - ▶ Fawns lie perfectly still. When they are young and still nursing, they have no scent, so if they don't move, they are safe.
 - ▶ Porcupines raise their quills, or maybe back up rapidly into the predator.
 - ▶ Owls fluff up to look as large as possible.
 - ▶ Rattlesnakes rattle
 - ▶ Ground squirrels wave their tails rapidly to defend from a rattlesnake, which can detect heat.
The tail will seem like a larger heat source than it really is.
 - ▶ Coyotes growl
 - ▶ Raptors (hawks and owls) extend their talons
 - ▶ Rabbits run in a zig zag pattern
 - ▶ Lizards drop their tail, which twitches for a few moments; predator will be distracted.
(Have ribbons ready for students to use as tails)
 - ▶ Bobcats hiss
 - ▶ Tortoises retreat into their shell
 - ▶ Yellowjackets sting
- (▶Also, turkey vultures throw up, but you might wait until the end to share this info.)