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Colors in plants and animals hide many secrets. Colors hold special meanings for plants and animals. Animals can use colors to send a message to their friends or enemies. Some butterflies hide their bodies with camouflage colors. But when predators approach, they suddenly spread their bright, colorful wings and fly away.

Worksheet

The Meanings in Colors and the Means of Communication

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Check Problem 01

In medieval times, clergy members also worked as doctors. Back then, doctors wore black robes when they treated patients. The color black symbolized knowledge and success.
That is why graduation gowns are black. People in the Middle Ages thought that a doctor with a dirty black robe had a lot of experience. Today, doctors wear green scrubs for surgery and usually wear white coats the rest of the time. Can you explain why doctors today wear white coats?

Check Problem 02

Colors that appear closer than they actually are called advancing colors. On the other hand, colors that seem further away are called receding colors. Cars painted in receding colors have more accidents because they seem closer than they actually are. Interestingly, red cars have fewer accidents during the day, but almost the same accident rate as black cars at night. Can you explain why red cars have a similar accident rate to black cars at night?

Check Problem 03

After hatching from their eggs, insect larvae spend all day eating. This might be where we get terms like "bookworm" for people who study a lot. Insects seem to spend most of their lives as adults, but this is not quite true. Many insects are only adults for a little while and spend most of their lives as larvae.
People often think of larvae as being green. Can you name some larvae that are not green?

Check Problem 04

We can tell where an animal lives by looking at its color. Many animals in cold places are white.
In deserts or dry climates, animals are usually brown. In areas with lots of plants and trees, many animals are green to blend in and avoid predators. Colors that help animals blend in with their surroundings are called camouflage colors. Leopards and jaguars have spotted patterns. How do you think their patterns help them?

Check Problem 05

Ladybugs use their bright colors to warn predators. Their colors say, "I do not taste good." Honeybees have yellow and black stripes that are easy to see from far away. Birds fly off quickly when they see bees because they may have been stung before. This type of coloring in animals is called warning coloration. We can tell how someone feels by looking at their face. What do you think it means when someone's face and ears are red?

Check Problem 06

Flowers use vibrant colors to attract insects. Insects carry pollen from flower to flower in exchange for nectar. However, the flowers in rice plants are not very colorful or smelly. They are so small that they hardly seem like flowers at all. Rice flowers rely on the wind to spread their pollen, so they do not need to be colorful to attract insects.
Can you think of another reason why rice flowers might be hard to see?