

Photo Description



This image shows a snake moving through dried leaves and wood pieces on the ground. You can see the snake's scaly skin pattern and how it moves in an S-shaped way through its natural habitat. The snake blends in with the browns and tans of the forest floor where it lives and hunts for food.

Scientific Phenomena

Anchoring Phenomenon: Why does a snake live in places with lots of leaves and sticks?

Snakes are animals that need shelter, food, and places to hide from predators. The dried leaves, wood chips, and debris on the forest floor provide the perfect home—it offers protection from larger animals and weather, camouflage (hiding colors), and access to prey like insects and small rodents. Snakes are cold-blooded, meaning their body temperature matches their environment, so they seek warm, protected spots. This habitat is ideal for their survival.

Core Science Concepts

- Animal Habitats: Snakes need specific places to live with shelter, food, and water. The forest floor with leaf litter provides all of these things.
- Camouflage (Adaptation): The snake's brown and tan coloring helps it hide among dead leaves and wood—this is a physical adaptation that helps it survive.
- Animal Structures: Snakes have scales (bumpy protective skin), which help them move smoothly across rough ground and protect their bodies.
- Food Chains: Snakes are predators that eat smaller animals, and snakes can be prey for larger animals like hawks or foxes.

Pedagogical Tip:

For Kindergarteners, avoid emphasizing the "scary" aspects of snakes. Instead, focus on wonder and observation: "This animal has special skin that helps it move and hide. Let's notice the patterns!" Use calm, curious language to build positive attitudes toward wildlife.

UDL Suggestions:

Multiple Means of Representation: Show the image alongside a tactile model or real snake skin (shed skin, completely safe). Provide both visual and touch-based learning. Use a snake puppet or toy so students can see how snakes move in an S-shape. Multiple Means of Action & Expression: Let students act out how a snake moves by slithering across the floor, or draw/paint snakes in habitats using earth tones.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think this snake needs to live in this pile of leaves? (Bloom's: Remember | DOK: 1)
2. Why do you think the snake's brown color helps it stay safe in this place? (Bloom's: Analyze | DOK: 2)
3. How is a snake's skin different from your skin? (Bloom's: Compare | DOK: 2)
4. What animals do you think live in the same pile of leaves as this snake? (Bloom's: Create | DOK: 3)

Extension Activities

1. Sensory Exploration Station: Provide safe materials (smooth river rocks, sandpaper, craft scales, textured fabrics) so students can feel different textures and discuss how a snake's scales feel bumpy and smooth. Compare scales to other natural materials.
2. Snake Movement Dance: Play soft music and have students move like snakes across the classroom floor, making S-shaped movements with their bodies. Discuss why snakes move this way and what challenges they might face.
3. Habitat Diorama: Provide a small box, dried leaves, twigs, and earth-tone paper. Let students create a snake habitat by arranging materials and gluing them in place. Students can place a toy snake and explain why they put it where they did.

NGSS Connections

Performance Expectation: K-LS1-1 - Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

- K-LS1.A - All organisms have external structures that serve different functions in growth, survival, and reproduction.
- K-LS1.C - All animals need food, water, and air to survive. Plants need water and light.
- Patterns - The snake's coloring matches its environment.
- Structure and Function - The snake's scales help it move and survive.

Science Vocabulary

- Snake: A long animal with no legs that moves by bending its body in S-shapes and has scales covering its skin.
- Scales: Tiny, flat pieces that overlap like roof tiles to cover and protect a snake's body.
- Habitat: The place where an animal lives that has everything it needs like food, water, shelter, and air.
- Camouflage: Colors or patterns on an animal's body that help it hide in its environment so other animals cannot see it easily.
- Predator: An animal that hunts and eats other animals to survive.

External Resources

Children's Books:

- Hiss: A Snake's Story by Katrina Charman (explores a snake's perspective and habitat)
- Dear Teacher, Thank You for Everything (contains snake facts in accessible language)
- Snake by Snake by Laurence Pringle (non-fiction picture book about snakes)

YouTube Videos:

- "Snakes for Kids - Animal Lesson" - A gentle, age-appropriate introduction to snake anatomy and habitats (approximately 5 minutes) - https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=snakes+for+kids+animal+lesson
- "How Do Snakes Move?" - Shows slow-motion footage of snake movement with clear explanations suitable for young learners (approximately 3 minutes) - https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=how+do+snakes+move+kids