

Title: Predator-Prey Freeze Tag

**Adapted from the activity "Quick Frozen Critters" from Project WILD K-12 Curriculum Guide.*

Objective: Describe and enact predator/prey relationships

Time: 15 -20 minutes

Materials Needed: Food tokens: pieces of construction paper, popsicle sticks, poker chips (at least 3 per prey); 4 hula hoops; identification for predators (vests or large name tags); cones or rope for two end line boundaries.

Directions:

1. Establish an outdoor game area. Make one end the *food source* area and the other end the *permanent shelter*. Both are safe zones. Place 4 hula hoops in the central area to represent *temporary shelters*. Spread food tokens inside the *food source* line, 3 tokens/prey.
2. Assign students a role as a predator or prey. Designate one predator to each 4-6 prey. Provide predators a vest or name tag.
3. Begin game with predators spread out on playing field. Prey must move from the *permanent shelter* to the *food source*, collect one food token and return safely to *permanent shelter* without getting tagged by predator.
4. Predators must capture 2 prey in order to survive. But prey have survival strategies: They can freeze if a predator is within 5 feet; or hide in *temporary shelter* (hula hoops). Prey must collect 3 food tokens to avoid starvation, so they must not be frozen or hidden for the entire game. (Before the game begins demonstrate what it is to be "within 5 feet.")
5. Captured prey go to the sidelines to observe and reflect on how they felt during the game and what they might do differently.
6. Signal an end to the game when 10 prey have 3 food tokens and are safe. Have a brief discussion and play the game again. Raise or lower the target of prey with 3 food tokens as the end point of the game. Compare the trials.

Discussion Questions:

1. For prey, were there some routes that were easier to get to the food source or some strategies that worked well? Explain.
2. What different feelings did you experience while acting as a prey animal or predator? Why? When?
3. What did the predators do in response when an animal *froze*?

Activity

Theme: Ecology

Topic: Predator/Prey

Suggested Grade Level: 3-5

Indoors or Outdoors: Outdoors

Science and Engineering Practices:

2. Developing and using models.

Crosscutting Concepts:

2. Cause and effect: mechanism and explanation; 4. Systems and systems models; 5. Energy and matter: flows, cycles and conservation.

Disciplinary Core Ideas:

Life Sciences: LS2: Ecosystems: Interactions, energy and dynamics.

Background Information:

- **Predator:** An animal that, as a matter of survival, kills and eats other animals for food that sustains the predator and its young.
- **Prey:** An animal that is killed and eaten by other animals for food. Prey are *usually* smaller animals are herbivores and they have many offspring.
- **Adaptation:** Genetic changes in structure, function, or behavior of populations that occur over generations.
- **Give students the following information prior to playing this activity:** Animals display a variety of behaviors in predator/prey relationships. These behaviors are their adaptations to survive. Some of them include: signaling to others, taking flight, posturing in a fighting position, scrambling for cover, or even *freezing* on the spot. This is why you are able to *freeze* during this game of tag. The kind of behavior depends on how far away the predator is from the prey.

Additional Resources:

- *Who Eats What? Food Chains and Food Webs* by Patricia Lauber
- *Bugs For Lunch* by Margery Facklam
- *What Eats That?* by Ryan Jacobson

Correlates with:

Greeting - Hello Predator, Hello Prey (p. 20)

Interdisciplinary Lesson - Predator/Prey Narrative (p. 109)