

HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

Investigation 3: Meet the Crayfish

Animals have adaptations that help them get food. An adaptation is a structure or behavior that helps an organism survive and reproduce. A hawk captures its prey with powerful talons. Pocket gophers, beavers, and other rodents use their front teeth (incisors) to eat tough plant stems. This wears down their incisors, but rodent incisors continue to grow as they wear down. We call adaptations such as a hawk’s talons or a rodent’s incisors food-gathering devices.

Part 1: Design a food-gathering device for an animal. Design a predator device or a plant-eating device. Select one of the challenges below, and use materials around your home to make your device.

Test your device at home to make sure it really works. Change your design until it works. You will have several days to work on this project. Bring it to school to share with your class.

Possible Materials

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| Toothpicks | Glue or tape |
| Craft sticks | String, yarn, or pipe cleaners |
| Rubber bands | Cotton, cloth, or netting |
| Paper clips | Clay or play dough |
| Construction paper or cardboard | Natural items from outdoors (sticks, rocks, leaves) |

Challenge	Animals that might have that adaptation
Make a predator device that could catch a flying insect.	Frog, spider, bat, flycatcher, bat, warbler
Make a device that could dig up roots.	Rabbit, gopher, bear
Make a device that could bite off and grind up leaves.	Deer, rabbit, giraffe
Make a predator device to grab or pick up an egg.	Blue jay, raccoon, crow, snake
Make a predator device for catching worms.	Robin, fish
Make a predator device for getting at animals that live underground in mud or soil.	Shorebird, gopher, mole
Make a predator device that could grab animals from the water.	Osprey, eagle, pelican, duck, raccoon, bear
Make a device to catch or gather any food of your choice.	

Part 2: Select one animal that has the food-gathering adaptation you created in Part 1. With the help of a parent or teacher, look up the animal on the Internet or in a book, and read about it. Record some information about how the animal gathers food, and bring this to school.