

Activity!
Kids Listen Activity Podcast – Cool Facts About Animals on Thorny Devils

Capillary Action

During our episode about thorny devils, we discussed how the thorny devils use **capillary action** to drink water through other parts of their bodies, like their feet. You can see capillary action “in action” with this fun at-home experiment.

The Cool Facts About Animals Crew tried out a color-changing flower experiment, which you can see on our YouTube page if a parent agrees:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcmaiQt6zC4&t=1s>.

For this experiment, you need:

1. Three cups
2. Water
3. Two pieces of paper towel
4. Two colors of food coloring that make another color (like yellow and blue, or red and yellow)
5. A light-colored (preferably white) flower

Line up your three cups on a surface that can be easily cleaned up. Fill all but the center one up about halfway with water. Add one color of dye to one of the cups with water, and one color of dye to the other. In the middle cup, put a flower. It should look like this.



Now, take your two paper towels and twist them up until they look like tight rods. Put one paper towel from the blue cup into the cup with the flower, and the other paper towel from the yellow cup to the cup with the flower. Like this:



Do you see the color creeping up the paper towels? That's *already* capillary action! The water molecules are **adhering** to the paper towel and climbing up it.

Now you wait! Some things to think about while you wait:

1. What color do you think will end up in the glass with the flower?
2. Do you think the flower will turn color? What color?

If your experiment didn't work (ours didn't work for some of our flowers) think about why. Where did the capillary action go wrong? With a grownup, you might want to cut up your stem to see if you can see where the color stopped flowing up.

If this experiment feels too complicated, you can take out a lot of steps and just put the flower directly in a glass with water and food coloring. That works too! You just won't see the paper towel capillary action.

Defense mechanisms

During our podcast, we talked about a lot of different defense mechanisms that thorny devils use. Do you remember all of them? They included:

- A "false head"
- Thorns to deter being eaten
- Camouflage

Do you remember any others?

For this activity, make a drawing of yourself – either in human or animal form – with as many defense mechanisms as you want. They don't have to be the ones that the thorny devil has.

Maybe your defense mechanism includes having a body covered in an armor made of diamonds, or making a really stinky smell (like a skunk). Why did you choose the defense mechanism(s) you chose?

Riddle

At the end of our episodes, we like to do a riddle to give a clue about the animal we will be featuring in our next episode.

One type of poem we like to do is a **haiku**. For haikus:

The first line has to be five syllables.

The second line has to be seven syllables

And the third line has to be five syllables.

Here's a haiku about our cat, Tuna.

Little tabby cat
She only has four teeth left
Her purr makes us smile

Another common type of poem is a **rhyming poem**. There are all sorts of different ways to rhyme. You can have the first line rhyme with the second, and the third line rhyme with the fourth. That's called an "A, A, B, B" rhyme pattern.

Or you can have the first line rhyme with the third, and the second line rhyme with the fourth. That's called an "A, B, A, B" pattern. You can really rhyme in any pattern you want – "A, B, C, A, C" or "A, A, A, B." It's your poem! Here's a rhyming poem, again about Tuna.

Tuna has the loudest purr
Lions can't compare
She also has the softest fur
And the fiercest stare!

What rhyme pattern is that? If you guessed "A, B, A, B" you're right – the first and third lines rhyme, and the second and fourth lines rhyme.

Okay, now it's your turn! Choose an animal, and make up a poem about it. Can your grownup guess what the animal is? When you're done, we'd love to see it. You can email it to coolfactsaboutanimals@gmail.com or tweet us at @coolanimalspod.