

Animal Adaptation — Praying Mantis

Approach: Station

Level: Year 4 and year 8

Focus: Observe and describe the structural features of a praying mantis that are considered to be adaptive features with survival value.


Resources: Picture of a praying mantis

Questions/instructions:

Look carefully at the picture. Write about the parts of the praying mantis that help it to survive. An example has been done for you.

Praying Mantis

The green colour of the praying mantis helps it to hide in the grass or on leaves.



The image shows a worksheet layout for a task. At the top, the title 'Praying Mantis' is centered. Below it, a text box contains the sentence: 'The green colour of the praying mantis helps it to hide in the grass or on leaves.' To the right of this text is a photograph of a green praying mantis on a leaf. Below the photograph are several empty rectangular boxes for students to write their answers. The entire worksheet area is set against a light blue background.

	% responses	
	y4	y8
strong legs for hopping, walking, attacking	21	27
long front legs, able to reach out to catch prey	19	28
grappling hooks on forelegs to aid climbing	13	20
wide apart bulbous compound eyes to give maximum vision	13	18
biting jaws to eat other insects — not plants	6	10
wings to fly	37	53
antennae/feelers to feel/sense	32	46
Number of valid responses: 4-5	5	10
	2-3	38
	0-1	57
		34

Commentary:

Like the last task this was one of the two tasks in the 1999 assessments that was more disliked than liked by the year 8 students. A majority of year 4 students identified less than two adaptive features, as did one third of year 8 students.