

Imagine that you are preparing a project with your friend. You have found some interesting material for the presentation and you want to read this text to your friend. You have 1.5 minutes to read the text silently, then be ready to read it out aloud. You will not have more than 1.5 minutes to read it.

Chameleons don't change colour to match the background. They change colour as a result of different emotional states. Chameleons change colour when they beat another chameleon in a fight. They change colour when a member of the opposite sex steps into view and they sometimes change colour due to fluctuations in either light or temperature.

A chameleon's skin contains several layers of specialised cells. Altering the balance between these layers causes the skin to reflect different kinds of light, making chameleons a kind of walking colour-wheel. It's odd how persistent the belief that they change colour to match the background is. The myth first appears in the work of a minor Greek writer of entertaining stories and potted biographies. Aristotle, far more influential and writing a century earlier, had already, quite correctly, linked the colour-change to fear. But it's come back with a vengeance since and to this day is perhaps the only thing most people think they 'know' about chameleons.