

Teacher's Guide

Fun Facts About Lizards

Introduction

This guide will help educators teach children about the physical features, habits and habitats of lizards, one type of reptile. Using many colorful photographs, labeled illustrations and text, *Fun Facts About Lizards* introduces young children to the wide variety of lizards in the world.

National Standards

This series supports Science, and Language Arts. Go to www.enslowclassroom.com and click on the Curriculum Correlations tab. Click on your state, grade level, and curriculum standard to display how any book in this series backs up your state's specific curriculum standard.

Classroom Activities

Activities for teaching the five curriculum areas: Reading/Language Arts; Math, Science; Social Studies; and the Arts, can be found in this teacher's guide. Beginning readers will practice sight words and repetitive text, as they learn about the wide variety of animals and what makes them special.

Guided Reading Level: **L**

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40 Industrial Road, Box 398
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Amphibians: Their Origins and Characteristics

Biologists believe that life began as single celled organisms in the ocean. Over time those original living creatures changed and grew until eventually fish appeared. Evidence now supports the theory that the first land animals were fish that adapted to life on land by developing ways of getting their necessary oxygen from the air and moving on land by developing legs and feet from what had once been the fish's fins, structures that had been adapted for moving through water. These "fish on land" fall in the group we now call amphibians.

While they are capable of life on land, amphibians also live part of their life in water and water still plays a vital role in their ability to breathe and reproduce. Amphibians exchange gases with the environment through their skin which must remain moist to perform this function. Amphibian eggs must be laid and remain in water in order for the young to develop, live and grow.

Reptiles: Origins and Characteristics

Reptiles resemble amphibians in many ways but differ in the fact that they have adapted fully to a terrestrial life where water is less abundant. The skin of a reptile is more waterproof than that of an amphibian and no longer serves a role as a respiratory organ. Reptiles breathe and exchange gases in their lungs. Reptile reproduction is also no longer water dependent. Eggs, whether hard and calcified or leathery, have adaptations that allow them to retain all of the moisture required for the developing embryo. As a result, reptiles lay their eggs on land and the hatchlings can survive out of water right from birth.

The first reptiles appeared more than 300 million years ago and were still very much like amphibians. Their evolution away from water dependence was so successful that the age of reptiles, when reptiles were the predominant life forms on earth, lasted about 250 million years and resulted in the existence of the largest reptiles known, the dinosaurs.

Reptiles and Amphibians: Similar, Yet Different

Both amphibians and reptiles are cold-blooded. They require heat from the sun for their bodies to warm. The ability to live further from the water is the key difference between amphibians and reptiles. Other adaptations specific to ecological niches, such as size, color, and diet account for the wide variety of reptile and amphibian species that exist today.

SAFETY WARNING:

Before any activity, make sure your students do not have any allergies to items that you might use. Never use anything that is sharp or may cut a student. Do not use anything too hot or cold that might injure any student. Always have an adult supervise all activities to ensure the safety of your students.

Reading/Language Arts activity: The teacher will create a word wall where all vocabulary words in this unit will be posted for student reference. Words related specifically to amphibians or reptiles will be color coded differently from those that have wider usage.

Math activity: Students will use a ruler to measure the length of the body and tail of the Blue-tailed skink on page 14. Students will discuss with the teacher how much shorter the lizard's body is after it drops its tail.

Science activity: Lizard smorgasbord. Students will create a collage to show the diet of lizards as listed on page nine.

Social Studies activity: Print a lizard distribution map from a reliable internet source. Students will compare habitat locations between maps to gain a better understanding of the variation in range between different species of lizards.

Arts Activity: Each student will be provided with a paper cutout of a lizard to color or paint using a variety of green, yellow, brown and black shades in a way that they find attractive.

Student Handout for **Fun Facts About Lizards**

1. List all of the places that lizards live.

2. List all of the things that lizards eat.

3. List all of the animals that eat lizards.

4. What lizard can change colors to fool its enemies?_____.

5. Why do lizards lose their tails?_____.

6. What is on lizard's feet to help them climb?_____.

7. What are lizards called when they come out of their egg?_____.