



Name: _____

Reptiles

What are Reptiles?

Reptiles are a group of fascinating creatures that belong to the animal kingdom. They are cold-blooded animals, which means their body temperature depends on the temperature of their environment. Unlike warm-blooded animals, reptiles cannot regulate their body temperature internally.

Scales and Skin

One of the key features of reptiles is their **scaly** skin. These scales act as a protective covering for their bodies. The scales help them retain moisture, prevent water loss, and protect them from predators. Reptiles shed their skin periodically, a process called **molting**. This allows them to grow and replace old, damaged skin.



reptile scales

Cold-Blooded and Ectothermic

Reptiles are **ectothermic**, which means they rely on external sources of heat to warm up their bodies. They **bask** in the sun to soak up heat and regulate their body temperature. This is why you may often see reptiles sunning themselves on rocks or branches. They also use shady areas or water to cool down when they get too hot.

Types of Reptiles

There are various types of reptiles, each with unique characteristics and adaptations to their environment. Let's explore a few examples:

Turtles and Tortoises

Turtles and tortoises are known for their protective **shells**. They have a bony structure that covers their entire body, providing a safe hiding place. Turtles are **semi-aquatic**, which means they spend time both on land and in water. Tortoises, on the other hand, are predominantly land-dwelling creatures.

Snakes

Snakes are fascinating reptiles that come in a variety of shapes and sizes. They move by slithering on their belly, using the scales on their undersides. Many snakes are **carnivorous**, meaning they feed on other animals. Some snakes are **venomous** and have sharp, **serrated** teeth that help them inject venom into their prey.



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Lizards

Lizards are another diverse group of reptiles. They have long bodies, scaly skin, and four legs. Lizards are known for their ability to shed their tails when threatened by predators. This is a defense mechanism that allows them to escape and regenerate a new tail later.

Crocodilians

Crocodilians, including crocodiles and alligators, are large reptiles that inhabit both land and water. They have powerful jaws, sharp teeth, and a muscular body. Crocodilians are carnivorous predators, feeding on fish, birds, and mammals that get too close to the water's edge.

Adaptations for Survival

Reptiles have evolved various adaptations that help them thrive in their environments. Some reptiles have venomous bites, which they use to immobilize their prey or defend themselves. Others have specialized teeth for crushing or tearing their food. Some reptiles, like turtles, have developed strong shells for protection. These adaptations ensure their survival in different habitats around the world.

Amazing Facts about Reptiles

Reptiles have been around for millions of years and have survived multiple mass extinctions.

The Komodo dragon, the largest lizard in the world, can grow up to 10 feet long.

Reptiles, such as the green sea turtle, can migrate thousands of miles across the ocean to lay their eggs.

Some reptiles, like the desert-dwelling Gila monster, can go for extended periods without food or water.

Reptiles, such as the eyelash viper, have vibrant colors and patterns that help them blend into their surroundings.

Reptiles are truly remarkable creatures with diverse characteristics and adaptations. They play an important role in maintaining the balance of ecosystems worldwide. By understanding more about reptiles, we can appreciate their uniqueness and contribute to their conservation efforts.



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Glossary

Carnivorous: Refers to animals that primarily eat meat or flesh.

Cold-blooded: Animals that rely on external sources of heat to regulate their body temperature. Reptiles are cold-blooded creatures.

Ectothermic: Cold-blooded animals that depend on the environment to regulate their body temperature. Reptiles are ectothermic creatures.

Herbivorous: Refers to animals that primarily eat plants.

Molt: The shedding or casting off of an outer layer or skin as a part of growth or renewal.

Scaly: Covered with scales, which are small, hard plates that protect the skin of reptiles.

Shell: The hard, protective outer covering of certain reptiles, such as turtles and tortoises.

Semi-aquatic: Animals that can live both on land and in water or spend part of their lives in aquatic habitats.

Serrated: Having a jagged or saw-like edge, often referring to the teeth or scales of reptiles.

Venomous: Refers to animals that produce and inject venom, a toxin, often through a bite or sting, used for hunting or defense.

Basking: Reptiles, such as turtles and snakes, often bask in the sun to regulate their body temperature.



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1. Highlight the headings in the passage.

Use the headings to locate the information for the following questions.

2. List some adaptations that reptiles have to help them survive.

3. How do scales help reptiles? _____

Use the glossary to answer the following questions.

4. What does *ectothermic* mean? _____

5. What does *semi-aquatic* mean? _____

6. What does *carnivorous* mean? _____
