

Children's Resources: Reptiles



Word of the Day: Reptile

Animal classification is when we group together animals that share similar traits into different categories. Classification helps scientists understand how different animals are related to each other. It is important for veterinarians to know the specific characteristics that define different groups of animals.

Many of the animals we see are called **vertebrates** because they have a backbone. Mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish are all vertebrates!

Reptiles are cold-blooded animals with scales. Turtles, snakes, lizards, and crocodiles are all reptiles!

Discussion Question

- What is your favorite reptile?

Examples of Reptiles



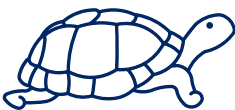
Cobra



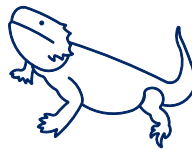
Rattlesnake



Sea Turtle



Desert Tortoise



Bearded Dragon



Gecko



Iguana



Chameleon



Crocodile

Children's Resources: Reptiles

Reptile Characteristics

How can you tell if an animal is a reptile?



Scales

Reptiles are covered in scales. These scales are made from a protein called keratin, which you can also find in human fingernails. Reptiles shed their scales as they grow.

Cold-Blooded

Reptiles are cold-blooded, which means they cannot generate their own body heat. Cold-blooded animals must use their environment to warm or cool their bodies.



Lays Eggs

Most reptiles lay eggs, which have soft and leathery shells. There are some exceptions, such as boa constrictors, who give live birth.

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Scales

All reptiles are covered in scales, which come in all sorts of shapes and patterns. Below are a few of the reasons why scales are important.



Protection

Scales protect reptiles from injury as they move around.

Some reptiles, such as crocodiles or horned lizards, have bumpy or spiky scales that protect against predators.



Camouflage

Some reptiles have scales that help them to camouflage, or blend in, with their environment.



Signal Danger

Brightly colored scales warn other animals that a reptile might be venomous and that they should stay away.



Slithering

Snakes don't have arms or legs to help them move. Instead, snakes use belly scales to help them slither across the ground.



Climbing

Geckos have hair-like scales called lamellae on the bottom of their feet which help them climb smooth surfaces.



Waterproof

Reptiles can live in some pretty hot places. For these reptiles, scales are important because they stop water from escaping the body, preventing dehydration.

Activities



PreK - 2nd Grade

Reptile Dress-Up

Materials: faux leather, gloves with velcro, snake sock puppet, cardboard turtle shell, alligator tail

- Dressing up is a fun way to learn more about animals! Your child can explore different reptile characteristics through costume play.
- If you already own reptile costume items, then that's great! If you're up for some costume DIY ideas, you can add velcro to green gloves for "gecko hands", create your very own snake sock puppets, or even make a turtle shell out of cardboard. Even a simple red fruit leather can be used as a pretend snake tongue. Ask your child for ideas and get creative!

Scale Art

Materials: bubble wrap, paint, paint brushes, construction paper, glue, scissors or large hole punch

- All reptiles have scales, and they can come in some beautiful patterns! Here are two ways to create your very own scale art:
- Let your child paint bubble wrap in any color they desire. Flip the bubble wrap and stamp it onto paper, creating a scale-like pattern.
- If you do not have bubble wrap, cut out scales using scissors or a large hole punch from construction paper in different colors. Now, your child can arrange the scales in fun patterns and glue them onto paper.

Snake Race!

Materials: none

- Want to try a fun way to race? Have your child and their friends slither on their bellies like a snake!

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Activities



All Ages

Live Reptile Cams

Materials: wifi, computer or tablet

- There are lots of fun animal cams that kids of all ages can tune into!
- No matter if your child is interested in snakes, lizards, turtles, or alligators, there is a live cam just right for them!
- Visit the following link to explore:
<https://www.mangolinkcam.com/webcams/reptiles/reptiles.html>