

URBANA PARK DISTRICT  
ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER

NATURALIST IN THE CLASSROOM: **REMARKABLE REPTILES**

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

Program Length:

- 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> – 60 minutes

**Focus Concept:** *Reptiles are cold-blooded animals with scales that vary in other characteristics and live in most ecosystems on Earth.*

**PURPOSE**

To familiarize students with the characteristics of reptiles and the important ecological niche they fill in nature.

**OBJECTIVES:** Students will

1. Be aware of and develop a more positive attitude towards reptiles.
2. Identify characteristics of the reptile family.
3. Recognize the importance of reptiles.

**Common Core Standards Correlated**

Area	Strand	Standard	Standard Numbers
English Language Arts	Speaking/Listening	Comprehension/Collaboration	K.SL.1,3,6 1.SL.1,3, 6 2.SL.1,3, 6 3.SL.1,3, 6 4.SL.1,2 5.SL.1,2
English Language Arts	Language	Conventions of Standard English	K.L 1 1.L 1 2.L 1 3.L 1 4.L1 5.L 1

**Next Generation Science Standards Correlated**

Physical Science	Life Science	Earth & Space Science
	K-LS1-1, 1-LS-1, 1-LS-2	K-ESS3-1

**Illinois Learning Standards Correlated**

Learning Area	Goal	Standard	Benchmark
Science	11	A	1a,1b
	12	A	1a,1b
		B	1a,2a,2b

**PROGRAM OUTLINE**

Vertebrate Groups  
Reptile Characteristics

Meet a turtle  
Turtle races  
Meet a snake

**PROGRAM NOTES:** The naturalist will be bringing live turtles and a live snake to the classroom and students may have the opportunity to touch them. All students that have touched a reptile should wash their hands at the conclusion of the program.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

The following activities are suggestions for use in the classroom before and/or after the naturalist's visit. Not all are appropriate for all age groups. Feel free to adapt them for your students' abilities.

1. Read stories involving reptiles. Have the students take on the character of a reptile and write a story from the reptile's point of view or pretend to interview the reptile.
2. Discuss why some people are afraid of reptiles? Have a creepy-critter day and have each child talk or write about an animal that they are scared of and why. How can they overcome their fear?
3. Have each student select a reptile to research. Have them draw the animal and write a little about it. Put them all together in the form of a reptile reference book for the classroom.
4. Bulletin Boards:
  - Use reptile pictures to create a bulletin board
  - Make a long, scaly snake out of construction paper with a child's name (or numbers, or the alphabet) on each scale.
  - Use egg cartons to create an alligator with bumpy skin and bulging eyes.
  - Create a reptile food web. Place a picture of a reptile in the center of a bulletin board. Then surround with pictures of other things it eats or is eaten by. Use string to connect them to the reptile
5. Drawing/Painting
  - Have students design their own reptile, making sure it has reptile characteristics as well as any other adaptations the children create. (Example: Design a reptile that is adapted to live on the moon or in a toxic waste dump.)
6. Measure the temperature at various places in the classroom and around the school. Where is it the warmest, or the coolest? Have the students choose where they would hide if they were a reptile and why.
7. Have several children make a line with their hands on the shoulders in front of them. Can they move like a snake? The first one should be sticking out its tongue and trying not to blink (snakes don't have eyelids). If it is a rattle snake the last child could make rattling sounds. Try to move like a side-winder.
8. Have turtle races. Who can get across the finish line last?

9. Play cold-blooded. Tell the students when they are hot, they can move quickly. If they are cold they must move slowly. The leader shouts out temperatures and the student reptiles should respond accordingly.
10. Play "Skin the Snake". Line the children up one behind the other. Have the children place their left hand between their legs and grab the right hand of the person behind them, creating a long chain. The person at the end of the line carefully lies down and the chain of people moves backwards, straddling the body of the person lying down and each successive person that lies down in the line. (see New Games in bibliography)

#### 11. Rabbits, Foxes, Snakes

##### Materials

4-6 Hula hoops or rope circles

gym floor or open area with two end zones

Randomly place the hula hoops on the gym floor. Pick children to be "coiled snakes", one inside each hula hoop. "Snakes" should be on their knees with their hands ready to "strike" at the prey. Choose another 3-4 children to be foxes and have them stand in one of the end zones. The remainder of the class stands in the same end zone and are the rabbits. The rabbits must reach their warren at the other end of the gym without being "bitten" by a snake or tagged by a fox. The children who are snakes can only strike with their hands and must keep their knees inside the hoop. Let the rabbits get a small head start before allowing the foxes to pursue them. A snake who bites a fox or a rabbit changes places with the victim. A rabbit caught by a fox becomes a snake sharing a hoop. (Courtesy of Shirley Splittstoesser, Wiley School, Urbana)

#### **A TURTLE IN A CLASSROOM:**

(The Anita Purves Nature Center has box turtles available with the Reptiles and Amphibians loan box, which also has puppets, books and a complete activity guide; call 384-4062 for more information)

- Time how long it takes a turtle to walk a certain distance. Figure out how long the turtle would take to walk down the hall or walk a mile.
- What foods do the turtles prefer? Provide a turtle with several types of food. Which does it eat first? Watch how the turtle eats.
- Observe what the turtle is doing at different times. Keep a chart in the classroom and record what the turtle is doing at various times during the day or week.

#### **RESOURCES**

##### CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Arnosky, Jim. *All About Turtles*. Scholastic, Inc. 2000

Berger, Melvin. *Let's Read and Find Out Science: Look Out For Turtles!* HarperCollins 1992

Dennard, Deborah. *Our Wild World: Turtles*. NorthWord Press. 2003

George, William T. *Box Turtle at Long Pond*. The Trumpet Club, New York. 1989

Kalman, Bobbie. *The Life Cycle of a Snake*. Crabtree Publishing Company 2003

Kalman, Bobbie. *What is a Reptile?* Crabtree Publishing Company. 1993

Lauber, Patricia. *Let's Read and Find Out Science: Snakes Are Hunters*. HarperCollins. 1988

MacGill-Callahan, Sheila. *And Still the Turtle Watched*. The Trumpet Club, New York. 1991.

Walsh, Ellen. *Mouse Count*. Voyager Books. 1991

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## OTHER BOOKS

Ranger Rick's Nature Scope: *Let's Hear it for Herps!*, National Wildlife Federation, Washington DC, 1987.

- An excellent source of ideas for teaching children about reptiles and amphibians. Includes stories, games, craft projects and an extensive list of references for field guides, children's books, films, filmstrips, slides, videos, coloring books, games, kits, posters, records and a list of articles in Ranger Rick Nature Magazine.

Zoobooks . *Alligators and Crocodiles, Snakes, Turtles and Tortoises*. Wildlife Education Ltd., San Diego. 2005

Burns, Garrow. *Take along Guide to Snakes, Salamanders and Lizards*. (ages 5-10)

Conant, Roger. *A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern/Central North America*. Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA, 1991.

Conant, Roger, Robert Stebbins and Joseph Collins. *Reptiles and Amphibians*. Peterson First Guides.

- A simplified version of the Peterson Field Guide (see above)

Fluegelman, Andrew, ed. *The New Games Book*. Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, NY, 1976.

Hoffman, Mary. *Animals in the Wild: Snake*. Scholastic Inc., New York, NY, 1986. (See also "Crocodile and Alligator", "Turtle and Tortoise".)

Hughes, Sarah Ann, Roger Conant and Robert Stebbins. *Reptiles*. Peterson Coloring Book Series.

- A book to color while you learn with many interesting facts (for older students)

Johnson, Fred. *Turtles and Tortoises*. National Wildlife Federation, Washington DC, 1973.

Martin, Laura C. *Wildlife Folklore*.

- Folklore from around the world for a variety of animals.

*National Audubon Society Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians*.

Lovett. *Extremely Weird Reptiles or Extremely Weird Snakes*. (ages 7 and up)

Parmalee, Paul W. *Reptiles of Illinois*. Illinois State Museum, Popular Science Series, Vol. V, Springfield, IL 1955.

Smith, Hobart & Edmund Brodie. *Reptiles of North America*. Golden Guide Series, Golden Press, Western Publishing Company, Inc., Racine, WI, 1982.

Tyning, Thomas F. *A Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles*. Stokes Nature Guides Series. Emphasizes behavior, ecology, habitat and life cycles. Helps to create a story.

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