



What is a Reptile?

An at home, do-it yourself family activity for Ages 3-6 (can be modified for younger or older children). Provided by Gumbo Limbo education staff.

Purpose: To identify the basic characteristics that define a reptile.

Define a reptile - a vertebrate animal that includes snakes, lizards, crocodiles, turtles, and tortoises. They are distinguished by having dry scaly skin and typically lay eggs on land.

Distinguish different features that all reptiles have in common:

- They breathe air through nostrils; they have lungs
- They have scales on their skin, no hair or fur
- They lay eggs on land
- They have a backbone (vertebrates)
- They cannot produce their own body heat (warm-blooded vs. cold-blooded)
- They have ear holes

Introduction: Have children collect pictures (if you have access to old nature magazines, or printer at home) or simply have them draw different kinds of reptiles (turtles, crocodiles, lizards and snakes). Make sure to have them include some of the above listed characteristics (scales, nostrils, ear holes).

- You can create puzzles out of the photos or pictures by cutting your child's pictures into irregular puzzle shapes. Have kids reassemble the pieces using this as an opportunity to point out the scales that cover each reptile, size of the

reptile, shape and what it might eat. Use the pictures to identify some of the characteristics all reptiles share.

- You may also: Use yarn to measure out the lengths of different snakes. Search for the native and non-native snakes of your state. Cut pieces of string or yarn to the different lengths of each snake. Have kids put them in order of size. If you have different colored string or yarn use specific colors to represent a different snake then have kids practice naming the snakes that reside in your state.