

Turtles



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What kind of animal are they?

Turtles are in the animal family called **reptiles**. Reptiles cannot warm their bodies from the inside like we can. They need sunshine to warm their bodies from the outside.

When it gets too cold or if food runs low, reptiles get sleepy to save energy.

There are many kinds of reptile, such as snakes and lizards, but turtles are the only ones that have a shell.

Draw some reptiles.

Facts about the shell

The bodies of turtles are kept safe by a shell on top and underneath. The shells do not come off because some of their bones are part of the shell.

Turtles pull their legs, tails and necks into the shell to protect themselves.

The shell underneath is called a **plastron**. The shell on top is called a **carapace**. The big scales on the shell are called **scutes**. The part where the top and bottom of the shell joins is called a **bridge**.

Draw a turtle inside its shell

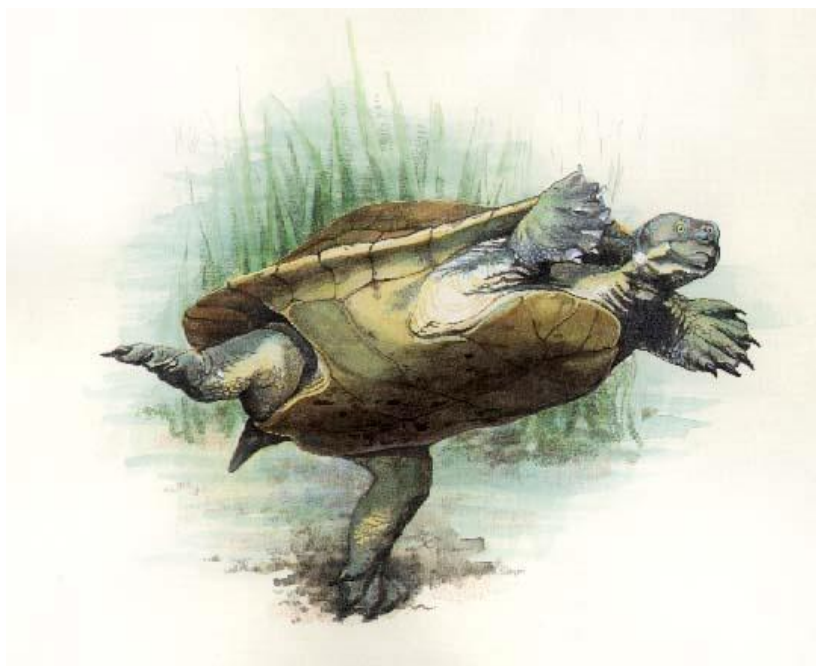
Different kinds of turtle

Turtles do not have teeth. Instead they have a sharp beak. Turtles live in water most of the time. They have long legs and webbed feet and claws.

Most live in fresh water but some are **sea turtles**. They have flatter shells and their front legs are flippers. They do not pull inside their shells.

Some turtles are called **tortoises**. They live almost all of the time on land. They have stumpy legs. Most have them have shells that are high.

Draw a line from each word to the body part



Beak
Carapace
Bridge
Plastron
Tail
Leg
Claws

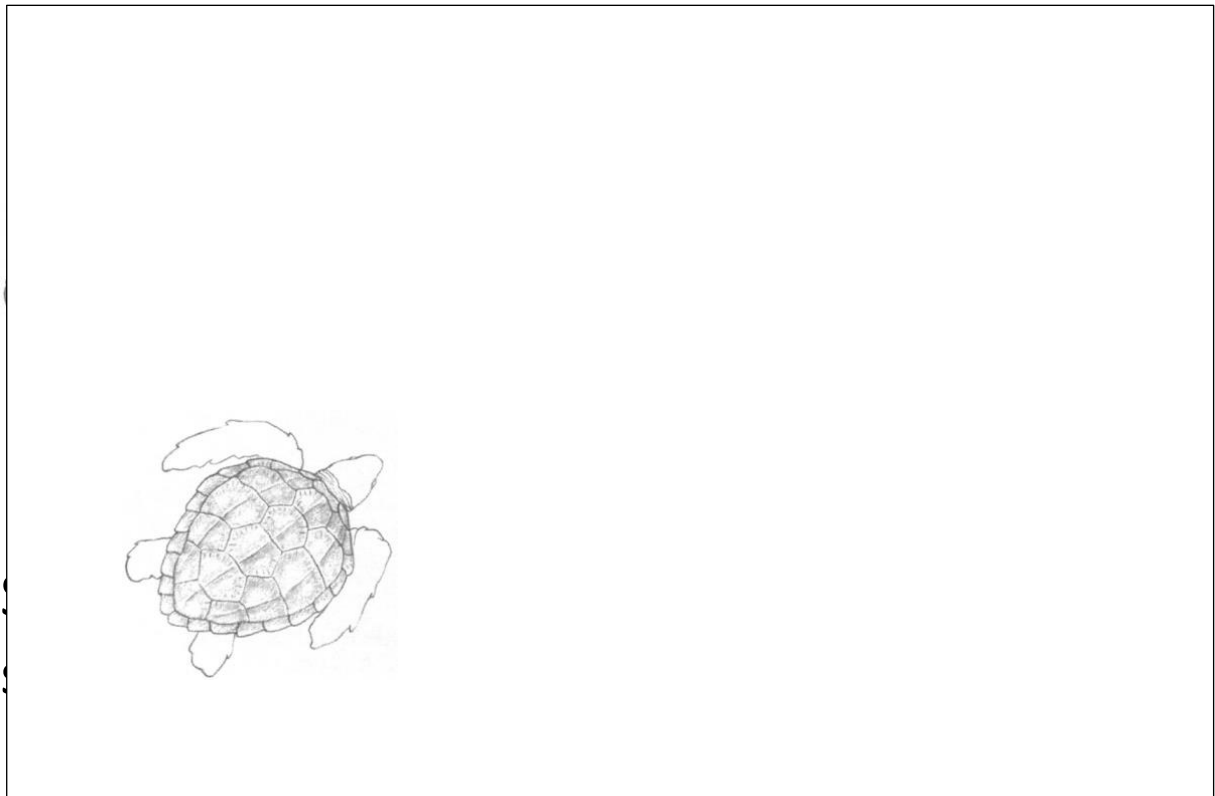
Where they live

Sea turtles live in the warmer oceans of the world.

Fresh water turtles live in rivers, streams and lakes. They hibernate deep in the mud. To hibernate is like sleeping, and they do that through the cold weather.

Tortoises live on land. Some live in hot deserts, some live in mountains, some in forests. They hibernate in holes or under rotting plants.

This is a sea turtle. Draw its home around it.



What they eat

Freshwater turtles eat insects and plants on land and tiny animals in the water.

Tortoises eat plants and fruits.

Draw and label some of the foods turtles and tortoises eat in the wild.

Baby turtles

Female turtles lay eggs on land. They dig a nest using their back legs. It can take many days to do this. When the hole is deep enough the female lays her eggs, covers up the hole and leaves. She does not look after the young ones.

After several weeks the eggs hatch. The babies are called hatchlings. They have a tooth that breaks the shell and then falls out. The hatchlings dig out of the hole.



Can you see the egg tooth? Draw an arrow pointing to it.

Female sea turtles always go back to the beach where they hatched.

Write a sentence for each word.

The first one is done for you.

plants - Tortoises eat plants.

beak-

flippers-

eggs-

shell-

rivers-

Quiz: circle the right answer

1. Which turtle does not pull its body inside its shell?

tortoise sea turtle

2. What do turtles have for a mouth?

tube lips beak

3. Females dig holes to make a nest. Which legs do they dig with?

nose back legs flippers

4. Which turtles have flippers instead of front legs?

fresh water turtles sea turtles

5. What do turtles do when it's cold?

go somewhere warm sleep swim

Make a turtle

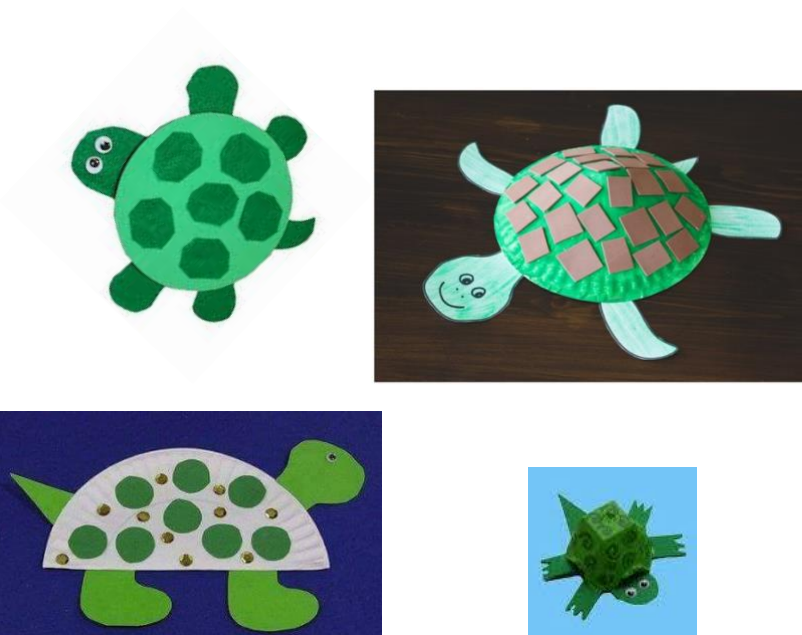
For a shell you can use a paper plate or bowl, or a circle of cardboard. For hatchlings you can use parts of egg carton.

Decorate the shell.

Draw on paper or cardboard a head, four legs and a tail. Remember that if you are making a sea turtle you will have two back legs and two flippers.

Cut these out and glue them to the shell.

Here are some examples:



Story

If you were a sea turtle, what are some of the things you would see in your world?

Write about it here or on another piece of paper. Draw a picture to illustrate your story.

Read more about turtles.

<https://www.kidcyber.com.au/turtles-and-tortoises>
<https://www.kidcyber.com.au/pet-turtles>
<https://www.natgeokids.com/au/discover/animals/sea-life/turtle-facts/>

The biggest kind of turtle is the Giant Galapagos Tortoise

<https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/animals/galapagos-tortoise>

Watch videos about turtles.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xB0OodoGuUQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qr0xIWEctyY>

Listen to the story of the tortoise and the hare

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EO1DJ6H8cVU>