

Reptiles Scavenger Hunt



MUSEUM-WIDE

Teacher Answer Key

Name

Date

Reptiles include turtles, lizards, snakes, crocodiles, and all of their relatives. There are over 9,000 different kinds of reptiles with *amazing adaptations* that help them find food and protect themselves from becoming a meal!

Starting your search in the **Rainforest** if it's open, keep an eye out for:

Geckos in the Rainforest

Keep a tally of each gecko species that you find:

- » How can you tell they are different species?

Different species may have different body shapes, coloration, adaptations, etc.

- » Can you guess where they spend most of their time?

Hint: Observe the patterns and colors of the geckos' skin.

Green coloration - leaves, brown coloration - tree trunks

Chameleons in the Rainforest

Chameleons have incredible and unique adaptations that make them well-suited for life in the trees, where they hunt and find shelter. If the Rainforest is closed, head to African Hall to find some of these lizards!

- » What are two adaptations that help chameleons find and eat small insects?

Feeding: long, sticky tongue, eyes that can move independently

- » What are two adaptations that make chameleons great tree climbers?

Hint: Look closely at their eyes, tail and feet!

Climbing: prehensile tail, specialized clawed feet

Green Anaconda in the Amazon Flooded Rainforest

Check out the heaviest type of snake in the world, the green anaconda! This snake can grow to be 9 meters (29.5 feet) long, and weighs over 227 kilograms (550 pounds)! Believe it or not, the green anaconda is a good swimmer.

- » Why would being able to swim be an advantage for an anaconda?

In spite of their heavy weight, anacondas are agile and can move more quickly in water than on land.

- » How does the green anaconda capture and subdue its prey?

Anacondas and other constrictors capture their prey using their mouths and then wrap their bodies tightly around the animal.



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Masters of camouflage

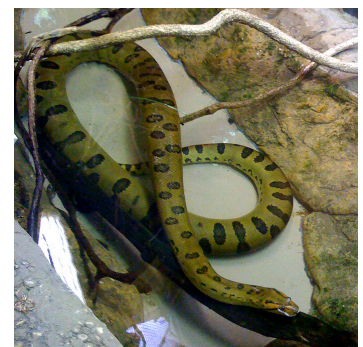
Some geckos blend into their surroundings to hide from their predators or prey!



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Did you know?

Chameleons can change color based on factors such as temperature or their mood!

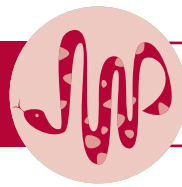


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Try out the anaconda squeeze!



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Pythons in the Water Planet Exhibit

Find the woma python, black-headed python, and centralian carpet python, which are found in the same display. Their identification labels are at knee level in the shadows. Most pythons have heat-sensing pits near their mouths and eat mammals.

- » How are the woma and black-headed pythons different from other pythons?

Womas and black-headed pythons don't have visible heat sensing pits.

- » Why would heat sensors be a useful adaptation for some snakes, but not necessarily for others?

Lizards and other ectothermic, or cold-blooded, animals make up a large part of these pythons' diets. This may explain why the ability to find prey by sensing heat could be a more useful adaptation for snakes that eat mostly warm-blooded prey, such as mammals.

Alligator and Alligator Snapping Turtles in the Swamp

Our albino alligator is named Claude, and his lack of color was caused by a rare mutation in his DNA. Alligator skin normally contains a dark green pigment.

- » How does an alligator's skin color help it to survive? What consequences might this have for an albino alligator such as Claude?

A dark green color helps the predator blend in with the dark water, so that it can sneak up on prey. Claude would have stood out in the wild as a baby alligator, and been eaten himself by a larger predator. Thankfully, he has spent his entire life in captivity!

- » What is one adaption that makes alligators strong swimmers?

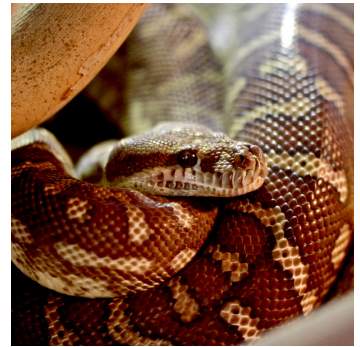
Answers might include a broad, muscular tail, webbed feet, or a streamlined body.

- » Notice the placement of Claude's eyes. How does this adaptation suit living in a swampy environment?

With eyes on the top of his head, an alligator can coast slowly through the dark water and be on the lookout for prey, without having the surface noisily each time.

- » Spend a minute to closely observe a turtle. What physical or behavioral characteristics show how it has adapted to its surroundings?

Alligator snapping turtles are "sit and wait" predators that can stay underwater for 40-50 minutes. To catch a fish, a turtle will sit very still in the depths of a water, holding its mouth open and wiggling the small, pink, worm-like appendage on its tongue to lure passing fish. These turtles are so sedentary that algae often grows on their rough shells, providing camouflage in the murky water. Their long tail helps with propulsion through the water, and although they are heavy, the water supports their weight. They only go on land to nest.



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Cousins of the boas

While most boa constrictors live in the Americas, pythons are more likely to be found in Asia, Africa, or Australia.



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How old am I?

Claude was born in 1995 in Florida. Do some quick math!



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Built like a tank

Weighing over 150 lbs, alligator snapping turtles are the largest turtle in North America!

