

Turtles vs Tortoises

Lesson Duration: 45 minutes

Teacher Information

This lesson will introduce students to the basic differences between turtles and tortoises. The main goal of this lesson is for students to learn that the structures (body parts) of different species helps them to survive in the life style and habitat they live in.

National Education Standards

4CLS1.2 Each plant or animal has different structures that serve different functions in growth, survival, and reproduction. Students will learn the body parts of turtle and tortoises, as well as the function these body parts serve.

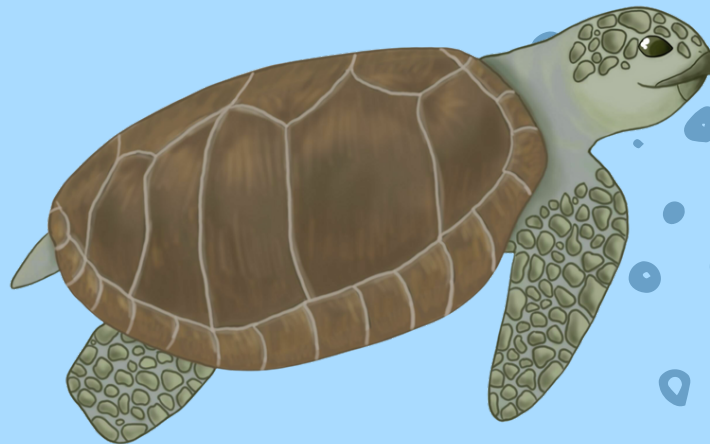


Turtles vs. Tortoises

Objective: Students will be able to identify and describe the seven species of sea turtles, their characteristics, and habitats.

Materials

- Pictures of turtles and tortoises
- Paper or board to create a Ven diagram
- Turtle and Tortoise Body Parts Flashcards (provided)
- Turtles and Tortoises Favorite Food and Habitats Worksheet (provided)



Warm-up (5 minutes)

- Ask students if they have ever seen a turtle or a tortoise before. Ask them to describe what they look like and what they do. Where have they seen them?

Turtles vs. Tortoises



Turtles and Tortoises

Duration: 35 minutes

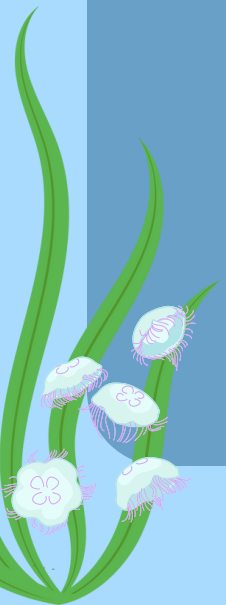
- Show students pictures of turtles and tortoises and talk about their physical characteristics.
- Tell students that we are going to compare and contrast turtles and tortoises to determine how they are different and the same. To do this, create a chart or a Ven diagram. Label one side “Turtle” and one side “Tortoise.” Explain to the students that the area in the middle is for characteristics that “Both” turtles and tortoises have. Ask students for ideas to add to the board/paper. Reference a photo of a turtle and tortoises to help stimulate ideas.
 - Turtles have flippers that are well-suited for swimming, while tortoises have short, sturdy legs that are better suited for walking on land.
 - Turtles have a streamlined body with a flatter shell, while tortoises have a more dome like shell.
 - Turtles can tuck their necks, arms, and legs into their shell while tortoises cannot.



Turtles vs. Tortoises

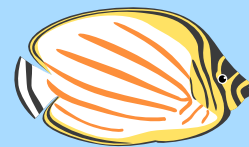


- Once students have identified the physical differences between turtles and tortoises, explain to students that they also live in different places (habitat) and eat different foods (diet). Try to have students use the characteristics they identified above to help guide their answers. Provide additional photos to stimulate ideas.
 - Turtles are adapted for swimming and can be found in a variety of environments, including oceans, rivers, and lakes. Tortoises, on the other hand, are adapted for life on land and are typically found in dry, desert-like environments.
 - Turtles are carnivores and eat a variety of foods, including insects, fish, and other small animals. Tortoises are herbivores and primarily eat plants. Show students pictures or videos of turtles and tortoises eating and ask them to identify the differences in their diets.



Turtles vs. Tortoises

- (Guided Practice) Divide students into groups of 2-3. Distribute the Turtle and Tortoise Body Part Flashcards. Have students work together to sort the different body parts into two piles: turtle and tortoise. Cards will need to be cut out. Encourage students to ask each other questions and discuss their answers.
- (Independent Practice) Provide students with the Turtles and Tortoises Favorite Food and Habitats Worksheet. Students should draw a line from the turtle and the tortoise at the top of the page to the type of food they eat and the place where they most likely live. Encourage students to use the information they learned during the lesson to help them complete the worksheet.



Turtles vs Tortoises

Conclusion (5 minutes)

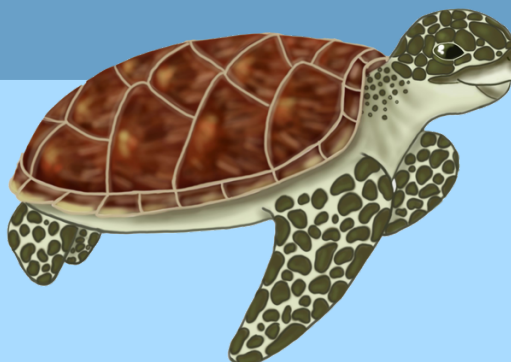
- Ask students to share one thing they learned about turtles and tortoises during the lesson. Students can draw a picture and write a sentence below their picture.
- Review the main differences between the two animals and remind students that both are important and interesting creatures.

Assessment

- Observe students during the guided practice and independent practice activities to see if they are able to identify the differences between turtles and tortoises.
- Use the worksheet as a formative assessment to see if students can apply what they learned in the lesson.

Extensions

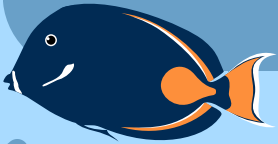
- Invite a local biologist or zookeeper to speak to the class in person or virtually.
- Organize a field trip to a local zoo or aquarium.
- Encourage students to write stories or draw pictures of turtles or tortoises.



Turtles vs Tortoises

Resources

- www.nashvillezoo.org/our-blog/posts/turtles-vs-tortoises
- www.marinesanctuary.org/blog/whats-the-difference-turtles-vs-tortoises/
- www.visitseaquest.com/blog/whats-the-difference-between-a-turtle-and-a-tortoise/



These materials are provided by SEE Turtles. SEE Turtles helps save sea turtles through conservation tours, supporting important nesting beaches, working to end demand for turtleshell, helping clean up plastic waste from turtle habitats, educating people about how to help these animals, and promoting inclusivity in the turtle community.

For lesson plans, fundraising ideas, online presentations, and field trips, please visit www.seeturtles.org/schools. For more information, please contact Brad Nahill, SEE Turtles Director, at brad@seeturtles.org or 5800-215-0378.



Directions: Cut out the six cards, cutting along the border and the dotted lines. Then try to decide whether each card is a trait that belongs to a sea turtle or tortoise.

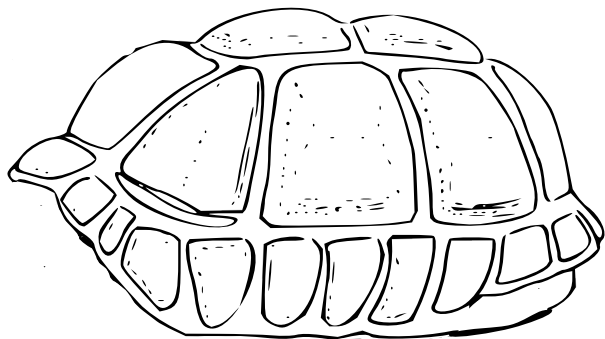
Stubby Foot



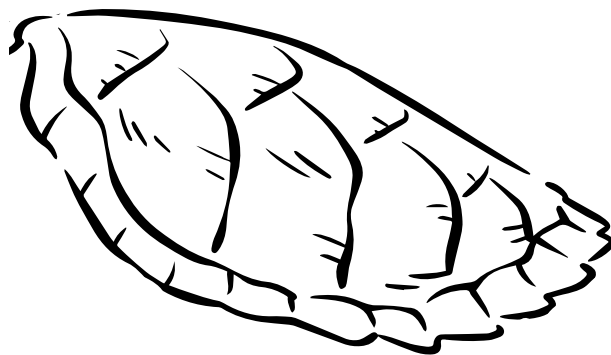
Flipper



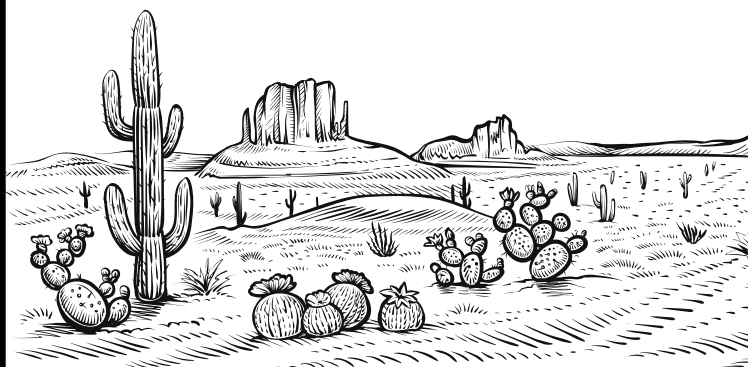
Domeshell



Flatter Shell



Lives on land



Lives in the sea



Tortoises

Turtles

Tortoises

Turtles

Tortoises

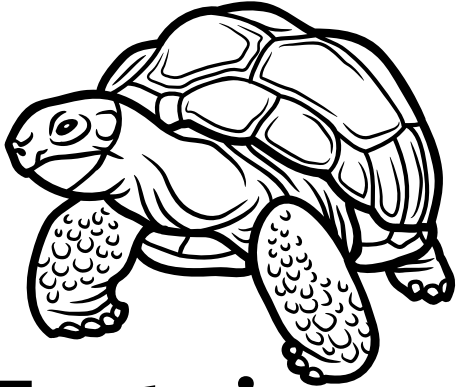
Turtles

Name: _____

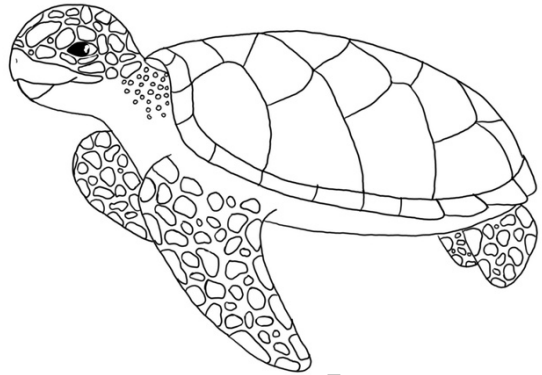
Date: _____

Turtles and Tortoises Favorite Food and Habitats

Directions: Draw a line from the tortoise and the turtle at the top of the page to the type of food they eat and the place where they most likely live.



Tortoises



Turtles

