

# TURTLE TALK

Students will learn about turtle structure. They will also learn about different turtles in Pennsylvania and how habitat loss and human interaction is destroying populations of turtles.

Learning Profile of Students:

Students will be in grades Pre-K to 4th grade.

PA Core Standards:

Standard - 3.1.K.A3

Observe, compare, and describe stages of life cycles for plants and/or animals.

Standard - 3.1.K.A5

Observe and describe structures and behaviors of a variety of common animals.

Standard - 3.1.1.C3

CONSTANCY AND CHANGE Describe changes that occur as a result of habitat.

Standard - 4.1.1.A

Identify and describe the basic needs of living things in a terrestrial habitat.

Standard - 4.1.1.D

Identify living things that are threatened, endangered, or extinct.

Standard - 4.3.K.B

Recognize the importance of conserving natural resources.

Materials Needed:

A turtle if one is available

Turtle shell

Turtle photos

Behavioral objectives:

Students will learn about turtle structure, and also learn about different turtles in Pennsylvania and how habitat loss and human interaction is destroying populations of turtles.

Introduction:

Introduce myself

Hand wash pledge

Introduce the turtles

Teaching Procedure/Sequence:

Anticipatory set: (holding franklin)

Today I brought a friend with me, meet Franklin! We are going to talk about some turtle species in Pennsylvania and how we can help them survive.

Development:

I have photos of some common turtles you can find in Pennsylvania. How many of you have found a turtle near your home or at a park? We are going to talk about a few today:

1. *Snapping Turtle*

- a. Can bite even if held on the back of their shell, flexible neck
- b. Do not pick up by tail, can break spinal column
- c. Carnivores (what is a carnivore?)
- d. Have a protrusion at the end of their tongue that looks like a worm to catch fish (try it out!)
- e. Mate once a year and lay eggs far from the water

2. *Eastern Box Turtle*

- a. Decrease in their population over the years due to habitat destruction, death from autos, ATVs and heavy equipment, and overcollection as pets
- b. Typically live 30-40 years in the wild, over 100 in captivity
- c. Habitat is the size of about two football fields, sometimes a little more or less
- d. Have high homing instinct – meaning if they are removed from their home, they will travel until they can get back
- e. Mature and reproduce when they are around 4-5 years old, they produce a small number of eggs and those hatchlings have a high mortality rate due to predators
- f. Should not be handled, due to possibility of eggs in their bodies crushing organs when turned upside down
- g. Public education is needed to abandon the practice of collecting them as pets from the wild, it is illegal!

3. *Red eared slider*

- a. NOT A NATIVE SPECIES, INVASIVE due to people buying them as pets and releasing them!
- b. Highly adaptable to many habitats
- c. Rapidly colonize the local habitat, even interbreeding with native species of turtles (have two students stand in front on pond, add five, add fifteen etc.)
- d. Compete with native species such as the Eastern Painted Turtle and Midland Painted Turtle
- e. Most carry bacterial called salmonella, it can make you sick. When released into the wild it can spread this bacterial to native turtles.

Closure:

Turtles are awesome reptiles. You can help the turtles that call Pennsylvania home by protecting their homes from habitat destruction, helping turtles cross the road safely, if you see a turtle take a picture, don't pick it up and keep it as a pet! If you buy a turtle

as a pet at a store and no longer want to keep it, take it to an animal shelter, do not release it into the wild.

To end our lesson, we are going to recite a poem together, you can repeat after me:

### The Little Turtle Song

There was a little turtle.  
He lived in a box.  
He swam in a puddle.  
He climbed on the rocks.  
He snapped at a mosquito,

He snapped at a flea,  
He snapped at a minnow.  
And he snapped at me.

He caught the mosquito,  
He caught the flea,  
He caught the minnow.  
But he didn't catch me.

### ADAPTATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL AND INDIVIDUAL NEEDS:

Lessons will be adapted as per student's IEP.

### EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:

Student learning will be evaluated by in-class questioning.