

# Turtles!

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 sing a song 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.

**SELF-EVALUATION OF TEACHING:**