

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Main Idea & Supporting Details

Read the short story and answer each question.



How Reptiles Survive in the Desert

Deserts are some of the hottest and driest places on Earth, yet many reptiles thrive in these extreme environments. How do they survive the burning heat and lack of water?

One helpful trait is their scaly skin. Unlike the soft skin of mammals, reptile scales keep moisture inside their bodies. This helps them go longer without needing water. Some desert lizards can even absorb moisture from the air or sand through their skin.

Reptiles are also cold-blooded, which means they depend on heat from their surroundings. In the desert, they warm up by lying in the sun, but they also know how to avoid overheating. During the hottest part of the day, many desert reptiles hide in the shade, burrow underground, or stay still to save energy.

Some snakes and lizards are active mostly at night when it's cooler. This behavior, called nocturnal activity, helps them hunt without using too much water or energy.

Thanks to these special adaptations, reptiles can live in places where many other animals cannot.



Name: _____

How Reptiles Survive in the Desert

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- A. Reptiles have special adaptations that help them survive in the desert.
- B. Reptiles eat cactus flowers to stay cool.
- C. Reptiles can't live anywhere but deserts.
- D. Mammals are better at staying warm than reptiles.

2. What is one way reptiles stay cool during the hottest part of the day?

- A. They hide in the shade or burrow underground.
- B. They drink cold water from rivers.
- C. They fly to cooler places.
- D. They grow extra scales.

3. Fill in the blank:

Reptiles are _____, which means they rely on outside heat to stay warm.

4. What are two key details that support the main idea of how reptiles survive desert life?

5. How do those details help explain why reptiles can live in such extreme environments?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: O

Lexile Level: 590L-740L

Grade Level: 3rd Grade, Middle of the Year

Genre: Informational / Life Science

Introducing the Text

"Today we'll read about reptiles and how they survive in one of the toughest environments on Earth: the desert. As we read, we'll look for the main idea and find important facts that support it."

Vocabulary: adaptation, moisture, cold-blooded, burrow, nocturnal

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about deserts and animals that live there?
 2. Why might it be hard for animals to survive in the desert?
 3. What kinds of reptiles have you seen or read about before?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. How do a reptile's scales help it survive?
 2. What do reptiles do when it gets too hot?
 3. What does "nocturnal" mean, and how does it help desert reptiles?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
 2. Which details help explain how reptiles survive extreme heat and dryness?
 3. How might these adaptations give reptiles an advantage over other animals?
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Activity Idea

Have students choose a desert reptile (e.g., horned lizard, rattlesnake, or gecko) and create a mini "survival card." They will draw the animal and list 3 adaptations it uses to live in the desert, using facts from the text or additional research.

