



Slithering Summer

Let's explore snakessssssss!



Reptiles are 4 legged, or descended from 4 legged, vertebrates. That means they have an internal skeleton and spine.

Most reptiles lay, generally, soft eggs.

Reptiles have dry scaly skins or plates.

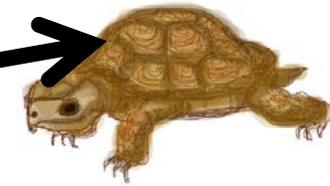
Reptiles are cold blooded— their temperature is close to the temperature outside.



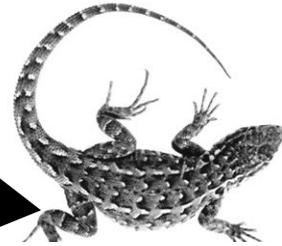
- Reptiles have a spine and either have 4 legs or are descended from creatures with 4 legs. Most reptiles lay eggs. Reptiles have scales. Most are cold blooded.

- There are 4 kinds of Texas reptiles:

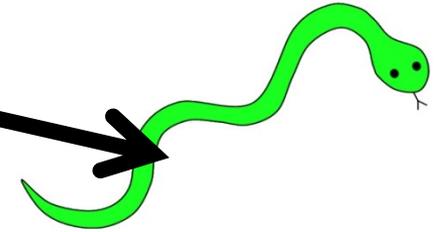
- Turtles have a bony shell derived from their pelvis, vertebrae and rib bones.



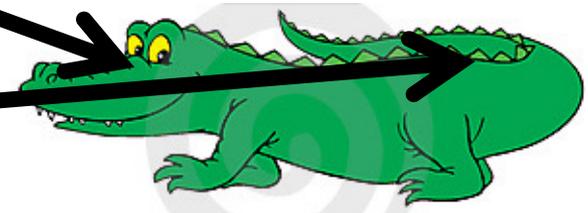
- Lizards have feet and external ears.



- Snakes are long and lack legs, external eyelids or ears. Snake skeletons are mainly backbone and ribs.



- Crocodiles and alligators are semi-aquatic with long flat snouts and compressed tails and peglike teeth. Their tails are squeezed sideways, and their eyes and ears are on the top of their heads.



The basic— reptiles without legs!

Snakes have a head and tail and a forked tongue. The tongue detects both taste and smell. Some have labial pits in the head area to detect warm blooded animals. Snakes use the sense of smell to detect predators, find a mate, and locate prey. The shape of snake pupils, and number and arrangement of scales, vary in different species.

Scientists studying snake fossils skulls, found that the ear structures resemble those of burrowing creatures, so when snake began to burrow, they no longer needed legs,





Finger snakes!

Snakes in the water, (rippling fingers)

Snakes in the trees, (pointing up high)

Snakes in the grass, (pointing down low)

And snakes in the breeze! (puffing)

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Reptiles are cold blooded—when it's hot they're hot and when it's cold, they're cold.



Shedding skin—first the eyes becomes shiny white, and the patterns lose color. Then the old skin loosens around the head. The snake rubs against something and crawls out

Snakes are cold blooded—poikilothermic. They hibernate in the winter, pile up, bask in the sun, or go underground, to regulate their temperature.



Most snakes are oviparous--laying eggs. Some male snakes do dances to attract a mate. A few weeks later the female lays eggs. After several weeks, the young slit the shell with a tooth and emerge fully formed.

A few snakes are ovoviviparous. The eggs remain within the mother and the snakes are born completely formed.



Snakes are carnivores. They eat live prey. Snakes have loosely hinged jaws connected by ligaments, covered with elastic skin so they can open their mouths wide to swallow prey bigger than themselves.

Snakes also eat eggs. The egg passes through the throat whole. Hard spiny ridges slit the shell. The nutrients go into the stomach and the shell is expelled.



Some snakes have fangs—
simple, grooved or tubular—
and glands that secrete
venom.

Snakes have various ways of
protecting themselves—playing
dead, standing up in an S shape,
puffing up their heads to look
scary, and hissing.



Snakes have various ways to evade predators—camouflage, mimicking a poisonous species, and having a tail which appears to be a head!

Some snakes live in the water. They eat amphibians and fish. Their nostrils are high on the top part of their snouts.





Snakes use color in many ways.

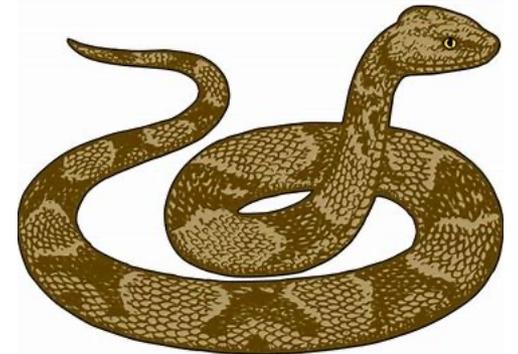
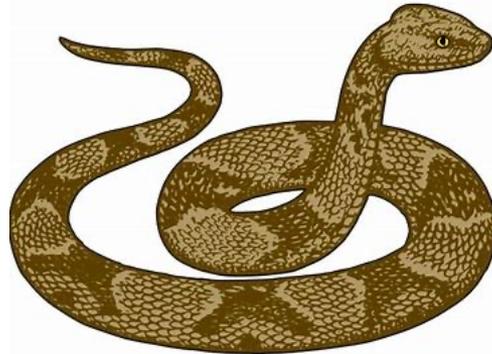
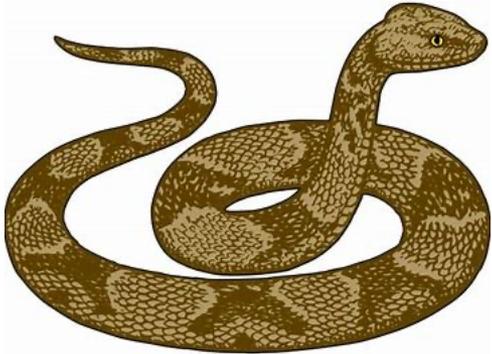
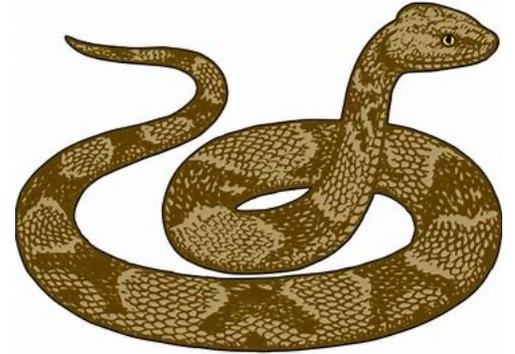
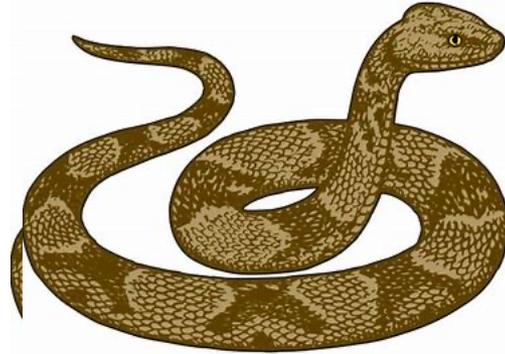
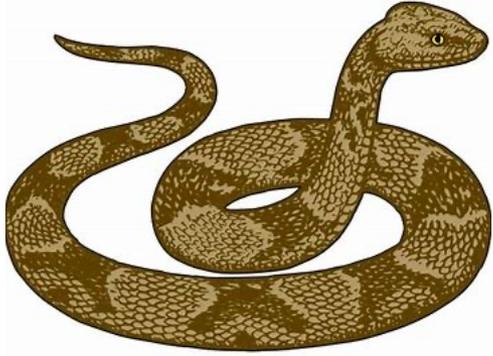
The gentle Milk Snake looks like the dangerous Coral Snake to scare away predators.

Snakes may also have colors to blend into their environments—we call this camouflage. You can have a Camouflage Adventure and find places inside or outside your house to hide these snakes, so they blend into the background.



Snakes for hiding around the outside of your house.....

You can cut these out and hide the snakes around your house.



Snakes slither in various ways—sidewinding, accordion style, or crawling sideways or forward.

There are some very large snakes—up to 30' in length. The largest snakes are pythons, boas and anacondas. They feed on birds and mammals.



Where can you find a snake?

Snakes in our area:

Texas Rat Snake, Rough Earth Snake, Texas Blind Snake, and Checkered Garter Snake.



Facts about some local snakes--

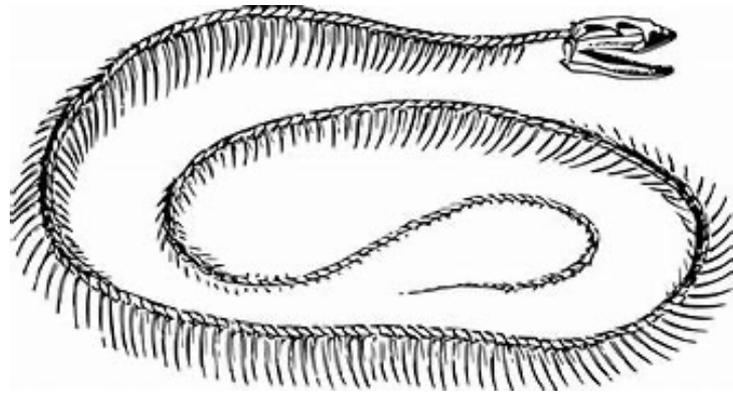
The Rough Earth Snake mainly eats insects. The Checkered Garter Snake may eat frogs. The Texas Rat Snake can eat small mammals and birds. The Texas Blind Snake lives in the ground and eats ant and termite larvae.

What to do if you find a snake?

Most snakes are not dangerous, but you can never be sure. So be careful--do not touch the snake. Stay on the trail. Dress appropriately with sturdy shoes or boots. Never put your hands in an area you cannot see and watch for snakes basking in the sun.



Snake skeletons are mainly backbones (vertebrae) and ribs. Scientists think that snakes became burrowing creatures and had no use for arms and legs



Dry scaly skin and vertebrae!

Snake skins show the signs of vertebrae.

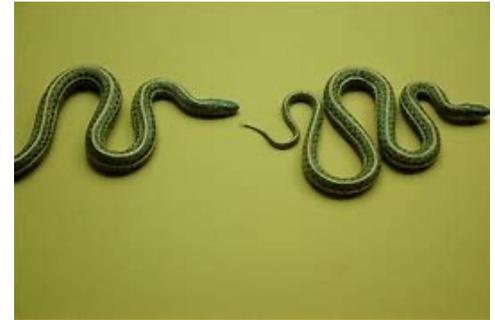


You can sing the snake song to the tune of *London Bridge*.

All the snakes are wriggling, (hand moving in S motion)
slithering, wiggling.

All the snakes are wriggling,
through the grass.

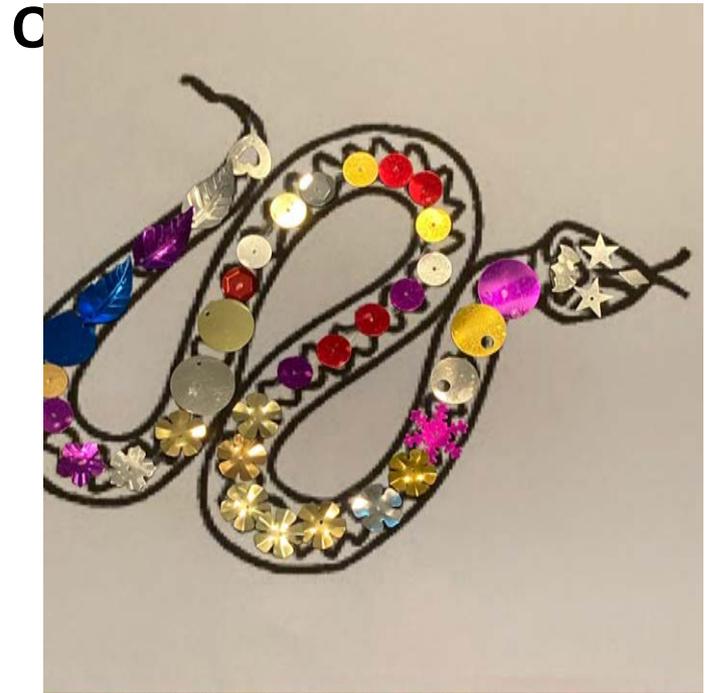
All the snakes make a sound, (hissing)
makes a hiss, make a sound.
All the snakes make a sound,
as they slither round.



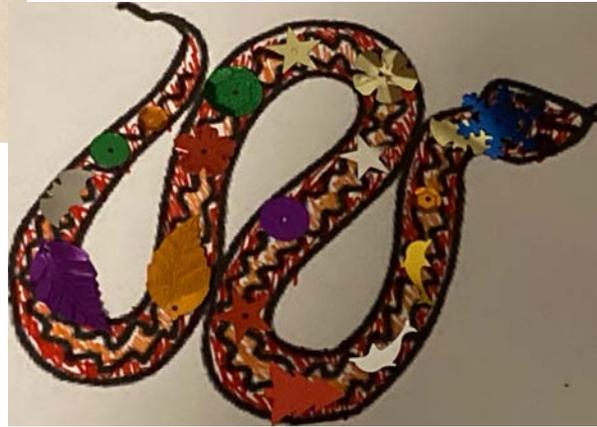
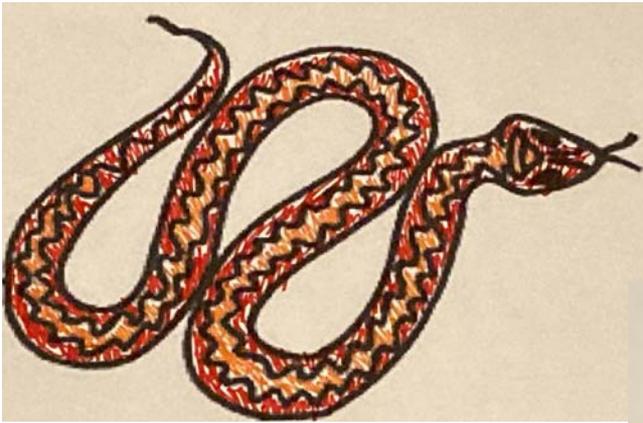
All the snakes smell with their tongues, (sticking tongue out)
With their tongues, with tongues.
All the snakes smell with their tongues,
smelling you!

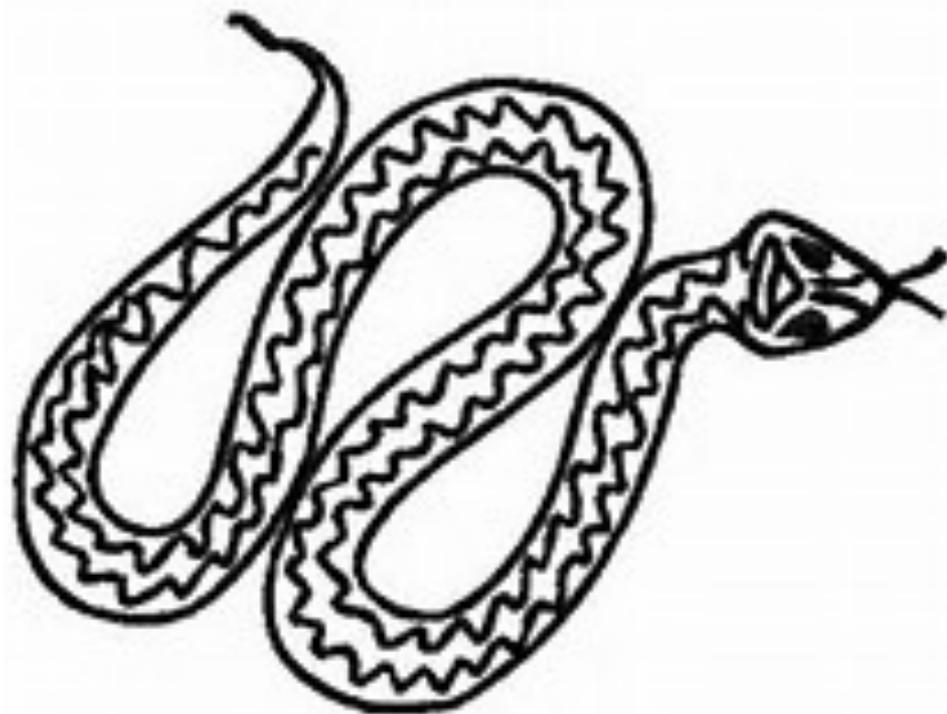


You can be a snake engineer and design a snake!!



You can be a snake artist. What could you use for scales? Sticky dots or sequins or waxed paper or foil? Now what can you glue under or over you snake to hide it in their environment?





Can you invent
a snake snack?

How about scales for a
snake—pumpkin or
sunflower seeds, baking
chips to make a pattern?
Could you use fruit
leather or licorice rope
to make the snake? Or
perhaps a a pretzel rod?



Yummy snakes!

Yum Yum



And
another
sssssnake!

Rainbow fruit and
pretzels!





What are other ways to make a snake snack?

Lots of snake books....

Non-fiction and fiction!

