



LEAPIN' LIZARDS

AND OTHER FACTS ABOUT REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

GRADE LEVEL: 5–8 **SUBJECTS:** Technology, Science, Language Arts **DURATION:** One 40-minute class period, one homework assignment

NATIONAL STANDARDS: Technology, Standard 5: Technology research tools; Science, Standard 3: Life science; Language Arts, Standard 7: Evaluating data, Standard 8: Developing research skills

MATERIALS: Computer with Internet connection and student worksheet

Use this lesson to help students develop Internet research skills by seeking facts about reptiles and amphibians on assigned web sites.

DESCRIPTION

In *Holes*, the fictitious yellow-spotted lizard is feared for its deadly bite. Herpetologists (scientists who study reptiles and amphibians) assure us that the yellow-spotted lizard does not exist. There are, however, more than 6,000 known reptile species to learn about, and some 2,400 different amphibian species, some of which are poisonous.

OBJECTIVES

- To utilize the web for primary source information on animals
- To identify various reptiles and amphibians
- To communicate found research in a creative manner that suits the intended audience

ADAPTATIONS

Younger students should work in groups, allowing the teacher more time to spend with each group, and to help encourage research. Have students draw a picture that relates to the research that they've found, and write one to three sentences about their picture and findings.

ASSESSMENT

Design a five-point rubric to assess students on demonstrated competence in using the Internet to locate specific pieces of information, and how the information is incorporated into a creative and succinct idea for an imaginary television documentary.

EXTENSIONS

Using the information found in the research, have students create posters around the findings. Present the posters to the rest of the class.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Official *Holes* web site: www.holes.com

Official web site for the *Animal Planet* channel: <http://animal.discovery.com/>

Official web site for *National Geographic*: www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/

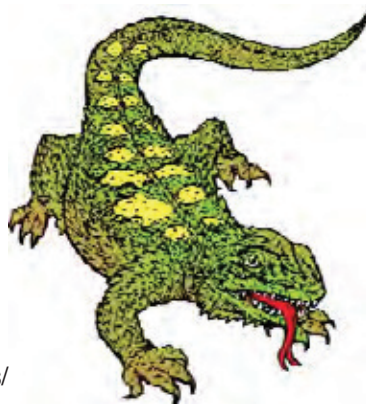
PBS's *Nature* videos from the series, *The Reptiles*: www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/index.html

Firefly Encyclopedia of Reptiles and Amphibians, by Tim Halliday (Editor), Kraig Adler (Editor), Firefly Books, 2002.

Herpetology (2nd Edition), by F. Harvey Pough (Editor), Robin M. Andrews, John E. Cadle, Martha L. Crump, Alan H. Savitzky, Kentwood D. Wells, Prentice Hall, 2000.

PROCEDURES

1. Prepare for the class by familiarizing yourself with the web sites that students will be utilizing:
 - The Columbus Zoo (www.colszoo.org/animalareas/reptiles/reptext1.html)
 - The Smithsonian National Zoo (www.fonz.org/animals/animalfacts.htm)
 - The United States Geological Survey's Field Guide for Reptiles and Amphibians of Coastal Southern California (www.werc.usgs.gov/fieldguide)
2. Pose the following questions to students: How are lizards and reptiles different from other types of animals? What's the difference between a reptile and an amphibian? Discuss.
3. Pass out copies of the worksheet to students.
4. If computer accessibility is limited, consider having students pair up or work together in small groups.
5. Each individual or group should submit one worksheet.





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NAME _____

DATE _____

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ACTIVITY

STEP 1: Visit the web sites below, then jot down five interesting facts about reptiles and amphibians that you find. Look for traits that are different from other animals such as mammals, fish, or birds. How do they adapt to desert life?

Web site resources

- The Columbus Zoo (www.colszoo.org/animalareas/reptiles/reptext1.html)
- The Smithsonian National Zoo (www.fonz.org/animals/animalfacts.htm)
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1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

STEP 2: Choose one fact that you just discovered about a reptile or amphibian. Imagine that you now have the power to create a television documentary about that animal. Who is the television show for? Will your audience be students? Adults? Scientists? What is the title of your show? Create a brief description of the show that could be published in your cable television guide. Use back of worksheet if necessary.

Title: _____

Audience: _____

Description: _____
