



The life of a turtle

Lesson plan: the sea turtle life cycle, nesting, temperature and a hatchling survival game



Ages	8 to 11 (grades 3 to 6)
Time	45 to 60 minutes
Group	Up to 35 students
Where	Any classroom, with room for everyone to stand
You need	The slides, a dice, the six stage cards and one life cycle sheet per student

What students learn

- The stages of a sea turtle's life, from egg to adult.
- That sand temperature decides whether hatchlings are male or female.
- Why hatchlings head for the sea, and how artificial lights confuse them.
- Why so few hatchlings survive, and which dangers people can reduce.

Before the lesson

1. Print the **stage cards** for the survival game and one **life cycle sheet** per student.
2. You need one dice. A large foam dice works well.

The lesson

- 1 The life cycle **10 minutes, slides 1 and 2**. Walk around the circle together.
- 2 Nesting, temperature and the dash **12 minutes, slides 3 to 5**. Explain nesting, the temperature rule and why lights on land confuse hatchlings.
- 3 Survival game **15 minutes, slide 6**. Read each stage card aloud and roll the dice once for each standing student, or let students roll in turn. Then play round 2.
- 4 In real life **8 minutes, slides 7 and 8**. Compare the game with reality, then discuss one or two questions.

Answers and what to listen for

The maths: in round 1, each hatchling has about a 17% chance of surviving all six stages, so about 6 of 35 students should still be standing. In round 2, without stages 2 and 5, the chance rises to about 39%, or about 14 of 35. Results vary with the dice, which is part of the fun.

Making it easier or harder

- **Younger groups:** the teacher rolls one dice for the whole class at each stage.
- **Older groups:** calculate the survival chance for each round as a fraction, and compare it with 1 in 1,000.

- **Movement:** run the dash to the sea in the hall, with a torch as the moon over the sea and another as a street light.

Safety and good practice

- If you run a game in the dark, keep the room partly lit and clear of chairs.

Curriculum links

- **Science:** life cycles, reproduction, environment and survival.
- **Maths:** chance and probability.
- **Ocean Literacy Principle 5:** the ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.

The teacher reading has the science behind every slide, with links to the sources.

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