

# What is a “Reptile”?

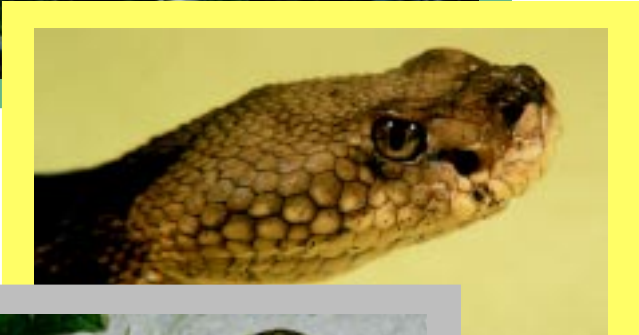


Have you ever wondered what makes an animal a reptile? Here are some characteristics that can help you tell the difference between reptiles and other animals.

**Skeleton:** Reptiles are vertebrates. Reptiles have an internal skeleton, unlike insects, which have an external skeleton.

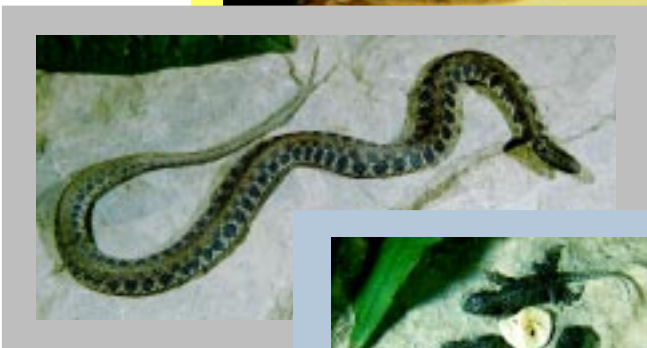


**Skin:** Reptiles have dry, scaly skin. Some reptiles such as lizards have small scales. Turtles have much larger scales called “scutes” (rhymes with “boots”). No reptiles have slimy skin, as do frogs and salamanders.



**Feet:** Reptiles have claws. Amphibians, such as frogs, toads and salamanders, do not have true claws.

**Breathing:** Reptiles have lungs. Most amphibians go through a life stage during which they have no lungs.



**Body temperature:** Reptiles are “ectotherms.” In reptiles the body temperature varies with the temperature of the environment. Mammals and birds regulate their own body temperature. They are called “endotherms.”



**Eggs and young:** Reptiles produce hard-shelled eggs or bear live young. Most amphibians lay eggs that require water to survive.