



Sea Turtles — Ancient Mariners of the Ocean

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

Sea turtles are among the most **ancient** creatures on Earth. They first appeared more than 100 million years ago, swimming through the same oceans as the dinosaurs. Today, seven species of sea turtle still exist, found mainly in warm **tropical** and subtropical seas around the world. These remarkable reptiles can live to be 70 or even 100 years old. Their dark, streamlined shells and powerful flippers make them perfectly built for a life spent almost entirely at sea.

Every two to four years, female sea turtles return to the exact same beach where they were born to build a **nest**. They crawl onto the sand at night, dig a deep hole with their back flippers, and lay between 80 and 120 soft, leathery eggs. About two months later, tiny hatchlings break out together and race across the sand toward the moonlit sea. Sadly, only about one in a thousand will **survive** to become an adult.

Once at sea, young turtles begin one of the most amazing journeys in the natural world. Using the Earth's magnetic field like an invisible map, they navigate thousands of kilometres across open ocean. Some species, like the leatherback, swim from tropical breeding beaches all the way to cold northern waters in search of jellyfish. Scientists believe sea turtles can memorise the magnetic signature of their home beach, returning to it decades later to lay their own eggs.

Despite their long history of survival, sea turtles face many serious **threats** today. **Pollution**, especially plastic waste, is one of the worst dangers. Floating plastic bags look like jellyfish — a favourite food — and many turtles die after swallowing them. **Climate** change is also raising sand temperatures, which can affect whether the eggs become male or female turtles. Coastal development, fishing nets, and the illegal trade in turtle shells continue to reduce the global turtle **population** every year.

Around the world, scientists and volunteers are working to **protect** these ancient mariners. Beaches are guarded during nesting season, fishing nets now include special escape openings, and laws ban the sale of turtle products. Every traveler who refuses single-use plastic, and every visitor who keeps a beach clean, is part of the global effort to make sure this remarkable **journey** continues for another 100 million years.

A. Vocabulary

1. ancient _____

a. harmful substances released into the environment

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|---------------------|--|
| 2. tropical _____ | b. the total number of a particular animal living in an area |
| 3. nest _____ | c. to keep something safe from harm or damage |
| 4. survive _____ | d. a place built by an animal to lay eggs or raise young |
| 5. threat _____ | e. a long trip from one place to another |
| 6. pollution _____ | f. something likely to cause damage or harm |
| 7. climate _____ | g. the usual weather pattern of a region over a long time |
| 8. population _____ | h. very old; from a time long ago in history |
| 9. protect _____ | i. from or relating to the hot regions near the equator |
| 10. journey _____ | j. to continue to live, especially in difficult conditions |



B. True or False

1. Sea turtles first appeared more than 100 million years ago. _____
2. There are seven species of sea turtle alive in the world today. _____
3. Female sea turtles lay their eggs on any random beach they happen to find. _____
4. A sea turtle nest usually contains between 80 and 120 eggs. _____
5. About one in ten hatchlings survives to become an adult sea turtle. _____
6. Sea turtles use the Earth's magnetic field to navigate the ocean. _____
7. Plastic bags are dangerous because turtles mistake them for jellyfish. _____
8. Climate change has no effect on sea turtle eggs. _____
9. Special escape openings in fishing nets help protect sea turtles. _____



C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: ancient, tropical, threat, climate, protect

1. Sea turtles are among the most _____ animals on Earth, dating back over 100 million years.
2. Today, sea turtles are found mainly in warm _____ and subtropical seas around the world.
3. Plastic pollution is one of the most serious _____ to the survival of sea turtles.
4. _____ change is raising sand temperatures and affecting whether eggs become male or female.
5. Scientists and volunteers work hard to _____ sea turtles during their nesting season.

D. Comprehension Questions

1. When did sea turtles first appear, and how many species exist today?
2. Describe how a female sea turtle builds a nest and lays her eggs.
3. How do sea turtles navigate across thousands of kilometres of open ocean?
4. What are the main threats facing sea turtles today?
5. What are people doing around the world to protect sea turtles?

E. Discussion Questions

1. Do you think it is fair for governments to ban the trade in turtle products, even if it hurts the income of some coastal communities? Why or why not?
2. What can ordinary travelers and tourists do in their daily lives to help protect sea turtles?
3. If sea turtles disappeared, how do you think it would affect the rest of the ocean ecosystem?





Answer Key

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A. Vocabulary: 1-h, 2-i, 3-d, 4-j, 5-f, 6-a, 7-g, 8-b, 9-c, 10-e

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-T, 3-F, 4-T, 5-F, 6-T, 7-T, 8-F, 9-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-ancient, 2-tropical, 3-threat, 4-Climate, 5-protect

D. Comprehension:

1. Sea turtles first appeared more than 100 million years ago, and seven species still exist today, found mainly in warm tropical and subtropical seas.
2. She returns at night to the exact same beach where she was born, digs a deep hole in the sand with her back flippers, and lays between 80 and 120 soft, leathery eggs before covering them and returning to the sea.
3. Sea turtles use the Earth's magnetic field like an invisible map, and scientists believe they memorise the magnetic signature of their home beach so they can return to it decades later.
4. The main threats are plastic pollution (especially bags that look like jellyfish), climate change raising sand temperatures, coastal development, fishing nets, and the illegal trade in turtle shells.
5. Beaches are guarded during nesting season, fishing nets include special escape openings, laws ban the sale of turtle products, and individuals reduce plastic use and keep beaches clean.