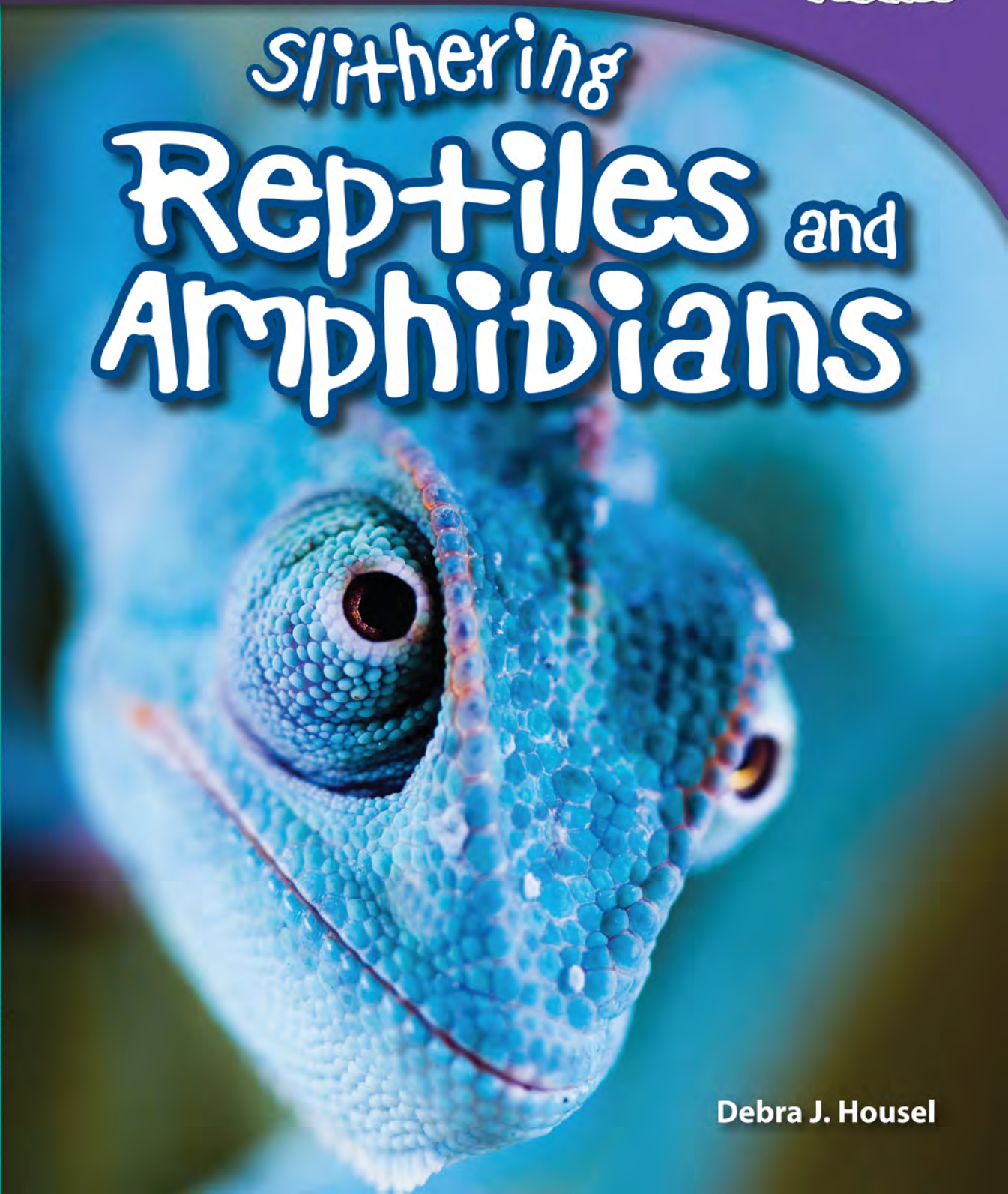
TIME FOR KIDS

Slithering Reptiles and Amphibians



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What Is a Reptile?

Have you seen a **snake** or a **lizard** lying in the sun? Why do they do that? They are **reptiles**, and they need the heat that comes from the sun.

Reptiles need heat from their **environments** to **maintain** their body temperatures. Unlike you, reptiles are **cold-blooded** animals.

▼ There are more than 6,500 kinds of reptiles. Tortoises are one of them.



leopard tortoise



python



agama lizard

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Vertebrates

Vertebrates are animals with backbones or spines.

You have hair and smooth skin. Reptiles have neither. Their bodies are covered with dry scales. But just like you, reptiles have five senses and a backbone. They are **vertebrates** (VUR-tuh-breyts) like humans.

Kinds of Reptiles



There are four reptile groups.

The first group includes lizards and reptiles. Lizards live in warm places. Most lizards avoid water, but marine iguanas swim in the sea. Snakes have spines that bend and twist to let them move. They also have sharp teeth, and some have fangs. From the desert to the sea, snakes are found in many different environments.

Crocodilians have short, stubby **limbs**. Both crocodiles and alligators live in and near warm water.



Third Eye

The tuatara has a third eye on top of its head! The eye can only see light and dark.

◀ Tuataras only live on islands off the coast of New Zealand.



▲ The desert tortoise lives where it is hot and dry.

Be Careful!

Some people keep reptiles as pets. If you touch reptiles, always wash your hands afterward. They may have **salmonella** (sal-muh-NEL-uh) on their scales. Salmonella is a germ. It doesn't hurt the reptiles, but it could make you very sick.

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Turtles and **tortoises** have shells. When one gets attacked, it pulls its head, limbs, and tail inside. Unless the predator can crack its shell, the turtle or tortoise stays safe. Tortoises usually live on land. Turtles live in or near water. They are good swimmers. Some even live in the sea.

Tuataras (too-uh-TAHR-uhs) are the fourth reptile group. They look like lizards, but they are more closely related to dinosaurs than any other reptiles.

Where Do They Live?

Reptiles live everywhere except for the polar regions. These places are so cold that a reptile would freeze to death.

During the winter, reptiles **hibernate**. They sleep in holes, under rocks, or buried in mud. Their heart and lungs slow down. They look dead, but they awaken in spring.

Did You Know?

Reptiles that live in warm places don't hibernate.



▼ hibernating prairie rattlesnakes

▼ New skin may grow beneath the old skin.

A New Snake?

Long ago people believed that snakes lived forever. People thought snakes were reborn when they shed their skins.



Lizards and snakes shed their skin. A lizard's skin flakes off. A snake's skin peels off in one piece.

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