The Scaly Trail



Nia and Ben visited Sunstone Nature Park on a warm morning.

Near the pond, Ranger Marisol knelt beside a turtle resting on a flat rock.

'Look closely,' she said. 'Today we are going to discover what makes a reptile a reptile.'

Nia noticed the turtle's dry shell and rough skin.

Ben watched it stretch its neck toward the sun.

'It looks different from the animals in the meadow,' he said.

Ranger Marisol smiled. 'That is the first clue on the scaly trail.'

Science Fables

Dry, Scaly Skin



At the reptile garden, Ranger Marisol pointed to a green lizard warming itself on a log.

Nia saw tiny scales covering its body.

'Its skin looks dry, not soft or furry,' she said.

'That is an important reptile clue,' Ranger Marisol explained.

'Reptiles have dry, scaly skin that helps protect them.'

Ben leaned closer. 'The scales look like tiny shields.'

The scaly trail was getting more interesting already.

Science Fables

Sun Lovers



Soon they found another reptile stretched out on a sunny rock.

'Why does it sit in the sun?' Ben asked.

Ranger Marisol smiled. 'Reptiles are cold-blooded, so they use warmth from the sun to help their bodies work.'

Nia looked at the lizard soaking up the light.

'So the sun helps it get ready to move,' she said.

'Exactly,' Ranger Marisol replied. 'Many reptiles rest in warm places and cool down in shade when they need to.'

Now the children knew reptiles were true sun lovers.

Science Fables

Egg Clues



At the next stop, Ranger Marisol showed the children a nest display with reptile eggs.

'Many reptiles lay eggs,' she said.

Nia noticed that the eggs looked different from bird eggs.

'Some reptile eggs feel leathery instead of hard,' Ranger Marisol explained.

Ben nodded. 'So eggs are another reptile clue.'

'Yes,' she said. 'Many reptiles begin life inside eggs, and the babies hatch when they are ready.'

The children added eggs to their growing list of reptile facts.

Science Fables

Breathing Air



Near the water, Ben watched a turtle lift its head and take a breath.

Ranger Marisol explained, ‘Reptiles breathe air with lungs.’

Nia thought about fish living in water.

‘So even reptiles that spend time near water still need air,’ she said.

‘That is right,’ Ranger Marisol answered.

‘Turtles, snakes, lizards, and crocodiles all use lungs to breathe.’

By now, the reptile clues were fitting together like puzzle pieces.

Science Fables

Science Element



Reptiles are animals with dry, scaly skin.

They are cold-blooded, so they use warmth from the sun or shade from their surroundings to help control body temperature.

Most reptiles breathe air with lungs.

Many reptiles lay eggs, though a few give birth to live young.

Common reptiles include turtles, lizards, snakes, and crocodilians.

Simple idea: if an animal has dry scales, breathes with lungs, and is a cold-blooded vertebrate, it is probably a reptile.

Science Fables