ANIMAL LEARNING CENTER · NOT CURRENTLY AT THE ZOO

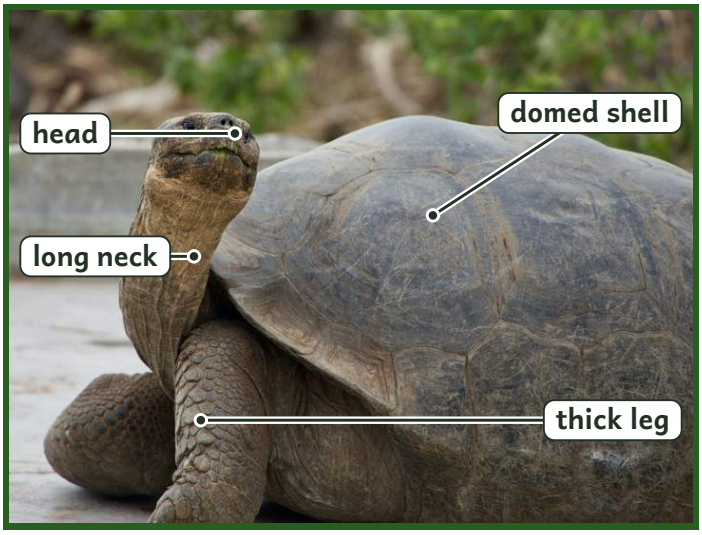
GALÁPAGOS TORTOISE

Chelonoidis species

GRADES K–2

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · © 2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.
Teachers may copy and share this sheet freely as long as they credit Plumpton Park Zoo.

Teachers: read this page aloud, one part at a time (about 5 minutes). Children follow along and say the bold words.



A giant tortoise from the Galápagos Islands.

Its body

It is a very big tortoise.
It has a hard **shell**.
Some shells are round.
Some rise up in front.

Its home (habitat)

It lives on islands.
They are the Galápagos Islands.
People help raise young tortoises.



■ Lives in parts of this area ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

Its food

It eats grass and fruit.
It eats cactus too.

Its babies (life cycle)

A baby is a **hatchling**.
It hatches from an egg.
An egg is as big as a tennis ball.
A hatchling stays in the nest at first.

Fun facts

It rests about 16 hours a day!

Words to know

hatchling: a baby that just came out of its egg
shell: the hard cover on its back

Talk about it

1. What two shell shapes can it have?
2. What does it eat?
3. How do people help these tortoises?

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/reptiles-and-amphibians/galapagos-tortoise/ · **Sources:** Galápagos Conservancy; Charles Darwin Foundation; Gaughran et al. (2024); Blake et al. (2024); IUCN Red List; Gibbs et al. (2014); Galapagos Conservation Trust.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: K-LS1-1 (3.1.K.A)
Plumpton Park Zoo · 1416 Telegraph Rd, Rising Sun, MD 21911 · (410) 658-6850 · plumptonparkzoo.org · a 501(c)(3) nonprofit zoo · Photo: Magdalena Kula Manchee on Unsplash

GALÁPAGOS TORTOISE

Before and after you read

GRADES K–2

Page 2 of the galápagos tortoise fact sheet for grades K–2 · © 2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.
Teachers may copy and share this sheet freely as long as they credit Plumpton Park Zoo.

Name _____ **Date** _____

Before you read · 5 minutes

What do you think? Circle **YES** or **NO**.

1. A tortoise has a shell. **YES** **NO**
2. All the shells look the same. **YES** **NO**
3. A baby hatches from an egg. **YES** **NO**
4. It eats meat. **YES** **NO**

Look closely · with a partner

Look at the photo on page 1. Check each one you see.

- ☐ domed shell
- ☐ head
- ☐ long neck
- ☐ thick legs

Where does it live? Find the dark part of the map, then circle.

South America · Africa · Asia

After you read · 10 minutes

Draw a tortoise eating cactus on an island.

Draw here

A tortoise has a _____

I learned that _____

ADJUST IT Kindergarten: read everything aloud; children talk and draw, and an adult writes their words. **Grade 2:** children read page 1 on their own. **Grades 3–5:** use the regular galápagos tortoise sheet on Teacher Resources. **Second source:** read about this animal in your class database or a library book too, then ask what both said and what was new. **Answers:** 1 yes, 2 no, 3 yes, 4 no. Map answer: South America, in the islands near it.

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/reptiles-and-amphibians/galapagos-tortoise/ · Page 1 of this sheet has the words and picture this page refers to.
Science, grades K–1: Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): K-LS1-1 · Pennsylvania (STEELS): 3.1.K.A
Reading and writing, grade 1: Maryland and Delaware: RI.1.1 · RI.1.7 · RI.1.9 · W.1.8 · Pennsylvania: CC.1.2.1.B · CC.1.2.1.G · CC.1.2.1.I · CC.1.4.1.W
Plumpton Park Zoo · 1416 Telegraph Rd, Rising Sun, MD 21911 · (410) 658-6850 · plumptonparkzoo.org · a 501(c)(3) nonprofit zoo