

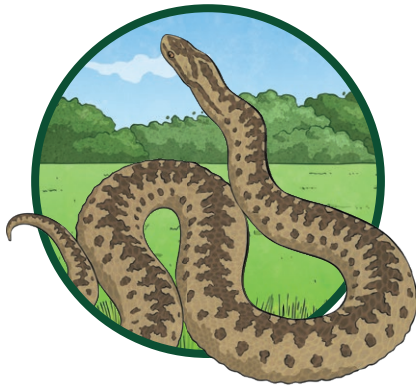
British Reptiles

Reptiles can be found in a wide range of habitats, from garden compost heaps to woodlands. Because some of Britain's six species of reptile are now very rare, they can be tricky to spot. These cold-blooded animals bask in the sun to warm up so, if you want to see them, carefully explore when the sun is shining. If you are lucky, you may see...



Adders

The adder is the UK's only venomous snake.



Although they are venomous, adders rarely bite humans. If they do, it is a painful bite but almost never fatal.

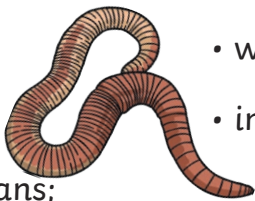
Male adders are usually grey while females are reddish-brown. There are also black adders. All adders have a diamond or zigzag pattern along their backs.



"Seconds Out, Round One" by Kevin Clarke

Adders will feed on:

- small mammals;
- birds;
- lizards;
- amphibians;
- spiders;
- worms;
- insects.



Grass Snakes

Grass snakes are very difficult to spot because they are fast moving. They are found in some areas of Britain, usually in:

- open woodland;
- rough grassland;
- gardens;
- parks.



Did You Know...?

The grass snake is Britain's only egg-laying snake. Eggs are laid in compost or manure where the warmth incubates the eggs.



The grass snake is an excellent swimmer, able to stay under water for over half an hour. Because of this, they usually live near water such as lakes, ponds, streams and marshes.

A grass snake is known to eat:

- frogs;
- toads;
- newts;
- fish;
- small mammals;
- young birds.

Smooth Snakes

The smooth snake is rare in the UK. It is a constrictor, which means that it coils around and crushes its prey. Smooth snakes like to eat:

- sand lizards;
- insects;
- slow worms;
- young birds.

Smooth snakes are well camouflaged but they are still the prey of some birds and animals. They will strike out if they are caught but, because they are non-venomous, they are just trying to scare their predators away.

Common Lizards

The common lizard is the UK's most common reptile. It is found across a variety of habitats, including:

- heathland;
- woodland;
- moorland;
- grassland.

It incubates its eggs inside its body and gives birth to live young.

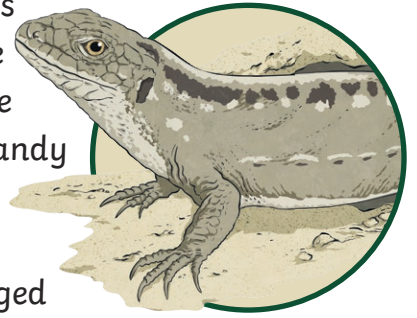
Did You Know...?

If threatened by a predator, the common lizard sheds its tail. The thrashing of the tail distracts the predator and gives the common lizard a chance to escape.



Sand Lizards

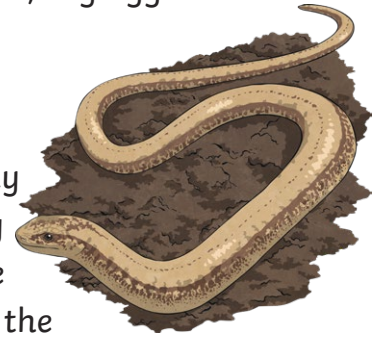
The sand lizard is the rarest reptile in the UK because its habitat of sandy heathlands is being destroyed. Females are a well-camouflaged sandy-brown. Males develop bright green markings during the mating season. The sand lizard is the only egg-laying lizard in the UK.



Sand lizards dig burrows up to one metre deep. They use these to shelter, lay eggs in and hibernate in.

Slow Worms

Slow worms are actually legless lizards! They are found across the UK – they often enjoy the warmth of garden compost heaps. They can be brown, grey or bronze. The female incubates her eggs inside her body, giving birth to live young.



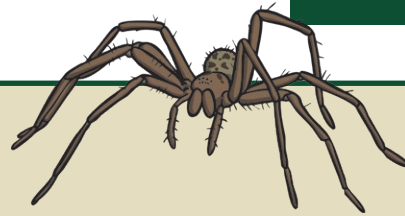
Slow worms eat:

- worms;
- insect larvae;
- woodlice;
- slugs.
- spiders;



Did You Know...?

Gardeners love slow worms because slow worms love to eat insects and slugs!



Threats to British Reptiles and How You Can Help

The biggest threat to British reptiles is the loss of their homes. It is possible to help some of these creatures in your own garden by keeping a wild area that they can hide in. You could also encourage minibeasts into your garden by making a bug hotel. This would give your new lizard friends plenty of food to eat.



Questions

1. What kind of weather is best for spotting reptiles? Tick one.

- rain
 sunshine
 snow
 wind

2. Match the reptile to the correct fact.

common lizard

lays eggs

grass snake

sheds its tail if threatened

adder

UKs only venomous snake

3. What is the rarest reptile in the UK?

4. Fill in the missing word:

Male adders are usually _____ while _____ are reddish-brown.

5. Find and copy a word from the first paragraph which means the same as **natural homes**.

6. Why has the author used bullet points?

7. Why are British reptiles difficult to see? Give two reasons.

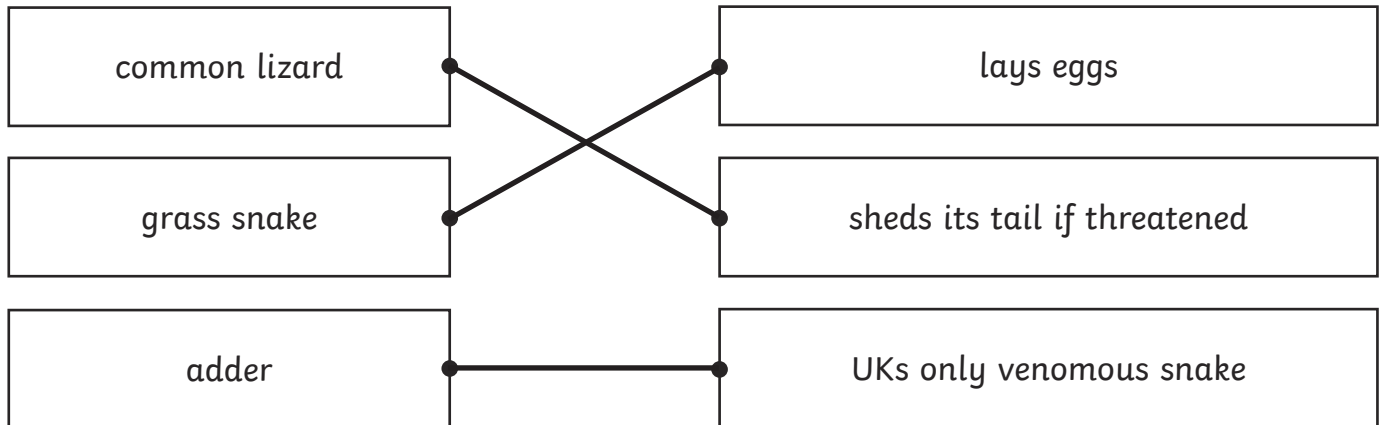
8. Which of the reptiles mentioned would you most like to see? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. What kind of weather is best for spotting reptiles? Tick one.

- rain
 sunshine
 snow
 wind

2. Match the reptile to the correct fact.



3. What is the rarest reptile in the UK?

The rarest reptile in the UK is the sand lizard.

4. Fill in the missing word:

Male adders are usually **grey** while **females** are reddish-brown.

5. Find and copy a word from the first paragraph which means the same as **natural homes**.
habitats

6. Why has the author used bullet points?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The author has used bullet points to make the text clear and easy to read.

7. Why are British reptiles difficult to see? Give two reasons.

Pupils' own responses, such as: British reptiles are difficult to see because they only come out in certain types of weather. They can also be sneaky and shy creatures who prefer to stay hidden.

8. Which of the reptiles mentioned would you most like to see? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would most like to see an adder because I think it would be interesting to meet Britain's only venomous snake.

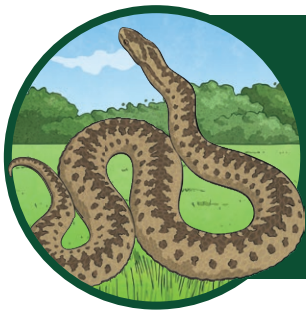
British Reptiles

Reptiles are found in a wide range of habitats, from garden compost heaps to woodlands. However, some of Britain's six species of reptile are now very rare, meaning they can be tricky to spot. If you want to see these creatures, you will need to explore when the sun is shining during the warmer months; you may see these cold-blooded animals **basking**. If you are lucky, you could see...



Adders

Latin Name: *Vipera berus*
Length: 60-90cm
Mass: 50-180g
Life Expectancy: 10-15 years in the wild



The UK's only venomous snake, the adder, might be seen basking in a sunny area of woodland. Although venomous, adders rarely bite humans; when they do, the bite is painful but almost never **fatal**.

Male adders are usually grey while females are reddish-brown. There are also black adders. All adders have a diamond or zigzag pattern along their backs.



"Seconds Out, Round One" by Kevin Clarke

Adders will feed on small mammals, birds, lizards and amphibians; some will also feed on spiders, worms and insects.

Female adders give birth to live young in late summer or early autumn, after **incubating** the eggs inside their body.



Grass Snakes

Latin Name: *Natrix natrix*
Length: 90-150cm
Mass: Around 240g
Life Expectancy: 15-25 years in the wild



Grass snakes are very difficult to spot as they are fast-moving, shy creatures. They are found living in open woodland, rough grassland, gardens and parks where there is some water present, such as lakes, ponds, streams or marshes.

The grass snake is an excellent swimmer and is able to stay **submerged** for over half an hour! There is no



surprise that the grass snake's diet consists of frogs, toads, newts and fish; small mammals and young birds may be swallowed live. The grass snake is Britain's only egg-laying snake; eggs are laid in compost or manure where the warmth incubates the eggs.



Did You Know...?

Grass snakes have many predators, such as badgers, foxes, cats, hedgehogs and some birds. When threatened, the grass snake 'plays dead', trying to look less appealing. If caught, they will hiss and release a foul smell.

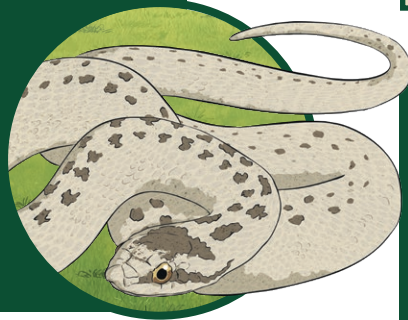
Smooth Snakes

Latin Name: *Coronella austriaca*

Length: 50-70cm

Mass: Around 100g

Life Expectancy:
Up to 20 years in the wild



The smooth snake is rare; native to the few heathland areas remaining in the UK. It is a constrictor, which means that it coils around its prey. Its prey usually consists of sand lizards, slow worms, insects and young birds.

Smooth snakes are well-camouflaged but are still the prey of some birds and animals. If caught, they will strike. However, as they

are non-venomous, their strike is just used as an attempt to scare their predators away.

Common Lizards

Latin Name: *Zootoca vivipara*

Length: 10-15cm

Life Expectancy: 5-6 years in the wild



The common lizard is the UK's most common reptile, found across a variety of habitats, including heathland, moorland, woodland and grassland. It incubates its eggs inside its body and gives birth to live young.

Did You Know...?

If threatened by a predator, the common lizard sheds its tail. Due to the thrashing of the tail, the predator will become distracted, giving the common lizard a chance to flee.



Sand Lizards

Latin Name: *Lacerta agilis*

Length: 20cm

Mass: Around 15g

Life Expectancy:
Up to 20 years in the wild



Females are a well-camouflaged sandy-brown, while males develop bright green markings during the mating season. The sand lizard is the only egg-laying lizard in the UK.



Slow Worms

Latin Name: Anguis fragilis

Length: 40-50cm

Mass: 20-100g

Life Expectancy: Up to 20 years in the wild



Despite looking like a snake and being called a 'worm', the slow worm is actually a legless lizard!

They are found across the UK, often enjoying the warmth of garden compost heaps. They are a variety of colours: brown, grey or bronze. As with many other reptiles **native** to the UK, the female incubates her eggs internally, giving birth to live young. They eat worms, spiders, woodlice, insect larvae and slugs. Due to this, gardeners love slow worms!



Glossary

native: Born in a particular place.

basking: To lie exposed to warmth and light, typically from the sun, for relaxation and pleasure.

fatal: Causing death.

incubating: To keep warm and bring to hatching.

submerged: Under water.



Threats to British Reptiles and How You Can Help

The greatest threat to British reptiles is loss of habitat; this is often caused by humans building. It is possible to help some of these creatures in your own garden by keeping a wild area that they can hide in. You may also wish to encourage minibeasts into your garden as food for them – why not make a bug hotel?



Questions

1. How long are adult grass snakes? Tick one.

- 40-50cm
 50-70cm
 60-90cm
 90-150cm

2. Match the reptile to its mass:

grass snake

20-100g

sand lizard

around 240g

slow worm

around 15g

3. Name two habitats that grass snakes can be found in.

- _____
- _____

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence: Grass snakes have many _____, such as badgers, _____, cats and some _____.

5. Find and copy a word from the text that shows that slow worms are born in the UK.

6. Summarise the information about sand lizards in 40 words or less.

7. Why do you think that gardeners love slow worms?

8. Why will a bug hotel help British reptiles?

9. Why has the author included a glossary? Choose one other word to include and write a definition for it.

Answers

1. How long are adult grass snakes? Tick one.

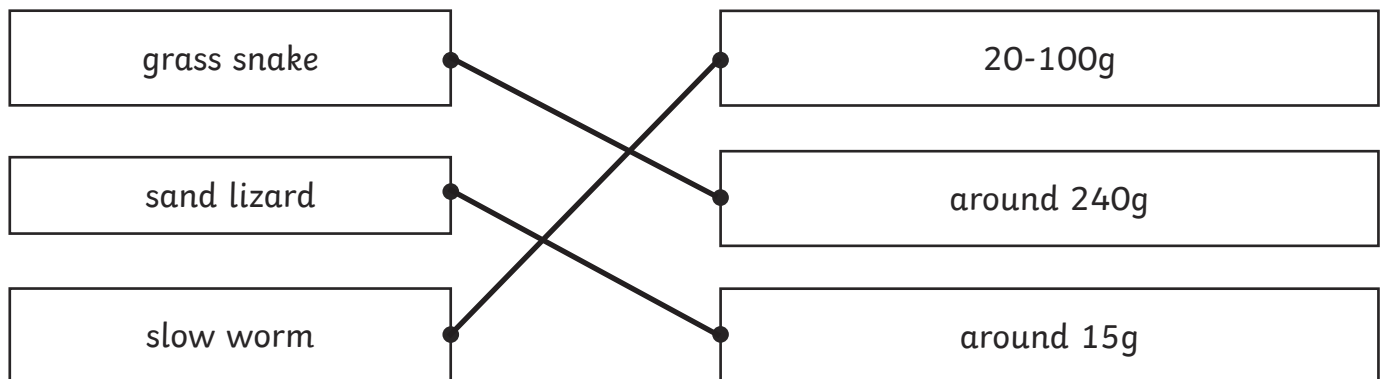
40-50cm

50-70cm

60-90cm

90-150cm

2. Match the reptile to its mass:



3. Name two habitats that grass snakes can be found in.

Accept any two of the following: open woodland; rough grassland; gardens; parks.

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

Grass snakes have many **predators**, such as badgers, **foxes**, cats and some **birds**.

5. Find and copy a word from the text that shows that slow worms are born in the UK.

native

6. Summarise the information about sand lizards in 40 words or less.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Sand lizards are very rare due to the few remaining sandy heathlands. Females, the only egg-laying lizards in the UK, are sandy-brown; males have bright green markings during the mating season.

7. Why do you think that gardeners love slow worms?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Slow worms eat slugs and other insects which could damage the plants in a garden. I think that gardeners love them because they help to control these minibeasts.

8. Why will a bug hotel help British reptiles?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Some British reptiles eat insects and minibeasts so a bug hotel, which encourages these creatures, could provide food for some reptiles.

9. Why has the author included a glossary?

Choose one other word to include and write a definition for it.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The author has included a glossary to explain the meanings of some of the more tricky words.
internally: On the inside.**

British Reptiles

Reptiles are found in a wide range of habitats, from garden compost heaps to sandy heaths and woodlands. However, some of Britain's six species of reptile are now very rare. If you want to see these fascinating creatures, you will need to venture out when the sun is shining – you may see these cold-blooded animals basking (warming in the sun). They are mainly visible between April and October as they go into brumation (a dormant state that is similar to hibernation) during the winter months. If you are lucky, you may see...



Adders feed on small mammals, birds, lizards and amphibians; some will also feed on spiders, worms and insects. Female adders give birth to live young after incubating the eggs internally. Litters are born in late summer or early autumn and may live for 10-15 years in the wild.

Adders

Latin name: *Vipera berus*



The UK's only venomous snake, the adder can occasionally be seen basking in a sunny area of a woodland glade. Despite being venomous, an adder bite is a rare occurrence and, although painful, it is almost never fatal.

Adders vary in colour but males are usually grey and females reddish-brown. All adders have a distinctive diamond or zigzag pattern along their backs.



"Seconds Out, Round One" by Kevin Clarke

Grass Snakes

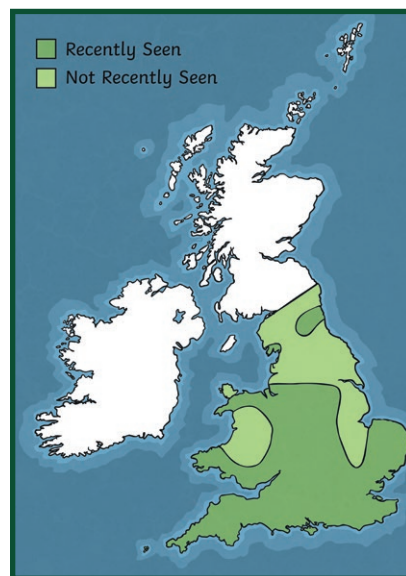
Latin Name: *Natrix natrix*



Difficult to spot due to their speed and wary nature, grass snakes are found in some lowland areas of Britain, living in habitats such as open woodland, rough grassland, gardens and parks. The grass

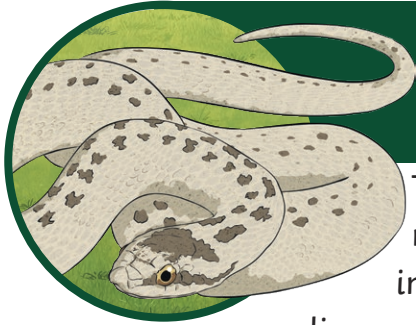
snake is Britain's only egg-laying snake. Eggs are laid in compost or manure where the warmth incubates them. Grass snakes can live for 15-25 years in the wild.

The grass snake is an excellent swimmer, able to



stay submerged (under water) for over half an hour. Therefore, it's no surprise that the grass snake's diet consists of frogs, toads, newts and fish.

When threatened by a predator (including badgers, foxes, cats, hedgehogs and some birds), the grass snake 'plays dead' in an attempt to look less appealing. If caught, they will hiss and release a pungent smell.



Smooth Snakes

Latin Name:

Coronella austriaca

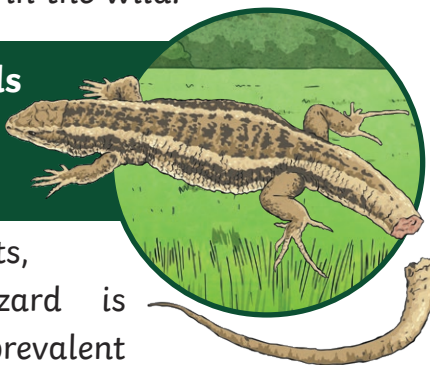
The smooth snake is rare and only found in the gradually disappearing heathland areas of the UK. It is a constrictor, meaning that it coils around its prey of sand lizards, slow worms, insects and young birds, crushing them to death.

Despite being well-camouflaged, smooth snakes are the prey of some birds and animals. If caught, they will strike but, due to being non-venomous, this is just used in an attempt to deter their predators. They are able to live for up to 20 years in the wild.

Common Lizards

Latin Name:

Zootoca vivipara



As its name suggests, the common lizard is the UK's most prevalent reptile, found across a variety of habitats, including heathland, moorland, woodland and grassland. It incubates its eggs inside its body and gives birth to live young.

Adults have a life expectancy of 5-6 years in the wild.

If threatened by a predator, the common lizard sheds its still-moving tail. Due to the thrashing of the tail, the predator will become distracted allowing the common lizard to flee.

Sand Lizards

Latin Name: *Lacerta agilis*



The sand lizard is very rare and protected across Europe because of the destruction of its habitat: sandy heathlands. Females are a well-camouflaged sandy-brown, whereas males develop bright green markings during the mating season. It is the only egg-laying lizard in the UK. Sand lizards dig burrows, up to one metre deep, for shelter, egg-laying and hibernation. They can live for up to 20 years in the wild.

Slow Worms

Latin Name: *Anguis fragilis*



Despite having the appearance of a snake and being called a 'worm', the slow worm is actually a legless lizard, which is commonly seen across the UK enjoying the warmth of garden compost heaps. They are a variety of colours – brown, grey or bronze – and can live for up to 20 years in the wild.

As with many other reptiles native to the UK, the female incubates her eggs internally, giving birth to live young. They eat worms, spiders, woodlice, insect larvae and slugs, meaning that gardeners love slow worms!

Threats to British Reptiles and How You Can Help



The greatest threat to British reptiles is the loss of their habitat, often as a result of human development. It is possible to help some of these creatures in your own garden by keeping a wild area of rocks and logs that they can hide amongst. You may also wish to encourage minibeasts into your garden to serve as prey. Why not make a bug hotel?



Questions

1. What is the Latin name of the adder? Tick one.

- Vipera berus
- Natrix natrix
- Coronella austriaca
- Zootoca vivipara

2. Match the reptile to its life expectancy:

grass snake

up to 20 years

common lizard

15-25 years

slow worm

5-6 years

3. What does **submerged** mean?

4. Find and copy **three** things that adders will eat.

- _____
- _____
- _____

5. Why are sand lizards so rare?

6. Why do you think that sand lizards have to be good at hiding? What helps them?

7. Summarise the information about slow worms in 40 words or less.

8. ...it's **no surprise** that the grass snake's diet...
Why does the author use the phrase **no surprise** in this section?

9. Why is it important to protect British reptiles? Explain your answer.

10. Describe a suitable time and place to look for one of these reptiles. Include as much detail as possible.

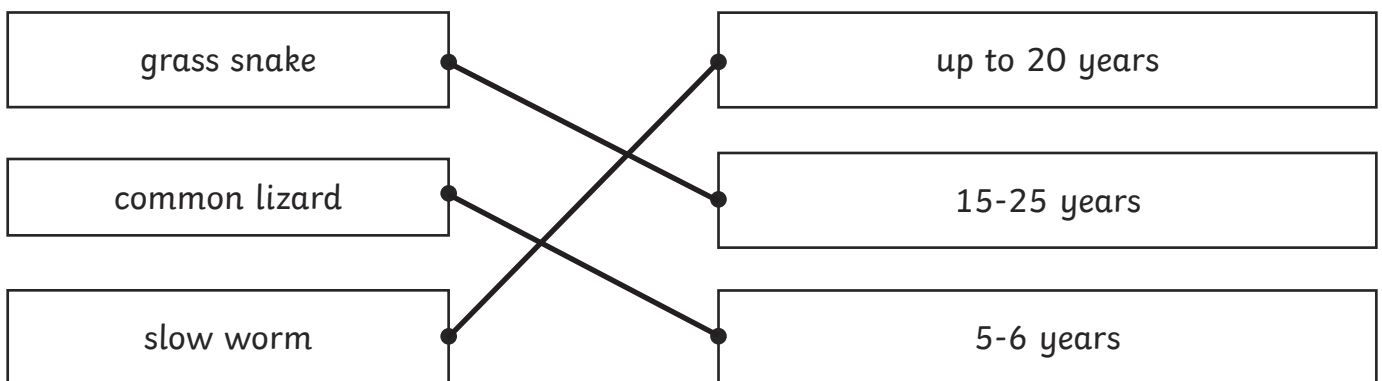
Answers

1. What is the Latin name of the adder? Tick one.

Vipera berus

- Natix natix
 Coronella austriaca
 Zootoca vivipara

2. Match the reptile to its life expectancy:



3. What does **submerged** mean?

Submerged means to be under water.

4. Find and copy **three** things that adders will eat.

Accept any three of the following: small mammals; birds; lizards; amphibians; spiders; worms; insects.

5. Why are sand lizards so rare?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Sand lizards are so rare because their habitat of sandy heathlands is being destroyed.

6. Why do you think that sand lizards have to be good at hiding? What helps them?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Sand lizards have to be good at hiding because they probably have many predators like the other reptiles; their excellent camouflage and burrows help them to hide.

7. Summarise the information about slow worms in 40 words or less.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Slow worms, which can be grey, brown or bronze, are common across Britain. They are well-loved by gardeners due to their diet of insects and slugs and can be found enjoying warm compost heaps. Females give birth to live young.

8. ...it's **no surprise** that the grass snake's diet...

Why does the author use the phrase **no surprise** in this section?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Due to their habitats (which are always in areas containing water) and the fact that they swim, it is not surprising that grass snakes eat water creatures.

9. Why is it important to protect British reptiles? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: British reptiles are native to the UK and it would be a shame if they died out because humans kept destroying their habitats. There are only six species of reptile native to the UK so we must preserve them for the future.

10. Describe a suitable time and place to look for one of these reptiles. Include as much detail as possible.

Pupils' own responses, such as: To spot a sand lizard, it is important to go out on a warm day during the summer months to a sandy heathland. I would need to look for burrows and wait quietly and patiently, looking carefully to spot one of these well-camouflaged creatures.