

## Galápagos Tortoises

Website: <https://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/galapagos-tortoise>

Galapagos tortoises (Guh-lop-uh-ghos Tor-tus-es) live in South America on the Galápagos Islands. They are giant tortoises. They live only on land and can weigh hundreds of pounds. There is a different kind of tortoise on each of the big Galápagos Islands. Let's learn more!

Let's start by looking at the right side of the website:

- 1) How old was the oldest tortoise ever? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What kind of animal is the Galapagos tortoise?
  - a. Mammal
  - b. Reptile
  - c. Amphibian
  - d. Bird
- 3) About how many eggs do the tortoises lay? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Look at the section labeled "Fun Facts". About how long can a Galapagos tortoise live without food and water?
  - a. One day
  - b. Two days
  - c. Six months
  - d. One year

LIFE SPAN
Unknown, but one tortoise was recorded at being 171 years old
YOUNG
Number of eggs laid: 2 to 16, depending on subspecies
Incubation period: 4 to 8 months
Weight at hatch: 3 ounces
Age of maturity: 20 to 25 years

FUN FACTS
Las Islas de los Galápagos, or the Islands of the Tortoises, are named for the famed giant tortoises found nowhere else in the world.
A Galápagos tortoise can go without eating or drinking for up to a year because it can store food and water in its body.
Galápagos tortoise Speed arrived at the San Diego Zoo in 1933 as an adult. He lived to be an estimated 150 years old.

Let's go to the section that looks like this:



- 5) Look at the first paragraph. How heavy can male tortoises be?
  - a. Two hundred pounds
  - b. Three hundred pounds
  - c. Five hundred pounds
  - d. One thousand pounds
- 6) Look for the third paragraph that begins with "When threatened..." How do male tortoises win a fight?
  - a. One eats the other one.
  - b. One lifts its head higher than the other one.
  - c. One rolls the other onto his back.
  - d. They race across a grassy area.

Let's go to this section now:

 HABITAT AND DIET

- 7) Find the third paragraph that starts with “Galapagos tortoises tend to lead...” Why do the tortoises like the warm sun?
- They have sun batteries that they need to charge.
  - They are cold-blooded and need to warm up.
  - They like to get suntans.
  - Actually, they don't like the sun.
- 8) Find the paragraph that begins with “Galapagos tortoises are herbivores...”. What does the word herbivore mean?
- Can swim well.
  - Eats marine and sea animals like crabs.
  - Eats only plants.
  - Eats meat.
  - Has a shell.
- 9) In the same paragraph as question #8 above, what do Galapagos tortoises like to eat?

Circle all the correct ones!

- Recycling and trash
- Prickly pear cactus
- Flowers
- Leaves
- Grasses

Find this section:

 FAMILY LIFE

- 10) Go to the paragraph that starts with “Temperature plays a role...” How does the temperature affect the tortoise eggs?
- It doesn't.
  - If it's warm, more females hatch.
  - If it's warm, more males hatch.
  - If it's warm, no eggs hatch.

Last section!

 CONSERVATION

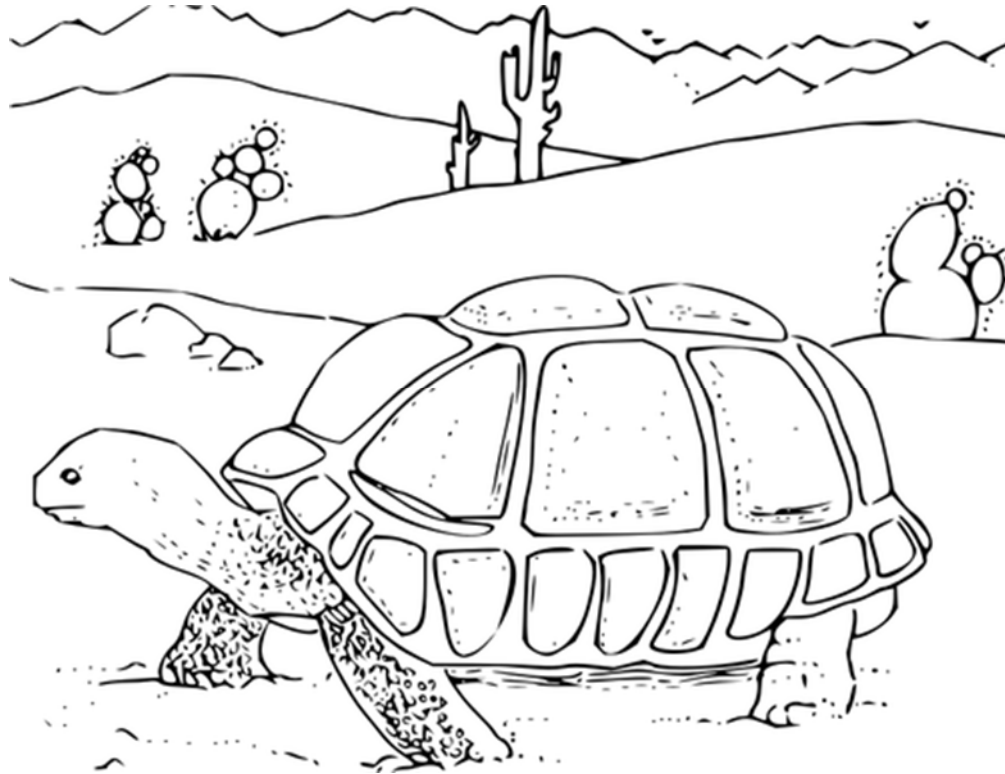
- 11) Read the first paragraph. What did pigs do that was bad for the tortoises?
- They ate the tortoise's food.
  - They ate the tortoise's eggs.
  - They fought with the tortoises.
  - They scared the tortoises away.

12) Look at the second paragraph that begins with “When pirates, whaling ships, and...”

Why did the sailors take the tortoises with them?

- a. For pets.
- b. To show their friends back home.
- c. For food.
- d. Because the sailors worried that the tortoise would go extinct.

**Color in your own Galapagos Tortoise. Don't forget to give him or her a name and age!**



Your tortoise's name \_\_\_\_\_

Your tortoise's age \_\_\_\_\_

The fastest speed your tortoise can “run” the mile \_\_\_\_\_

(Hint: A good mile time for a high school student is 9 minutes)

## Answer Key

- 1) 171 years old. Wow!
- 2) B
- 3) 2 to 16 eggs
- 4) D
- 5) C
- 6) B
- 7) B
- 8) C
- 9) B, C, D, E
- 10) B
- 11) B
- 12) C

## Glossary

**Galapagos Islands** (Guh-lop-uh-ghos Eye-linds) - Volcanic islands in the Pacific Ocean near South America. There are many famous animals there.

**Herbivore** (Her-bih-vor) – An animal that eats only plants.

**Threatened** (Thre-tin-d) – When an animal is scared or about to get hurt.

**Tortoise** (Tor-tus) – A type of turtle that lives on land.

**Whaling Ships** (Whale-ing Ships) – Ships that were created to hunt, kill, and capture whales.