



Guided Reading with

Box Turtles

Guided Reading Level: N

DRA Level: 30

by Barbara Flores, Elena Castro, and Eddie Hernandez

Overview: Box turtles are found in the United States and Mexico. Read this book to find out all about them.

About the Book

Page number: 16, Word Count: 335

Genre: Nonfiction

Focus: Concepts of Print and Reading Strategies

- use context to predict unknown words; confirm by attending to letter sounds
- blend word parts to read phonetically regular words, including content-specific vocabulary, relying on a wider variety of spelling patterns
- use syllabication strategies to decode multisyllable words
- use a wide variety of high frequency words to support fluent reading
- use background and vocabulary knowledge to help read and comprehend unknown words

- read varied sentences fluently, with expression and stamina
- use text and photos to visualize information presented
- read and interpret numerical information included in text

- RI.3.1, RI.3.2, RI.3.3, RI.3.4, RI.3.7, RI.3.8, RI.3.10

ELL/ESL:

Las tortugas de caja See last page

Supportive Text Features:

- some details supported by illustrations
- some vocabulary is familiar, with some more varied word choices, literary and content-specific language
- varied sentence lengths and formats

Phonics:

- strategies for decoding multisyllable words

Common Core Standards:

- RF.3.3, RF.3.4

Getting Ready to Read

1. Introduce the concept and vocabulary by asking open-ended questions:

- Have you ever seen a turtle in a picture, video, or real life? What do you know about turtles?
- Do you know any different kinds of turtles? If someone was interested in learning about a certain kind of turtle, what questions might they have?

2. Connect children's past experiences with the story and vocabulary:

- Hold the book. Call children's attention to the title. Read: "Box Turtles." Ask children to use the title



and picture on the cover to predict what the book will be about.

- Show the back cover and read the copy. Ask children if they think this book will be fiction or nonfiction and why they think that.
- Have children suggest some words they might read in the book.
- Give children the book and have them look at the photos. Ask them to notice what each one shows. Ask them to share questions they have about the illustrations that might be answered as they read.
- If needed, model for students how to read the numbers included and/or metric conversions in parentheses.
- Let students know that this book doesn't contain headings, but they should still pause to think about what information each page shares, and to connect that information to other parts of the book. Introduce some of the other content-specific vocabulary if you'd like.

3. Remind children of the strategies they know and can use with unfamiliar words:

- Ask them, "What will you do if you come to a word you don't know?"
- Encourage children to sound out each letter if the word can be phonetically sounded out. Point out any consonant blends or digraphs, word families, or vowel sounds they may know.
- Suggest that children read on past an unfamiliar word in order to use the context of the book and sentence to unlock the meaning of the word. Encourage children to return to the word after completing the sentence or section.

- Tell children to think what they know about the subject or topic of this book. Then encourage them to choose a word that makes sense in the sentence.

4. Be aware of the following text features:

- The book contains familiar words, including a variety of high frequency words.
- There are many content-specific and challenging vocabulary words and phrases, including:
 - Place names: United States, Mexico
 - Science words: Box turtle, reptiles, native, environments, woodlands, grasslands, pastures, meadows, streams, ponds, survive, "in the wild," bony, shell, dome, markings, nostrils, upper jaw, hooked beak, claws, "sense of smell," hatch, male, female,
 - Math/measurement terms: inches, centimeters,
 - Additional vocabulary: broad, tearing, ability, protect, crush, tend, produce, active, burrow.
- Each spread includes a photo and information. Topics include box turtles' bodies, eating habits, nesting/hatching, males vs. females, and activity. There are no dedicated nonfiction text features.

Guided Reading Note: Level N is the benchmark for the beginning of the third grade. Children reading at this level are in the fluent stage, and the focus emphasizes comprehension and independent reading. Reading should be done silently. Children are also encouraged to: 1) independently apply their reading skills and strategies, 2) make connections between their own experiences and the story, and 3) "get" the author's message and be able to discuss it with other readers. Most



importantly, children should feel confident and eager to read. This is a time to bolster fluency and independence as children read a variety of genres and develop a sense of reading for different purposes.

Reading the Book

1. Set a purpose by telling children to read the book to find out about the bears described in this book.

2. Have children read the book silently. Each child should be reading at his or her own pace. Listen to children as they read by leaning close or bending down beside each child. After the group has read a few pages, check for understanding with simple questions, such as: "What is the book about?" or "Tell me how the book begins." Then direct children to continue reading. As they read, watch for indications of comprehension: changes in facial expression, giggles, audible comments, rereading, turning back a page. You may want to make notations about what you observe.

3. Look for these reading behaviors during the first reading:

- Do they rely on the print while reading?
- Do they have a strong sight vocabulary?
- Do they use known sound chunks to read unknown words?
- Are they monitoring meaning and rereading when they lose meaning?
- Do they easily move from page to page? Are they reading fluently?
- Are they using punctuation and any text

features to gain meaning?

- Do they make accurate predictions?
- Are they connecting the text to their own experiences?
- Do they react to the text even though they are reading silently? Do they laugh? Smile? Frown?
- Are they drawing conclusions and making inferences?

4. As children read, note what they are doing. Help them build independence by being available, but not intervening too quickly.

- Watch for changes in children's facial expressions and use these signals to ask questions, such as: "What made you smile?" or "Where do you need some help?"
- Encourage children's attempts by making comments, such as: "I like how you are using a different strategy when the first one you tried didn't work."
- If children are struggling with deciding which strategy to use, suggest a specific strategy that would help them get meaning in the most efficient way, such as, "Did you use sound out the word?" "Did you think about chunking the word?"

5. Possible teaching points to address based on your observations:

- Call attention to all the high-frequency words children have learned and used.
- Review how to find a known part or sound chunk in an unknown word.
- Show children how to use analogies to move from the known to the unknown when encountering new words.



- Work with suffixes and prefixes.
- Review using grammar (syntax) to unlock words by considering the sentence structure or parts of speech in the sentence.
- Review how to determine what is important in a picture, sentence, or section.
- Model asking questions or making “I wonder...” statements to extend comprehension.
- Review using punctuation marks to guide the meaning-making process. Discuss the use of question marks, exclamation points, and commas as clues to reading with a particular kind of expression or inflection.
- Model how to revisit the text to find specific examples or ideas.

After the First Reading

1. Have children confirm their predictions and talk about what this book taught them about insects.

2. Ask questions like:

- Where do box turtles live? What kind of habitats do they have?
- What body parts does a box turtle have? If you saw a turtle, how might you tell it's a box turtle?
- How do box turtles use their body parts?
- What do box turtles eat? How do they eat?
- Where do box turtles lay eggs? What was interesting to learn about their eggs and hatching process?
- How are male and female box turtles different?

- Are box turtles nocturnal? How do you know why or why not?
- Why do you think the authors chose to share information about this kind of turtle with kids?
- Do you have any other questions about box turtles? How could you find out answers?
- Do you think a box turtle would make a good pet? Why or why not?
- Why might some people want to have box turtles as pets?
- Would a box turtle survive in your local habitat? Why or why not? What kinds of places do box turtles do best? Why?

Second Reading

1. Have children reread the book silently or to a partner.

2. This is a time for assessment. Keeping notes on children's progress during a guided reading session will be a helpful resource for giving children on-going feedback about themselves as readers as well as helping you record how they develop over time.

- While they are reading, watch what children do and what they use from the teaching time.
- You might also take a running record on one child as an assessment of the child's reading behavior.
- You might also listen in on each individual reader, observing as children use appropriate or inappropriate strategies. This information will be valuable for any additional strategy discussions after the second reading.



Cross-Curricular Activities

Language: Review some of the multisyllable words in the book. Work together to divide each word into syllables, starting with the bear names and progressing to other words. Talk about using syllabication to help decode or spell longer unfamiliar words.

Talk about reading longer sentences fluently by breathing between phrases. Practice re-reading some of the longer sentences from the text aloud, focusing on using commas to support phrasing.

Have students practice summarizing the text by creating a sticky note for each page spread of the book with a plausible section heading (e.g., "Box Turtle Body Parts") and a couple bullet points with key facts.

Tell students to imagine that the publisher has hired them to add helpful nonfiction features to this book. What would they add? Use sticky notes or removable tape to add headings, labels, captions, or a table of contents that reflect the information presented in the text.

Have students read, or read aloud, other informational books about turtles. Make connections between texts and note similarities and differences between box turtles and other kinds of turtles. Talk about how reading an overview text, like *Box Turtles* can prepare readers for comprehending other books by building background knowledge.

Talk about visualizing when reading informational text. Choose specific scenes from the book and have students talk in pairs about what they imagined as they read them (e.g., a mother turtle digging a nest or a turtle eating.) If possible, find

video clips of some of the scenes and compare what students were visualizing to the videos

Science: Have students create a science diagram of a box turtle, labeling body parts and markings referenced in the text and perhaps adding brief informational captions (e.g., "sharp, hooked beak to crush and chew food.") You could give students the option of drawing a male or female turtle.

Have students work individually or in pairs to research the typical box turtle habitats of woodlands, grasslands, pastures, meadows, streams, and ponds. Have them print or draw other animals and features of that habitat to create a collage showing how a box turtle might fit into that ecosystem.

Poll the group to find out if students would like to have a box turtle as a pet. Then, research what's involved in caring for a box turtle as a pet together, charting key ideas you find. Poll again and see if any students have changed their minds.

Social Studies: Explore turtles' roles in stories, legends, myths, etc. For instance, share the story *The Turtle Ship* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-turtle-ship>.) Make connections to the information in *Box Turtles*

Art: Study the images of box turtle shells in the book, and/or find others online. Provide students with oval shaped paper or cardstock and have them use paint or markers to create their own realistic shell designs.

English Language Learners: Have students sketch a box turtle and together label the parts of the turtle, including physical and behavioral adaptations.



Guided Reading with **Las tortugas de caja**

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The directions given for the introduction, first reading, and second reading of the English edition can be used with the Spanish edition of the book. To read the book successfully, children need the same kinds of support as their English-speaking classmates. Second language learners often benefit from acting out new words, seeing pictures, and talking about them using concrete examples.

Noun & Verb Support

The following nouns are used to talk about box turtles in the story:

Tortugas de caja, reptiles, nativos, Estados Unidos, México, concha, ojos, nariz, mandíbula, pico, patas, garras, pies, comida, la cabeza, la cola, caja, olfatto, dientes, animales, plantas, insectos, lombrices, hongos, flores, bayas, hembra, huevos, adultos, machos

The following nouns are used to talk about the habitat of box turtles in the story:

Ambientes, bosques, praderas, pastos, arroyos, estanques, naturaleza, nido, troncos, hojas, arena, lodo

Print each of the different groups of nouns on index cards that are small enough to label. Photocopy each of the illustrations and cover the text so that students cannot see the nouns. With the word cards, have students place the appropriate word cards for the noun on the photocopied illustrations.

The following verb/action words are used to describe the box turtle and it's habitat:

viven, sobrevivir, pueden, medir, tienen, suele, ser, sigue, creciendo, ayudan, caminar, usa, escarbar, triturar, habilidad, esconderse, cierran, protegen, sienten, mastican, comen, quedan, mantienen, activas

Encourage students to write or share a sentence with a partner that uses each of the words that describes the actions that the insects in the story do.

Guided Reading Guided reading levels were assigned by literacy experts and certified Reading Recovery® teachers using the guidelines identified in Guided Reading and Matching Books to Readers by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell.

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DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) and **EDL (Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura)** DRA and EDL levels were determined using information in the Developmental Reading Assessment Resource Guide and EDL Resource Guide by Joetta Beaver.

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Adjective Support

The following adjectives are used to describe the box turtle and its habitat:

dura, huesuda, marron, oscuro, marcas amarillas, anarandjadas, dos, ganchudo, cuarto, cortas, anchos, despacio, asustada, calientas, friós, grandes, delgadas, café-amarillos, rojos, gruesas, curvadas, más, debajo

Encourage students to write or share sentence comparing the female vs male box turtle using the adjectives listed above.

For students engaging with both English and Spanish texts, have students note that there are questions statements used throughout the story. In Spanish, the question marks come before the sentence in an upside-down orientation and after the sentence in the opposite orientation.

The book language used may differ from children's oral language. Comparing any differences will help children read and understand the story. Also help children understand that we often speak differently than we write, and that both ways of using language are important.

Encourage students to create an illustration of the box turtle from the story and to write a sentence using the nouns, verbs, and adjectives they learned in the story.

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