



Teacher's Notes: Gila Monster

Science Standard:

Learning Objectives:

The students will be able to match picture to picture.

The students will be able to complete a graphic organizer.

The students will use a graphic organizer to write sentences about Gila monsters.

The students will be able to identify Gila monsters.

The students will be able to explain/identify characteristics of Gila monsters.

The students will use technology to search for Gila monsters.

The students will use a ruler to measure 2 feet.

Activities

1. Students do image searches. Have the students save pictures of their favorite ones. Those are then inserted onto a Word document or a PowerPoint. Students write a sentence about each characteristic. **See Technology printable in the materials.**
2. Paint small pieces of bubble wrap and then use it to stamp the bumpy skin texture on the picture of a Gila monster (picture of Gila monster coloring page in worksheets or draw a big one on butcher paper).
3. Have students use butcher paper to measure two feet and draw a line. Then, draw a lizard or circle along that line to show how big two feet is. Have students lay down on butcher paper and find out how many feet they are.

General Tips: The goal is to build background knowledge while leading an engaging discussion on any and all information that can be talked about on a given page. The items that you choose to bring up or focus on can be modified for the students you are working with. For example, if you have a student who can point to something in the picture, answer yes/no questions be sure to incorporate a lot more of that as you go through the book. On the same token, be sure to ask a lot of comprehension questions and critical thinking questions at the level appropriate for students. There is something for everyone.

Page 1:

This animal is called a Gila monster. It seems like it should be pronounced Geela because of the G. In this word it sounds like an "H". Anyway, this animal is a lizard. All lizards are reptiles. Reptiles lay eggs. They usually have skin like a lizard too. Baby lizards hatch out of eggs. They are small little lizards when they are first born. They are cute. Show student the following video of a Gila monster.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zt36pxSJF0c>

Point: Gila monster, tongue, egg shell, baby in egg, head, tail

WH Questions: What is the Gila monster? What do Gila monsters lay?

Yes/No: Is the Gila monster a dog? Is it a type of squirrel? Is it a reptile? Does it lay eggs? Does it have feet?

Opinions/Experiences: What animals do you know of that lay eggs? What do you know about lizards?

Peer to Peer Interaction: After you read Page 1, ask students to get their main idea card and ask, "What do you know about Gila monsters?"

Page 2: I know that this animal is called a Gila monster. The Gila monster gets the name Gila from the Gila River. That is a big river in the desert in the southwest. Have you heard of it? It is named after the Gila River because that is where they first found these lizards. They live near the Gila River. Show students the following video of the Gila River. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9zmAmGUE2o>

Point: river, mountains, plants, monster, tongue, eyes, teeth

WH Questions: What river is the Gila monster named after? What river did the Gila monsters live by?

Yes/No: Is the Gila monster a monster? Is it named after a river? The Gila River?

Opinion/Experiences: Why do you think the Gila monsters live by the river?

Peer to Peer Interaction: Students use their main idea card from this page and ask each other questions about that main idea.

Page 3: Gila monsters are pretty big lizards. Some lizards are very small. The Gila monster is 2 feet long. That is two rulers. That would be a big lizard!

Point: Gila monster, head, tail, legs, feet, rulers

Questions: How big can Gila monsters get? How many rulers are there?

Yes/No: Are Gila monsters small? Are the biggest ones 1 foot long? Are they tiny little lizards? Are they 2 feet long when they are full grown?

Opinion/Experiences: How many feet tall are you? What are some things you can measure with a ruler?

Peer to Peer Interaction: Students use their main idea card from this page and ask each other questions about that main idea.

Page 4: The Gila monsters live in 3 desert in the southwest. The deserts are the Sonoran, Mojave, and Chihuahuan Deserts. Most of the Gila monsters are in Arizona and New Mexico. Show students a map of the U.S. and show that the SW includes AZ, NM, and part of Mexico.

Point: cactus, Gila monster, dirt, mouth

Questions: What part of the plant holds the plant up?

Yes/No: Do Gila monsters live in the jungle? Do they like to live in places where it snows? Do they live in the desert in the Southwest? Do Gila monsters dig holes?

Sharing Opinion/Experiences: What other animals live in the desert?

Peer to Peer Interaction: Students use their main idea card from this page and ask each other questions about that main idea.

Page 5: All animals have someplace that is sort of a home for them. Like a nest or a den. Gila monsters have burrows. A burrow is a hole in the ground. The Gila monster can dig the hole with its claws. Then it can go in the hole and hide and sleep. Sometimes the Gila monster doesn't dig its own hole. Sometimes the Gila monster finds a hole that another animal made and goes into that hole. That is stealing a burrow. So, Gila monsters find a hole or make a hole and that is its burrow. That is where it stays most of the time. Show the students the following video of a rabbit making a burrow.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4H0tiNTShgM>

Point: Gila monster, burrow

WH Questions: What is the Gila monsters' hole called? What is it called when the Gila monster takes another animal's hole?

Yes/No: Do Gila monsters steal another animal's burrow sometimes? Do Gila monsters like to be in their burrow?

Sharing Opinion/Experiences: What are some places you know of where animals live? (dens, caves, nests, hives) What do you know about stealing?

Peer to Peer Interaction: Students use their main idea card from this page and ask each other questions about that main idea.

Page 6: The Gila monster's favorite food is eggs, so when a Gila monster sees a nest, he steals the eggs and eats them. The Gila monster also eats mice. Video of Gila monster eating eggs

<https://youtu.be/mqsYnzEA6Gw>

Point: stem, leaves, salad

WH Questions: What do Gila monsters eat?

Yes/No: Do Gila monsters love to eat eggs? Do they like to eat mice?

Opinion/Experiences: Do you like to eat eggs? What kind of eggs do we buy at the store? (chicken) What are some things that can be made with eggs? (omelets, fried, scrambled, quiche, etc.) What other animals eat eggs? Mice?

Peer to Peer Interaction: Students use their main idea card from this page and ask each other questions about that main idea.

Page 7: Gila monsters can get scared just like people do. When they are scared, they hiss like a snake. They have their mouth open wide. It's kind of scary to see a Gila monster scared or mad. Can you make a hissing sound? Here is a video of a gila monster and a discussion of hissing.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHPs_PdY65g

Point: Gila monster, mouth, claws

Questions: When do Gila monsters hiss? What do they do with their mouth when they hiss? Why do they hiss?

Yes/No: Does a Gila monster bark if it is afraid? Does it hiss? Do they get scared? Should people move back if they hear that?

Opinion/Experiences: What warnings do other animals give us if they are scared? What does a dog do? What does a cat do?

Peer to Peer Interaction: Students use their main idea card from this page and ask each other questions about that main idea.

Page 8: The Gila monsters shut their mouth really tight when they bite. That is called their jaw. They close their jaw tight. They don't stop biting. They hold their jaws tight for a long time. Sometimes 15 minutes! Most animals bite fast and move away. Not Gila monsters. They bite down with their jaws and hold on tight for a long time. Do you think that is why it's called a monster? People and animals getting bit try to shake off the Gila monster, but it's very hard to do.

Point: stem, leaves, flower

Questions: mouth, tongue, danger

Yes/No: Are flowers in the ground? Are flowers at the end of the stem? Are flowers colorful?

Opinion/Experiences: Do you like flowers? What color of flower is your favorite?

Peer to Peer Interaction: Students use their main idea card from this page and ask each other questions about that main idea.

Page 9: If a Gila monster is scared and the person or animal doesn't move back, the Gila monster will bite. Gila monsters are poisonous. When they bite, poison comes out of their mouth. The poison does not come out of its teeth, it comes out of its gums. Your gums are the part of your mouth that your teeth grow out of. When a Gila monster bites, it hurts. Show the following video of a scientist who gets bit by a Gila monster. Be sure to explain to the students that only scientists who know what they are doing should touch a Gila monster. Start at 2 minute mark to see Gila monster bite a man and his message to not bother them. It says that the bite really hurt a lot. Great video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swlozUKuvFI>

Point: mouth, tongue, danger

WH Questions: Where does poison come out of? What will the Gila monster do if people or animals do not move back when it hisses?

Yes/No: Do Gila monsters bite? Is it poisonous? Does it hurt?

Opinion/Experiences: What are some other animals you know of that are poisonous?

Peer to Peer Interaction: Students use their main idea card from this page and ask each other questions about that main idea.