

Snakes

Are you afraid of snakes? Lots of people are. But once you learn more about these amazing **creatures**, you may not be afraid of them after all.

There are more than 2,700 species, or kinds, of snakes in the world. Some little snakes are only a few inches long. Some enormous snakes are as big as forty feet long! Snakes also come in many different colors and patterns.

Although their skin can look shiny like it is wet, snakes are not **slimy**. They are actually dry and soft. If you look closely at a snake, you'll see that its skin is covered with scales. These scales protect the snake and keep moisture inside its body. This helps to keep its skin from drying out. From two to four times a year, a snake will shed its skin. It will grow a new layer of healthy skin and crawl out of the old, dry skin, leaving it behind.

Did you know that snakes have no eyelids? Their eyes are covered by clear skin. And of course, snakes have no legs. Instead, they use their stomach muscles to glide along the ground. This is called **slithering**. Snakes can even slither up trees! Many snakes can also swim. In fact, sea snakes live in the water for most of their lives.

Snakes are hunters. They eat eggs, insects, and small animals called **rodents**. Mice and rats are two types of rodents that snakes eat. Large snakes can eat larger animals such as wild pigs and small deer. Snakes have different ways of catching the animals they hunt for food.

Some snakes are venomous. These include rattlesnakes, adders, and cobras. Venomous snakes have teeth called fangs that drip **poison** into the animals they bite. The animals may run away, but they die quickly from the poison. Other snakes catch animals and squeeze them. These snakes are constrictors. They include pythons, boas, and anacondas.

No matter how they catch their food, snakes swallow it whole. A snake can swallow something three times as wide as its head! One meal can last a snake a long time.

If you find a snake, don't hurt it. A snake will not **attack** unless it is scared and feels it must protect itself. Instead, watch this amazing creature from a safe distance. There is not another animal like it!

COMPREHENSION Which words in this passage help you understand snakes? What is the most interesting thing you learned about snakes?



"Amanhã"

So Say the Little Monkeys

Squirrel Monkey lives with his friends and family in the rainforests of Brazil. Lots of rain falls in a rainforest. But there are also many sunny days.

On sunny mornings, Squirrel Monkey chatters and jumps. He swings through the treetops with his family. He runs along the tree branches with friends. Together, they munch on ripe, juicy fruit for breakfast.

All day long, Squirrel Monkey plays. He squawks and he screams. He chatters and he peeps. If he climbs a tree, the other squirrel monkeys follow him. Then they leap from one branch to another, all in a row. They snack on more fruit and munch on leaves. Life is fun in the warm afternoon sun.

But on other days, the sky gets dark and rain starts to pour like it was coming from buckets. The **rainfall** makes Squirrel Monkey and his friends all wet. Soon, water is **dripping** from their ears and faces, and from their arms and legs. Squirrel Monkey does not like to be covered in **liquid**, so he whimpers and cries. He and all his friends and family wrap their long tails around their bodies, and they huddle together to try to keep dry.

The rain falls all night without stopping. Squirrel Monkey feels **soggy** from all the water on his fur. As the rain pounds, he wonders, "Will this **monsoon** never end?"

Their leader says, "We must build a house tomorrow, *amanhã*. A house will keep us dry when it rains."

Squirrel Monkey agrees. So does everyone else. Until they fall asleep, they all chatter to each other, "*Amanhã*, tomorrow, we will build a house."

Then, surprise! It is daytime again. The sun is shining. Soggy Squirrel Monkey and his friends and family open their eyes and stretch. "Look, the sun is out again! Come, let's play," they chatter to each other. Then Squirrel Monkey runs up and down the trees, **moist** from last night's rain. He and his friends and family pick ripe, juicy fruit for breakfast. Tomorrow, *amanhã*, they will build a house. Why waste a sunny day working? Squirrel Monkey knows that sunny days are for playing and having fun.

COMPREHENSION Which words help you understand what the rainforest weather is like? Do you think that Squirrel Monkey and his family and friends will ever build a house? Why or why not?

