

# Turtle Paradise: Design Your Dream Turtle Habitat!

Hi Aria! Since you're interested in turtles, today you're going to become a turtle habitat architect! You'll research a specific type of turtle and then design the most amazing and suitable home for it. This is all about using your research skills and creativity to make a happy turtle!

## Activity Steps:

### Part 1: Become a Turtle Expert (Research - Approx. 45-60 minutes)

1. **Choose Your Turtle:** Select a type of turtle you find interesting. It could be a sea turtle (like a Green Sea Turtle or Loggerhead), a freshwater turtle (like a Red-Eared Slider or a Snapping Turtle), or a tortoise (like a Galápagos Tortoise or a Sulcata Tortoise). If you need help choosing, we can pick one together!
2. **Deep Dive Research:** Once you've chosen your turtle, find out everything you can about its natural habitat and needs. Consider these questions:
  - Where in the world does it live naturally (its native environment)?
  - What does it eat (its diet)?
  - Does it live mostly in water, on land, or both?
  - What kind of water does it need (fresh, salt, brackish)? How deep?
  - What temperatures does it prefer? Does it need a place to bask in the sun?
  - What kind of substrate (ground material) is best for it (sand, soil, rocks, mud)?
  - Does it need places to hide? What kind?
  - Are there any specific plants important for its habitat?
  - What are its main predators or dangers in the wild? (This can help you think about safety in your design).
3. **Recommended Resources:** Use child-friendly online resources like National Geographic Kids, zoo websites (e.g., San Diego Zoo Wildlife Explorers), reputable wildlife conservation sites, or any books you have about reptiles or turtles. Take notes!

### Part 2: Design Your Turtle's Dream Home (Creative Design - Approx. 60-90 minutes)

Now it's time to get creative! Based on your research, design the perfect habitat for your chosen turtle. You can present your design in one of the following ways (choose what you prefer!):

- **Detailed Drawing/Blueprint:** Create a colorful and labeled drawing of the habitat. Show it from different angles if possible (e.g., top view, side view). Label all the important features (food source, water area, basking spot, hiding place, substrate, plants, etc.).
- **Physical Model/Diorama:** Build a 3D model of the habitat using a shoebox, cardboard, craft supplies, recycled materials, clay, or even natural items (like small pebbles or twigs - collect responsibly!).
- **Digital Design:** If you enjoy digital tools, you could use a simple drawing program or presentation software to create your habitat design.

#### Make sure your design includes:

- Appropriate food and water sources.
- A comfortable place for shelter and hiding.
- A basking area with the right temperature (if applicable).
- The correct type of substrate.
- Space for movement.

- Any special features your turtle needs!
- **Bonus Challenge:** Think about how your habitat could also help educate others about turtle conservation!

### **Part 3: Present Your Masterpiece! (Show and Tell - Approx. 15-20 minutes)**

Show me your habitat design! Explain your choices:

- Tell me about the turtle species you chose.
- Walk me through the different parts of your habitat design.
- Explain why you included specific features and how they meet the needs of your turtle. For example, "I included this flat rock because [turtle species] needs a warm place to bask and regulate its body temperature."
- What was the most interesting thing you learned?
- What challenges did you face in your design, and how did you solve them?

### **Part 4: Reflection and Extension (Discussion - Approx. 10-15 minutes)**

- What do you think are the biggest threats to wild turtles today?
- How can learning about their habitat needs help us protect them?
- **Optional Creative Extension:** Write a short story about a day in the life of a turtle living in the habitat you designed, or create a "Turtle Care Guide" for your species, highlighting the key aspects of its new home.

Have fun creating a wonderful home for your turtle, Aria!