

Connect, Respect, Coexist

4th Grade Standards targeted:

Big Idea	Heredity and Reproduction
SC.4.L.16.4	Compare and contrast the major stages in the life cycles of Florida plants and animals, such as those that undergo incomplete and complete metamorphosis, and flowering and nonflowering seed-bearing plants. Students will understand the lifecycle of a Florida Gopher Tortoise.
SC.4.L.16.2	Explain that although characteristics of plants and animals are inherited, some characteristics can be affected by the environment. We will discuss how slow mama's (the tortoise) environment has affected her behavior.
Big Idea	Interdependence
SC.4.L.17.4	Recognize ways plants and animals, including humans, can impact the environment. Students will understand the role tortoises have on the environment and how humans can affect tortoises' environment.
Big Idea	Civic and Political Participation
SS.4.C.2.2	Identify ways citizens work together to influence government and help solve community and state problems. We will discuss what students can do to protect tortoise burrows and the area they live in. Including protecting them from other threats they face like vehicle strikes, habitat fragmentation, and destruction.

Introduction: Slow Mama video (10 minutes)

- Watch the video
- Ask review questions listed below.

Tortoise Crossword Puzzle- 20 minutes

Students will go over vocabulary and definitions.

Tortoises Word Search- 20 minutes or take-home

Students can complete the tortoise word search as classwork, homework, or extra credit.

Review

How are Gopher tortoises considered a keystone species?

They increase diversity and play an important role in the health of the ecosystem they inhabit because of their burrows.

What are the benefits of burrows for other animals?

- Provides shelter
- Protects against environmental extremes like heat, cold, fire and aridity.
- Used as a site for feeding, reproduction, and nesting.

What is anthropogenic change?

Human impact on the environment.

What are some threats that Florida's gopher tortoise Experience?

- Extinction
- Being hit by cars
- Anthropogenic change