

RAMSEY READER



THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES:

Design a snake

Visit a park

Read a good book

Snakes

What's the first thing that pops into your mind when you hear the word "snakes?" *Is it a negative thought? That they're scary? That they're slimy? That they're something to be afraid of?* This week's Ramsey Reader will look at some of Minnesota's slithering snakes, highlight some of their amazing adaptations and hopefully increase your appreciation for these amazing creatures!

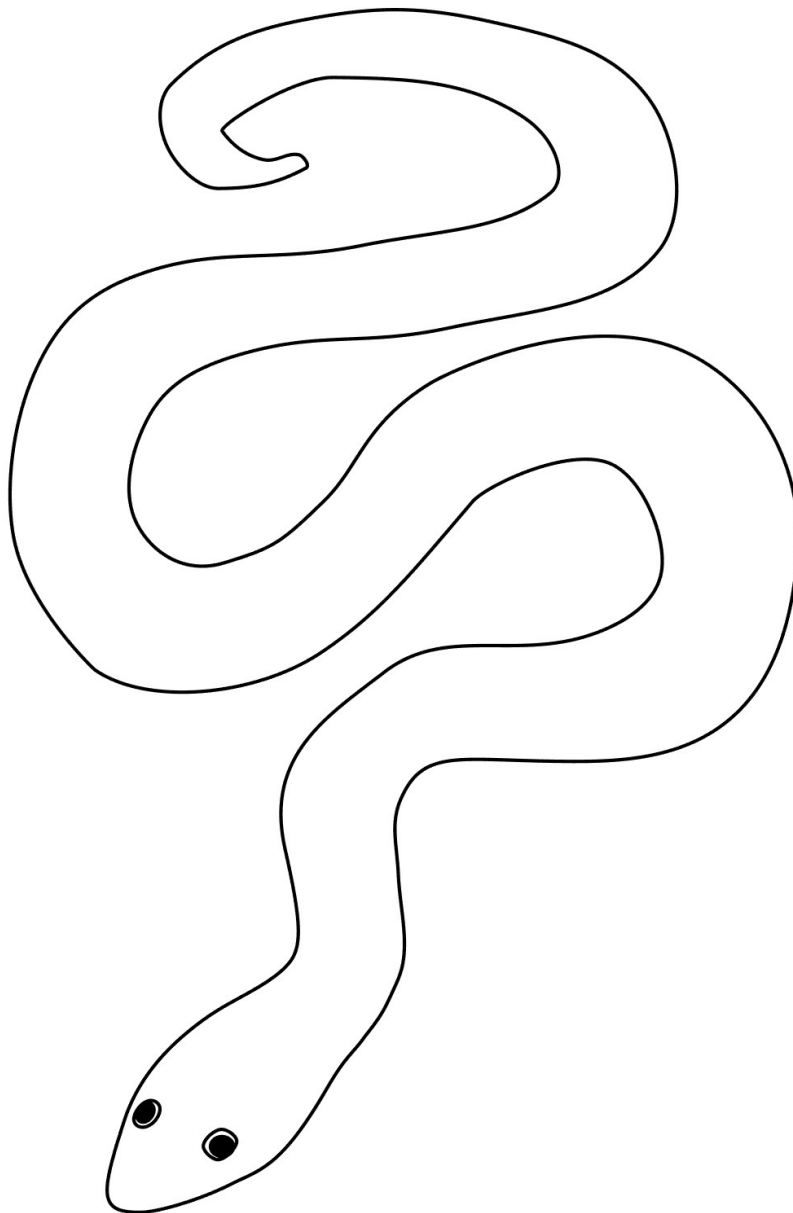
Snake camouflage

One amazing adaptation that helps many snake species is their skin's camouflage. By blending into their surroundings, snakes can remain hidden from both predators who many try to eat them, and from the prey the snakes are trying to hunt.



DESIGN A SNAKE

Color this snake to blend in with any background, use your imagination and color your snake to blend in with your favorite trail or an area spot of your house, let your imagination go wild!



Snake sightings



Snakes are very shy and elusive, and without any legs to get in the way, they can fit into very small hiding spots. All these things make snakes very difficult to find in the wild. One species that you may see is the common garter snake. They are found throughout Minnesota, in many different types of habitats. Remember, if you do see a snake, don't touch it or try to pick it up, any animal may bite if they feel threatened.



SEARCH FOR SNAKES

Snakes can be found in a wide variety of locations. Because they're great at hiding and their camouflage helps them blend into the local scenery, you'll have to look extra carefully.

Long Lake Regional Park Check out the restored prairie area along the park entrance road. Park at the New Brighton History Center, 700 Park Drive in New Brighton and walk the paved trail back towards the park entrance. Look in the tall grasses along the way.

Battle Creek Regional Park Hike the trails near the Battle Creek Recreation Center and look in the tall grasses and stick piles.

Why are snakes important?

Snakes are a key component of the food web, helping to keep prey populations, such as mice, from getting out of control. Without snakes in an ecosystem, rodent populations could dramatically increase causing damage to crops and homes.



SOLVE THE PUZZLE

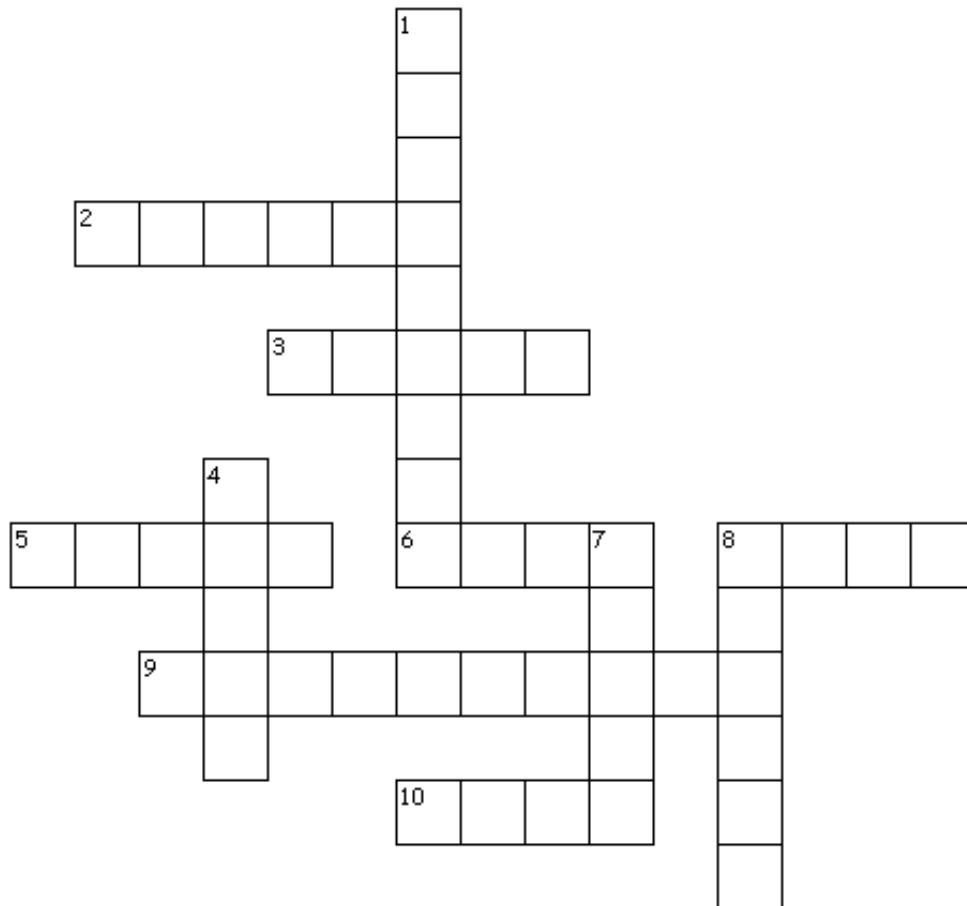
Complete this puzzle to learn some facts about snakes. *Answers can be found on the last page of this activity guide.*

ACROSS

2. Snakes can smell with this body part.
3. Snakes use this when they hunt.
5. This is how snakes swallow their food.
6. Nearly all snakes lay these.
8. Snakes do this with their skin.
9. This is the only continent without snakes.

DOWN

1. This is what snakes do in the winter.
4. Snakes have no eyelids so they can't do this.
7. Snakes' skin is not ____.
8. Snakes' bodies are covered with these.

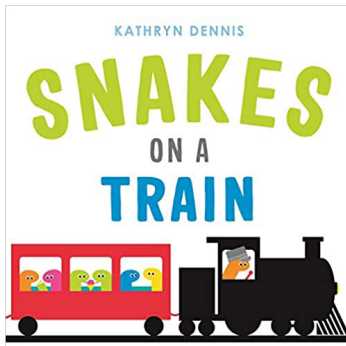


Ramsey readers

Here are some interesting books to get your little learners interested in snakes. All of these books are available through Ramsey County Library.



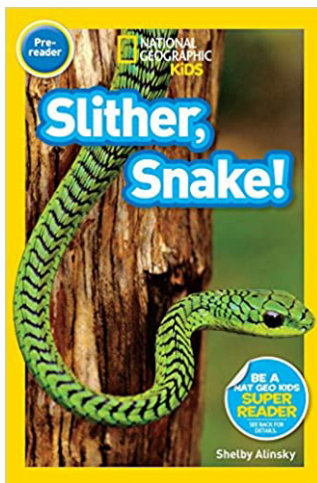
DIVE INTO A GOOD BOOK



Snakes on a Train

by Kathryn Dennis

A funny and adorable picture book full of sibilant sounds and other word play, *Snakes on a Train* is as fun for parents as it is for kids, and sure to be a read-aloud hit. Friendly snakes slither and hiss on their train ride.



Slither, Snake!

by Shelby Alinsky

Meet different kinds of snakes! Find out where they live and what they do. Through engaging text features, such as the vocabulary tree and the wrap-up activity, kids will be introduced to vocabulary in concept groups — helping them make connections between words and expanding their understanding of the world.



We Are Water Protectors

by Carole Lindstrom

Water is the first medicine. It affects and connects us all. When a black snake threatens to destroy the Earth and poison her people's water, one young water protector takes a stand to defend Earth's most sacred resource. Inspired by the many indigenous-led movements across North America, this bold and lyrical picture book issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption.

Learn more

There's so much more to learn about snakes. Check out this resource to continue exploring and discovering.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Learn about reptiles of Minnesota, including a link to a 72-page identification guide.
dnr.state.mn.us/reptiles_amphibians

Crossword answers

ACROSS

2. Snakes can smell with this body part: **Tongue.**
3. Snakes use this when they hunt: **Venom.**
5. This is how snakes swallow their food: **Whole.**
6. Nearly all snakes lay these: **Eggs.**
8. Snakes do this with their skin: **Shed.**
9. This is the only continent without snakes: **Antarctica.**

DOWN

1. This is what snakes do in the winter: **Hibernate.**
4. Snakes have no eyelids so they can't do this: **Blink.**
7. Snakes' skin is not ____: **Slimy.**
8. Snakes' bodies are covered with these: **Scales.**



Did you know?

Snakes aren't slimy! Many people think that snakes' skin is slimy, but their skin is dry and scaly. As they grow, snakes shed off their old skin, often in one large piece, which you may find when you are out on a hike.