

Turtle Shell Quilt Instructions

A Turtle Shell Quilt is an educational activity designed to teach children K-12 about threats facing sea turtles and their habitats. Using a turtle shell as the shape for the quilt, each student will be able to design a scute (the bony external scales that make up a turtle shell) based on one threat to sea turtles or conservation effort to save them. For example, one scute may focus on plastic pollution, while another may focus on recycling. The final quilt will reflect the complex issues facing sea turtle survival. One quilt project can be done by up to 14 individual students or 28 students working in pairs.

Materials:

- Turtle Shell Template (see attachment)
- Felt fabric – 2 pieces, measuring 36” x 36” each, any color
- Permanent marker
- Sticky-backed Velcro adhesive – 2-3 half-inch squares per sea turtle scute, firm side only
- Kid-friendly paint pots - assorted colors
- Paint brushes – foam and bristled
- Glue sticks (or felt glue)
- Blunt-tipped scissors
- Varied craft accessories:
 - Sea-themed stickers
 - Yarn
 - Glitter
 - Paper clips
 - Colored craft papers
 - Recycled materials



Instructions:

1. Using one piece of 36” x 36” felt, draw a basic turtle shell using a permanent marker and the Turtle Shell Template provided to create the quilt foundation. For easy tracing, the Turtle Shell Template has been divided into 12 sections using the grid method.
2. Assign a number for each scute inside the turtle shell. Set aside.
3. Using the second piece of felt, draw another basic turtle shell. Then cut out the individual scutes and number the back of each piece to correspond with the number assigned on the quilt foundation. Another option is to have students cut their own scutes using the quilt foundation as a template.
4. Provide students with craft accessories and ask them to illustrate a threat to sea turtles or a conservation effort to save them.
5. To add a level of difficulty, ask students to research the threat or conservation effort, and write a 2-3 minute presentation to explain the issue and why they chose it. This will reinforce the lesson and allow students to share their scutes with classmates.
6. To assemble, attach 2-3 pieces of Velcro (firm side only) to each scute on the quilt foundation. Then affix each student's scute to its corresponding number on the quilt, pressing firmly to ensure grip.
7. Once the scutes are assembled, the quilt can be left in a square shape and the surrounding felt decorated.
8. Another option is to cut out the finished turtle shell and use it to outline another turtle shell on a separate piece of 36” x 36” felt. Then stitch or glue the two shells together and use plastic grocery bags to stuff the shells for a 3D turtle quilt.

