

- Description** Students read a text on British snakes and focus on True or False sentences
Lesson link Use this activity after exercise 6
Time 10 minutes
Extra material Print out and photocopy the *Snakes in Britain* worksheet for each student
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Instructions

- a In lesson 6B SS have read about the Australian crocodile. Now SS read another text about snakes and focus on nine True or False sentences on it.
- b Give each student a copy of the *Snakes in Britain* worksheet. Give SS five minutes to do the activity. Before giving SS the answers, give SS a minute to discuss their answers with a partner.

Answers

- 1 True. You might think of 'serpents snoozing in trees'.
- 2 False. There are three (the slowworm is a lizard).
- 3 True. It is 'venomous'.
- 4 False. This is rare.
- 5 False. They are harmless.
- 6 True. They are common.
- 7 False. Slowworm skeletons have signs of where they once had legs, but they don't have legs now.
- 8 False. The climate is almost identical.
- 9 False. The author does not give his own opinion but says 'whatever the reasons' and calls this story 'a legend'.

Snakes in Britain

If someone asked you 'where do snakes live?', you might think of rattlesnakes in the desert, or serpents snoozing in trees in the tropical rainforest. Certainly, you wouldn't think that these cold-blooded reptiles would enjoy the rain and mist of Northern Europe. But snakes really are amazing creatures and they seem to get everywhere, and, believe it or not, Britain is home to some native species of snake.

The most famous is the adder, which is actually a kind of viper. Yes, this snake is venomous, but it is most dangerous to small children. You can identify it easily as it is yellow, with a black zigzag pattern on its back. But sometimes you see a rare example: the black adder.

After the adder, but not dangerous at all, is the common grass snake. This is much smaller than the adder, a green colour, long and thin, and completely harmless to people.

The third snake that inhabits Great Britain is the smooth snake. It's not as famous as the adder and the grass snake, but they are pretty common if you get out into the countryside and look carefully.

There is another strange animal I should mention which is the slowworm. This is a silver animal that looks almost identical to a snake. But its skeleton still has signs of where it once had legs: because the slowworm is actually a lizard. If you're in Britain, you might see one as they like to live in people's gardens.

The strange thing is that the island of Ireland has no snakes at all, even though it has almost identical climate and geography to Great Britain. The legend is that when Saint Patrick came to Ireland, he sent all the snakes out of the country and into the sea. Whatever the reason, one thing is true: to this day Ireland is free of snakes.

Read the text and mark the sentences True (T) or False (F).

- 1 People think of snakes in the rainforest sleeping all day.
- 2 There are four kinds of snake in England.
- 3 The adder is poisonous.
- 4 Adders are often completely black.
- 5 Grass snakes are very dangerous to people.
- 6 There are many smooth snakes in Britain.
- 7 Slowworms have legs.
- 8 The weather is very different in the islands of Ireland and Great Britain.
- 9 The author believes Saint Patrick removed the snakes from Ireland.