

# Mojave Max

Mojave Max, the desert tortoise, is a reptile, like alligators, snakes, and lizards. Reptiles depend on heat from outside our bodies, such as the sun, to keep warm. Their bodies must stay within just the right temperatures for them to move around, find and digest their food. Cool temperatures cause them to move slowly. Warm temperatures allow them to move faster. It's dangerous for them to become too hot or too cold.

Reptiles have some special abilities (adaptations) that allow them to live in the desert despite the harsh conditions. Mojave Max is a digger and he digs a number of underground burrows over the area in which he lives. This digging behavior results in our having underground protection that is cooler in summer than temperatures at the ground surface that may reach 140 degrees Fahrenheit. These burrows are located so that no matter where Max is one is usually close by. Reptiles spend at least 95% of their lives in these burrows. By moving in and out of them the reptiles keep their bodies at just the right temperatures.

## Max's Secret Message

*Decode max's message using the code key below*

*- see page 15 for answers -*

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