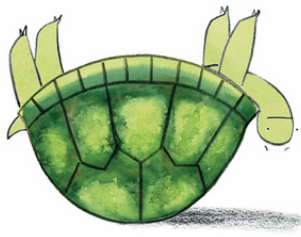


# I Am Stuck

## Educator's Guide

I am

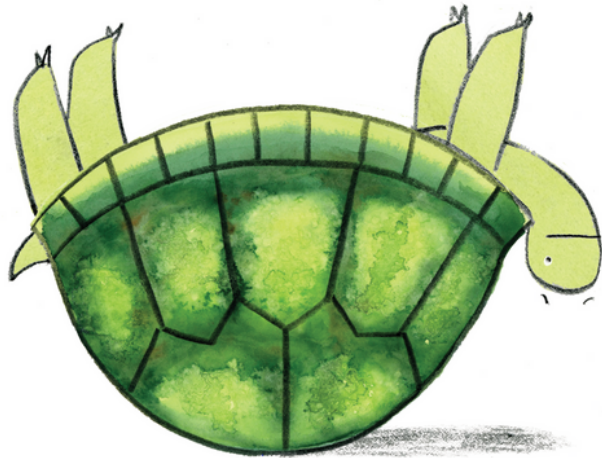
ST  CK

JULIA  
MILLS

# About the Author & Illustrator



When Julia Mills was six years old, she discovered that there were many pictures of cats in the “C” volume of the encyclopedia. She attempted to draw and paint every single one and has been making art ever since. Julia is an author, illustrator, and public-school art teacher. She lives in New Jersey with her husband and two kids. When she feels stuck, she likes to have a cup of tea and a nap.



art © 2023 by Julia Mills, from I AM STUCK.  
[www.jamills.com](http://www.jamills.com)

A note for teachers from Julia: I am so excited to share I AM STUCK with you. As a teacher I know that students needs stories about friendship and overcoming tough times. I also know that humor is one of the best tools for getting my students to love books. I hope your students love this book and it inspires them to be kind, creative and caring.

# I AM STUCK Discussion Questions

At the beginning of the book Turtle gets stuck. What do you think happened?

Are the first three animals helpful to Turtle? Why aren't their suggestions good for Turtle?

Do you think an animal should have tried to flip Turtle over? Would that have fixed all of his problems?

What does Possum do to help Turtle?

Turtle and Possum use their senses to help get unstuck. What are things you can see, smell, taste, hear, taste, and touch?

Can you think of a time you felt stuck? What helped you feel unstuck?

Sometimes we feel like Turtle and sometimes we feel like Possum. Can you think of a time you were like Turtle? Can you think of a time you were like Possum?

# Watercolor Turtle Shell Exploration

A note from Julia: In my book, I AM STUCK, I used watercolors and salt to make Turtle's shell. I did a lot of exploration, combining different colors and techniques. I probably painted over 30 different shells until I found the one I wanted to use! Playing and experimenting is the best part of being an artist. I hope you enjoy exploring materials with this activity.



Age: This lesson can be adapted to many grade levels. I've included the National Art Standard for Grade 1, but there are similar standards across grades.

National Art Standard:

VA:Cr2.1.1a Explore uses of materials and tools to create works of art or design.

Materials:

Turtle shell print out

Watercolor paints

Crayons

Water in a cup

Watercolor paper (or heavy weight mixed media paper)

Brushes and/or droppers for paint

Salt

Construction paper for turtle legs and body or drawing paper for backgrounds  
or turtle body print out

Glue or glue sticks

1. Transfer the shell drawing onto the watercolor paper with pencil. You can use a lightbox, window, transfer paper or a pencil on the back and then trace the front. Then, draw over the pencil with a black crayon (this will resist the watercolor and show up nice and bold).
2. Using a brush, wet the paper all over the shell. It's ok if you go out of the lines a bit because we are going to cut out the shell.
3. Pick one color and get your brush nice and paint-y. Touch the brush to the paper and watch the paint flow!
4. Try another color. Too many colors will make mud (but that's ok!).
5. If you want to add texture, have students sprinkle some coarse salt over the wet paint. Then set the turtles aside to dry. When dry, brush off the salt and you will have an interesting texture!
6. Cut out the dry shell.
7. Now you can have students use construction paper to make a head and legs. I like to let them design these on their own, but you can also print the attached head and legs and have students color, cut and attach. You can also glue the shell onto a paper and have them draw the body on the paper.

#### **Modifications:**

For an easier project with younger students use half a paper plate for the shell.

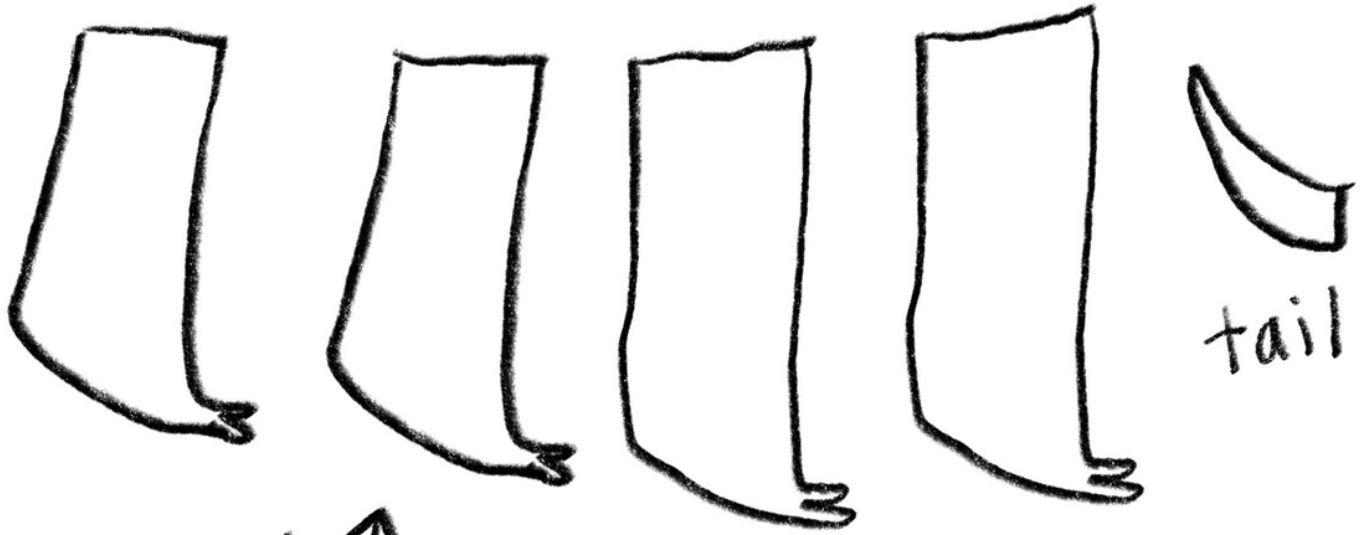
Students can use paper towels to dab textures instead of salt.

Liquid watercolors can be diluted and used with brushes or droppers.

Have students create designs or textures with a white crayon before painting to resist the watercolor.

For older students you can introduce the idea of layering paint. This is how I actually painted my shell, first allowing the bright yellow to dry and then painting the dark green and adding salt. Students could experiment with swatches of paint first and then apply the techniques to their shell.

This could be modified to include color theory. Have students pick analogous colors, complementary colors or combinations with special meaning to them.



feet ↗  
(cut out)

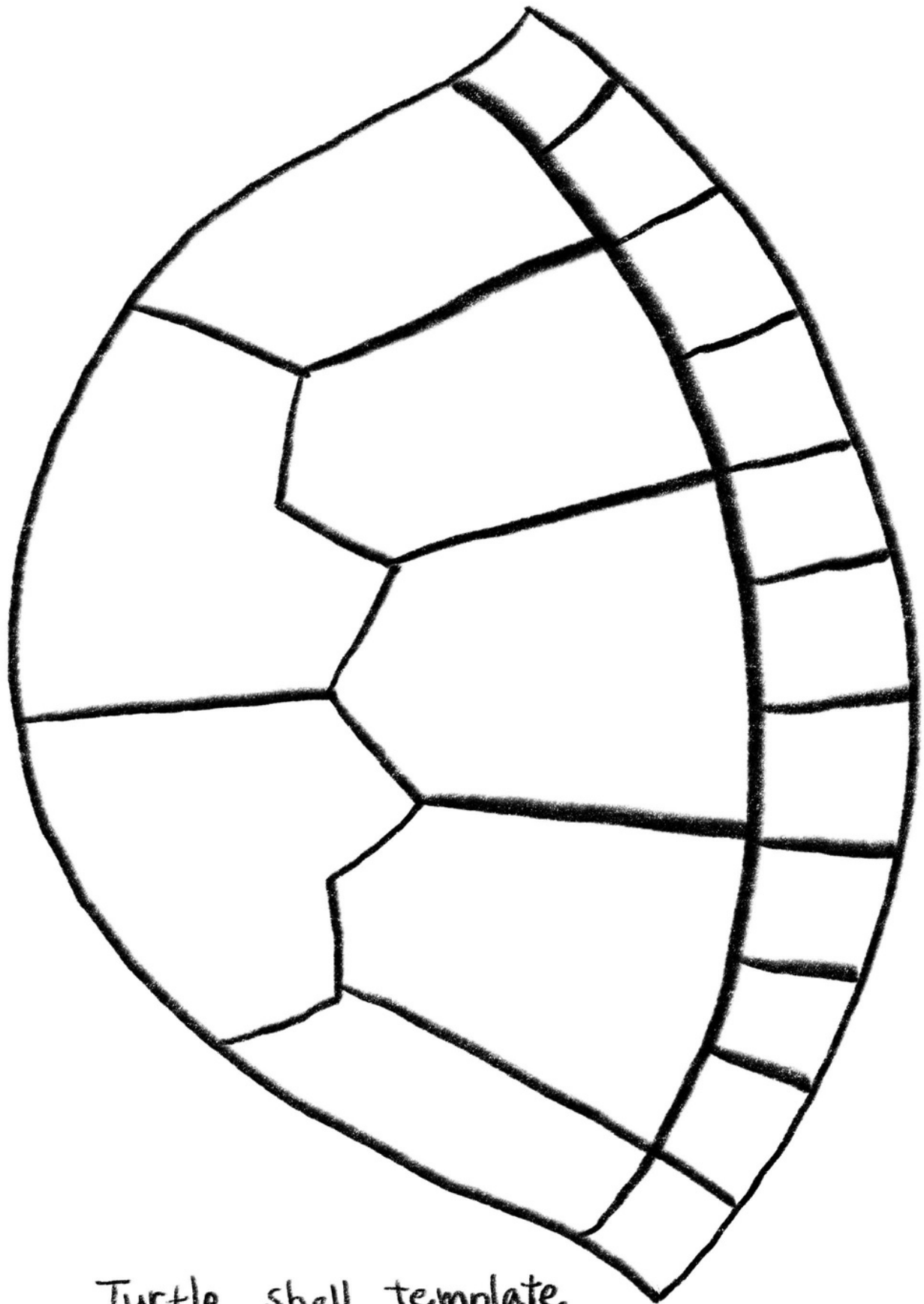
\* write name  
on the back!

head  
←



cut  
out  
& add  
a face!

glue head,  
legs, and  
tail to the  
back of  
the shell



Turtle shell template





# How to Draw Turtle! (a turt-oria!)

1. Draw the shell



like a rainbow with feet

2.



looks like a hat!

Connect with a curve!

3. letter 'w' halfway down



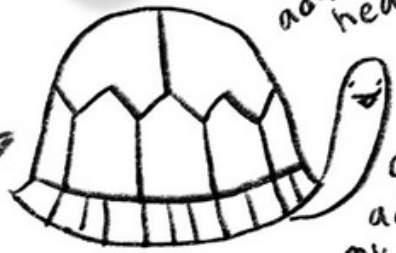
this line is curved ☺

4. connect the points



11 sections

5.



add turtle's head.

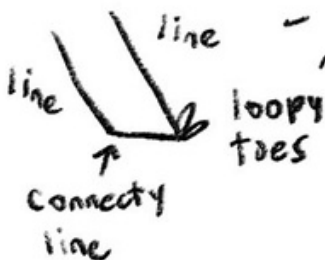
you can add my face too!

two dots!

smile!

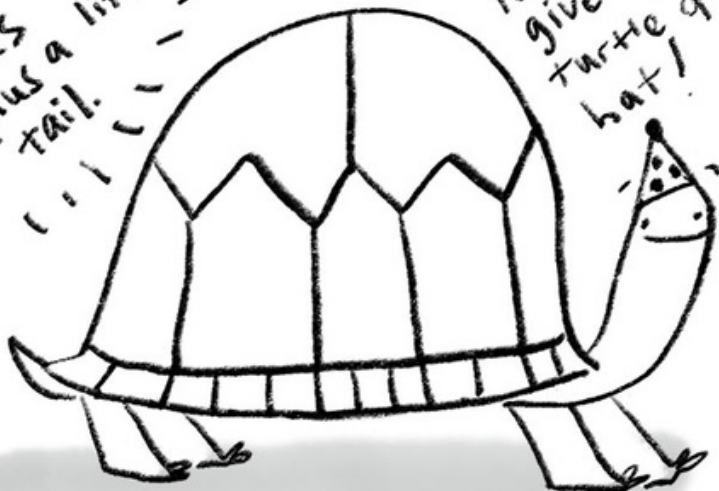
6.

each leg is like this:



turtle has 4 legs plus a little tail.

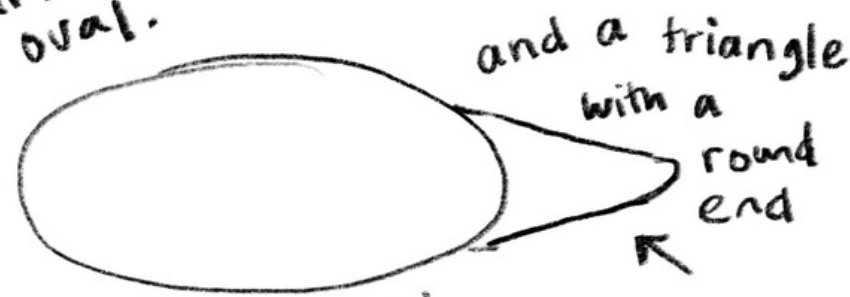
You can give your turtle a hat!



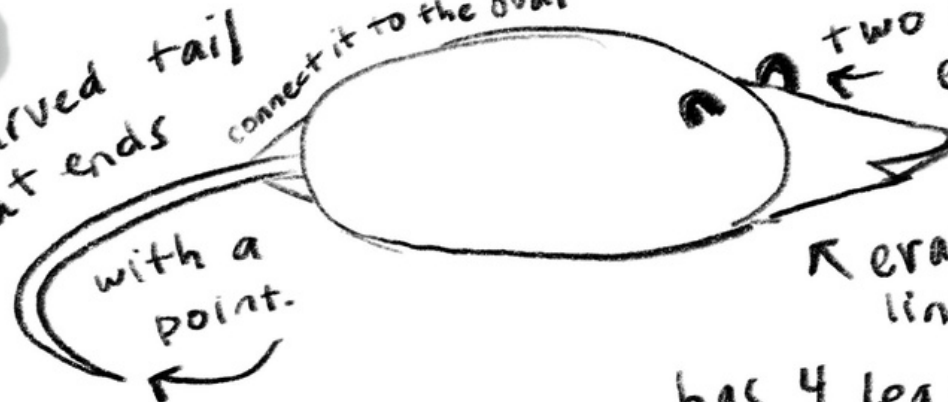
# How to draw possum!



1. Start with an oval.



2. Curved tail that ends with a point. Connect it to the oval. Two round ears. Sketch the mouth. Erase that curved line and any extras.



3. Possum has 4 legs

4. Add fur. "V" shape. Skinny leg. Cute toesies. Eye. Cute 'lil nose.

