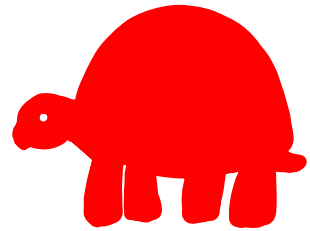
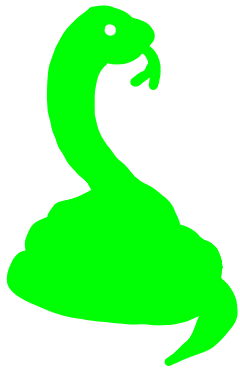


Sensation and perception: Afterimages

Stare at the eye of the green snake while you slowly count to 20, then immediately look at a spot in the empty terrarium. The faint silhouette of a magenta snake should appear in there. Try the same thing with the tortoise, and a faint blue-green shape should appear.



These ghostly reptiles are known as **afterimages** - images that stay with you even after you've stopped looking at them. As you stare at the green snake, light-sensitive cells at the back of your eyes become less responsive to green light. When you shift your gaze to the terrarium, your visual system "subtracts" green light from the white light that's being reflected from the white background. White light minus green light is magenta light, so you see the afterimage as a magenta snake.

