

# ALLIGATOR Worksheets

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## "The Mighty"



### SALTWATER MONSTER

The biggest sea-dwelling crocodile ever found turned up in the Tunisian desert. The whopper of a prehistoric predator grew to over 30 feet long (nearly ten meters) and weighed three tons. Paleontologists have dubbed the new species *Machimosaurus rex*. Although the recovered remains are fragmentary, enough remained in the 120-million-year-old rock to identify the reptile as the largest known member of a peculiar line of crocodiles that spent their lives almost entirely at sea.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## "Gator Myths"

Knowledge about alligators will help you understand more about their. Although they all look scary, there are things we have to know about that are actually unexpected.



### TRUTH from MYTHS

Look at the example below and follow the pattern. Be curious!

**Myth:** You should run zigzag if you come across an alligator.

**Fact:** This is a common misconception. First, it is rare for an alligator to pursue humans because humans are too large to be suitable prey. However, if an alligator does make an aggressive charge, run fast and straight (away from the alligator, of course) usually do not run very far. But remember they are most likely to charge at you near their nest.

**Myth:** Alligators live for hundreds of years.

**Fact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Myth:** Alligators will chase people.

**Fact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Myth:** Alligators are immune to the bite of venomous snakes.

**Fact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Myth:** Alligators make good pets.

**Fact:** \_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## "More Gator"



### GATOR WORD CREATOR

Let's test your vocabulary. Generate 5+ letter words from each letter.

A



L



I



G



T



O



R



# Free Sample

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- Ryan, Beth & Nicola :)

Let's talk about

# ALLIGATORS



An Alligator is a group of animals in the order Crocodilia. The genus Alligator has two living species, the American Alligator and the Chinese Alligator.

See the fact file below for more information about alligators.

# ALLIGATOR FACTS

- The alligator is a member of the crocodile family. Alligators and crocodiles are from the Age of Reptiles, which means they have survived for 200 million years. Alligators and their relatives are the last of the living reptiles that were closely related to dinosaurs.
- Alligators are found throughout the Southeast, from the Carolinas to Texas and north to Arkansas. They live in wetlands. As predators at the top of the food chain, they help control numbers of the animals that might strip the vegetation in the marsh's wetlands.
- Alligators have a lifespan of approximately 30 years in the wild and up to 50 years in captivity.
- Alligators are cold blooded which means they do not make their own body heat. They gain body heat by sunbathing.
- A mature male alligator can reach a length of up to 14 feet and weigh approximately 1,000 pounds. The largest alligator ever recorded in the United States was found in Louisiana. It was 19 feet 2 inches long and weighed 2,000 pounds.
- The alligator has a large, slightly rounded body, with a broad head and thick limbs. It also has a very powerful tail which it uses to move itself through water. The tail accounts for half the alligator's length.

# ALLIGATOR FACTS

- Alligators move very quickly in water, but they move slowly on land. They can, however, move very quickly for short distances. Some alligators have been known to travel at a speed of 35 miles per hour for a very short distance.
- Alligators will eat just about anything, but their primary diet consists of snails, fish, and turtles. Small animals that come to the water's edge to drink make easy prey for the alligator. Young alligators mostly feed on insects, crustaceans, snails, and fish.
- Alligators mate in the spring. They can mate when they are between 8 to 13 years old. The male bellows to attract a female. The female builds a nest with mud, sticks and leaves in a sheltered spot near the edge of the water. The female lays between 20 to 50 eggs.
- The heat of an alligator's nest determines the sex of the babies. If the eggs are incubated for 65 days at over 93 degrees Fahrenheit, they become males. If the eggs are incubated for 65 days at temperatures below 86 degrees, they will turn out to be females. In-between temperatures produce both.

# ALLIGATOR FACTS

- When the young begin making a high-pitched noise, the female alligator begins to dig them out of the nest. The babies are born with a series of yellow bands around their bodies. Shortly after birth, they find their way to the water. Females aggressively defend their young for sometimes more than a year. Alligators are considered adults when they have reached a length of six feet.
- Alligators create water holes by uprooting vegetation and clawing away mud. This hole is called a “gator hole” and creates a space that fills with and provides water for fish, insects, turtle, birds, and many other animals including the alligator itself.
- In 1967, the alligator was listed as an endangered species. However, a combined effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife agencies in the South, saved these unique animals.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# “Gator Body”



## EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL FUNCTIONS

Mark the correct descriptions about alligators' internal and external bodies in red.

### INTERNAL FUNCTIONS

- ☐ Alligators have a 3-chambered heart.
- ☐ Alligators have large brains.
- ☐ They breathe using a better functioning respiratory system, including stronger lungs, and lack gills.
- ☐ They need to eat at least three times a day.
- ☐ They cannot generate their own body heat and must modify their activity to regulate their internal temperature.
- ☐ They have internal “copulatory organs” for fertilization.
- ☐ Alligators shed tears.

### EXTERNAL FUNCTIONS

- ☐ Alligators have complete 360 vision.
- ☐ Alligators have up to 80 teeth.
- ☐ Their epidermis is covered in keratin scales.
- ☐ Their tails are meant to whip prey when hunting
- ☐ Their jaw structures are built for crushing prey
- ☐ Most reptiles lay hard-shelled amniotic eggs
- ☐ They have limbs with five toes for movement
- ☐ They chew their food.
- ☐ Alligators shed their skin.
- ☐ All alligators live in saltwater environments.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# **“Key Answers”**



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# “Gator Body”



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