



About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 16 Word Count: 600

Book Summary

Crocs and Gators teaches students about the four types of crocodilians—their physical characteristics, habitats, and eating habits. The book also discusses why some crocodilians are becoming endangered and what is being done to save them.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

Objectives

- Connect to prior knowledge to understand text
- Distinguish fact or opinion
- Identify vowel digraph ea
- Recognize and use plural nouns
- Place words in alphabetical order

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Crocs and Gators* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Fact or opinion, plural nouns, alphabetical order worksheet
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- Content words:

Story critical: *crocodile* (n.), *endangered* (adj.), *fierce* (adj.), *reptiles* (n.), *scaly* (adj.), *snouts* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students what they know about crocodiles and alligators.
- Ask whether anyone knows the differences between a crocodile and an alligator. List student responses on the board. Tell students to look for the differences between crocodiles and alligators in the book as they are reading.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, fiction or nonfiction, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Connect to prior knowledge**

- Explain to students that good readers make connections between what they already know and new information they read. Remind them that thinking about what they already know about the topic of the book will help them understand what they read.
- Model connecting to prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: On the front cover of this book, the photograph and title remind me of a time I visited a zoo and saw crocodiles and alligators. I watched them walk into the water on their short legs and become almost invisible, with only their snouts and eyes showing above the water. Because I already know a little about them, I'm looking forward to learning even more. I'm hoping this book will have photographs and illustrations that will help me learn about the differences between these two animals.
- Direct students to page 8. Have them look carefully at the two illustrations to find the differences between crocodiles and alligators. Ask students to share what they see. (*A crocodile's snout is narrower than an alligator's; alligators have two teeth that are larger than the rest and stick out; and so on.*)
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at photographs and captions.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Fact or opinion**

- Ask students what they think the author's purpose was for writing the book and what they hope to learn about crocodilians that they don't already know.
- Model the skill of distinguishing fact from opinion.
Think-aloud: If I have a red apple, I can state the fact that the apple is red. If I say that red apples are better tasting than green apples, that would be my opinion. Someone else may think green apples are better.
- Review or explain that a *fact* is something that a person can *prove to be true* in real life. An *opinion* is a belief, based on a *personal feeling*. People have lots of opinions about reptiles. Have students turn to page 13, and discuss with them the different kinds of feelings that may be elicited when looking at the crocodile's teeth crunching down on a frog. Relate these feelings to the concept of fact versus opinion.
- Remind students that as they read, they should look for facts—things that a person can prove to be true—about crocodilians.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, ask them to point out any difficult words they see. Identify words that you feel may be difficult for them. List on the board all of the words mentioned.
- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out the word. They can look for base words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use context clues to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Direct students to page 15. Point out the word *endangered* in the first sentence. Model how to use context clues to figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Explain to students that the photograph on the page shows many crocodilian skins in a pile. The sentence containing the unfamiliar word explains that most crocodilians are *endangered*. The next sentence describes the fact that they are often killed for food and for their skins, and that their homes are destroyed by farmers. Tell students that these clues make you think that the word *endangered* means *exposed to harm and in danger of becoming extinct*. Have students follow along as you reread the sentence on the page to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Remind students that they should always check whether a word makes sense by rereading the sentence in which the word appears.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to find out about crocodiles and alligators, and the differences between them. Remind students to think about what they already know about crocodiles and alligators as they read.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to page 8. Tell them to look for words and phrases in the book that identify differences between crocs and gators. Encourage students who finish before others to reread the text.

- When they have finished reading, have students tell the interesting information they have read about so far.

- Model connecting to prior knowledge.

Think-aloud: When I read on page 5 about crocodilians seeking cool, shady places, it made me remember when I was at the zoo watching the crocodiles. It was very hot that day, and I remembered that all of the crocodiles were either in the water or under a tree in the shade. Ask students whether any of them have ever seen a live crocodile or alligator and, if so, what they observed.


- **Check for understanding:** Have students read page 9. Ask them to tell what information they already knew about caimans that helped them to better understand what they read.

- Have students read to page 13.

- Model distinguishing fact from opinion.

Think-aloud: When I read about crocodilians being fierce hunters and I looked at the photo on page 13, it made me nervous about coming across one in the wild. I wouldn't want to become a crocodile's lunch. That is my opinion, based on a personal feeling. However, the author can prove that crocodiles hunt and eat deer, cattle, frogs, fish, and birds—and that they have attacked people. Therefore, the information in this book about crocodilians as hunters is fact. Write on the board: Fact: Crocodilians hunt and eat deer, cattle, frogs, fish, and birds. They will also attack people. Opinion: Crocodilians make me nervous, and I would never want to be in danger of becoming lunch for one of them.

- Have students read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to continue connecting to prior knowledge as they read. Remind them to continue looking for important information on crocodiles and alligators as they read.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- **Think-aloud:** *When I read about crocodilians laying their eggs in sand or in a nest, I remembered seeing photographs of baby crocodiles hatching from eggs. They were so tiny that I can understand that the baby crocodiles might not survive. I know that connecting with what I already knew about the subject kept me actively involved in the reading. This helped me understand and remember the new information I read.*

- Have students share examples of how they connected to prior knowledge to understand and remember the information in the book.


Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- Ask students to turn to page 11. Review the facts about crocodilians underwater. Ask students to tell their opinion of crocodilians being so adept underwater. Write on the board: *Fact: Crocodilians close their ears and nostrils to keep water out. They shut off their windpipe so they can open their mouth without breathing in water. Opinion: I think these abilities are amazing.* Have students share their opinions, and write them on the board.
- **Check for understanding:** Ask students to turn to page 9 and reread the facts about caimans and gharials. Ask a volunteer to share the facts (*caimans have heads shaped like crocodiles, gharials have long, narrow snouts*, and so on). Ask students to share their opinions about the differences between the two reptiles. Write the facts and opinions on the board.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [fact-or-opinion worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Build Skills


Phonics: Vowel digraph ea

- Write the word *treat* on the board and say it aloud with students. Tell students that sometimes letters combine to stand for one sound. Reread the word *treat* as you run your finger under the letters in the word. Ask students to identify the two letters that represent the long /e/ vowel sound in the word *treat*.
- Write the ea letter combination on the board. Have students practice writing the letter combination on a separate piece of paper while saying the sound the combination represents.
- Write the following words on the board, omitting the ea vowel digraph: *neat, beat, wheat, speak, meat*. Ask volunteers to come to the board and add in the vowel digraph ea to each word. Read each word aloud with students.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 5 and circle the word that has a vowel digraph ea.

Grammar and Mechanics: Plural nouns

- Review with students that a *noun* is a word that names a *person, place, or thing*. Explain that nouns can be singular or plural. Show students one item, such as a pen. Ask them to tell how many items there are and to name it (pen). Show students two pens. Ask them to tell what you are holding (pens). Write the words *pen* and *pens* on the board. Explain that *nouns* can tell the name of one thing (circle the word *pen*). When they do this, they are called *singular nouns*. They can also name more than one thing (circle the word *pens*). This is called a *plural noun*. Ask students to tell how the words are different (an s has been added to show more than one).
- Direct students to page 3 of the book. Ask students to look for nouns that are examples of plural nouns (*crocodiles, animals*). Ask students how you would change these words to make singular nouns (by removing the s).
- Show students your watch (if you are wearing one). Ask them to tell how many and what it is that you are wearing (watch). Show students two watches (a photo or a student's watch will suffice). Ask students to name the two objects (watches). Write the words *watch* and *watches* on the board. Underline the *ch* in the word *watch*. Explain that when a word ends in *s, ss, sh, ch, x, or z*, the letters *es* are added to show more than one.
- Write the following words on the board: *mess, goat, dish, box, whiz, race, patch*. Ask students what to add to each word to make it show more than one item. Make the changes on the board.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students work in partners to go through the book to find and underline 5–10 plural nouns. Ask students to write the singular noun next to the plural form. Circulate to check for understanding. Ask students to find one example of a noun that ends in *ch, ss, sh, x, or z* that would require adding an *-es* to make the plural form.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [plural nouns worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Write the words *crocodile* and *protect* on the board. Underline the first letter in each word. Ask students which letter comes first in the alphabet, *c* or *p*.
- Review or explain to students that words are sometimes placed in a list by ABC, or alphabetical, order. Words are placed in alphabetical order by looking first at the initial letter in each word and deciding which letter comes first in the alphabet. Explain that *crocodile* would come first in an alphabetical list.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the words *protect* and *incubator* on the board. Underline the first letter in each word. Ask students which letter comes first in the alphabet, *p* or *i*. Explain that *incubator* would come first in an alphabetical list.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [alphabetical order worksheet](#).

Build Fluency
Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students practice visualizing the story with someone at home and then compare the pictures they created in their minds.

Extend the Reading
Informational Writing Connection

Have students choose an animal they find interesting and tell the reason they chose that particular animal. Have them write about the animal's appearance, habitat, and ability to survive in the wild. Provide an opportunity for students to find more information about their chosen animal by using library and Internet resources.

Visit [Writing A–Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on expository writing.

Science Connection

Help students learn more about crocodilians. Brainstorm with them to create a list of questions for which they would like to find answers. Provide books, encyclopedias, magazines, online resources, and videos for students to look for answers to their questions. Invite a guest speaker from the zoo to speak about crocodilians and answer any questions students may still have.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the reading strategy of connecting to prior knowledge to understand nonfiction text
- correctly distinguish fact or opinion during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify vowel digraph ea in words during discussion
- correctly recognize plural nouns formed by adding -s and -es in the text and on a worksheet
- accurately alphabetize words in discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)