

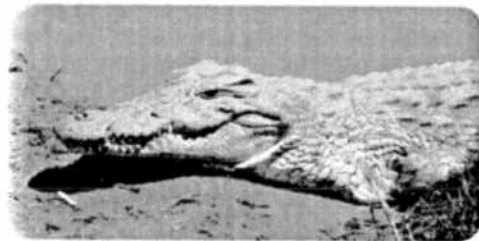
Crocodile or Alligator?

If you ever come across an alligator or a crocodile in the wild, don't stop to figure out which one you've met! These two large reptiles are often confused with one another. Both are egg-laying **carnivores** that can be **exceedingly** dangerous to humans. However, crocodiles are thought to be far more **aggressive** than alligators. Crocodiles also tend to be larger, measuring an average of 19 feet in length. Alligators only grow to be about 14 feet long. Both are armored with thick skin made of overlapping bony plates.

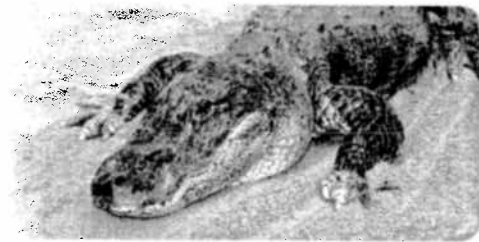
Like the lizards they resemble, crocodiles and alligators walk with their legs extended out to the sides of their bodies. They slide on their bellies along the ground. They may look awkward on land, but they are quite at home in the water, where they swim by sweeping their powerful tails from side to side. They can **lurk** submerged underwater without breathing for over an hour. Or they can float just below the surface, with only their nostrils, eyes, and ears above the water. In this position, it is easy to mistake them for floating logs.

Another observable difference between these two **species** is the shape of their snouts. A crocodile's snout is narrower and pointed, while an alligator's snout is wider and more rounded. Both have a fearsome set of teeth, but when an alligator's mouth is closed, its lower teeth are hidden. A crocodile's upper and lower teeth are exposed at all times. New teeth grow constantly, so they never run out of sharp teeth with which to seize their prey.

Crocodiles are found in both fresh and saltwater **habitats** in Asia, Australia, Africa, and North and South America. Alligators are only found in freshwater habitats in China and North America. Since South Florida is the only place in the world where *both* crocodiles and alligators are known to live, it's unlikely that you will ever have to tell the difference on the spot.



Crocodile



Alligator

One way to tell alligators and crocodiles apart is to look at their snouts.

MONDAY

Match each word from the passage to its definition on the right.

carnivores

exceedingly

aggressive

lurk

species

habitats

- extremely
- meat-eating animals
- places where animals or plants naturally live
- ready to attack
- groups of similar animals or plants
- to lie hidden in wait

TUESDAY

What is the structure of this article? Circle your answer and explain how you know.

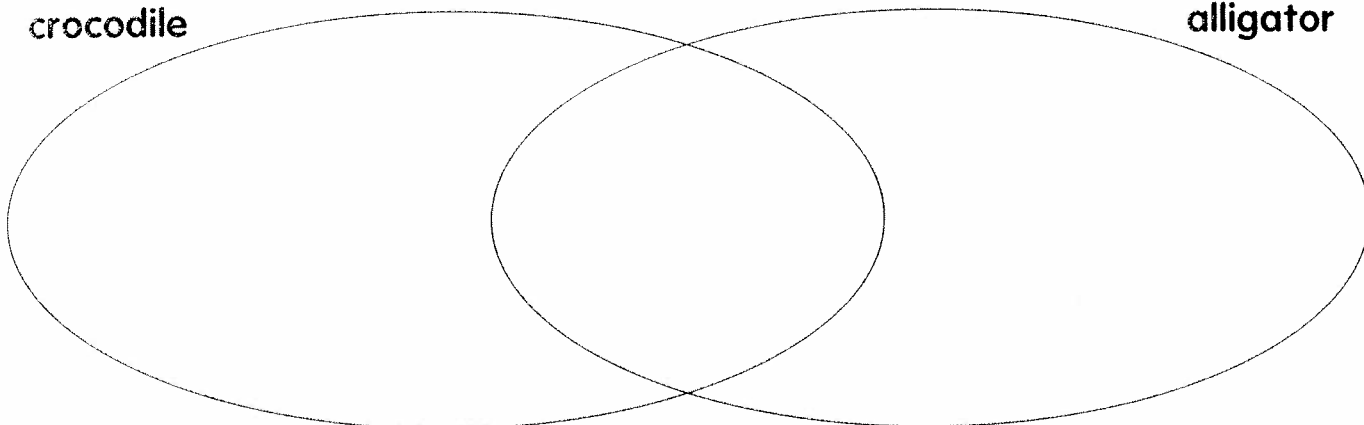
chronological (order of events) compare/contrast cause/effect problem/solution

WEDNESDAY

Write at least two descriptions in each section of the Venn diagram.

crocodile

alligator



THURSDAY

Write T if the sentence is true. Write F if it is false.

- _____ Crocodiles and alligators are not dangerous to people.
- _____ A crocodile's teeth can be seen even when its mouth is closed.
- _____ Crocodiles can be found in Africa.
- _____ Reptiles cannot live in saltwater.
- _____ Both crocodiles and alligators live in North America.

FRIDAY

Research crocodiles and alligators and write about more ways they are alike.
