



Name: _____

American Alligators vs. American Crocodiles

Did you know there are thousands of species that live in the Everglades? They all play an important role in the Everglades ecosystem. Today we are going to focus on one of the most well-known Everglades species of all, an iconic, powerful reptile species that has over 1 million of them living in the state of Florida alone.

Did you guess the American alligator? There is so much to learn about the American alligator, a species that is protected and vital to the Everglades ecosystem. American alligators are a keystone species in the Everglades, a species that changes the environment for its own use in a way that helps other plants and animals.

Directions: Learn more about the American alligator by watching this [video](#) from Everglades National Park. Did you learn about the other reptilian species that lives in the Everglades too?

The Everglades is the only place in the world that is home to both the American alligator and American crocodile!

After viewing the video, fill out the T-chart (below), to describe the following differences between each species:

- Shape of the snout
- Skin color
- Teeth
- Habitat

Standards: SC.2.N.1.5

Everglades Literacy Lesson Connection:

<https://www.evergladesliteracy.org/second-grade>

Grade 2 - Lesson 2 Everglades Seasons

-Students will act out an ecodrama in an alligator hole during the dry season. Each student will play a role of an animal that depends on the alligator hole. Students will identify the American alligator as a keystone species that enables other species to survive.

Extension: To learn more about alligator holes and why they are important, have your students act out a virtual ecodrama! Each student will be assigned a species that uses the alligator hole for survival. Have your students make a hat or a sign that indicates which species they are and when it is their turn to act, have them make the sounds and move like the animal would in the ecosystem.

American Alligator vs. American Crocodile T-Chart

Directions: Use the T-Chart to describe the following differences between each species: shape of the snout, skin color, teeth, and habitat.



American Alligator

American Crocodile

Extension Wrap-up: Have the students answer the following questions:

1. What are the two seasons that occur in the Everglades? _____

2. Why are Alligators important to other wildlife? _____

3. What does the American alligator provide for wildlife? _____

4. What does the wildlife provide for the American alligator? _____

5. Why do American alligators dig these alligator holes? _____

6. How do alligator holes help other animals? _____

7. How can we help protect the American alligator? _____

Answer Key:

1. Wet and dry
2. As a keystone species, they change their environment and provide for other species.
3. Water and a place to live.
4. Food.
5. To create a home.
6. Provide water and food.
7. Answers will vary but should include habitat protection, do not feed the wildlife, no illegal hunting, etc.