

Florida's Prehistoric Predator Alligator

5th Grade Standards targeted:

SC.5.L.17	Plants and animals, including humans, interact with and depend upon each other and their environment to satisfy their basic needs. Students will understand the importance of alligators and the role they play in the environment.
BIG IDEA : Interdependence	
SC.3.L.17	Plants and animals, including humans, interact with and depend upon each other and their environment to satisfy their basic needs. Students will understand how other wildlife and the environment can benefit from alligators.
SC.4.L.17	Plants and animals, including humans, interact with and depend upon each other and their environment to satisfy their basic needs. Students will understand the effects seasons have on alligators and why these changes are important.
SC.7.L.17	Both human activities and natural events can have major impacts on the environment. Students will understand the impact humans have on the alligator's population and how it will affect the environment.
Big Idea: Reproduction & Heredity	
SC.4.L.16	Life cycles vary among organisms, but reproduction is a major stage in the life cycle of all organisms. Student will understand the life stages of alligators, the role mother alligators play, and why many do not reach adulthood.

Set Up: For classrooms a powerpoint presentation can be found [here](#).

Worksheet answers: The worksheet can be found [here](#).

- 1) - If it is too small, they will swallow it whole.
 - If it is too large, they will shake it into smaller pieces so that it can be easier to swallow.
 - If very large they will use a technique called the "Death Roll", which consists of them biting its prey and then spinning, tearing off smaller pieces to swallow. Disperse seeds, manage insect populations, and clean-up dead or sick animals.
- 2) - External sources, such as the sun, are used to give them warmth. They will "sunbathe" by basking in the sun.
 - Another way to warm themselves is by digging holes in the mud or swimming in warmer waters.
- 3) If it's too cold (during winter) alligators will stop hunting and eating and become dormant. Metabolism slows down. It helps them conserve energy during cold months.

- 4) They are apex predator, meaning they are top of the food chain. As adults they do not have many natural predators.

Grading:

Grades will be based on the scores from the worksheet.