

## See You Later Alligator — In a While Crocodile!



**Reptiles** are scaly-skinned, 'cold-blooded' creatures with a bony skeleton and a backbone. There are about 6500 different species of reptile in the world. They are found in almost every part of the world, except the Arctic and Antarctic regions and on mountain peaks. Most make their homes in lakes, swamps and freshwater rivers. Although reptiles are known as 'cold-blooded' creatures, they do not always have chilly blood. A reptile's body temperature changes, depending on how hot or cold its surroundings are.

Reptiles gain heat and energy by basking in the sun.

There are four main groups of reptiles. Crocodiles, alligators, caimans and gharials belong to the Crocodylia group. These fierce, dangerous predators are related to reptiles that lived more than 200 million years ago.

Crocodylian reptiles have tough, armour-like skin covering their entire bodies. This protects them from injury during attacks and also helps them to survive in hot, dry places by keeping water out and body moisture in. All crocodylian reptiles are carnivores (meat eaters). While all crocodylians have similar features, there are also some notable differences.

A reptile's outer scales are mostly made up of keratin. Keratin is also found in human fingernails and hair.

Some crocodiles live for up to 100 years.

**Crocodiles** are the largest and most dangerous of all living reptiles. They prey on fish, birds and mammals as big as deer or cattle. 'Crocs' move swiftly through water, powered mainly by the tail. Males and females look alike, but males tend to grow bigger. The largest crocodile can grow to more than 7m (23ft) long. Dwarf crocodiles are the smallest species of crocodile and grow to just 2m (6.5ft) long.



Crocodile farms can be found in some countries, such as Zimbabwe, where crocodiles are bred for their skins to make shoes, handbags and other articles.

The **salt-water crocodile** or 'saltie' is one of the few crocs to inhabit salt-water, although it also lives in freshwater rivers and lakes. It is the largest reptile alive today and is one of the world's most powerful animals. Strong enough to kill and eat a human, it can stay underwater for more than an hour. It gets rid of extra, unwanted salt through large salt glands on the back of its tongue.

The **Nile crocodile** has become rare, due to the demand for its skin. This African reptile preys on large mammals, who come to the water's edge to drink. Having snatched its prey, the croc drowns it by holding it under water. The crocodile can't chew its food, so it spins its dead prey round and round in the water, to tear off bite-sized chunks. While most reptiles leave their young to look after themselves, Nile crocodile females are caring mothers. The female lays between 10 and 90 eggs at a time and then buries them in a sandy hole in the riverbank. When the young crocs are ready to hatch, they chirp loudly and their mother scrapes away the sand to uncover them. Then she gently picks up the hatchlings with her teeth and carries them inside her mouth to a safe place. She can carry as many as fifteen at a time. This ensures the babies have a good chance of survival.



**Alligators** are not as common as crocodiles. There are two species of alligator — the American alligator of South-Eastern USA and the smaller Chinese alligator that lives in the Yangtze River. Alligators look very like crocodiles, but have broader, flatter heads with rounded snouts. 'Gators' also have a

An alligator's fourth tooth is hidden, while a crocodile's fourth tooth sticks out when its mouth is closed.



shorter body (about 5.5m [18ft]) and a shorter snout than crocodiles. Alligators usually live longer than crocodiles. While all



reptiles are good at camouflage, the American alligator is particularly good at disguising itself.

Tiny algae (water plants) on the surface of the swamps of Louisiana, USA help to cover the alligators so that they look like floating logs. They are actually hunting their prey — turtles, fish and water mammals.

The **caiman** is a type of alligator found in Central and South America. The caiman is smaller than other crocodilians and can move much more quickly on land. Caiman teeth are sharper and longer than alligator teeth. The leathery scales of caimans are strengthened by bony plates on the back and belly.



The **gharial** or gaviel is easily recognised by the shape of its head. This Indian reptile has a long snout and scissor-like jaws that each contain more than 50 teeth — all the same size and shape. Its jaws are especially suited to catching fish and frogs. The strange bump on the male's snout is called a ghara. The gharial rarely leaves the river, except to breed. Gharials grow to 6.1m (20ft).



## Light Bites

Look back over the text to find suitable **adjectives** to complete the details below.

### A. Nature trail detail — adjectives

- 1 A reptile's body temperature depends on how \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ its surroundings are.
- 2 Crocodiles prey on fish, birds and mammals as \_\_\_\_\_ as deer or cattle.
- 3 The salt-water crocodile is \_\_\_\_\_ enough to kill and eat a human.
- 4 The caiman has \_\_\_\_\_ scales and \_\_\_\_\_ plates on its back and belly.
- 5 The gharial has a \_\_\_\_\_ snout and \_\_\_\_\_ jaws.



Use suitable **adjectives** to complete these comparisons.

### B. Dare to compare — more adjectives

- 1 Crocodiles are the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ dangerous of all living reptiles.
- 2 Dwarf crocodiles are the \_\_\_\_\_ species of crocodile.
- 3 The caiman is \_\_\_\_\_ than other crocodilians.
- 4 The caiman's teeth are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ than alligator teeth.



### C. Time to take action — verbs

Find verbs in the text to complete this passage about the female Nile crocodile.



The female \_\_\_\_\_ between 10 and 90 eggs at a time and then \_\_\_\_\_ them in a sandy hole in the riverbank. When the young crocs are ready to \_\_\_\_\_, they \_\_\_\_\_ loudly and their mother \_\_\_\_\_ away the sand to \_\_\_\_\_ them. Then she gently \_\_\_\_\_ up the hatchlings with her teeth and \_\_\_\_\_ them inside her mouth to a safe place.

Find five more verbs on pages 66 and 67.



## Dia daoibh ar Phláinéad Ceoil



### Feidhmeanna Teanga: Eiseamláirí

Tá ... ceangailte le ...

Tá mé ag iarraidh ...

Caithfidh dul ...



Go tobann tagann aghaidh bheag ar an scáileán.

'A Zac, a Zac. Rac agus Ról anseo,' arsa Rac.

'Táimid inár gcónaí ar Phláinéad an Domhain le bliain anuas.

Bhí timpiste againn sa spáslong.'

'Beidh sé deisithe againn an tseachtain seo chugainn,' arsa Ról.

'An bhfaca daoine fásta sibh?' arsa Zac agus imní air.

'Ní fhaca. Tá cairde againn anseo. Is páistí iad.

Conor agus Ciara is ainm dóibh,' arsa Rac.

'Táimid inár gcónaí i stábla. Is leo an stábla. Is iontach an áit í Pláinéad an Domhain. Déarfadh mé gach rud leat nuair a thiocfaidh mé abhaile,' arsa Ról.

'Beimid abhaile i gceann coicise. Caithfidh dul ar thuras beag ar dtús,' arsa Rac.

'Slán go fóill. Tabhair aire,' arsa Zac agus sceitimíní áthais air.

Go tobann imíonn a aghaidh ón scáileán. Múchann Ról an teilifíseán agus múchann Rac an ríomhaire.



Freagair na ceisteanna.



- 1 Cad atá ar siúl ag Rac agus Ról?
- 2 Cad a chloiseann Rac?
- 3 Cé a thagann ar an scáileán?
- 4 Cén fáth go bhfuil imní ar Zac?
- 5 Cathain a bheidh Rac agus Ról sa bhaile?



### 8.5 Éist leis agus léigh an scéal.



Tá Rac agus Ról sa stábla. Tá siad ag obair ar an seanteilifíseán.

Tá an seanteilifíseán ceangailte le ríomhaire. Tá spúnóg ag gobadh amach as an gcianrialtán. Tá siad ag iarraidh dul i dteangmháil le Pláinéad Ceoil.

'Cuir an teilifíseán ar siúl agus cuirfidh mé an ríomhaire ar siúl,' arsa Rac.

Brúann Ról cnaipe ar an gcianrialtán. Tosaíonn an spúnóg ag bogadh suas agus síos. Brúnn Rac na cnaipí ar an méarchlár. Lasann an scáileán ar an ríomhaire.

'Ag tástáil ... a haon, a dó, a trí. An bhfuil aon duine ansin?' arsa Ról.

'Cloisim ceol,' arsa Rac.



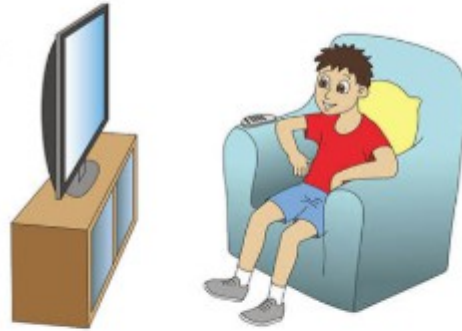
Labhair le do chara.

Cén sórt ríomhaire atá i do scoil?

An bhfuil ríomhaire agat sa bhaile?

# An Deireadh Seachtaine

Is maith liom an deireadh seachtaine  
Mar bíonn sos agam ón scoil.  
Fanaim im' shuí san oíche  
Gan obair bhaile, le do thoil.



Féachaim ar an teilifís  
Má éirím go moch,  
Ach b'fhearr liom go mór mo ríomhaire  
Má bhíonn an aimsir fliuch.



Taitníonn an chispheil liom  
Le mo chairde roimh am lóin,  
Ach is fearr liom cluiche peile leo  
Uair éigin san iarnóin.



Ní maith liom an leadóg  
Mar ní cluiche foirne é.  
B'fhearr liom bheith im' pheileadóir  
Is beidh, le cúnamh Dé.