

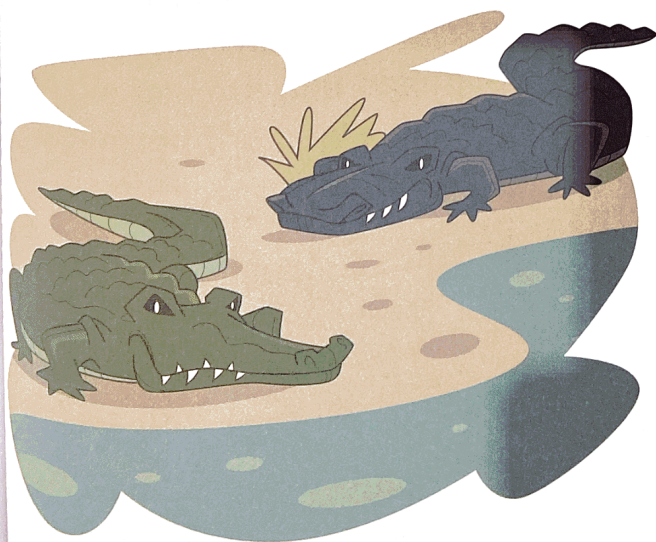
both jaws remain visible. The fourth tooth on the lower jaw sticks out. American Crocodiles are some of the world's largest crocodiles. Some can grow more than 15 feet long and weigh as much as 450 pounds. They live in freshwater and where saltwater and freshwater meet. We've talked about how these reptiles look and where they live. Now let's talk about what they eat and where they lay their eggs.

Alligators eat different kinds of foods, including fish, frogs, turtles, snakes, water birds, deer, and other alligators. First, they drown their prey. Then, they use their teeth, slap the prey against the water, or drag the prey around to break it into bite-sized pieces.

Crocodiles eat fish but may also eat any animal that comes too close. They usually drown the prey first and then swallow it whole.

When it's time to mate, the female alligator builds a nest. She uses plants to build mounds that rise out of the water. These mounds are the nests. Each mound can hold about 30 eggs. The eggs hatch in about two months. But baby alligators stay near their mothers a lot longer. Some stay near their mothers for more than two years.

Female crocodiles build nests, too, but not mounds. They dig holes in sand or mud. Then they lay between 30 and 60 eggs. The eggs take about three months to hatch. Baby crocodiles move away from their mothers a few days after birth.



Why do people who make movies use alligators and crocodiles as their models? Maybe it's because these reptiles are large and powerful. Or maybe it's because they have lots of teeth and unusual behaviors. Whatever the reason, alligators and crocodiles are big movie stars.