



Just like superheroes have unique costumes, the American Alligator has a special suit of its own - a tough, scaly skin which is usually black! This amazing creature can grow up to 15 feet long, that's longer than most cars! These alligators have a broad snout and their upper jaw is wider than the lower one, causing the teeth in the lower jaw to fit into the sockets of the upper jaw. Their eyes are placed high on their heads, so they can see while submerged in water.



Speaking of water, did you know that American Alligators are like the ultimate swimmers? They live in freshwater environments, such as ponds, marshes, wetlands, rivers, and swamps, primarily in the Southeastern United States. These areas provide all the things an alligator needs, like food, fresh water and plenty of sunbathing spots. Also, their nests, which are made of vegetation, sticks, leaves, and mud, can be found in these habitats.

Now, let's talk about the alligator's daily menu. Young alligators love to munch on small fish, insects, snails, crustaceans, and worms. As they grow larger, they expand their diet to larger fish, turtles, various mammals, birds, and other reptiles. They are known as opportunistic feeders because they can eat anything that comes near the water's edge.



While alligators may seem scary, they usually prefer to avoid humans unless their nests are threatened. However, they play an important role in their ecosystem by controlling the population of certain prey species. Alligators and humans have a complex relationship, they are often seen as dangerous, but they also fascinate us and are protected by conservation laws in many areas. So, the next time you think of an alligator, remember they are not just big, scary creatures, but an important part of our natural world.



**Solve each problem.**

**Use the article to answer the question.**

- 1) What color is the American Alligator's skin?
  - A. White
  - B. Brown
  - C. Black
  - D. Green
- 2) In which part of the United States are American Alligators primarily found?
  - A. Southeastern
  - B. Midwestern
  - C. Southwestern
  - D. Northeastern
- 3) What do young alligators eat?
  - A. Grains and nuts
  - B. Large fish, turtles, various mammals
  - C. Small fish, insects, snails, crustaceans, and worms
  - D. Fruits and vegetables
- 4) Where do American Alligators live?
  - A. Deserts
  - B. Freshwater environments
  - C. Saltwater environments
  - D. Jungles
- 5) What is the shape of an alligator's snout?
  - A. Broad
  - B. Narrow
  - C. Pointy
  - D. Wider at the bottom
- 6) How long can an American Alligator grow?
  - A. Up to 15 feet long
  - B. Up to 10 feet long
  - C. Up to 20 feet long
  - D. Up to 5 feet long
- 7) Are alligators often dangerous to humans?
  - A. No, they prefer to avoid humans unless their nests are threatened
  - B. Yes, they often provoke humans
  - C. Yes, they often hunt humans for food
  - D. Yes, they often attack humans on sight
- 8) Where on their heads are American Alligators' eyes located?
  - A. High on their heads
  - B. At the back of their heads
  - C. At the front of their heads
  - D. At the sides of their heads
- 9) What do alligators eat as they grow larger?
  - A. Rocks and soil
  - B. More insects and worms
  - C. Bigger alligators
  - D. Larger fish, turtles, and mammals
- 10) Why are American Alligators considered opportunistic feeders?
  - A. They steal food from other animals
  - B. They can eat anything that comes near the water's edge
  - C. They travel long distances to find food
  - D. They only eat during certain seasons



**Determine if the statements is something the animal would say (W) or if it is not something the animal would say (N).**

- 11) "You'll mostly find me in freshwater homes - like marshes, wetlands, rivers, swamps - you name it!"
- 12) "I live on a fruit-only diet. Berries are my favorite!"
- 13) "I prefer the cold environment of mountainous areas, not the sweltering heat of the marshes."
- 14) "I usually stick to dry places like deserts."
- 15) "I have skin that is tough and scaly."
- 16) "You know what's really cool about me? My eyes are placed high on my head, so I can see even when I'm submerged in the water."
- 17) "I find it quite difficult to swim and you won't find me in much water."
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- 20) "Humans? Well, we usually stay away, but if someone threatens my nest, I have to defend it!"
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- 22) "I build nests with sticks, leaves, and mud, just like how you would build a house with bricks and cement."
- 23) "My eyes are positioned low on my head, so I can view fish underwater."

**Determine if the statement is a fact or opinion based on the information in the article.**

- 24) American Alligators primarily live in freshwater environments.
- 25) The American Alligator's black scaly skin looks sleek and elegant.
- 26) American Alligators' eyes are located high on their heads to be able to see while they are underwater.
- 27) It's neat that alligators can see well even when they are underwater.
- 28) American Alligators usually have black scaly skin.
- 29) It would be scary to see an alligator swimming towards you in a swamp.
- 30) Young American Alligators eat a diet consisting of small fish, insects, snails, crustaceans, and worms.
- 31) The upper jaw of an American Alligator is wider than the lower one.
- 32) The alligator's broad snout and wide upper jaw make it look silly.
- 33) The way the American Alligator can grow up to 15 feet long is incredible.

**Determine if the statement is true or false.**

- 34) American alligators live in saltwater environments.
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- 38) American Alligators bodies grow to 30 ft long.
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- 45) American alligators can stay underwater for up to two hours.
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|---|---|
| 1. <u>          <b>C</b>          </u>        | 26. <u>          <b>fact</b>          </u>          |
| 2. <u>          <b>A</b>          </u>        | 27. <u>          <b>opinion</b>          </u>       |
| 3. <u>          <b>C</b>          </u>        | 28. <u>          <b>fact</b>          </u>          |
| 4. <u>          <b>B</b>          </u>        | 29. <u>          <b>opinion</b>          </u>       |
| 5. <u>          <b>A</b>          </u>        | 30. <u>          <b>fact</b>          </u>          |
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| 7. <u>          <b>A</b>          </u>        | 32. <u>          <b>opinion</b>          </u>       |
| 8. <u>          <b>A</b>          </u>        | 33. <u>          <b>opinion</b>          </u>       |
| 9. <u>          <b>D</b>          </u>        | 34. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
| 10. <u>          <b>B</b>          </u>       | 35. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
| 11. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>    | 36. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
| 12. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 37. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
| 13. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 38. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
| 14. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 39. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
| 15. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>    | 40. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
| 16. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>    | 41. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
| 17. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 42. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
| 18. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 43. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
| 19. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 44. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
| 20. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>    | 45. <u>          <b>declarative</b>          </u>   |
| 21. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 46. <u>          <b>interrogative</b>          </u> |
| 22. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>    | 47. <u>          <b>declarative</b>          </u>   |
| 23. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 48. <u>          <b>declarative</b>          </u>   |
| 24. <u>          <b>fact</b>          </u>    | 49. <u>          <b>interrogative</b>          </u> |
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A. \_\_\_\_\_ B. Brown  
C. Black D. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) In which part of the United States are American Alligators primarily found? (paragraph 2)  
A. Southeastern B. Midwestern  
C. \_\_\_\_\_ D. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What do young alligators eat? (paragraph 3)  
A. \_\_\_\_\_ B. Large fish, turtles, various mammals  
C. Small fish, insects, snails, crustaceans, and worms D. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Where do American Alligators live? (paragraph 2)  
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- 5) What is the shape of an alligator's snout? (paragraph 1)  
A. Broad B. Narrow  
C. \_\_\_\_\_ D. \_\_\_\_\_
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A. Up to 15 feet long B. Up to 10 feet long  
C. \_\_\_\_\_ D. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Are alligators often dangerous to humans? (paragraph 4)  
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A. They steal food from other animals B. They can eat anything that comes near the water's edge  
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