

How Alligator Got His Smile Back

Activity Pack

By Jayne Moraski and illustrated by Carl Kocich
An alligator purse full of activities for libraries,
K-4 classrooms and families.

How Alligator Got His Smile Back



Written by Jayne Moraski

Illustrated by Carl Kocich

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About the Book.

Category: Fictional picture book, folk tale or myth

Title: How Alligator Got His Smile Back

Author: Jayne Moraski

Illustrator: Carl Kocich

Publisher: Guardian Angel Publishing
(Academic Wings Imprint)

Page Count: 24 pages



Synopsis: *How Alligator Got His Smile Back* is a modern myth with a science twist. It describes the origins of frog songs, mangrove swamps, cypress knees, and of course, how alligators got their big grins. As prehistoric Alligator evolves into the form we know today, he learns the true meaning of friendship along the way.

Reviews of *How Alligator Got His Smile Back*.

"Frogs croak all night, but alligators don't have to make noise to feel important. A charming story, beautifully illustrated, with something to think about for all those frantically pursuing their 15 minutes of fame." - *Caldecott Honor Medal winner Eric Kimmel*

From [Attentionology](#) (the science and art of catching and keeping every kid's attention to curriculum support and classroom management): "One of the joys of an educator's journey is the discovery along the way of new and wonderful teaching resources...I was recently introduced to a picture book that does just that. It tells a delightful modern myth as it also delivers K - 2 science lessons on species classification and coastal habitats. *How Alligator Got His Smile Back* by *Jayne Moraski*, illustrated by Carl Kocich (Guardian Angel Publishing, Inc.), begins "when the earth was very young and animals looked very different," than they do today. But how and why do animals look and live differently? The lessons begin..."

About the Activity Pack. This pack contains:

Page 3· Reading comprehension questions

Page 4· Habitat activity - Scientific activities to support Florida Standards

Pages 5 and 6· Species classification activity - Alligators and reptiles

Page 7 and 8· Classroom character activity - What makes a good friend?

Page 9· Maze fun

Page 10· Coloring sheet

Many more puzzles are available under the "Classroom help" tab on www.jaynemoraski.com

Special thanks to puzzlemaster Carrie Clickard, and teachers Maureen Kowker and Elizabeth Jacobbe for their help in generating classroom activities that support the Common Core.



Reading Comprehension.

1. What do you think was the MAIN purpose of the story?
 - a. Frogs sing all night to get attention
 - b. Alligator is happier when he stops trying to compete with others
 - c. Alligator needs tough scales to protect him from tough tongues
 - d. Frogs and alligators cannot be friends.

2. What is another name for boasting?
 - a. crying
 - b. singing
 - c. smiling
 - d. bragging

3. What part of the story was repetitive?
 - a. Frog's song
 - b. Alligator's tears
 - c. The Great Spirit's message

4. A creation myth is a story that explains how the world or parts of the world began. Which of the following lines from the story help explain why seas are salty?
 - a. The winds swept his salty tears away from the marsh and out to sea.
 - b. The cypress trees pulled away from the salt that stung their roots.
 - c. Frog decided it would be wise to say nothing and hop away.
 - d. Alligator smiles because he knows Frog's bragging will never bother him again.

5. Which example has the correct punctuation?
 - a. I wish I could go with you, Alligator said.
 - b. He puffed out his chest and croaked this song, frogs are special. We are grand.
 - c. "Alligator said," I want legs for land.
 - d. In a booming voice he asked, "Alligator! Why do you cry such large tears?"



Coastal habitat activity.

Sunshine State Science Standards. Standard 2: The student understands the process and importance of genetic diversity.

Benchmark SC.F.2.1.2: The student knows that there are many different kinds of living things that live in a variety of environments. Grade Level Expectations

Kindergarten: knows that plants and animals may live in different habitats.

First grade: knows some ways in which animals and plants are adapted to living in different environments. • knows plants and animals that live in a particular habitat (for example whales in the ocean, camels in the desert, ducks in the wetlands, and alligators live in swamps). [Florida Department of Education]

EXPLAINING A COASTAL HABITAT

Throughout history, cultures around the world have created myths like **How Alligator Got His Smile Back** to explain the world around them. This story offers fun explanations for real trees and animals found in the southeast United States such as: the strange root systems of the mangrove trees, and the reason that sea water is salty.

Read through the story again and find the part where the mangrove trees wrapped their roots around Alligator. Mangroves don't actually hug anything, but their roots provide important places for animals to hide to avoid getting eaten by bigger animals. Mangroves are special because they can survive salt water, high winds, and waves and provide a place to live or habitat for many creatures.

Habitat Activity: Create a habitat collage. A collage is a mix of many different pictures put together to form a new picture. Cut pictures from old magazines (travel and nature magazines work best) or pictures from the internet that show the plants and animals you would find in an ocean or swamp habitat: mangroves, alligators, shore birds, fish, shrimp, and oysters.



Species Classification Activity. Florida State Standards for 3rd grade science: SC.3.L.15.1 Classify animals into major groups (mammals, birds, **reptiles**, **amphibians**, fish, arthropods, vertebrates and invertebrates, those having live births and those which lay eggs) according to their physical characteristics and behaviors.



SPECIES CLASSIFICATION: WHERE DO THEY BELONG?

Scientists also have a need to explain the world around them. So they have developed a system to put all animals into different groups.



Have you ever tried to  clean your room? Do you put your toys in the same drawer as your clothes? Of course not. In order to find things later, you need to organize and separate—clothes go with clothes and toys go with toys.

Scientists do the same thing when they organize and separate animals into different families and species. Though the story is fiction, the main characters in **How Alligator Got His Smile Back** end up with the real life traits of two different animal families known as reptiles and amphibians.

Can you re-read the story to find out what makes a frog an amphibian, and an alligator a reptile?

Here is a list of characteristics to look for:

Amphibians:

- Amphibians have a backbone.
- Amphibians are cold-blooded. They need the sun and air to warm them.
- Amphibians spend at least part of their lives in water and on land.
- Amphibians do not have scales, and their skin is smooth.
- Amphibians have gills for at least part of their lives. Some species have gills only as larvae, while others can have gills throughout their lives.
- Most amphibians go through metamorphosis. Frog started with fins and changed to legs.

Reptiles:

- Reptiles have a backbone.
- Reptiles are cold-blooded. They need the sun and air to warm them.
- Reptiles are covered in scales.
- Reptiles breathe with lungs.
- Most reptiles lay eggs.
- Reptiles do not go through metamorphosis. This means they stay the same shape as when they are hatched. Alligators have had the same basic legs and scales for thousands of years.



Species classification activity (continued)

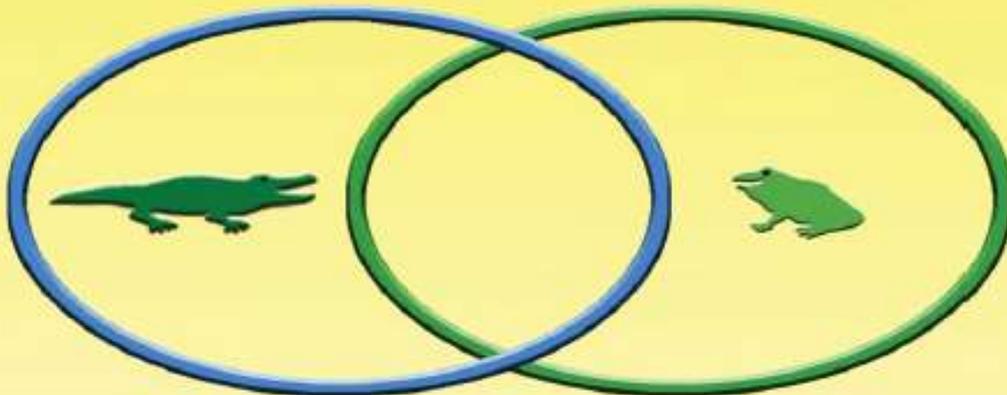
CLASSIFICATION ACTIVITY

Draw a Venn diagram that shows how these two animals are alike and how they are different. Make two circles that overlap. Where the circles overlap, the animals have similarities. Put different features in the part of the circle that belongs to only them.

REPTILES
Like Alligator

BOTH

AMPHIBIANS
Like Frog



Character Discussion.

What makes a good friend, and how can you be a good friend?

In which of these two pictures is alligator happy? Which one shows alligator when he is sad? On the next page find phrases or pictures from the book. Cut them out and paste them on the chart, matching the actions with how they made Alligator feel. Which animal was a better friend to Alligator, the frog or the plover bird?



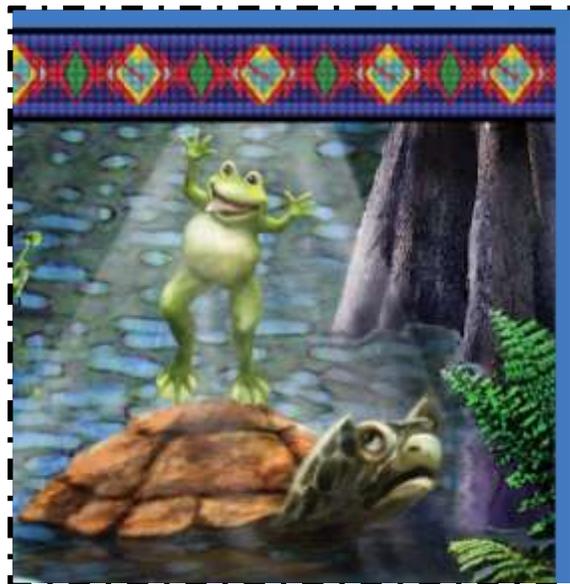
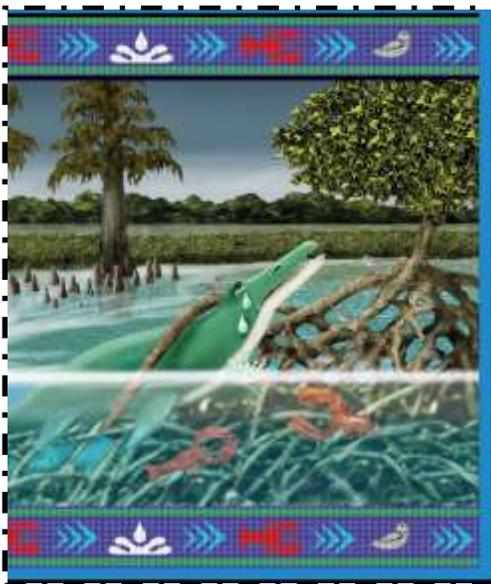
Alligator's
Feelings
Chart



Character Activity continued. Cut out the pictures and phrases and put them in the correct column on Alligator's Feelings Chart.



The Great Spirit listened carefully.



Frog's pride grew with every passing day. "Not only am I faster than you, I am braver, too! I can climb onto the bank and jump back into the water. And you can't!"

"Frogs are special. We are grand. We live in water and on land."

Help Alligator Find Tadpole Frog

Start at the black arrow and draw a path through the maze to help Alligator find Tadpole Frog .



