

Finding information = 1

When you read text you can usually remember some of the information, but if you are asked about details you should read the text again to locate and check that your information is correct. Remember the answer you are looking for is there in the text, you just need to find it.

Read the report.

Crocodiles

1. Crocodile-like reptiles existed before dinosaurs around 230 million years ago (mya). These remarkably adaptable creatures outlasted the mass extinction of the dinosaurs to evolve into the 23 species of crocodylians around today. Crocodylian is the name given to the group of reptiles which includes crocodiles, alligators and caimans. They have changed very little over the last 65 million years.

its saltwater counterpart, with males growing to about three metres and females to about two metres. This species of crocodile is not considered dangerous to humans, as its diet generally consists of fish, frogs, snakes, turtles, waterbirds and other small animals. It mainly hunts at night and rests and recuperates during the day. The freshwater crocodile has a long, smooth, slender snout as opposed to the saltwater crocodile, which has a shorter, wider snout.
2. One prehistoric species was the *Sarcosuchus imperator* (flesh crocodile emperor), also known as 'super-croc'. It was discovered in Niger in Africa and lived around 110 mya. It grew to a length of around 11 to 12 metres (dwarfing the crocodylians of today) and weighed in at a hefty 8000 kilograms; the skull alone measured two metres in length and held 132 teeth. This carnivore had a voracious appetite and probably died out as a result of this. It is not a direct relative of the crocodile of today but is a very impressive close cousin. The link between the ancient and the modern crocodile was finally discovered in Isisford, a small town in central-western Queensland, Australia. The discovery of *Isisfordia duncani* in the mid-1990s gave scientists the direct ancestor to modern-day crocodiles. This crocodile lived around 98 – 95 mya, grew to just over one metre in length and weighed in at around three kilograms; relatively small in comparison to the crocodiles of today.

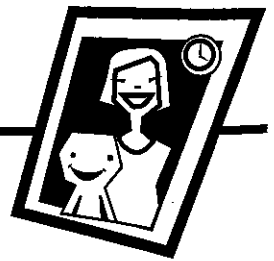
The saltwater crocodile is the largest species of crocodile, with males growing up to seven metres in length and weighing in at around 1000 kilograms, while the females can grow to a length of about four metres. The saltwater crocodile can be found along estuaries, rivers, lagoons, swamps and beaches in Southeast Asia and Northern Australia. The stealthy crocodile waits near the water's edge, pouncing out of the water at its unsuspecting prey, then dragging it under the water. The prey is usually stored underwater for several days to soften, before the crocodile returns for its meal. The saltwater crocodile dines on a variety of foods from fish, crabs and insects to turtles, birds, other reptiles, dingoes, wallabies, cattle, horses and occasionally people who do not follow safety precautions. Because of this, saltwater crocodiles were hunted almost to extinction in Australia until they became a protected species in 1970. Since then, numbers have increased.
3. Crocodiles are a formidable reptile considered to be at the top of the food chain. They are also highly intelligent animals that have been known to hunt and stalk their prey. Crocodiles are able to last long periods between feeding—probably contributing to the success of the species. The continent of Australia is home to two species of the modern crocodile: the freshwater crocodile (*Crocodylus johnstoni*) and the saltwater or estuarine crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*).

One has to marvel at the power of the saltwater crocodile; its body was built to kill. The jaws deliver an incredible impact, and the 68 teeth are designed to hold prey, penetrate the skin and crush the victim. The tail propels the crocodile out of the water at speeds faster than a racehorse over ten metres, and can also administer a huge blow, easily breaking the legs of its victim to prevent an escape!
4. The freshwater crocodile is found in northern Australia and lives in freshwater rivers, gorges and billabongs. The freshwater crocodile is smaller than



Finding information

Practice page



Use similar strategies to those on page 11 to find information.
(Clues are given to help you!)

1. Name the reptiles which are grouped to make the Crocodilian family.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Think!

This information is in the first paragraph.

2. What features make the saltwater crocodile so formidable?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Think!

Read Paragraphs 5 and 6 and consider the parts of the crocodile that are strong and powerful.

3. Complete the sentences using words from the text.

- (a) A freshwater crocodile's diet consists of _____

- (b) A saltwater crocodile's diet consists of _____

Think!

Read Paragraph 4 and 5 to find the information needed.

4. Which species of crocodile is the direct ancestor of modern-day crocodiles?

- (a) *Crocodylus johnstoni*
- (b) *Crocodylus porosus*
- (c) *Sarchosuchus imperator*
- (d) *Isisfordia duncani*

The best answer is

Think!

Read Paragraphs 2 and 3.

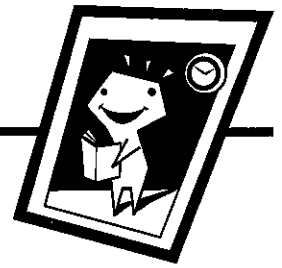
5. What is considered to be the main cause of the extinction of the 'super-croc'?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Think!

Consider the huge size of the species.

Finding information



On your own

Think about the strategies you have been using and work out these answers.

1. Explain the importance of the discovery at Isisford.

2. Look at the pictures of the two crocodiles below. Match them to their correct name.



- *Crocodylus johnstoni*



- *Crocodylus porosus*

3. Prehistoric *Sarchosuchus imperator* was discovered in ...

- (a) Southeast Asia.
- (b) Africa.
- (c) Northern Australia.
- (d) America.

The best answer is .

4. In your own words, explain how a saltwater crocodile catches and kills its prey.

5. Complete these number facts using figures from the text.

- (a) A saltwater crocodile weighs _____ kilograms and has _____ teeth.
- (b) *Sarchosuchus imperator* weighed _____ kilograms and had _____ teeth.
- (c) In Australia, saltwater crocodiles became a protected species in _____.
- (d) Male freshwater crocodiles grow to _____ metres and females to _____ metres.
- (e) At the present time, there are _____ species of crocodilians.