

Whole-Whole (Reptile Relatives) Practice Activities

American Crocodiles

The American crocodile makes its home in the sunny warmth of southern Florida. Though it can be aggressive, the American crocodile is also vocal. It uses over 20 different growls, squeals, snorts, and hisses to communicate. Its pointed snout helps the crocodile hunt fish, which is a major part of the crocodile diet. Today, the American crocodile remains on the endangered species list.

American Alligators

Though once endangered the American alligator now thrives throughout the swamps and wetlands of the southeastern United States. The American alligator is considered by some to be less aggressive than the crocodile, but it's just as vocal. One call sounds like the roar of a lion. Its powerful, u-shaped snout enables the American alligator to crush the hard shells of turtles and snails.

First, think about what you already know about crocodiles and alligators. After you finish thinking, read the passages, "American Crocodiles" and "American Alligators."

Next, based on these two passages, write a list of the major characteristics or important features of crocodiles. Then create a similar list for alligators.

Finally, create a "Venn Diagram Graphic Organizer" that helps you visualize how crocodiles and alligators are similar and different. This will help you remember the author's main points as you read.

Compare your answers with **Paige's Think Aloud**.

Compare-Contrast Text Structure

- A style of writing in which the author is able to show how two things are alike or different.

Alike

- When an author takes the time to **compare** the features of two or more things.
- When an author uses **comparison signal words** such as: like, too, both, or same as to show how two or more things are similar.

Different

- When an author takes the time to contrast the features of two or more things.
- When an author uses contrasting signal words such as: however, while, but, rather than, or adjectives that have -er, or -est endings to show that two or more things are different.

Venn Diagram

- A type of Graphic Organizer that allows the reader to visualize the text structure being used by the author. **In a Venn Diagram two circles are drawn in an overlapping fashion.** Each circle contains characteristics or details of the topics being studied.
- The area of the circles that intersect and overlap contain the characteristics that are similar or alike.
- The area that is outside the intersection of the overlapping circles contains the characteristics that are different.

Whole-Whole Text Structure

- A style of writing that usually has two whole/complete passages presented together. This organization of writing allows the reader to easily compare and contrast the information.

Planetary Playing Field: Mars vs. Earth

Comparing all the planets in the solar system, Mars is most like Earth. Scientists, in fact, use Earth as a laboratory to study Mars. They've discovered that both planets have canyons, valleys, volcanoes, polar ice caps, and wild weather. Both have similar amounts of dry land. On Mars and Earth, the rotational axis tilts towards the Sun at about the same angle, which creates defined seasons.

But there are major differences between Mars and Earth. Mars has a hazy, red appearance and a pink sky. It is much smaller than Earth, with only half the diameter. The atmosphere on Mars is primarily carbon dioxide. A year on Mars lasts 687 days, which is the number of days it takes for the planet to orbit the Sun. Mars is also frigidly cold. The average temperature planet-wide is -67 degrees Fahrenheit (-550 Celsius). Mars has two small Moons, and a volcano mountain, Olympus Mons, which is three times taller than Mount Everest. NASA scientists recently made an exciting discovery. They found the presence of water on Mars, through studying soil samples gathered by the Phoenix Mars Lander.

Oceans, in contrast, cover 75% of the Earth. The Earth's atmosphere is made up of mostly nitrogen and oxygen. It takes 365 days, or one year for the Earth to orbit the sun. Instead of two Moons, the Earth has one. In addition, the temperature on Earth is much warmer than on Mars, with the planet-wide average 47.3 degrees Fahrenheit (8.50 Celsius). Because Earth is larger and denser than Mars, Earth's gravity is stronger.

First, think about what you already know about Mars and Earth. After you finish thinking, read the passage, Planetary Playing Field: Mars vs. Earth.

Next, based on these two passages, write a list of the major characteristics or important features of Mars. Then create a similar list for Earth.

Third, highlight any signal words the author used to help the reader compare and contrast the information presented.

Finally, create a Venn Diagram Graphic Organizer that helps you visualize how Mars and Earth are similar and different. This will help you remember the author's main points as you read.

Challenge yourself by thinking of a topic involving two things that you are interested in studying. Create a Venn Diagram Graphic Organizer to show how the two are similar and different.

Compare your answers with **Arun's Think Aloud**.