

Reptile Rally

Pre-Program Activity

Grades 9-12



Objective: Students will compare the time that crocodilians first appeared on Earth to other events in Earth's history.

Sunshine State Standards:

- **SC.912.L.15.6** Discuss distinguishing characteristics of the domains and kingdoms of living organisms.
- **SS.912.A.1.3** Utilize timelines to identify the time sequence of historical data.

Overview: Students research.

Materials:

- 10 foot piece of string
- Copy of [timeline dates](#) cut into separate pieces
- Clothespins, paperclips or tape to attach dates to the timeline
- [List of events and extinct crocodilians](#)
- Internet and/or library access
- Multicolored notecards

Background:

The first primitive crocodilians are believed to have evolved about 200 million years ago. Many different species came and went, but we still have 23 species of crocodilians living on Earth today. Crocodilian adaptations have allowed them to survive with few changes through the extinction of the dinosaurs, the ice ages and every human milestone. Many of today's crocodilians, however, are in danger of extinction due to human interference.

Procedure:

- Discuss with students that alligators and crocodiles are believed to have been around for about 200 million years. Then tell the students that they are going to be making a crocodilian timeline.
- Have two students hold the ends of the string 10 ft apart. Give the student on the left the "200 million years ago" sign and the student on the right the "Today" sign. Attach the living crocodilian list to the "Today" sign.
- Give another student the "100 million years ago" sign and ask the class where this sign should go. Discuss ways of finding the exact spot to place the sign (measuring, dividing the string in half, etc.)
- Hand out the rest of the dates one at a time and allow students to find where they go on the timeline.
- Once all the dates are on the timeline, hang it up somewhere in the classroom.
- Assign each student an event or extinct crocodilian and allow them to research when it occurred.
- Give students with events one color of notecard and students with extinct crocodilians another color of notecard. Tell the students to include the following information on their notecard:
 - Name of event or crocodilian
 - How many years ago the event happened or the crocodilian lived
 - A visual representation of the event or crocodilian
- Have students place their notecards in the appropriate places along the timeline.
- Discuss how long crocodilians have been on the earth and which adaptations may have helped them survive. Ask students to hypothesize why some crocodilians went extinct while others survived.