

The Crocodile Book: Armoured and Dangerous

By Malcolm Douglas

Crocodiles are fascinating yet fearsome creatures whose existence for over 200 million years is a remarkable story of survival. This reason alone is enough for children to make a study of them.

Interestingly, it is humans who have seriously threatened their survival most of all. Fortunately, conservation measures have turned this situation around and crocodiles thrive in their Australian environment. This welcome development, however, does present crocodile management challenges.

Genre: Written and visual information

Readership: Grade Two Plus

Themes include:

Characteristics and habitats

Crocodiles around the world

Crocodiles in Ancient Egypt

Endangerment and Conservation

Wildlife tourism

About the book

The Crocodile Book: Armoured and Dangerous is a thoughtfully and beautifully crafted fact-filled book with an accessible format and simple yet engaging text. It contains stunning photographs, maps, break-out boxes, sidebars and other aids to learning. An excellent resource for children - one they should thoroughly enjoy reading and studying.

Learning Activities

The learning activities below apply to Science, Integrated Studies, English and The Art and may overlap Key Learning Areas.

INTRODUCING THE BOOK

Book features and format

What is the book's full title?

What does *armoured* refer to?

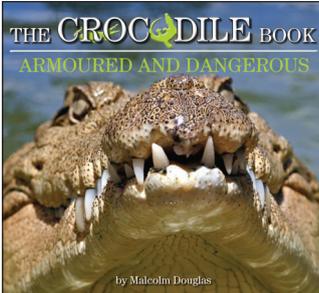
What is the sub-title? What does it mean?

Who is the author? (refer class to the small photo and blurb about the author opposite the Contents page)

The Crocodile Book has features that are important in a factual text.

Locate all the features below:

- Contents page. Note the engaging headings and factual sub-headings



- Break-out boxes (information inside a box)
- Sidebars. What information is included in these?
- Glossary (Point out that if a word is highlighted, for example **predators** on p. 2, it means the word can be found in the glossary)
- Index
- Further Resources, Websites

SCIENCE

Quiz on interesting crocodile facts

Write down four interesting facts about crocodiles that you learnt from *The Crocodile Book*, then turn the facts into four questions for a game of trivia. Agree on the rules of the game then play in groups of four.

The Mugger Crocodile:

Using the listed websites, find out about the Mugger crocodile (a species not included in the book). Present your findings in the same page format used by Malcolm Douglas.

- A heading that will gain the reader's interest
- A factual sub-heading
- A map showing the Mugger crocodile's distribution.
- A photograph
- A break-out box with information about reasons for decline in numbers and any conservation efforts.
- A paragraph on interesting features
- A sidebar showing size and prey.

<http://www.angelfire.com/mo2/animal1/crocodile/mugger.html>

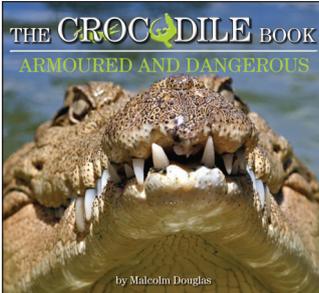
<http://www.itsnature.org/ground/reptiles-land/mugger-crocodile/>

INTEGRATED STUDIES

Ancient Egyptian History

Read the break-out box on p. 21

Locate Egypt on a world map. Locate the Nile River.



Use a resource book from the library or the listed website to find out the following:

- What is an Egyptian Mummy?
- Briefly describe the steps in the mummification process.
- Why did ancient Egyptians mummify crocodiles and bury them in tombs?
- Why did ancient Egyptians worship Sobek the crocodile God?
- What did the Nile River have to do with ancient Egyptian crocodiles?

<http://ancienthistory.ppst.com/egypt/mummies.html> (A kids' site about mummies, includes free power point-presentations)

<http://egypt.mrdonn.org/crocodiles.html> (kids' site about crocodiles in ancient Egypt)

<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/sobek.htm> (more about crocodiles in ancient Egypt).

Discussion groups

Put the six topics below in a hat. Divide the class into six groups and have someone from each group draw out a topic. Ask each group to find out about and discuss that topic. Report findings/ opinions back to the class for comment.

1. Conservation of crocodiles

What are the main reasons for some crocodiles becoming endangered?

What conservation measures now exist to protect this ancient and largest of reptiles?

2. Crocodile meat

Find out the nutritional benefits of crocodile meat.

Crocodiles are protected, so where does the legal production of crocodile meat for commercial purposes take place?

3. Wildlife tourism

Find two examples of tourist sites in Australia where travelers can safely experience crocodiles in the wild.

4. Malcolm Douglas, author

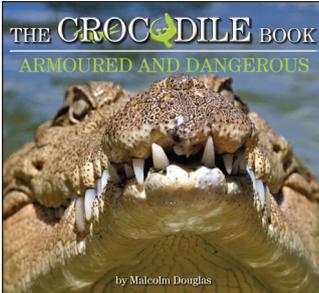
Malcolm Douglas has been called the original crocodile hunter. Find out some interesting facts about him.

5. Steve Irwin, crocodile hunter and wildlife warrior

Find out about two or three projects that Steve Irwin established or participated in that benefited crocodiles in the wild and/or improved our knowledge of them.

6. The great survivor.

The crocodile is a survivor - the last of the giant reptiles. Why do you think crocodiles have survived for over 200 million years when other creatures such as the dinosaur have not?



ENGLISH

Talking about fear

Crocodiles are creatures to be scared of. Somewhat surprisingly, however, the late Crocodile Hunter, Steve Irwin, fearless when it came to crocodiles, once confessed to being scared of parrots because he had received so many nasty bites from them.

In groups, talk about what you are most afraid of. How have you tried to overcome your fear?

Writing a children's story about Crikey the Crocodile

Crocs can't be moved to new areas in the wild – even over great distances they find their way back home (p. 29).

Write an illustrated short story suitable for prep students about a crocodile called Crikey who has, unhappily, been relocated to a new area in the wild and is determined to find his way back home.

Imagine the story in your mind, then write a draft, page by page. Do not make the story too long. Rewrite as needed.

On each page of your story have one or two sentences with a picture. Remember it is a story for 5 year olds. Keep it simple and short.

Plan the drawings needed for each page. They should help tell the story on that page.

Write the final copy with illustrations.

Add the book cover with the title of the book and a picture, plus your name as the author.

Read your story to a prep child.

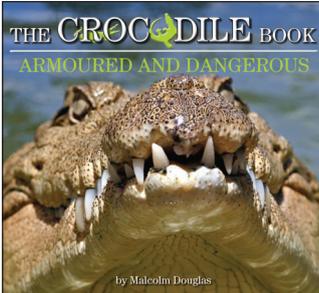
Visual literacy

On the book's front cover, what is the clever artistic device that draws attention to what the book is about?

Choose the photograph that you felt gave you the most information about crocodiles. Explain your choice.

What is your favourite photograph? Explain your choice.

In pairs, go through the book again, looking at all the photographs. Talk about what lasting impressions about chimpanzees the photos leave you with.



THE ARTS

Art

Wildlife Warrior poster/cartoon:

Create a hand-drawn or computer graphic poster or humorous cartoon with the caption Wildlife Warrior.

Crocodile masks:

Make crocodile masks for a theatrical performance of *Never Smile at a Crocodile* (see Drama)

Music

Never Smile at a Crocodile sung by Rolf Harris (suitable for the younger students).

Have the class sing along with Rolf Harris, while watching his short, 2:30 minute crocodile video-clip on-line. The tune is very catchy and the song easy to sing.

Google: "youtube-rolf harris::never smile at a crocodile (with lyrics)"

Never Smile at a Crocodile (Disney)

Never smile at a crocodile

No, you can't get friendly with a crocodile

Don't be taken in by his welcome grin

He's imagining how you'd fit within his skin

Never smile at a crocodile

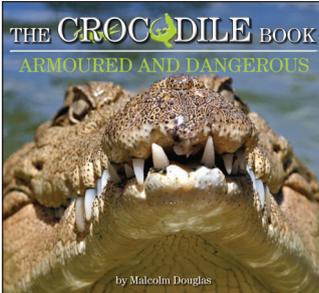
Never dip your hat and stop to talk awhile

Never run, walk away, say goodnight, not good-day

Clear the aisle but never smile at Mister Crocodile

You may very well be well bred

Lots of etiquette in your head



But there's always some special case, time or place

To forget etiquette

For instance:

Repeat: Never smile at a crocodile...Clear the aisles...)

Drama

Have the class put on a theatrical/musical performance of *Never Smile at a Crocodile*.

Make any props in Art class (see Art above).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Malcolm Douglas is an Australian icon – an outback adventurer, fisherman and popular TV presenter for over forty years.

As a filmmaker Douglas has produced many television documentaries about the outback. His documentary series *In The Bush* has recently been shown on TV.

Called the original crocodile hunter, Douglas is passionate about saving the salt water crocodile from extinction and has established the Broome Crocodile Park.

A cancer survivor, he shows no signs of slowing down.

(Ed. not sure about including this last sentence? LK)