

“Alligators”

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions below.

An alligator is a very big reptile.



Alligators can grow to be more than 15 feet long.

An alligator has a long tail, short legs, strong jaws, and **sharp** teeth.

It eats fish, mammals, and birds.

Alligators live in rivers and swamps where the weather is very warm.

There are lots of alligators in Florida.

Questions:

1) What kind of animal is an alligator?

- A. an amphibian
- B. a mammal
- C. a reptile
- D. a fish

2) What does an alligator look like?

- I. It has long legs.
 - II. It has a long tail.
 - III. It has sharp teeth.
- A. I only
 - B. I and II
 - C. II and III
 - D. I, II, and III

3) What do alligators eat?

- I. birds
 - II. plants
 - III. fish
- A. I only
 - B. I and II
 - C. I and III
 - D. I, II, and III

4) According to the story, most alligators are

- A. big and long
- B. tall and skinny
- C. small and weak
- D. fat and funny

5) The opposite of **sharp** is

- A. dull
- B. big
- C. soft
- D. smart

6) What can the reader discover about Florida from the passage?

- A. It is far away.
- B. It is a very big place.
- C. It has rivers and swamps.
- D. It is the best place to see alligators.

Answers and Explanations

1) **C**

The beginning of the story says, “An alligator is a very big reptile.” Therefore, **(C)** is correct. The story does not contain information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)** and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

2) **C**

In the middle, the story says “An alligator has a long tail, short legs, strong jaws, and sharp teeth.” Since the alligator has short legs, this eliminates **option (I)**. The alligator has a long tail. This supports **option (II)**. The alligator has sharp teeth. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

3) **C**

In the middle, the story says that alligators eat “fish, mammals and birds.” Since alligators eat birds, this supports **option (I)**. The story does not say that alligators eat plants. This eliminates **option (II)**. Since alligators eat fish, this supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

4) **A**

At the beginning, the story says, “An alligator is a very big reptile.” The story also says, “Alligators can grow to be more than 15 feet long.” We can understand from these statements that alligators are big and long. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The story does not contain information to support choices **(B)**, **(C)** and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

5) **A**

Sharp means having an edge that can cut or pierce. The story tells us that alligators eat fish, mammals and birds, and it would be difficult to eat those things if the alligators’ teeth could not cut or pierce. Something that is *dull* is blunt and lacks sharpness. Something that is dull cannot cut things very well. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

Answer choice **(B)**, *big*, and answer choice **(D)**, *smart*, are both unrelated to “an edge.” Therefore **(B)** and **(D)** are incorrect. The word *soft*, which is answer choice **(C)**, means not hard. While something that is sharp is usually not soft, soft does not mean blunt. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

6) **C**

The story claims “alligators live in rivers and swamps” and “there are lots of alligators in Florida.” If there are lots of alligators in Florida, there must be rivers and swamps because that is where alligators live. Thus, **(C)** is correct.

We do not know whether Florida is far away because we do not know where the narrator is. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Although the story tells us that there are a lot of alligators in Florida, that does not necessarily mean that Florida is a very big place. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Although the story tells us that there are lots of alligators in Florida, we do not know if that makes the alligators easy to see. We also do not know if there are better places to see alligators. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.