

NAME:

PERIOD:

DATE:

## Characteristics of Organisms Thinking Problems

Read the following, and then answer the following questions.

“There are two true species of alligator: the American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) and the Chinese alligator (*Alligator sinensis*.)

The American alligator has four short legs, a broad, round snout, a long and powerful tail and a rough hide with scales. Adult males can grow up to 20 feet long and weigh up to half a ton, though on average, males are about 11 feet (3.4 m) long, while females are about 8 feet (2.6 m).

American alligators have nostrils that face upward, which allows them to breathe when the rest of them is submerged underwater.

American alligators can live up to 50 years in the wild, according to the Smithsonian National Zoo.

While young, the alligator has yellow stripes on its tail, while adults have darker stripes.

Compared to its cousin the American alligator, the Chinese alligator is relatively small, with males growing to an average length of around 5 feet (1.5 meters) and females about 4.5 feet. Its snout is shorter and blunter than the American alligator. Its blunt teeth are perfect for crushing shelled animals such as clams and snails. Alligators are generally very solitary animals and, contrary to popular belief, alligators rarely attack humans, unless provoked to do so, particularly when they are protecting their eggs or young.”\*



1. Name **2 adaptations** of alligators, and **tell how** each helps alligators to survive.

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2. Would an alligator be **unicellular**, or **multi-cellular**?  
How do you know?

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3. What is the **lifespan** of an American alligator?  
Also, define lifespan.

4. Are alligators **consumers** or **producers**? What evidence did the reading give you to make that decision?

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5. Describe a **stimulus** and a **response** that an alligator might experience.  
Be clear on what the stimulus is and what the response is.

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6. Heatstroke Harry was outside on a 100 °F day. He was sweating within minutes. Then he went inside where the AC was on. It was 45 °F inside. Soon he was shivering.

How is the above an example of **homeostasis**?

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7. In the list below, circle all the **organisms**.

rock

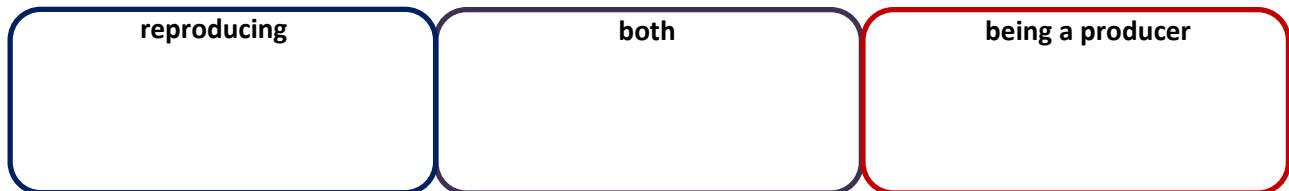
tree

buffalo

water

the Sun

8. Compare and contrast: **reproducing** and **being a producer**



Venn first...

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Then write...

9. Ethel said, "All living things **move**." Lucy says, "**Trees** and **flowers** don't move. Who's right? Why?"

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

