

# Classroom Study



## LYLE THE CROCODILE

*Based on the books by Bernard Waber*

### Quite an Unusual Pet

Josh Primm and his family have just moved to New York City. While settling into their new house, Josh's mother finds a crocodile in the upstairs bathroom. Soon a man comes with a letter of introduction, reassuring everyone that the crocodile is friendly, and named Lyle. Soon neighbors stop by to meet the Primms, but they are upset to find that they have a crocodile living with them. Even the children in the neighborhood are unsure of Josh and his pet crocodile until Lyle becomes an instant hero by showing them that he knows how to jump rope, just like them!

Everything is going well until Lyle meets the most difficult neighbor - Mr Grumps! Mr Grumps only loves ONE animal - his cat Loretta - and he'll do anything he can to make sure that Lyle can never come anywhere close to his cat.

There will be lots of adventures for Lyle and the Primms, from ice skating in Rockefeller Plaza to Lyle causing a ruckus at Grumps' Department Store, but it will probably all wind up fine, since Lyle, more than anyone else, knows how to make himself loved by loving and accepting everyone else first.

**GreatWorks**  
touring theatre

[www.greatworkstheatre.com](http://www.greatworkstheatre.com)

## Meet Bernard Waber; author of the Lyle books

**B**ernard Waber was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on September 27, 1924. During his childhood, his family moved around the city as one family business after another failed. With each move, young Bernard always made his parents promise that there would be a library and a movie theatre within walking distance of their new home. When Bernard was eight years old, he got his first job working in a local movie theater after school. Running to the theater from school everyday, Bernard would arrive just in time to watch the final ten to fifteen minutes of the daily feature. He would then spend his idle moments imagining the beginning and middle of the film. This became his first experience at plot construction, and to this day, Waber often thinks of the ending of a story before creating the beginning and middle.



After graduating from high school Waber joined the U.S. Army and served from 1942-1945. He then attended the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia College of Art from 1946-1950, and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts from 1950 - 1951. During college Waber married Pauline Fleishman and over the next few years, the two moved to New York City and had three children.

Waber's first employment was at Conde Nast Publications as an artist in the promotions department. During this time, art directors looking at his portfolio suggested that his style was appropriate for children's books. This suited Waber as he was beginning to read to his own children and found that he enjoyed their books far more than adult novels.

In 1961 his first book, "Lorenzo," was published by Houghton Mifflin. Over the years he has won many awards for his children's books including the New York Herald Tribune's Children's Spring Book Festival picture book honor and the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award.

## Crocodile Research on the Internet

**American Zoo & Aquarium Association (AZA) - <http://www.aza.org>**

***Crocodylians: Natural History & Conservation*** - Information on all 23 species of crocodiles, including photographs and detailed drawings. Links to other crocodile research pages.  
**<http://crocodilian.com>**

***The Gator Hole*** - Focusing on the American alligator, this site answers many common questions regarding the alligator and its habitat. **<http://magicnet.net/~mgodwin>**

***Sea World*** - This page is devoted to helping find quick information, including entries on the American alligator and Nile crocodile. **<http://www.seaworld.org>**

# Meet Real Crocodiles

lyle is indeed a rare crocodile. Except for alligators and the American crocodile, most crocodiles live in the tropical regions of the world, spending most of their time in and around water. Crocodiles are large, carnivorous reptiles whose primary diet consists of fish, birds, frogs, and small mammals. To capture their prey, crocodiles will often use their long, strong tails to corral the prey into deep waters and then crush the victim with their sharp teeth and powerful jaws. The power in a crocodile's jaw is, however, limited to closing for although a croc's jaw has enough force to crush the bones of small animals, it is also possible to hold a crocodile's jaw closed using bare hands.

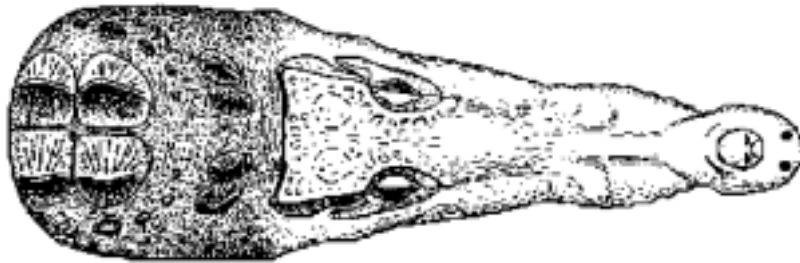
Unlike most reptiles, crocodiles produce a wide variety of sounds, from quiet hisses to fearsome roars. They also differ from other reptiles in that they protect and take care of their nests of eggs and their young. Like other reptiles, the cold-blooded crocodile's body temperature depends on the climate and they are known to hibernate by burying themselves in the mud during the dry season in warmer climates and during winter in colder climates.

There are many different species of crocodiles living all over the world and ranging in size from the 11 foot long Nile Crocodile to the 30 foot long Saltwater Crocodile. Crocodiles move best on land in a belly crawl but can also walk on all four legs. They are good swimmers, using their strong tails to propel themselves through the water with their eyes, nostrils and a portion of their back being the only part visible above the water.

## Discussion and Activities



Side and top view of the American Crocodile.



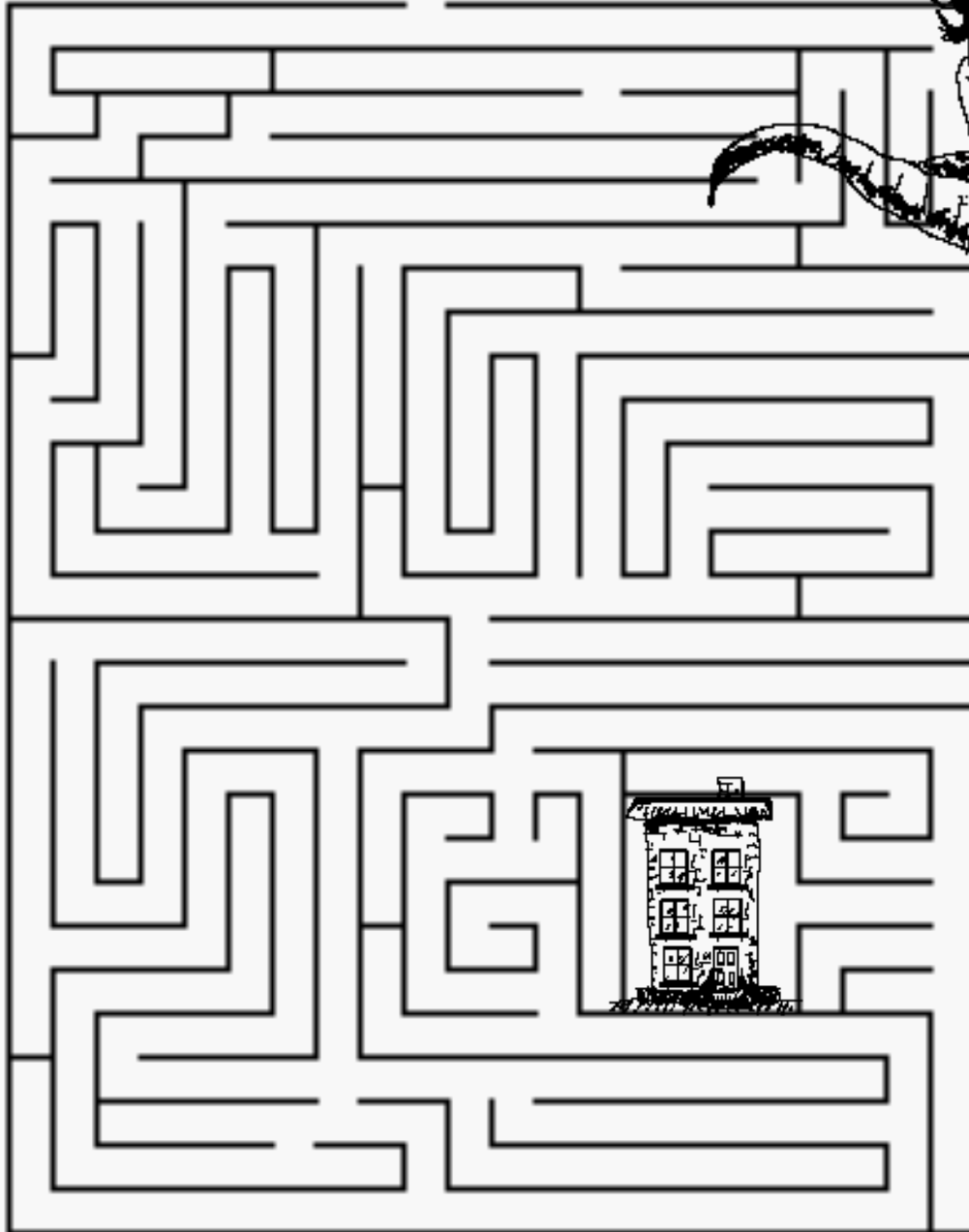
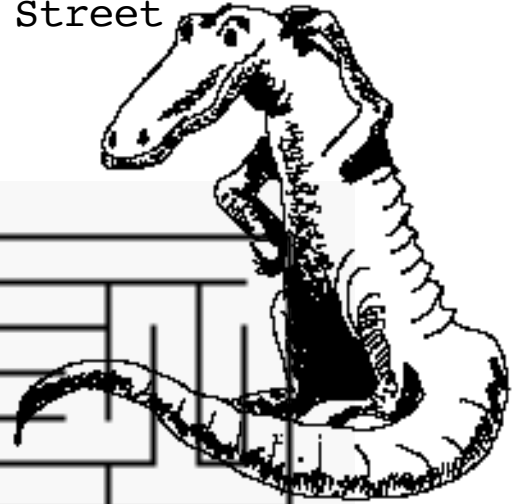
## QUESTIONS about Lyle the Crocodile

1. When the neighbors first met Lyle they weren't too sure that they wanted a crocodile living in their neighborhood. Why do you think they didn't want a crocodile on their block? Do you think it was because they had never known a crocodile before and they weren't sure what to expect? Look up the word *prejudice* in the dictionary. Do you think that they were prejudiced against crocodiles? What causes people to be prejudiced?
2. Lyle is an extraordinary pet who helps around the house, can dance and has had a career as an entertainer. Discuss some of the responsibilities involved in having a pet of any kind. After learning about real crocodiles, what do you think it would be like to have a real crocodile for a pet? What would be some of their special needs? Ask students what types of pets they have and what it takes to take care of their pet?
3. When Mr Grumps meets Lyle, he makes it clear that Lyle is not wanted in the neighborhood. But Lyle stays cheerful. What are examples of times when you have had to look on the bright side? What do you do to cheer yourself up? How do you cheer up a friend who is down in the dumps?
4. Josh finds that Lyle makes it easier to find new friends, since all the kids in the new school are curious about Lyle. But what if he didn't have Lyle - what else could Josh have done to help make friends in his new school?
5. Before seeing the play, try to decide which facts about crocodiles will apply to Lyle in this production. Do some additional research on crocodiles to add to the facts contained in this guide. After the production, discuss with your class-mates what the character was really like. What were some similarities and differences between Lyle and real crocodiles?
6. In some species, crocodiles are close to extinction. What causes animals like the crocodile to become extinct? What other North American animals are close to extinction? What can be done to help these animals? Pair up with other class-mates and research your ideas. Share your findings with the class by making large posters describing the animal, its habitat and what is endangering its habitat.

# Lyle is Lost!

Help Lyle find his way home to 88th Street

START



# Pre-viewing Activities

The following are activities you may want to complete with your class before seeing the production. Activities may need to be modified based on age group.

## Kindergarten-3rd Grade Activities

1) Discuss where people live (home, apartment, duplex, townhouse, cottage, cabin, trailer house – these answers may vary). Discuss how these places are similar and how they are different. This can be completed with a visual on the board (white board, smart board, etc) using a Venn diagram or it can just be a verbal discussion. Where can these specific buildings be found...can we find an apartment in the country? Why or why not? How about a cabin, where would that type of home usually be found?

The characters in this story live in a specific spot in the city; this is called an address. Review/meet individually with students to verify their address.

Why is it important to know one's address? Safety - in case something happens: you get lost or someone in your house is hurt and you need to dial 911.

2) Pick 4-6 key vocabulary words from the book, *The House on East 88th Street*. Introduce the words to students. Have students write their own stories using the 4-6 key words. Allow students to share their stories. After students have shared, read *The House on East 88th Street* as a class. Conclude the activity with a discussion, where students can compare their stories to the book.

\*You can make this activity more difficult for older students by choosing 7-10 key words.

3) In the production, the neighbors are unsure of having a crocodile live in the neighborhood. Have children make predictions on how Lyle could win over the friendships of his neighbors. Ask the children to provide the reasoning for how they made their predictions. Write the predictions down, and save them for a post-viewing activity.

## 2nd-5th Grade Activities

4) After reading the book, *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile* have students write a story about what it would be like to have a pet crocodile living in their house. Students could write 3-6 sentences and include an illustration (Handout A). Older students could create a short booklet that includes text and illustrations.

5) Have a short discussion where students discuss the differences between a book and a play. Talk about how a play can be different than the original book. You can connect this concept by discussing how movies have been different than books. Some movies based on books that children may have seen, include: *Curious George*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *The Polar Express*, and *Harry Potter*.

## **Another story about Lyle from Author Bernard Waber: The House on East 88th Street**

### Summary:

- The Primm's have bought a house and are busy moving in, so busy they do not pay attention to the water noises they hear in the upstairs bathroom.
- When Mrs. Primm goes upstairs to the bathroom to wash her hands, she finds a crocodile.
- While Mr. and Mrs. Primm struggle with this problem, Joshua, their son, answers the door and receives a note. This note explains that the crocodile's name is Lyle. Lyle is a nice crocodile that can do tricks. The note is from a strange man by the name of Hector Valenti.
- While the Primm's are wondering what they are going to do, Lyle joins them downstairs and captures their attention and hearts with his amazing tricks.
- Lyle lives with the Primm's and he quickly becomes a member of their family. He helps around the house and plays games.
- One day there is a parade and it passes right in front of the Primm's house. Lyle is so happy that he goes outside and performs his amazing tricks for the people watching the parade. A photographer takes his picture and makes Lyle famous.
- This attracts the attention of the strange man, Hector Valenti. He comes back and takes Lyle, because Lyle is really his crocodile.
- Hector and Lyle travel around the world performing for people, but Lyle is too sad to perform. Hector returns Lyle to the Primm's. They become a happy family once again.

### **The House on East 88th Street - Vocabulary**

Anxiously: Being very worried.

Bundles: An item, group, or quantity wrapped for carrying.

Cordially: Friendly

Expertly: The act of doing something that is a special skill or takes special knowledge.

Grimy: Dirty

Hoarse: A vocal tone that makes a harsh, low sound.

Notches: An angular or V-shaped cut, indentation, or slit in an object, surface, or edge.

Pistachio: A type of nut that grows on a tree. The part that is eaten is usually green or yellow.

Turkish Caviar: Specially prepared fish eggs from certain fish (such as the sturgeon or the beluga whale). This is eaten as a delicacy; it is considered special and delightful.

Uproarious: Very funny, as a person or situation, or very loud, as sounds or utterances. (Uproarious stories are very funny stories.)

Worthy: Having adequate or great merit (A worthy answer is a useful or valuable answer.)

# Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile - Sequencing

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Place these events in the order that they occur in the story by numbering them 1-7 on the lines provided.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lyle is sent to the zoo

\_\_\_\_\_ Lyle meets his neighbor, Miss Nitpicker

\_\_\_\_\_ Lyle rescues Mr. Grump and his cat from a fire

\_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Grump is unhappy with Lyle living next door to him

\_\_\_\_\_ Lyle is rescued from the zoo

\_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Primm takes Lyle shopping

\_\_\_\_\_ Lyle shows that he knows how to jump rope

## Extension Activity (3rd-5th Grade)

Using the back of this paper, make a comic strip that represents the events from the story. Make sure that the events are in chronological order.



# Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile - Quiz

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Circle the letter of the best answer for each question.

- 1. Where did Lyle the Crocodile live?**
  - a. East 8th street
  - b. East 88th street
  - c. Main street
  - d. Alligator alley
  
- 2. What kind of animal was Lyle?**
  - a. Turtle
  - b. Alligator
  - c. Crocodile
  - d. Cat
  
- 3. What was the name of the family that Lyle lived with?**
  - a. The Pratts
  - b. The Primms
  - c. The Palmers
  - d. The Grumps
  
- 4. Where did Lyle rescue Mr. Grumps' cat?**
  - a. Under the bed
  - b. Up a tree
  - c. In the attic
  - d. From a burning building
  
- 5. What did Lyle and Hector Valenti once do together?**
  - a. Performed on stage
  - b. Painted houses
  - c. Built roads
  - d. Cleaned carpets

**6. What did Mrs Primm bring to Lyle in the zoo to make him feel better?**

- a. A Hamburger
- b. Ice Cream
- c. Turkish Caviar
- d. His iPhone

**7. Who worked at the store and was not happy to see Lyle there?**

- a. Mr. Primm
- b. Mr. Grumps
- c. Mrs. Primm
- d. Mrs. Grumps

**8. Who turns out to be a very good ice skater?**

- a. The Fireman
- b. Ms Nitpicker
- c. Loretta the Cat
- d. Hector P. Valenti

# Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile - Word Find

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

O	L	O	K	U	O	A	F	C	G	A	X
P	A	O	P	Y	I	G	G	R	E	U	Z
A	R	Z	M	F	L	R	L	O	Z	H	N
R	A	I	Q	V	H	U	W	C	I	S	S
T	M	K	M	J	I	M	D	O	T	O	U
Y	L	M	R	M	G	P	P	D	N	J	U
A	R	F	O	E	S	S	P	I	E	J	Y
D	J	G	W	K	S	J	A	L	L	B	F
B	C	M	C	W	T	C	J	E	A	C	Q
O	R	I	E	X	U	Q	U	G	V	U	E
D	R	D	T	X	L	U	Q	E	P	J	L
T	S	M	O	K	E	T	I	B	D	X	Y
C	A	T	N	W	O	T	N	W	O	D	L
I	Y	S	X	J	E	R	O	T	S	O	D
B	U	A	T	T	E	R	O	L	U	U	U

CAT  
CROCODILE  
DOWNTOWN  
GRUMPS  
JOSHUA  
LORETTA  
LYLE  
PARTY

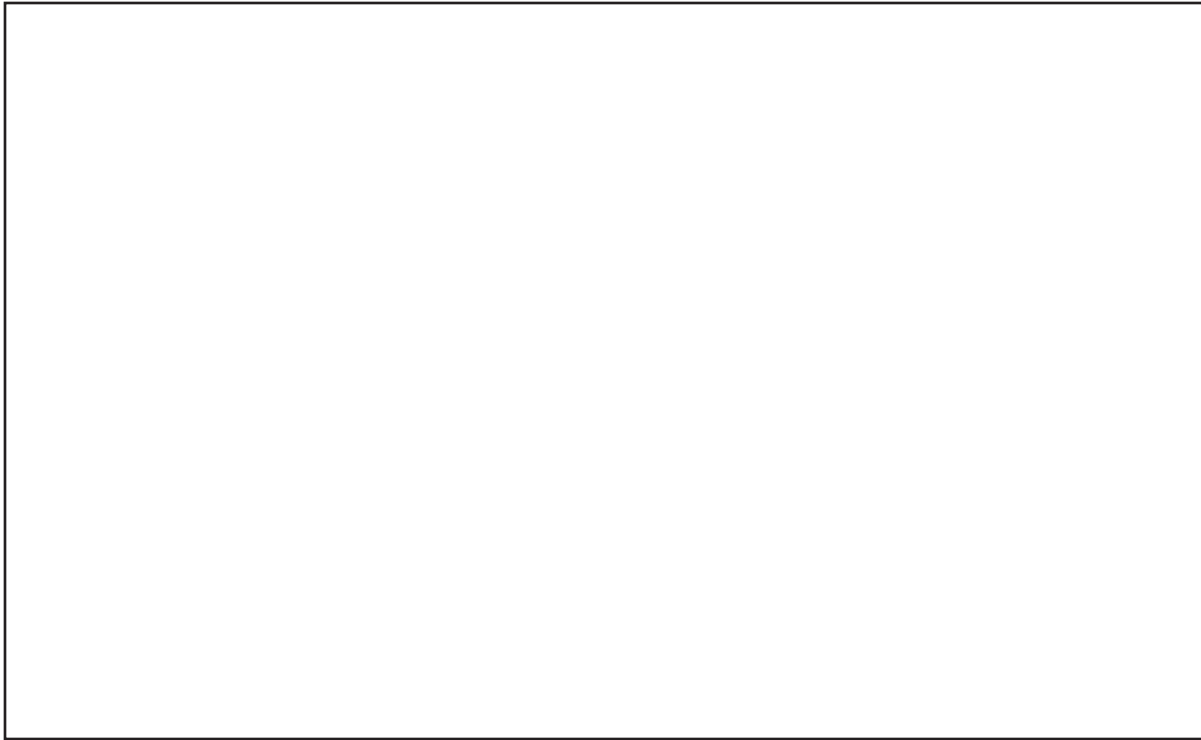
PRIMM  
RESCUED  
SMOKE  
STORE  
TRICKS  
VALENTI  
ZOO

# Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile - Writing a Story

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Use a combination of pictures and words to write a short story about Lyle the Crocodile.



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# Content Connections

## Science

### **Crocodile Research (3rd-5th Grade)**

Have the students spend class time in a computer lab researching the different kinds of crocodiles. Students should be split up into small groups and each group is responsible for sharing information with the class. Here are some website links that can help your students get started:

Nile Crocodile:

<http://www.seaworld.org/animalinfo/animalbytes/animalia/eumetazoa/coelomates/deuterostomes/chordata/craniata/reptilia/crocodylia/nile-crocodile.htm>

American Crocodile:

<http://www.swbganimals.org/animalinfo/animalbytes/animalia/eumetazoa/coelomates/deuterostomes/chordata/craniata/reptilia/crocodylia/american-alligator.htm>

### **Identifying Crocodile Needs (1st-2nd grade)**

Lead a discussion with the class that identifies the possible needs of a crocodile. Ask questions such as, "What kind of food do you think a crocodile eats?" "Where do crocodiles live?" "How does a crocodile protect itself from predators?" Once students have made a good list of possible needs, expand the information if needed. Discuss with students: "If Lyle really lived in a house, what changes would have to be made so that he could get everything he needed in order to survive?"

### **Further Information:**

- Crocodiles eat insects, crabs, shrimp, turtles, wallabies, pigs, reptiles and amphibians.
- Crocodiles live in freshwater and saltwater, depending on what kind of crocodile it is. Most are found in Africa, Asia and Australia.
- Crocodiles protect themselves with their scaly rough bodies.
- Crocodiles are dangerous and should not be approached. They should be viewed from a great distance, under a well-trained guide's direction.

Additional crocodile information can be found using the following resources:

- <http://crocodilian.com> - Includes pictures, drawings, and information on all known species of crocodile.
- <http://www.crocsite.com> - This site provides a broad range of information on crocodiles and alligators.
- Library time can be used to research crocodiles in non-fiction sources.

## Science Continued...

### Research the Endangerment of Crocodiles

Most crocodile species are endangered. As a class, spend time researching the reasons why they are endangered. Have students find real life methods to help solve the problem. Discuss why helping endangered species is such an important issue. Connect the topic to species that are endangered in your local area. Students could think of methods of raising awareness in the community for helping endangered animals or restoring certain animal habitats.

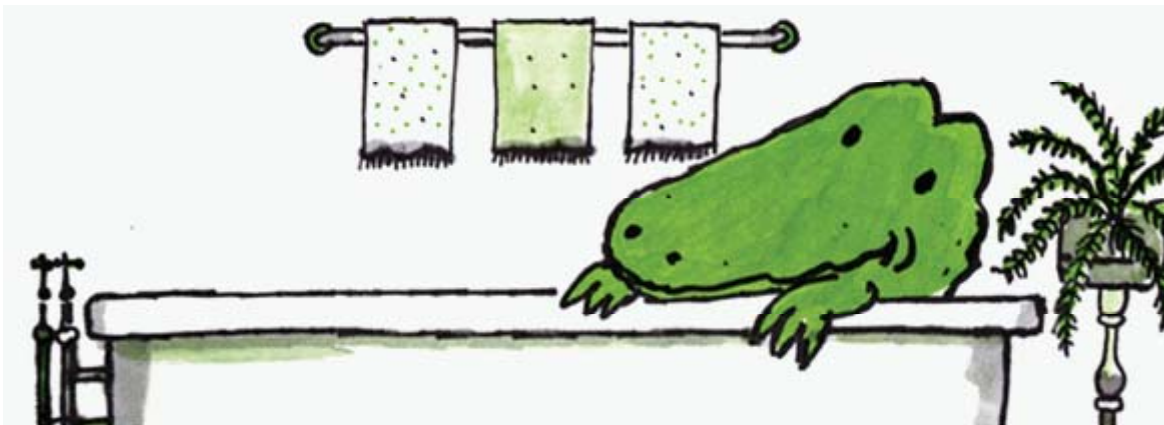
Use the following website for guidance: [http://www.defenders.org/wildlife\\_and\\_habitat/wildlife/crocodile.php](http://www.defenders.org/wildlife_and_habitat/wildlife/crocodile.php)

## Social Studies

### Character Education

Depending upon the trait that is currently being focused on, use Lyle's story to talk about important aspects of this trait in your students' lives (responsibility, caring, flexibility).

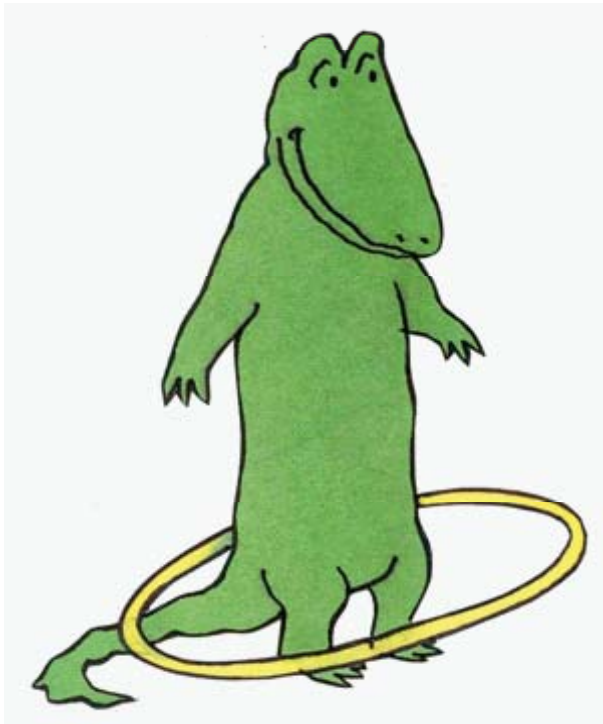
- Is it responsible to run away? What could happen? Does someone have a better plan?
- Who is "nice" in this story? Why? What makes \_\_\_\_\_ nicer than \_\_\_\_\_?
- Lyle likes to help others, what do you do to help?
- Lyle is different from the Primms, because he is a crocodile. What characteristics make him similar to the Primms? What are some characteristics that connect you to your family?



# Post-viewing Activities

The following are activities that can be completed after your class has viewed the production.

- 1) In the production, the neighbors are unsure of having a crocodile live in the neighborhood. Children previously made predictions about this topic during a pre-viewing activity (p.2). As a class, revisit the predictions students made from this activity. See if any of the students made correct predictions. Have a short discussion on how students believe a crocodile would be accepted into their own neighborhoods.
- 2) Mr. Grumps did not like Lyle because he was a crocodile. Lead a discussion with students that addresses, “Do you think Mr. Grumps had a good reason for not liking Lyle?” “Has there been a time when someone did not like you and there was no reason for them not to like you?” “How did that make you feel?” “Is it easy to not like someone, when you don’t even know them?”
- 3) Both the Primm’s and Valenti care about Lyle. Write why each deserve to keep Lyle and what they have done to show this? Brainstorm ideas together and write them on the board for students to review as they are writing their activity.



## #3 Examples:

Before Lyle met the Primm’s, Hector Valenti raised him. He taught him to be a nice crocodile and perform many fun tricks. When Hector can no longer afford to feed Lyle, he has Lyle live with the Primms, so that Lyle doesn’t have to live in a zoo.

The Primm’s take good care of Lyle. He helps around the house and is a good sport when playing games. He becomes a part of their family. They miss him when he is gone.

- 4) Sequence of Events: Remind students that paying attention to the order in which things happen will help them to understand the story. Tell children to keep in mind the important events that happen at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the play.

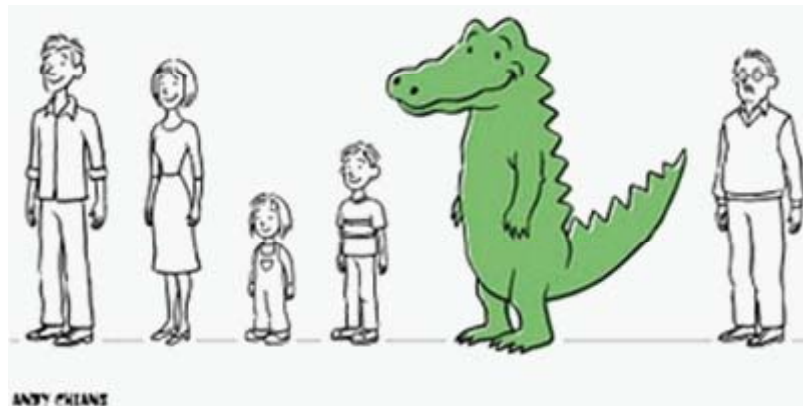
Have students describe the beginning and the ending of the play, writing the information on the board while leaving room between them; then go back and brainstorm different events that happened in the middle.

With grades K-2 use sentence strips. These can be created from the information the students give you or can be premade to save time.

As an assessment, the sentence strips would be on a paper and the students would need to arrange them in the correct order or have the students draw four sequenced pictures of the story as it moves through time (need the beginning and the ending and two middle events in the correct order.)

With grades 3-5, allow the students to write a review of the play. Stating their opinion and reasoning about the beginning, middle and ending of the story.

- 6) Throw a Lyle themed party to celebrate the unit and all that your class has learned. The following website has resources that will aid in planning an all Lyle themed party.  
<http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/authors/waber/funwithlyle.shtml>





# Lyle the Crocodile - Discussion Questions

QAR (Question Answer Relationship) engages students in higher order thinking skills. Before discussing the following questions, talk with your students about the four different types of questions and how they can find answers to each. Consider answering the first of each different type of question as a think-aloud so that your students are able to see and hear you model this new approach to answering discussion questions.

## **Right There Questions (These are questions that can be answered directly from the text)**

1. Where is the Primm's new home?
2. What are some activities that Lyle does to help and be part of the family?
3. Where did Lyle and Valenti go to perform?
4. Who does Lyle rescue at the end of the story?

## **Think and Search Questions (These are questions that the reader needs to piece together information from the text)**

1. Who was Lyle's owner when he moved in with the Primms?
2. Give an example of a threat in the story.
3. At the end of the story, Mr. Grumps states that Lyle is the "bravest, kindest, most wonderful crocodile in the whole, wide world." What did Lyle do to receive such praise from Mr. Grumps?
4. Why would Loretta be even more afraid of Lyle when he met her?
5. What is Lyle's main obstacle at the beginning of the story?

## **On Your Own (Questions that allows the reader to make a choice/opinion and explain why.)**

1. What do you think is the difference between a threat and a promise?
2. Have you ever been in a store or a crowd and become separated from the person you were with? If so, how did you feel? If not, how do you think you might feel?
3. The children considered Lyle a hero once he hit the homerun. What makes a hero? Write about one of your heroes and explain what makes them so special.

## ANSWER KEY

### Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile - Sequencing

- 1 Lyle meets the neighbor, Miss Nitpicker
- 2 Mr. Grumps is unhappy with Lyle living next door to him
- 3 Lyle shows that he knows how to jump rope
- 4 Mrs. Primm takes Lyle shopping
- 5 Lyle is sent to the zoo
- 6 Lyle is rescued from the zoo
- 7 Lyle rescues Mr. Grump and his cat from a fire

## ANSWER KEY

### Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile - Quiz

1. b East 88th Street
2. c Crocodile
3. b The Primms
4. b Up a tree
5. a Performed on stage
6. d Entertained the visitors
7. b Mr. Grump
8. d Signor Valenti

ANSWER KEY

**Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile - Word Find**

O L O K U O A F C G A X  
*P* A O P Y I G G R E U Z  
A R Z M F L R L O Z H N  
R A *I* Q V H U W C *I* S S  
T M K M J I M D O T O U  
Y L M R M G P P D N J U  
A R F O E S S P I E J Y  
D J G W K S J A L L B F  
B C M C W T C J E A C Q  
O R *I* E X U Q U G V U E  
D R D T X L U Q E P J L  
T S M O K E T I B D X Y  
C A T N W O T N W O D L  
I Y S X J E R O T S O D  
B U A T T E R O L U U U

*Answers are down, across, diagonol, backwards and forwards. The key is typed in gray italic font.*

CAT  
CROCODILE  
DOWNTOWN  
GRUMPS  
JOSHUA  
LORETTA  
LYLE  
PARTY  
PRIMM  
RESCUED  
SMOKE  
STORE  
TRICKS  
VALENTI  
ZOO

## Resources

American Crocodile - Defenders of Wildlife. (n.d.). Defenders of Wildlife - Protection of endangered species, imperiled species, habitats. Retrieved March 22, 2010, from <http://www.defenders.org/wildlife>

Bernard Waber - Fun with Lyle. (n.d.). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - Distinguished book publishing since 1832. Retrieved March 28, 2010, from <http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks>

Bernard Waber. (n.d.). The Pennsylvania Center for the Book. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from <http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/pa>

Bernard Waber - The Books. (n.d.). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - Distinguished book publishing since 1832. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from <http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.co>

Company, H. M., & Waber, B. (1992). Lyle Lyle Crocodile. New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (Hmh).

Crocodylians: Natural History & Conservation: Crocodiles, Caimans, Alligators, Gharials. (n.d.). Crocodylians: Natural History & Conservation: Crocodiles, Caimans, Alligators, Gharials. Retrieved March 23, 2010, from <http://crocodylian.com/>

Information on Crocodiles, Alligators and Caimans. (n.d.). Information on Crocodiles, Alligators and Caimans. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from <http://www.crocsite.com/>

National Geographic Coloring Book: Nile Crocodile Picture. (n.d.). National Geographic - Inspiring People to Care About the Planet Since 1888. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from <http://www.nationalgeographic.com>

Theatre IV on Tour - Touring Children's Theatre; Entertaining and Educating America for over 30 years. (n.d.). Theatre IV on Tour - Touring Children's Theatre; Entertaining and Educating America for over 30 years. Retrieved March 10, 2010, from <http://www.theatreiv.com/>

Waber, B. (1975). The House on East 88th Street. Austin: Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine Books.

# Theatre Vocabulary A-Z

**Act:** 1. To perform a role on stage; 2. One of the main divisions of a play or opera, i.e. Act I, Act II

**Actor:** Someone who performs a role on stage

**Applause:** To show approval by clapping the hands

**Apron:** The part of the stage that extends in front of the main curtain

**Audience:** Spectators that listen to or watch a performance

**Backstage:** The part of the stage and theater that is out of sight to the audience

**Balcony:** A platform inside of a building extending out over part of the main floor, as in a theatre

**Blackout:** A fast shutdown of lights to darkness

**Bow:** To bend the head, body or knee in acknowledgement

**Box Office:** Refers to the ticket office where people can buy tickets for a show

**Cast:** The group of actors or performers in a show

**Catwalk:** A walkway above the stage used to gain access to equipment

**Choreographer:** A person who arranges dances or other movements

**Company:** The cast, crew, and other staff associated with a show

**Costumes:** Clothes worn by the actors on stage

**Crew:** People that perform the technical tasks for a show

**Cue:** The signal for an actor or crew member to do an action

**Curtain Call:** At the end of a performance, the acknowledgement of applause by actors taking bows

**Dialogue:** The spoke text of a play, conversations between characters

**Director:** Person who guides the making of a show

**Downstage:** The part of the stage nearest to the audience

**Dress Rehearsals:** A full rehearsal in costume, to practice the show as it will be on show night

Dressing Rooms: Room in which actors change into their costumes and apply make-up

Equity: Short for American Actor's Equity Association, the trade union of actors, directors, designers and stage managers ([www.actorsequity.org](http://www.actorsequity.org))

Follow Spot: A hand operated lighting instrument that emits a high intensity beam of light used to follow an actor on stage

Front of House: Areas of the theatre in front of the proscenium arch, includes lobby areas open to the general public

Gel: Thin, transparent sheet of colored plastic used to color stage lights

Ghost Light: A light on a pole that is left on stage when nobody is there so the last person out and the first person in won't fall off the end of the stage in the dark

Green Room: Room close to the stage for the actors to meet and relax

House: 1. The audience inside the theatre; 2. The seating area inside the theatre

Intermission: A brief break between acts of a performance, usually ten to twenty minutes long

Load In/ Load Out: Process of moving a production in or out of the theatre

Matinee: A performance held in the daytime, especially in the afternoon

Musical: A play whose action and dialogue is interspersed with singing and dancing

Orchestra Pit: Sunken area immediately in front of the stage, intended to accommodate an orchestra

Props: Something other than scenery or costumes that is used in a performance, short for "properties"

Proscenium: The frame separating the stage from the audience

Rehearsal: A practice session in preparation for a public performance

Script: The text of a musical or play

Set: The complete stage setting for a scene or act

Sound Check: A thorough test of the sound system before a performance

Stage: the part of the theatre on which performances take place

Stage Manager: A person who is in charge of the stage and the related details of a performance

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● Stage Right/ Stage Left: The left and right of the stage from the point of view of the actor on stage looking at the audience ●

Theatre: A building or area for dramatic performances

● Understudy: Someone who studies another actor's part in order to be his or her substitute in an emergency ●

● Upstage: The part of the stage furthest from the audience ●

Usher: A person who guides audience members to their seats

● Wardrobe: The general name for the costume department ●

Wings: The out of view area to the left and right sides of the stage

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### A Lesson in Theatre Etiquette

A fun way to review theatre etiquette with your students is to have them compare appropriate dress and behavior for the theatre with other activities such as attending a baseball game, going to a movie, swimming at the beach, or going to the mall with family or friends. Divide the class into groups and assign each group a different activity. Have the groups list the appropriate dress and behavior for their activity and why. The groups can then briefly role play their activity and present their ideas to the rest of the class. After all groups have presented, discuss how we behave differently for a live theater performance than we do for other activities (such as watching TV or a movie).

Print copies and review the "Courtesy Counts" sheet in this guide with your students.

# Courtesy Counts

Please share this information with your students . . . most children are unfamiliar with proper theatre behavior. Make sure you share these courtesies as a part of their experience, and be sure to select shows appropriate for their age & attention span. Have them use the restroom before the performance begins.

**Produce positive energy**...Watching a live theatre performance is very different from watching a movie or television show. A live presentation has not been pre-recorded with the mistakes edited out. The audience's behavior and reactions can either add or detract from a performance. Each audience member affects those around him/her as well as the performers. Concentrate on helping the performers by producing only positive energy!

**Find your seat**...An usher will show you where to sit. Walk slowly and talk quietly as you are seated.

**Keep it clean**...Gum, food, and beverages are not allowed in the theatre!

**Quiet on the set** . . . theaters are known for their excellent acoustics, so if you make a noise others will hear you (including the performers)! Please no talking, humming, unwrapping cough drops, candy, or foot tapping during the performance. Exceptions to this rule include shows that ask for audience participation. Applause and laughter are appreciated and appropriate.

**Unplug** . . . Turn off pagers, cell phones, cameras, and watch alarms during performances. Better yet, leave them at home or school!

**Only use your memory as a recording device** . . . Flash photography and video recording is not allowed during performances because the bursts of light are dangerous to the performers on stage and distracting to other patrons. Please keep recording equipment at home or school or conceal it in a jacket pocket or purse.

**Respect personal space** . . . Remember that you are sharing the theater with hundreds of other people including your classmates. Be respectful of their space by keeping your feet on the floor and not talking to each other during the performance. If you need to sneeze, remember the safe way to do it so you don't make anyone else sick!