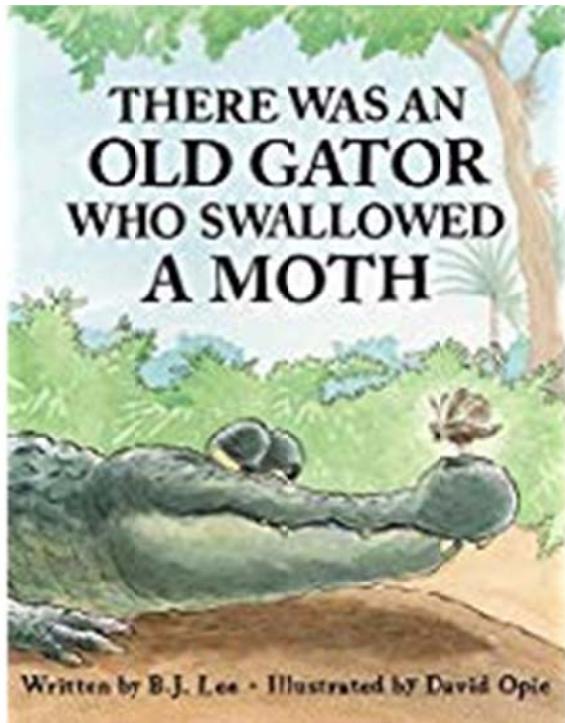

**THERE WAS AN OLD GATOR
WHO SWALLOWED A MOTH**

B. J. Lee

Illustrated by David Opie

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Sherry Howard, M. ED.



B. J. Lee, Author

There Was an Old Gator Who Swallowed a Moth

B. J. Lee grew up in the Northeast, where she only saw gators in the Bronx Zoo. When she moved to Florida, she was amazed to see them in the wild, swimming in lakes and basking on shores. A poet and author, she had to write a book about one special and silly gator.

Visit www.childrensauthorbjlee.com for more information about B. J. Lee and her books.

David Opie, Illustrator

There Was an Old Gator Who Swallowed a Moth

David Opie holds design degrees from Rhode Island School of Design and the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. His humorous images appear in many publications and books. David lives in Connecticut, and keeps dogs in his studio, not a gator.

Visit www.spacemandave.com to learn more about David and his work.

Sherry Howard, M. Ed., Curriculum Writer

Sherry Howard is an educator, poet, and author who loves gators, although not close up. She also writes curriculum guides for special friends.

Sherry can be contacted at author.sherryhoward@gmail.com or at www.sherryhoward.org

How to Use This Guide

There Was an Old Gator Who Swallowed a Moth is intended for children from pre-school to second grade. That's a wide range of abilities and readiness. Choose activities suitable for the age and readiness of your students.

This guide offers activities to help integrate **There Was an Old Gator Who Swallowed a Moth** into language arts, math, science, and social studies. Arts and drama are used as teaching tools throughout. This book is an excellent study for aspects of southern United States animals and habitat, poetry, cumulative rhyme, and the consequences of choices: in this case poor eating choices and bad behavior.

Relevant content standards and social-emotional/personal growth standards for grade levels K-2 were considered in the development of this guide.

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Language Arts: Comprehension and Vocabulary

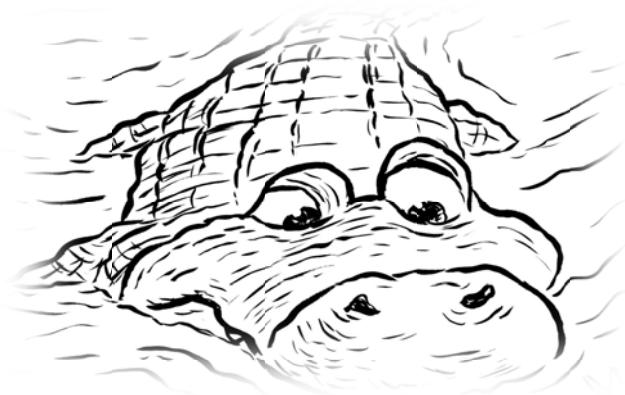
Pre-Reading

Before reading *There Was an Old Gator Who Swallowed a Moth*, identify and discuss the front and back covers, and the title page inside. Note the information on the spine.

The cover:

- Discuss that this book has both an author and an illustrator. What does the author do? What does the illustrator do?
- Discuss the look of the characters on the front cover. Describe how you think the gator feels. What other creature do you see on the cover? (Use the title to help you decide what kind of creature that is!) Who seems to be the main character?
- Mimic the look of the gator on the cover. Describe in three words how he looks.
- Can you predict from the cover what the story might be about? Consider the setting, the title, and the characters you see.
- The old gator has a lot of different looks throughout this book. Compare his expression on the cover to his expression on the page where his belly is full. Explain the difference if you see one.
- Discuss how the main character might feel about the secondary characters. How might they feel about him?

Read *There Was an Old Gator Who Swallowed a Moth*



Post Reading:

Comprehension Activities:

- Have students summarize the story in their own words.
- Compare the old gator's expression on the cover with his expression when his belly is full and after he coughs up his stomach contents. How does the old gator change in his expressions during the story?
- What happens in the story to make gator's belly grow bigger and bigger?
- How many creatures does the old gator swallow? Can you name them?
- Follow the path of the moth throughout the book. What does the moth keep doing to the old gator? How is the moth involved in what happens to the old gator?
- Consider what we know from the illustrations. Look at the illustrations separately from the words and tell the story in your own words. Now listen to the words read aloud.
- How do the expressions of the animals getting swallowed change: when they are minding their own business, when they are swallowed, when they are in the crowded belly, and when they're coughed out? How do their expressions show their feelings?
- What are the reasons the gator gives for swallowing the animals? Do his reasons help solve his problem?
- Find some illustrations of the gator getting ready to swallow an animal. How does he do it? What tactic does he seem to use most often: planning carefully or surprising them? Do the animals seem aware they're about to be swallowed?
- How does the illustrator foreshadow (give a hint about) what's going to happen? Find places where you have to turn the page to be sure what happened.
- What happens when the old gator gets thirsty? What does he look like after he's satisfied his thirst?
- What is the climax of the story? How do you think the old gator feels after the climax?
- Do you think there's a lesson, sometimes called a moral, to this story? What do you think it is?

- What is the insect the gator sees on the last page? What do you think Gator will do? Why?

Writing Activities: (May be done as a teacher-led activity at lower levels)

- We've talked a lot about the old gator. Let's think about another character's point of view (POV) now. Write a few sentences telling the story from the moth's viewpoint.
- Think about a different ending. What if old gator had to live with his big belly? What would that be like for him? Write a few sentences about a different ending.
- Think about a different setting. Instead of a swamp, have the old gator live somewhere else. Write a few sentences with him in that setting.

Language Arts: Poetry Activities

General Activities:

There was an Old Gator Who Swallowed a Moth uses a lot of poetic techniques. The following activities will help introduce these techniques to your class.

- Find some of the rhyming words used in the story. Create your own list of rhyming words.
- Find some of the words in the story that almost rhyme, sometimes called slant rhyme. (moth, cough; belly can, pelican; answer, panther) and discuss why they aren't perfect rhymes.
- Internal rhyme is often used in poetry. Find some examples of internal rhyme—places within a line that rhyme, rather than the end of the lines. (No gator's *belly can* handle a *pelican*.)
- Repetition can be a component of some poetry. How many times can you find "It made him cough" repeated?
- Alliteration is when the same letter is repeated at the beginning of words (he swallowed the *panther* to *pounce* on the *pelican*.) Can you find the alliteration?
- Onomatopoeia is when a word describes a sound and mimics that sound. Can you find any onomatopoeia? Is "cough" an example of onomatopoeia?

Cumulative Stories

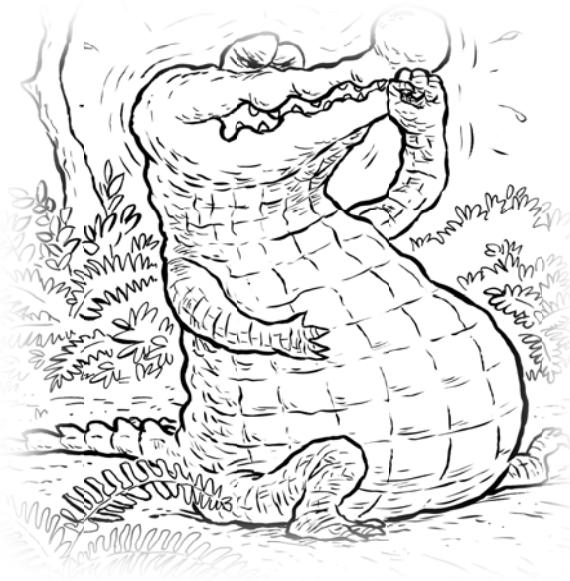
Discuss what cumulative means, and how it applies to this story. Do the children know any other cumulative tales? *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*, *There Was an Old Dragon Who Swallowed a Knight*, *The House That Jack Built* are a few.

Use letters to show how these stories build in a pattern. First comes A, then A plus B, then A plus B plus C, and so on.

Divide the class into sections where each small group has a representative line in the cumulative tale of *There Was an Old Gator Who swallowed a Moth*. They can do a choral reading performance.

Acrostic Poetry

Introduce poetry as a way to summarize. Have students try an acrostic poem for one of the characters.



Gator
Ate
The
Other
Residents.

What's Coming Next?

Rhyming poetry can help students predict what's coming next. Mid-book is a spread with a panther. Read the text aloud, and let students chime in with the rhyming words: prey on the ray, nab the crab. This is also a good spread to look at internal rhyme. As the book becomes more familiar to the students they'll be able to chime in on more rhymes.

Rhyme Time

List some of the simple words from the story, and come up with rhyming words: moth, eel, crab, ray, shark, loon. Discuss the difficulty of finding rhymes for words like lagoon and pelican.

Math

General

- Name all of the animals who ended up in the old gator's stomach. How many were there at the end? Put them in order from smallest to largest. Is this the same order he swallowed them?
- Considering the animals from largest to smallest, how do you think it felt to swallow the smaller compared to the bigger?
- How might size make a difference with swallowing something?
- Are there other animals that the gator doesn't swallow? How many?
- Old gator's mood/facial expression changes throughout the book. Count how many different moods you see.

Word Problems

1. What if Gator changed his mind and didn't swallow the eel or the panther? Using the total you found in earlier activities, figure out the total of animals he swallowed if you take away those two.
2. How does the illustrator show gator's cough changing throughout the story? He uses two techniques. See if you can find both. (Hint if needed: quantity and size.)

Science and Social Studies

- Discuss animal habitat. What kind of animals live in a swamp? Are the animals in this story in their natural habitat?
- The story is fictional. Identify and list fictional and non-fictional elements of the story.
- Discuss alligators. Where in the United States are alligators found? Where would it be unlikely to find an alligator? What other animals similar to alligators exist in the world, and where do they live?
- Discuss the food chain. Discuss an alligator's role as predator and prey. List animals that are more likely to be predators than prey. Which animals in this book are likely to be the prey of alligators in a swamp in Florida?
- Discuss endangered animals. Manatees and Florida panthers are endangered. Choose one to research.
- Marshes and swamps are types of wetlands. They are found along rivers, ponds, lakes, and seacoasts. Find Florida on a map. Discuss why swamps would be found in Florida. Where else in the United States might you find similar habitats?
- Discuss terrestrial animals vs. marine animals. How do they differ?

There Was an Old Gator

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

Find these words:

CRAB

EEL

GATOR

LAGOON

MANATEE

MOTH

PANTHER

PELICAN

RAY

SHARK

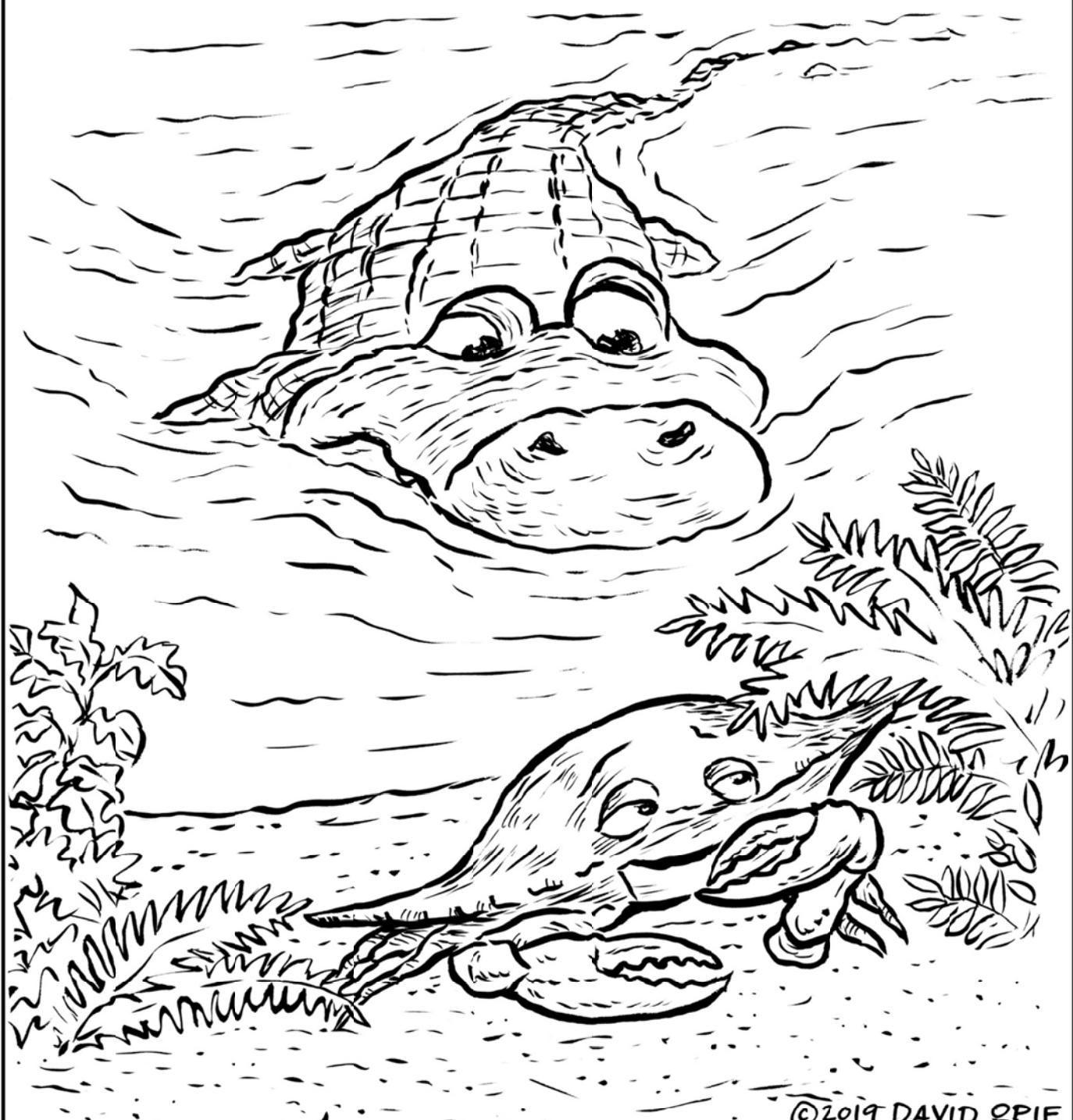


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at your local bookstore, at pelicanpub.com, or on Amazon.

www.spacemandave.com

There was an old gator who swallowed a moth,
and the more he swallows the more he wants to eat.



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What does Gator look like to you?
Illustrate your favorite version of
Gator.

Illustrated by: _____