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Working with ALLIGATORS

Nineteen-year-old Danni Weston talks about her work with these amazing animals.



EXAM TASK

8 **Read the text again. For each question, choose the correct answer.**

1 Danni first became interested in alligators after
- A seeing a wildlife programme.
- B a family holiday.
- C her family moved home.
- D a trip to the zoo.

2 What does Danni say about her work?
- A It's a pity she doesn't get paid more.
- B Family members don't like her working with alligators.
- C It's hard work looking after the animals in the park.
- D She chooses to do two different jobs.

3 What surprised Danni when she first caught an alligator?
- A how calm she felt at the time
- B how frightened the animal was
- C how quickly she managed to catch it
- D how difficult it was to hold the animal

4 What does Danni think about the alligators in the park?
- A It's good that they were all rescued from the wild.
- B They seem friendly, but they can still harm people.
- C It's surprising how similar to humans they are.
- D It's amazing how they form relationships with the visitors.

5 What would Danni say about her job?

A I've been an alligator catcher since I was 15, and I now understand their behaviour completely.

B Wild alligators are a problem in Florida, but I help people learn to accept them and live with them.

C I get pleasure from working with these fantastic animals, even when I don't get paid for doing it.

D It's really important to save alligators that are in danger, but we shouldn't use them in shows.

As a kid, I loved watching wildlife programmes, and I always knew I wanted to work with animals one day. Because I lived in New York, I'd never seen a live alligator. I'd been to the zoo, of course, but I'd always spent all my time with the cute animals, like the monkeys. Then, when I was 15, my dad got a job in Florida and we went to live there. That's when I saw my first wild alligators, and I fell in love with them.

I'm now an alligator catcher. There are lots of wild alligators in Florida and our job is to find and catch ones that are causing problems for people, usually because they end up in places like swimming pools. My parents weren't very happy with my job at first, but they accept it now. I also help care for alligators at a local rescue park, and show them to visitors. I don't get any money for this, but I don't mind because it's fun!

I remember the first alligator I caught. It was in a stream close to some houses. The water was quite deep, so it took us hours to get it out. We tried to encourage it to climb out on its own, but, in the end, I had to climb down and grab it from behind, then get my hands around its mouth, while my colleague tied it shut. I thought I'd be scared, but in fact I felt relaxed. Once we'd tied its mouth it was easy to keep it still and lift it out.

The alligators in the rescue park are great. Some were caught in the wild, but others were born in the park, so they're more used to humans and they don't mind us touching them. Of course, you have to remember that they are still dangerous animals, so you can never relax completely or know what they are thinking. But I don't worry about being injured – if it happens, it happens. The park gets visitors from all over the world and I love showing them what beautiful and amazing creatures alligators are!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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