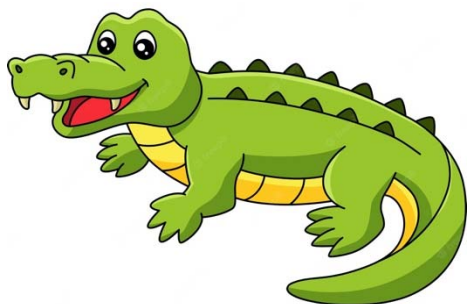


Name _____



The Monkey and the Crocodile

Once upon a time, in a lush forest in India, there lived a clever and mischievous monkey named Rama. Rama was known throughout the forest for his intelligence and quick wit. He spent his days swinging from tree to tree, enjoying the sweet fruits that the forest provided.

One day, Rama met a crocodile named Ganga who lived in the river that flowed through the forest. Ganga was not like other crocodiles; he was friendly and kind-hearted. Rama and Ganga struck up an unusual friendship. Rama would often sit on a rock by the riverbank, sharing stories and laughter with Ganga.

As time passed, Rama and Ganga's friendship grew stronger. Rama would bring Ganga the juiciest fruits from the trees, while Ganga would offer Rama the tastiest fish from the river. Their bond was unbreakable, and they cherished each other's company.

However, trouble loomed in the horizon. Ganga's wife, Makara, was a jealous and cunning crocodile. She watched Rama and Ganga's friendship with growing resentment. She couldn't bear the thought of her husband spending so much time with the monkey.

One day, Makara hatched a wicked plan. She pretended to be sick and told Ganga that she could only be cured by eating the heart of a monkey. Ganga was devastated and conflicted, torn between his loyalty to Rama and his love for his wife.

When Ganga shared Makara's request with Rama, the clever monkey immediately knew something was amiss. He decided to outsmart Makara and save his friend's life. Rama agreed to give Ganga his heart but asked him to take him to the tallest tree on the riverbank first.

As they reached the tree, Rama told Ganga to let him climb to the top to get the sweetest fruit as a farewell gift for Makara. Ganga, trusting his friend, allowed Rama to climb. But as Rama reached the top, he realized he was out of Makara's reach. With a cunning smile, Rama shouted, "You foolish crocodile! You can't reach me here!" and swung away, leaving Ganga in shock.

Rama had saved his own life and preserved his friendship with Ganga, who understood the depths of his wife's treachery. Makara's plan had failed miserably, and she never saw Rama or her husband again.

