

# DRAGON TALE

## Lifestyle of the Komodo Dragon **Classroom Materials**



**Quick Facts**

**Dragon Puzzle Activity**

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**Growth Chart Activity**

**Energy and Recycling Tips**

**Resource Guide**

These materials introduce the life of the endangered Komodo dragon to you and your students through four fun and educational activities. The activities share information about the daily life of a Komodo dragon, how Komodo dragons recycle and save energy, and how students can also recycle and save energy. In addition to the activities, a resource guide on Komodo dragons is provided to assist you in exploring more about this fascinating reptile with your students. The following activity sheets are intended for you to copy for your students as needed. Please let us know how you liked these materials and how we can improve them.

**Enjoy.**

**San Diego Zoo Education Staff**

**These materials  
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# KOMODO DRAGON QUICK FACTS

## *Varanus komodoensis*

- Komodo dragons live in the monsoon forests of four Indonesian islands.
- Komodo dragons are endangered lizards, with fewer than 6,000 remaining.
- Over-hunting of Komodo dragons' prey, the increase of the human population, and natural disasters are the main reasons this lizard is endangered.
- A full-grown male Komodo dragon can weigh as much as 400 pounds and measure ten feet long!
- A full-grown female Komodo dragon can weigh as much as 150 pounds and measure seven feet long!
- Komodo dragons are hatched from eggs the size of grapefruit.
- Komodo dragons are as long as two feet when they are born and grow to be as big as ten feet by age eight!
- Baby Komodo dragons live in trees until they reach four feet in length or until about age three, to avoid being eaten by adult Komodo dragons!
- Komodo dragons use their excellent sense of smell to hunt and find food.
- A Komodo dragon has a long, yellow, forked tongue that is used to smell out its prey.
- Komodo dragons have a special organ called the Jacobson's organ located on the roof of their mouths. This organ helps them smell out rotting carrion.\*
- Komodo dragons are both predators and scavengers.
- Komodo dragons have 60 short and sharp teeth that are replaced four to five times in their lifetime!
- Their teeth look like shark teeth and have been compared to those of a saber-toothed tiger.
- Komodo dragons have fifty-four different types of bacteria in their saliva.
- After one bite from a Komodo dragon, an animal will slowly die from blood poisoning caused by the bacteria in the dragon's saliva.
- Adult Komodo dragons will eat just about any animal that comes into their path but their favorite meals are Sunda deer and water buffalo.
- Komodo dragons can eat up to sixty percent of their body weight in one sitting!
- Komodo dragons also eat extremely fast. Komodo dragons have been seen eating 5.5 pounds of meat in one minute.
- Komodo dragons are the largest carnivorous lizards in the world!



\*carrion: dead and decaying animals





# KOMODO DRAGON PUZZLE ACTIVITY

**Student Instructions:** Test your knowledge about the Komodo dragon. Complete the puzzle below and be a Komodo dragon expert.

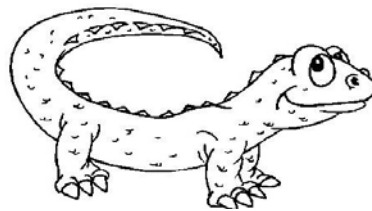
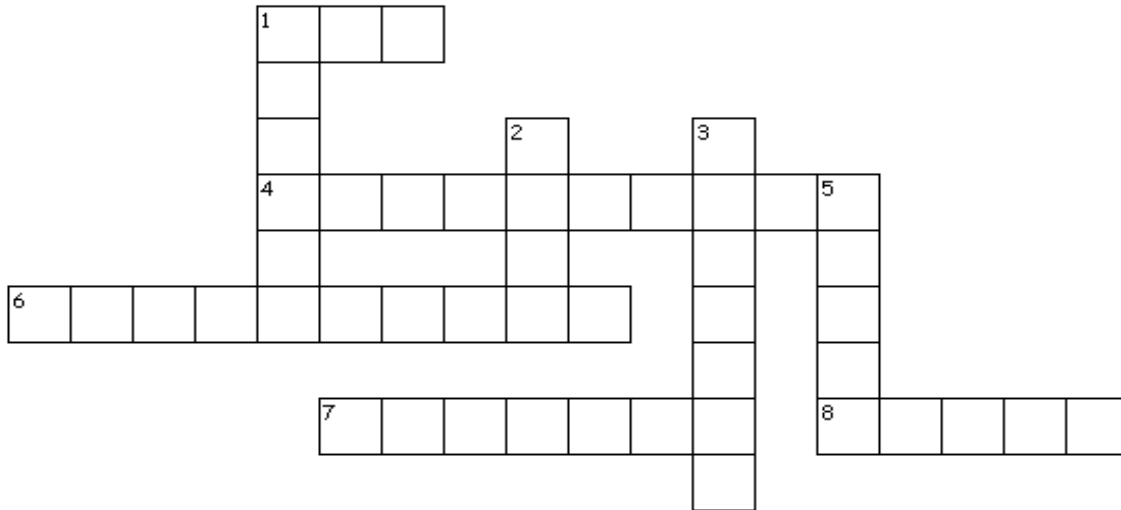
## Across

1. A Komodo dragon can measure this many feet when it is first born.
4. The size of a Komodo dragon's egg is the same size as what fruit?
6. Komodo dragons are the recyclers or \_\_\_\_\_ of the beach.
7. Komodo dragons live in this type of Indonesian forest.
8. A Komodo dragon's teeth look like this marine animal's teeth.

## Down

1. Komodo dragons use this part of their body to smell for their prey.
2. This is one of the Komodo dragons' favorite meals.
3. Komodo dragons are endangered because of this human activity.
5. Baby dragons live here until they are about three years old.

**ANSWERS:**  
 Across: 1. two, 4. grapefruit, 6. scavengers, 7. monsoon, 8. shark  
 Down: 1. tongue, 2. deer, 3. hunting, 5. trees





# DRAGON RHYMES ACTIVITY

**Student Instructions:** Read the limericks below. Use the energy or recycling tips to create your own limericks. To create a limerick, use a rhyming scheme of a-a-b-b-a in which the first, second, and fifth lines rhyme as do the third and fourth lines. See the examples to help you make your own.

**Energy Tips:**

- Put a sweater on instead of turning the heat up when you are cold at home.
- Don't leave outside doors open when the heater or air conditioner is running.

**Recycle Tips:**

- Participate in a beach clean up.
- Pack a waste-free lunch by using a cloth napkin and reusable containers.

**Komodo Dragons  
Save Energy**

When it is hot I pant like a dog,  
or retreat to my log.  
I sleep away the days,  
collecting the sun's rays.

**Kids Save Energy**

Close the door,  
it will help you save more.  
Wear a sweater,  
it will make you feel better.  
Conserving energy is a fun chore.

**Komodo Dragons Recycle**

The dragons will eat  
left-over meat.  
Dragons clean up their place,  
in a speed-eating race.  
To them it is just a tasty treat!

**Kids Recycle**

Clean up your beach,  
it is within your reach.  
Pack a waste-free lunch,  
animals will have less trash to munch.  
Practice what you preach.

Write your own limericks below:

**Kids Save Energy**

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**Kids Recycle**

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## GROWTH CHART ACTIVITY

**Note to the Teacher:** Copy one set of the five growth chart pages for each child in your class. Please copy on recycled paper or paper that is already used on one side.



### Student Instructions:

1. Put your name on the first page of the growth chart where indicated.
2. With your class or adult family members, read on your growth chart how a Komodo dragon grows, recycles and saves energy.
3. Answer the questions on each of the growth chart pages about how you grow, save energy and recycle each year.
4. With the help of an adult, choose and place pictures of yourself at different ages in the areas on your growth chart that say, "Place a picture."
5. Using the five growth chart sheets, piece together your Komodo dragon growth chart. Place the five sheets on the floor or on a large table. Line up the ruler on the page, starting with 24 inches on the bottom. Pages should create one large ruler and the image of a Komodo dragon.
6. Once you have the growth chart put together, tape or staple the pages together. (You may need an adult to help you by holding the pages together while you tape or staple them.) The pages may also be glued together. Remember to allow the growth chart at least one hour to dry after gluing and before coloring or writing on it.
7. Next, color your growth chart. Begin by coloring the Komodo dragon image and then color the rest of the growth chart.
8. With the help of your family, find a special place to hang up your growth chart at home.
9. Tape the chart to the area, making sure to place the bottom of your growth chart at 24 inches above the floor. An adult can help you with this by using a ruler or tape measure.
10. At least once a year, measure your height using the growth chart. Write on the chart the date, your age and your height each time you measure yourself.

*Be creative. Add photos of yourself, drawings or write down special memories on your growth chart.*



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## ENERGY AND RECYCLING TIPS

**Introduction:** A Komodo dragon is the largest lizard in the world and an animal that survives by being a good recycler and saving energy.

Komodo dragons will eat just about anything.... dead or alive! They are the recyclers of the islands because they eat all of the carrion (dead animals) that are found on the beaches and in the forest. They find dead animals that are sometimes as far as 6 miles away!

Komodo dragons save energy by resting a lot, using the environment to stay warm and eating less frequently.



### Can you too live like a Komodo dragon by recycling and saving energy?

**Instructions:** Post this page on your refrigerator door. Each week, work on a new energy or recycling tip with your family. See how many tips you can do at a time. Continue to work to be like a Komodo dragon by recycling and conserving energy for your environment! Both you and the Komodo dragon will benefit from your hard work!

**Recycle like the Komodo dragon:** *Komodo dragons are the recyclers of the beach. They eat all the leftovers and leave nothing behind.*

- Recycle plastic, aluminum and paper.
- “Pre-cycle” by purchasing products in recycled packaging.
- Participate in a beach clean up.
- Pack a waste-free lunch. Use a cloth napkin and reusable containers for your lunch, especially when going out into nature.
- Clean with cloth. Using cloth napkins or towels reduces our impact on trees.

**Save Energy like the Komodo dragon:** *Electricity comes from the burning of fossil fuels. That contributes to the greenhouse effect. All species on Earth suffer when the planet’s climate is changed—but the worst hit are those already endangered.*

- Don’t stand in front of the refrigerator with the door open. Instead, decide what you want before you open it. Make fewer trips to the refrigerator and save your own energy
- Bundle up: Put a sweater on instead of turning the heat up when you are cold.
- Don’t leave outside doors open when the heater or air conditioner is running.





## RESOURCE GUIDE

**Instructions:** The following is an introductory list of Komodo dragon, energy and recycling resources for those interested in learning more about this endangered species and how to help.

### BOOKS:

Darling, K. 1992. **Komodo Dragon: On Location.** HarperCollins Publishers.

Eckart, E. 2003. **Komodo Dragon.** Children's Press.

Kalman, B. 2004. **Endangered Komodo Dragons.** Crabtree Publishing Company.

Maynard, T. 1997. **Komodo Dragons.** Child's World Press.

Murphy, J. 2002. **Komodo Dragons: Biology and Conservation (Zoo and Aquarium Biology and Conservation Series).** Smithsonian Books.

Myers, J. 1999. **On the Trail of the Komodo Dragon and Other Explorations of Science in Action.** Boyd Milk Press Incorporated. Honesdale, Pennsylvania.

Schafer, S. 1992. **Komodo Dragon (Dillon Remarkable Animals Book).** Dillon Press.

Sis, P. 1993. **Komodo!** Greenwillow, Mullberry ed. Edition.

### WEBSITES:

**Komodo Dragon Central:** <http://www.isidore-of-seville.com/komodo/>

**San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE):** <http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/>

Outdoor Education: <http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/outdoored/welcome.html>

**San Diego Environmental Services:** <http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services>

**San Diego Zoo's website:** <http://www.sandiegozoo.org>

Komodo dragon fact sheet: <http://www.sandiegozoo.org/animalbytes/t-komodo.html>

Story of Ruby the Dragon at the Zoo: [http://www.sandiegozoo.org/kids/animal\\_komodo.html](http://www.sandiegozoo.org/kids/animal_komodo.html)

Conservation and How to Help: [http://www.sandiegozoo.org/help\\_wildlife/index.html](http://www.sandiegozoo.org/help_wildlife/index.html)

*Visit a female Komodo dragon at the San Diego Zoo's Reptile Mesa.*

**SDGE, A Sempra Energy Company:** <http://www.sdge.com>

Kids Pages: <http://www.sdge.com/kids/>

