

# AMERICAN ALLIGATOR

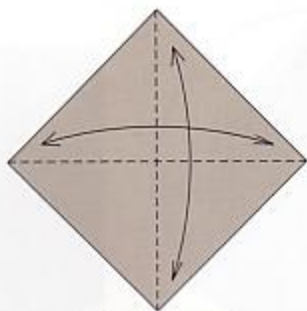
*Designed by Michael G. LaFosse*



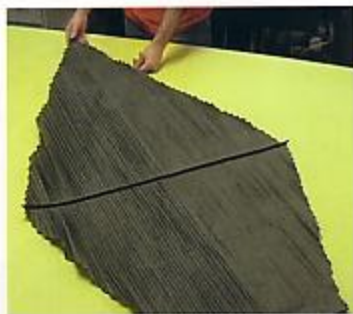
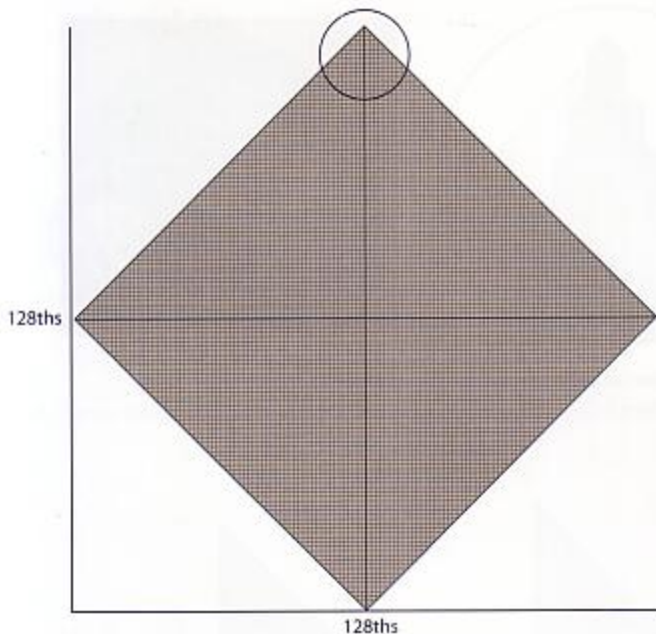
*Don't try this at home! (Just kidding!) One of our most prized origami models by Eric Jaisel is his African Pangolin. We knew that Eric spent a whole week performing meticulous box-pleats in a logarithmic progression. We never imagined that we would be folding something comparable, not once, but twice. The Monkami Museum and Japanese Gardens in Delray Beach, Florida was the first venue for an origami exhibition called FOrigami. No show of Everglades animals and plants would be complete without an American Alligator, and Michael obliged. We missed the model so much we made another! This is one of those models that Michael pictured vividly in his mind, completely folded and finished, before he ever touched a sheet of paper.*

### Paper Suggestions:

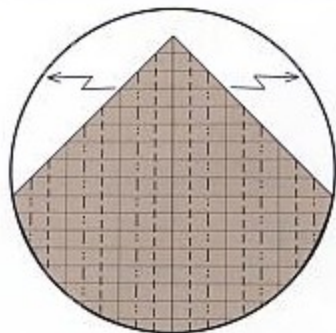
Use back-coated washii for this model. Use paper at least 6 feet square. We recommend building up the large sheet from smaller sheets of high quality washii. Brush on acrylic color pigments, and let them dry. Re-moisten, then lay out and paste the overlapped sheets with archival polyvinylacetate (PVA) on a plastic drop cloth. Make two of these. Let them dry completely, then re-wet and bond them together with methyl cellulose or wheat starch paste, without worrying about the placement of the seams. They shouldn't show in the finished model, due to the extensive pre-pleating.



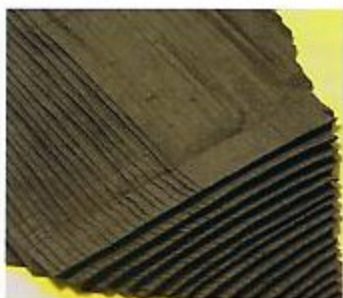
1. Fold in half diagonally, both ways.



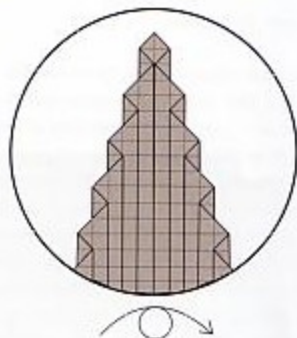
2. Fold into 128ths diagonally, both ways. Divide each major division in half: Two segments become four; then eight, sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four, then one hundred twenty-eight! A long, straight bar of wood or metal, such as a T-square, is useful to fold against.



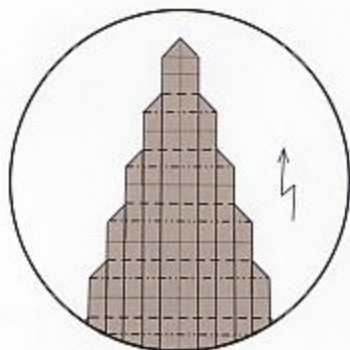
3. Mountain and valley-fold from the center out, forming a series of overlapping layers.



This photo shows the progress of this pleating.



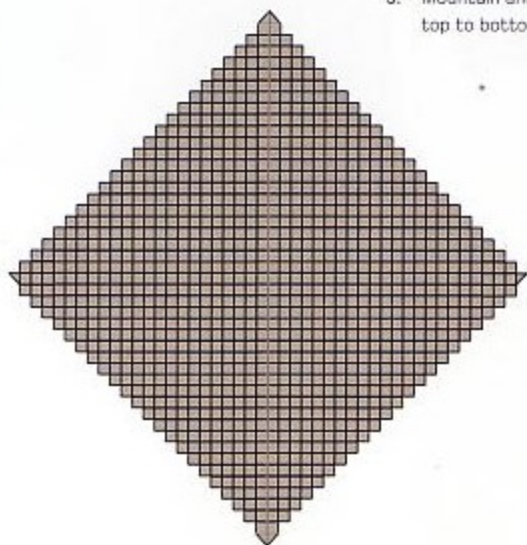
4. Turn over.



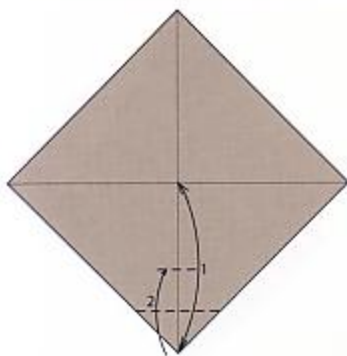
5. Mountain and valley-fold from top to bottom.



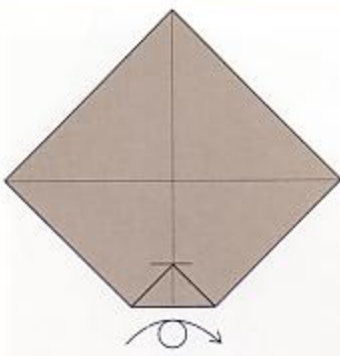
Here is the result.



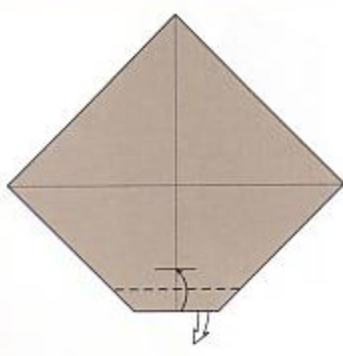
6. The pleated square is now ready to develop into the alligator. Notice that the pleated form may not be perfectly symmetrical. This is not a problem since the folding of the base is rather simple. Diagrams 7 through 29 will demonstrate the folding of this base. The scales have not been added for the sake of clarity. You should practice folding the base in ordinary, un-pleated paper before attempting the real thing.



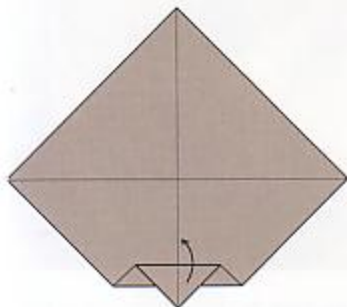
7. With crossing diagonal creases in place (1) move the bottom corner up to the center and make a pinch mark. Unfold. (2) Valley-fold the bottom corner to the pinch mark.



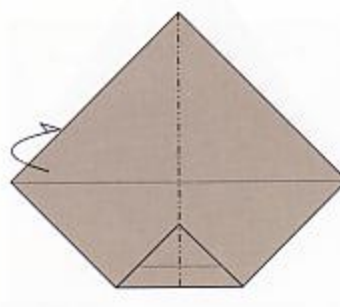
8. Turn over.



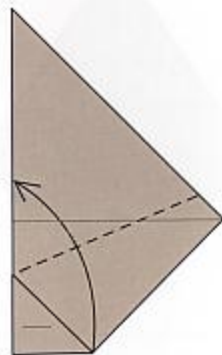
9. Valley-fold the bottom edge to the pinch mark. Allow the hidden corner to come from behind.



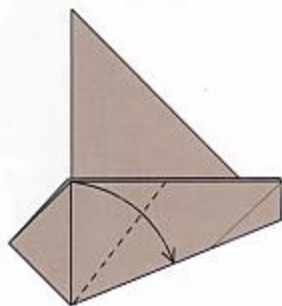
10. Unfold the corner up.



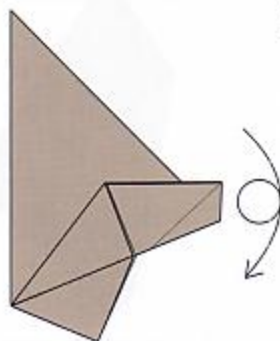
11. Mountain-fold in half.



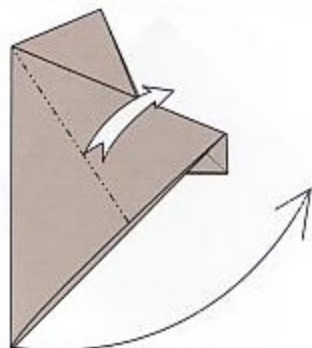
12. Move the indicated bottom corner up to touch the left side folded edge. Valley-fold from the top corner of the triangle layer out to the right edge.



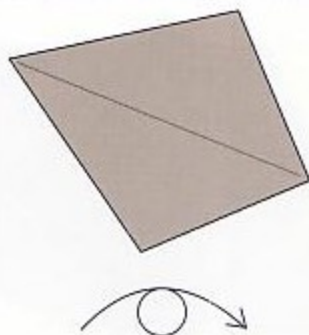
13. Valley-fold. Note that the hypotenuse edge of the triangle aligns with the bottom edge.



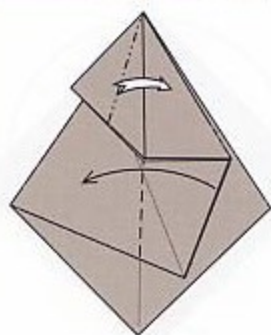
14. Turn over.



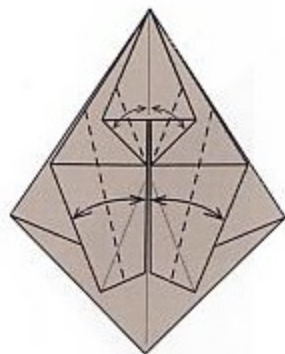
15. Squash-fold.



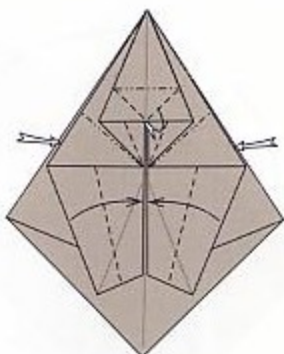
16. Turn over.



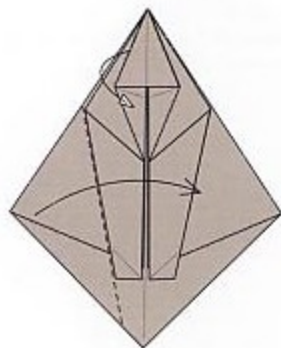
17. Squash-fold the top corner and move the indicated layer to the left.



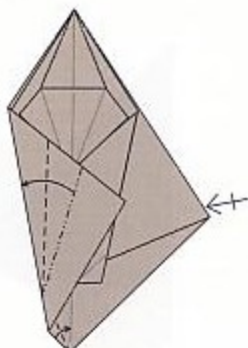
18. Your model should look symmetrical, like this. Valley-fold the indicated edges to the center. Unfold.



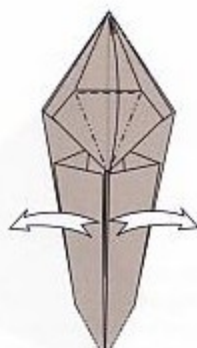
19. Inside-reverse-fold the left and right flaps. Petal-fold the bottom edge of the top triangular layer inside the model.



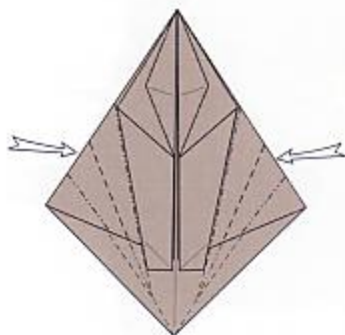
20. Pull out the loose layers from behind the uppermost shape. Valley-fold the left side over the inner left edge.



21. Crimp the left side to swivel it into alignment with the center. Notice the small valley-fold at the bottom corner. Repeat on the right.



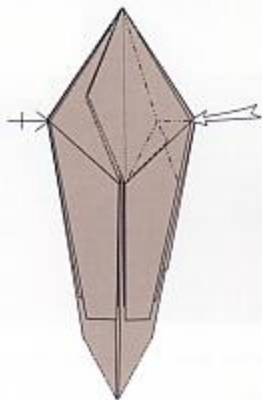
22. Petal-fold the top flap up. Pull open the side crimps.



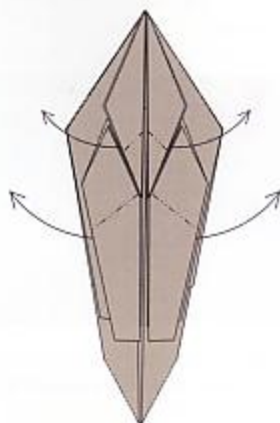
23. Inside-reverse fold the left and right sides.



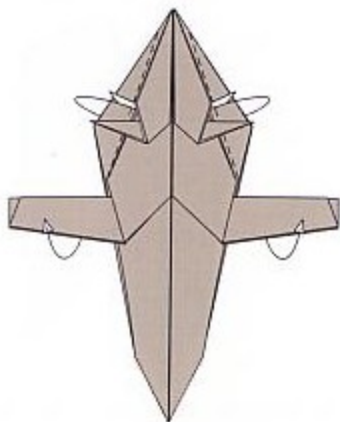
24. Your model should look like this. Fold the top, rhombus-shaped area in half, to the left.



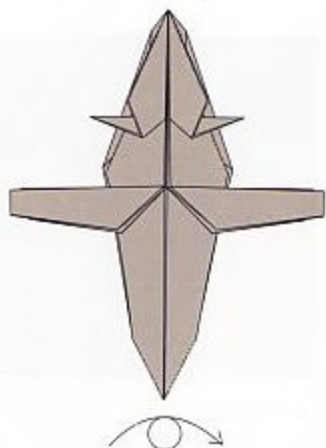
25. Sink this corner. Repeat on the left.



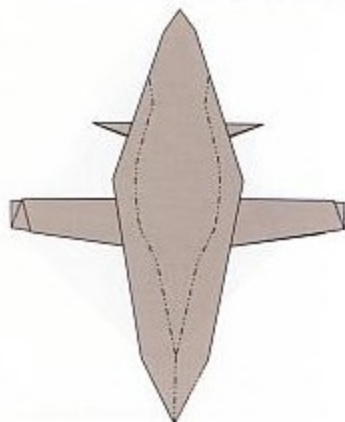
26. Inside-reverse-fold the four corners for the limbs.



27. Valley-fold the left and right sides of the head and body in and under the front leg layers. Move the inside layer of the hind legs to the outside.



28. Your paper will look like this. Turn over.



29. The completed alligator base (good for any species of crocodilian). The following photos will be used to complete the demonstration.



30. Use tweezers to pull up and shape the tail scales that outline the top edge of the tail.



31. A bamboo skewer works as well. Shape each scale to add texture over the whole of the back.



Mountain-fold the end of the tail in half. Form two mountain-folds, diverging up the tail and either side of the body. Contour the general shape of the tail, body and head.





32. Pull up a scale for each of the two eyes. It is helpful to look at a photo of an alligator's head to approximate their location on the model. Pull out the leading edges of the front corner to widen the area of the head. Pull scales out from along the edges of the upper jaw for the teeth. Form the teeth by folding the edges of these scales inward, making them sharply pointed.



33. Here is a view of the lower jaw, which can be found beneath the head corner. Pull scales out from along the edge of the lower jaw for the teeth. Form the teeth by folding the top edge of each scale over, forming a point.



34. Shape the lower jaw and set it into position, open and below the head. The outside edges of the lower jaw should be folded upward so that the teeth point up.



35. Refine the shape of the head and add the nostrils. You can insert the tip of a skewer behind a scale, lifting it and forming a rounded edge, implying a nostril.





36. Restrain the neck and jaw with a strip of cloth, tied around the neck. Remove when completely dry.



37. With the neck and jaw secured, begin to shape the joints of the legs. Use softly rounded bends at the shoulders, elbows and knees. Let the thickness of the accumulated layers of paper imply powerful muscles here.



38. Close-up of a knee and ankle.



39. Use the many-layered pleats to form the webbed toes by splaying them open. Refine the ends of the toes with sharp folds for the claws.



40. The American Alligator.