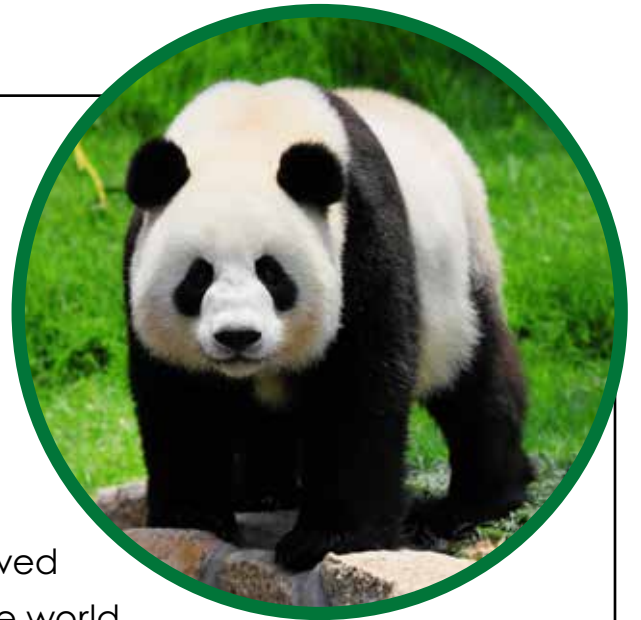


Name: _____

Giant Pandas

By Guy Belleranti



Black and white giant pandas are much loved in their native China and around the rest of the world.

Sadly, they're also a very endangered animal. Much of their forest habitat has been cleared for farms, roads, railroads, and other development. The 1,500



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in the forests, and a lot of it – 25 to 40 pounds (11 to 18 kg) every day! Giant pandas must eat more than one kind of bamboo because the plants are low in nutrients. They will eat other plants, and even meat occasionally, but bamboo makes up 99% of their diet.



Giant pandas eat by gripping bamboo stems in their front paws and sitting upright, kind of like a person. Each paw's grip is aided by an extra long flesh-covered wrist bone that acts like a thumb.

Most of the time, giant pandas are loners. However, when they come together, they're the most vocal of all bears. They bleat, bark, huff, and growl

during their very short breeding season. Cubs squeal and croak when they're with their mothers.

Pandas also communicate by leaving scent markings from glands under their tails. Males find breeding females by scent. Males also sometimes do "hand stands" so they can leave their scent higher up a tree.

Giant panda mothers give birth to one, or sometimes two, tiny cubs. If two cubs are born, only the stronger cub usually survives. Males do not help with the care. The cubs are mostly hairless and only weigh $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pound (.11 kg). That's 800 times smaller than its 200-pound (90 kg) mother!

Giant panda cubs don't fully



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quire a unique species! In fact, each panda's markings are slightly different from all other pandas.

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1. In the box below, circle the words that describe a giant panda's natural habitat.

tropical

high altitude

sand dunes

mountainous



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a. tea panda

b. raccoon

c. grizzly bear

d. badger

4. Put a check mark next to each of the ways a male giant panda might attract a female mate.

_____ Male pandas rub against trees to leave their scent.

_____ Male pandas fight other males in front of the females to impress them.

_____ Male pandas walk in circles around female pandas.

_____ Male pandas do "hand stands" to leave their mark higher in the trees.

5. If a mother giant panda gives birth to two cubs, will they both be with her a year later? Explain why or why not.

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Giant Pandas

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Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.



1. e r i t e



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4. ___ a ___ o o ___

clue: American mammal with a mask-like face

4. _____

5. ___ a ___ i ___ a ___

clue: the natural environment an animal lives in

5. _____

6. ___ a ___ i n ___ s

clue: patterns on an animal's fur or skin

6. _____

7. ___ o ___ a ___

clue: loud; expressive

7. _____

8. ___ o ___ o ___

clue: empty on the inside

8. _____

Name: _____

Giant Pandas

By Guy Belleranti

In the article, "Giant Pandas," you learned that pandas live in a very restricted mountainous habitat in China, where they can find the bamboo that makes up 99% of their diet. In fact, there are only around 1,500 giant pandas left in the wild.

Why do you think there are so few pandas left in the wild? Is there anything that



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Giant Pandas



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5. If a mother giant panda gives birth to two cubs, will they both be with her a year later? Explain why or why not.

No, likely not. If two cubs are born, usually only the stronger cub will survive.

Giant Pandas



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7. v o c a l

clue: loud; expressive

7. **vocal**

8. h o l l o w

clue: empty on the inside

8. **hollow**