

Activity 10

The Bear Facts

Objective & Overview:

By coloring and assembling an illustrated map, students will become familiar with the world's eight bear species and the continents where they live.

Teacher Background Information:

What is the giant panda's scientific classification? Is it a bear?

The scientific classification of giant pandas has, over the years, proven to be controversial among biologists. About ten years ago, National Zoo scientists and their colleagues determined that giant pandas' closest relatives are bears, but that they share many physical traits with raccoons. They are currently placed in the bear family Ursidae.

The family Ursidae, the bear family, contains eight species found on four continents. Here is a thumbnail overview of the world's eight bear species. Regarding diet, herbivore means plant-eater; carnivore means meat-eater; and the term "omnivore" means an animal that eats both plant and animal matter.

Common Name	Habitat	Diet	Status	Continent
giant panda	temperate forest	herbivore	endangered	Asia
sun bear	tropical rainforest	omnivore	unknown	Asia
sloth bear	tropical forests	omnivore	vulnerable	Asia
Asiatic black bear	temperate forest	omnivore	vulnerable	Asia
Am. black bear	temperate forest	omnivore	common	North Am.
spectacled bear	mountains (varied)	omnivore	vulnerable	South Am.
brown bear	varied	omnivore	threatened	N.A., Eur,Asia
polar bear	polar ice	carnivore	not listed	N.A., Eur,Asia

Materials:

- crayons
- pencils or pens
- bear family portrait coloring page
- world map page
- scissors
- glue
- bear reference materials

Directions:

1. Hand out the world map page and bear family portrait coloring page to your students. Have them color in the bears, referring to color pictures you provide from reference books.

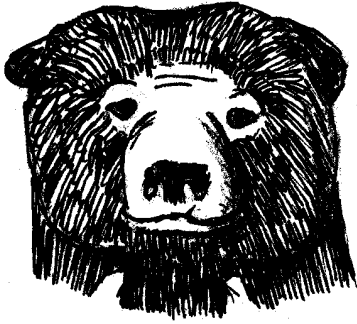
2. Next, have students cut out the bear heads and glue them onto the correct continents on the map page. In the case of the brown and polar bears, there are several continents; they can choose one.

3. Students should then label all of the continents, then hand in the worksheet, with their names printed on them.
4. Discuss which continents don't have any bears, which have just one, and which have more than one.
5. Ask students what they learned about bears through this exercise. Did they know that all eight species existed? Did they know that there were no bears in Africa, Antarctica, and Australia?

Extension idea:

You could have students pick a bear and report on that species' range, habitat, diet, and status.

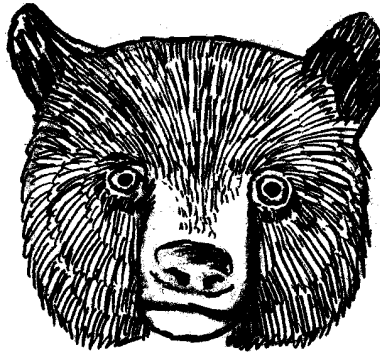




sun bear



giant panda



Am. black bear



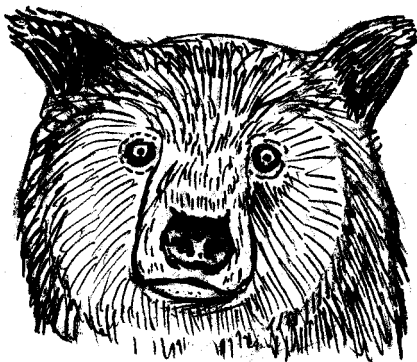
spectacled bear



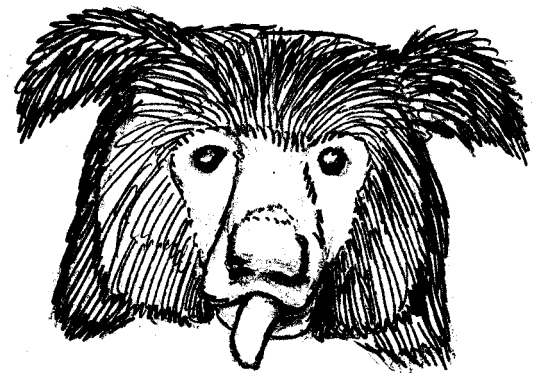
Asiatic black bear



polar bear



brown bear



sloth bear