

Will the Pandas Disappear?

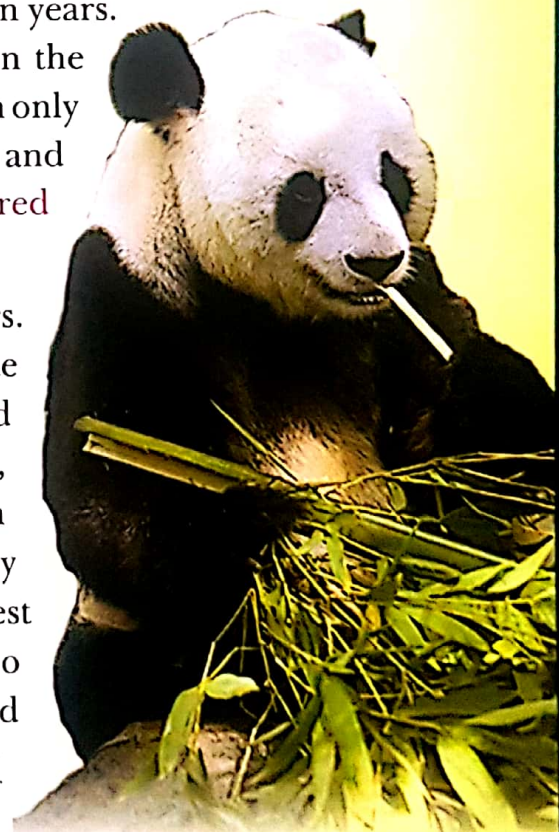
5. Started

Answer the following questions.

1. What is the panda thinking in the picture above?
2. Is the panda happy, sad or worried? Give reasons for your answer.

Can you see this beautiful black and white animal? It is loved all over the world. Do you know what it is called? The **Giant Panda**! The Giant Panda is also known as the panda bear. Pandas have been there on earth for about 3 million years. But, today you can find them only in the high forest areas in the mountains of south-western China. Very soon, you will see them only in pictures. They will become extinct like the cheetah, the dodo and the dinosaur. Presently, pandas are the second most endangered animals in the world.

Pandas are bears but they are different from other bears. Unlike other bears, they are mostly vegetarian. Their favourite food is bamboo. Just 1% of their diet includes other plants and meat such as small rodents. A panda's diet includes the leaves, stems, and shoots of bamboo. Bamboo does not have much nutritional value, so pandas eat about 12-40 kg of bamboo daily to get their energy. This is the main reason why they live in forest areas where bamboo is found in plenty. Any loss of bamboo forests becomes a threat to their survival. They have strong and



giant very large | **endangered** a species in danger of extinction | **rodents** mammals with strong incisors and no canine teeth | **nutritional** having nutritive value

big teeth and jaw muscles which help them to eat and chew large amounts of bamboo.

Pandas are generally big in size. They can grow to the size of 1.5 m long from nose to **rump**. They are also quite heavy and weigh about 150 kg, twice the weight of a normal human being. Male pandas are 10 to 20% heavier than females. Pandas live for about 18 to 25 years in the wild.

Pandas first appeared about 3 million years ago. Initially, they lived in South and East China, Northern Vietnam and in many parts of Myanmar. Nowadays, they are found only in six Chinese forests in Gansu, Sichuan, and Shaanxi provinces. They live in hilly areas at 5,000 to 10,000 feet. These areas are rich with natural **flora and fauna**. In these areas we find trees such as **fir**, **spruce** and bamboo. However, these areas are decreasing due to farming and clearing of forests for development. This has resulted in the shrinking of pandas' natural homes and has forced the Giant Pandas to remain **confined** to the mountains only. At the moment, there are only 29 small areas which can be suitable homes for pandas.

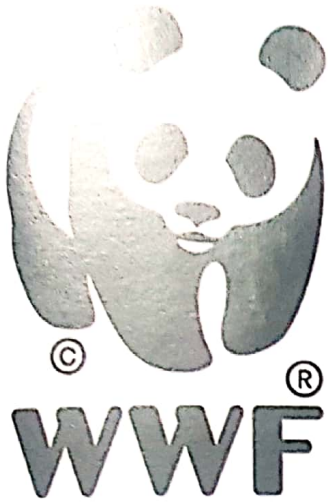
Pandas make excellent climbers. Female pandas also like to climb trees. Panda cubs start climbing trees when they are only six months old. Pandas can also swim well. They can talk with other pandas through some calls that they make with the help of their mouths. They have 11 different ways of calling. What their calls mean is still not known. What is surprising about them is that they do not sleep for months. They do not sleep even during winter months when other bears hibernate. These skills and abilities make pandas attractive animals.

Generally, Giant Pandas are peaceful animals and they do not like to get into trouble with other creatures but they are not **timid**. They are **fierce** fighters when they have to defend themselves against enemies. They fight back when they know that there is no escape from the situation. They are very strong and use their strength to protect themselves just as other bears do. But they use their strength mainly for **crushing** bamboo, their favourite food. But one has to be careful with this peace loving animal too. A panda bite can be very horrible.

Humans are the greatest danger to the pandas because of what they do every day. Human activities such as wood cutting, animal grazing and agriculture have made them endangered. These activities decrease the forest area which is the natural habitat of pandas. But on the other hand, it is also true that only human beings can do something to save them.



rump the hind part of the body of an animal | **flora and fauna** plants and animals | **fir** evergreen trees with needle-like leaves | **spruce** a species of an evergreen forest tree with needle-like leaves | **confined** limited | **timid** easily frightened | **fierce** menacingly wild
crushing biting and cutting into pieces | **habitat** place of living



The first efforts to save pandas were made in China during the 1940s. In 1963, Wolong (Wanglang) was created as a forest reserve and Sichuan province was established as a nature reserve by the Chinese government. An international non-governmental organisation called the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has been working with the Chinese government to protect pandas since 1980. Efforts are being made to help pandas by:

- ▮ decreasing human activities in areas where they live
- ▮ growing more bamboo groves
- ▮ educating people about the need to protect them

Pandas are well-known all over the world. They have a special importance for World Wide Fund for Nature. Since 1961, they have been the symbol of WWF because they are endangered species and are loved by people across the world. Saving pandas means helping to conserve nature and protecting animals, plants and the landscapes which are necessary for their survival.

Respond and Reflect

A. Select the right answers to fill in the blanks. Tick (✓) against the right answers.

1. The pandas are _____ in colour.

- (a) black
- (b) white
- (c) black and white

2. Pandas were first seen on Earth _____.

- (a) three hundred years ago
- (b) three million years ago
- (c) three thousand years ago

3. Pandas are now found in _____.

- (a) south-eastern China
- (b) forests in Gansu, Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces of China
- (c) Myanmar

4. Pandas are the _____ endangered animals in the world.

- (a) most
- (b) second most
- (c) fourth most

B. Write whether the following statements are true **T** or false **F**.

1. Pandas love to eat meat.
2. Their favourite food is small rodents.
3. A panda's diet includes the shoots of bamboo.
4. Bamboo has a lot of nutritional value.
5. Pandas eat about 12-40 kg bamboo shoots daily.
6. Loss of bamboo forests is not good for their survival.

C. Read the lesson and complete the following statements.

1. The areas considered suitable to be pandas' homes _____.
2. First appearance of pandas _____.
3. Pandas lived initially in _____.
4. Three provinces in which they live now _____.
5. They live at the height of _____.
6. Names of plants/trees in the area where pandas live _____.
7. Two reasons why forest areas are decreasing _____.

D. Fill in the blanks with suitable information from the lesson.

Pandas make _____ climbers. Female pandas can also _____ trees. Panda cubs start climbing trees when they are only _____. Pandas can also _____ with other pandas. They talk with the help of _____ they make from their _____. They can produce calls of _____ different types. It is not known to people what their _____ mean. Pandas do not need to sleep even in _____ when other bears like to sleep.

A winter forest scene with a full moon and a hunter. The scene is set in a snowy forest with bare trees. A full moon is visible in the sky, casting a glow. A hunter is visible on the right side, aiming a rifle. The overall atmosphere is quiet and suspenseful.

The Deer and the Hunter

Lo, the wind blows soft and free,
Gently **whistling** through the trees.
The sky is dark, the stars are out,
A full moon **casting** shadows about.

The fresh, new snow lay crisp on the ground,
There is no movement, not a sound.

Yonder stands a bob-tailed deer,
Without a thought or fear.
But this soon changes, a hunter nears,
His stomach hungers seeing the deer.

The hunter takes his rifle bounding,
His pulse running, his heart **pounding**.
He aims and pulls the **trigger** quickly,
A shot rings out so very sickly.

And yonder stands a bob-tailed deer,
Without a thought or fear.
Lo, the wind blows soft and free,
Gently whistling through the trees.

-James Thornton

whistling making a sound resembling a whistle | **casting** to make a shadow in a particular place
yonder over there | **pounding** beating fast | **trigger** the part of a gun that we press in order to fire it | **bob-tailed** a tail that has been cut short

Understand and Enjoy

COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions briefly.

1. How does the poet describe the scene?
2. What happens to the hunter when he sees the deer?
3. What does he do then?
4. Does the deer die or does he run away on hearing the gun shot? What makes you think that?

B. Read the poem and complete the following lines. Then write in your notebook what the following couplets mean in the poem.

1. The sky is _____, the stars are out,
A full moon _____ shadows about.
2. The fresh, new snow lay _____ on the ground,
There is no _____, not a sound.
3. He aims and pulls the _____ quickly,
A shot rings out so very _____.
4. Lo, the wind _____ soft and free,
Gently _____ through the trees.

Couplets are small stanzas consisting of two lines.

VOCABULARY AND APPRECIATION

A. Identify and write some adjectives from the poem and also the words they describe in the poem.

Example: *soft wind*

B. Read the poem and make a list of pair of words that end with similar sounds.

1. _____