



Bears of the World

LESSON

GRADE LEVEL K-7

CATEGORY Plants, Animals
& Habitats

TOPIC Bears

LENGTH

Part 1: 30 minutes
Part 2: 40 minutes

MATERIALS

- "Bears Around the World" sheets for the eight bear species
- Mini bear illustrations
- Scissors
- Glue
- Map of the world
- Class set of world atlases
- Copies of the bear masks
- One "Getting to Know Me" card for each mask
- Copies of the "Getting to Know You" worksheet,
- Crayons or markers,
- Construction paper or tagboard
- Popsicle sticks or elastic

SETTING

Indoors

GROUP SIZE

8+

SUBJECT AREAS

Social Studies, Science,
Visual Arts

Overview

Students identify the eight bear species of the world and locate their habitats on a world map. Each student then creates a mask of one of the eight bear species. Wearing their creations, students meet the other seven bear species of the world and identify their similarities and differences.

Objectives

Students will:

- Recognize and compare the eight species of bears in the world
- Locate the habitats of the eight bear species on a world map
- Correctly identify the countries and continents in which bears are found
- Create a 2-D image to communicate ideas

Making Connections

As students learn about the bears of the world, they will be able to make connections between the various species, and link some of their differences to the different environments/climates in which they live.

Background

Today, bears live on every continent except Antarctica, Africa and Australia. There are eight species in three genera. The southern bears include the sloth bear, the sun bear, the spectacled bear, the Asiatic black bear and the giant panda. The northern bears include the grizzly bear (also known as the brown bear), the polar bear, and the American black bear.

Bears have characteristics in common that distinguish them as bears. All bears are mammals with small eyes and short tails. They have five non retractable claws, long canine teeth and most have broad, flat molars adapted for crunching and grinding. Like raccoons and humans, bears are plantigrade: they walk with the entire lower surface of their foot touching the ground and are capable of standing up on their back feet. Bears also have an excellent sense of smell and of hearing.

Part 1

Procedure

Warm Up

Enlarge world map to 11" x 17" sheet. Copy one map and one set of mini bear illustrations per student. Create one set of the "Bears Around the World" fact sheets (see primer) for each working group.

Brainstorm: Ask students to name all the kinds of bears they can think of and list them on the board or a flipchart.

Introduce the terms species and habitat.

The term species is scientifically defined as a population of individuals that are more or less alike and that are able to breed and produce fertile offspring.

Habitat is defined as the place or home in the environment where an animal or plant lives, which provides all its essentials for life, including food, water, shelter or cover and space.

Explain that there are 8 different species of bears that live in different, but sometimes overlapping, areas of the world.

Ensure that students are familiar with locating continents and countries on a world map. Review the locations of the equator and the north and south poles, and determine their significance in climate patterns.

The Activity

1. Give each student a copy of the world map, the mini bear illustrations and an atlas. Divide students into groups of four and hand out one set of "Bears Around the World" fact sheets per group.
2. Students work together in their groups to locate the continents and countries in which each bear species is found. Students cut out the mini bear illustrations and glue each bear into its appropriate habitat. Some areas of the world will have many bears, while others will have few or none. Students label the continents and countries in which bears are found.
3. Groups identify the continents where no bears live (Australia, Africa, and Antarctica), and list these continents on the back of the map.

Part 2

Procedure

Warm Up

Enlarge the copies of the bear masks provided using 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Copy the 'Getting to Know Me' cards for each bear or have students write their own from the "Bears Around the World" fact sheets.

Give each student a copy of a bear mask and have him or her colour it, paste it on construction paper and cut it out, including the eyeholes. Attach elastic or a popsicle stick (handle) to each mask.

When students have completed their masks, have them read their "Getting to Know Me" card and glue it to the back of their "Getting to Know You" worksheet.

The Activity

1. Wearing their masks, students roam the room introducing themselves and meeting the other bears until they have met the other seven bear species of the world at least once.
2. As students meet the other bears, they complete the 'Getting to Know You' work sheet. Students may find it challenging to complete the worksheet, as some of the answers must be determined by inference or previous knowledge, rather than what is written on the cards.

Assessment

Part I

Collect student worksheets and assess for:

- Correct labeling of continents and countries
- Accurate placement of mini bear images on the map
- Correct identification of the three continents in which no bears live

Part II:

Gather the "Getting to Know Me" sheets and assess for:

- Completion of both questions for the eight bear species

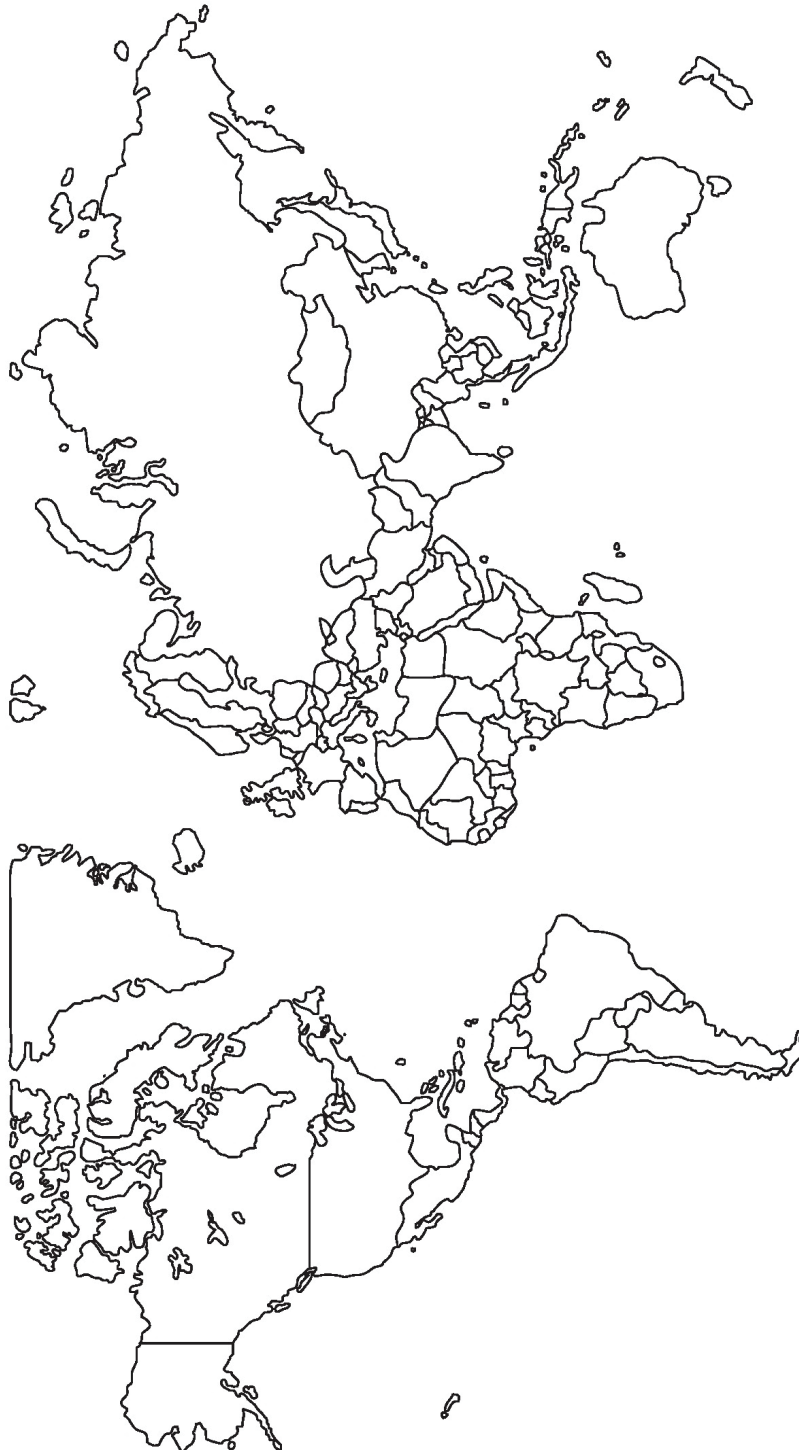


Extensions

1. Students draw borders onto the map, label each country and shade each bear's habitat.
2. Students create a key for the habitats of the eight bear species.
3. While in their groups, students discuss why protection of bears may be difficult when habitats stretch across two or more countries. Each group is to provide a minimum of two suggestions. Open this to a class discussion when each group has completed their two points.
4. Using the information provided in the 'Bears Around the World' fact sheet, students determine how each bear species is uniquely adapted to its habitat.
5. Students choose one bear species and research the area in which it is found. Working alone or in pairs, students create a poster or pamphlet describing the area, why bears live there and what threats they face.
6. Students do not use mask templates but design their own masks using a variety of materials such as cardboard, fabric, wool, twine, carpet scraps, wire, etc.
7. Students design a presentation to be performed for other classes or at an assembly. Working in groups of three or more to represent the eight bear species, students create a choral speaking script to describe their bear and its habitat. Masks, costumes and other props can be used to support the presentation.

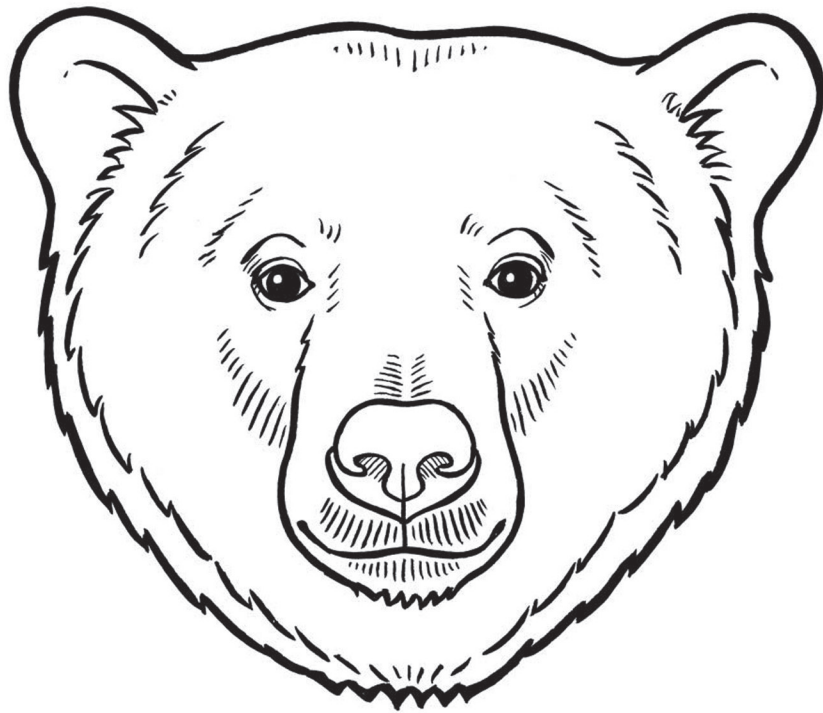


Bears of the World Worksheet





American Black Bear



Getting to Know Me

I am the American black bear.

I am the most numerous bear in the world.

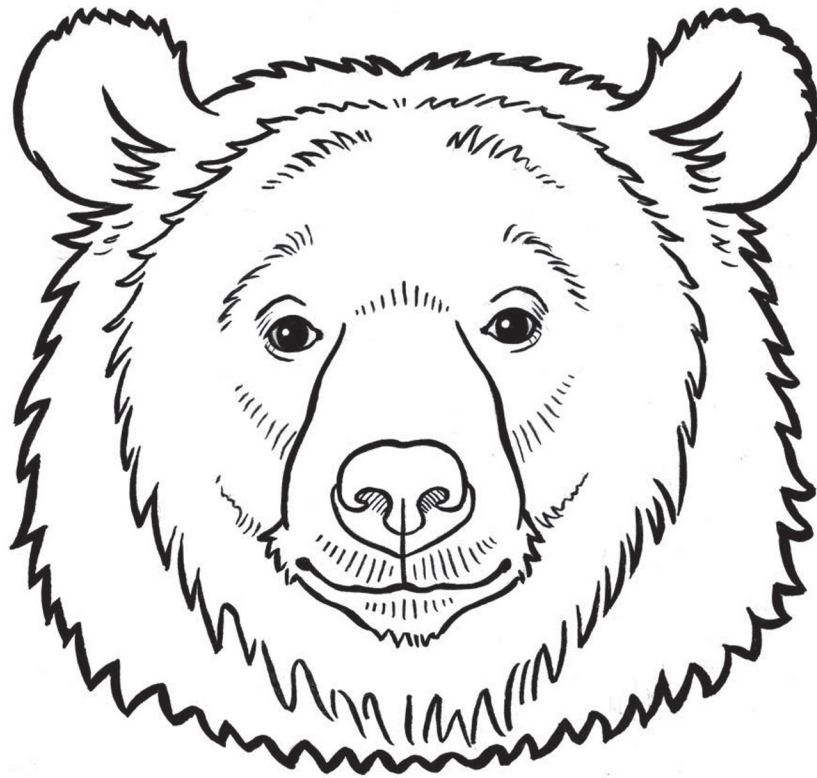
I live in North America in Canada, the United States and northern Mexico.

I am a medium-sized bear with fur that ranges in colour from black to creamy white.

I eat mostly plants, but am happy to eat meat and insects when I can get them.

Total global population: up to 750,000.

Asiatic Black Bear



Getting to Know Me

I am the Asiatic black bear.

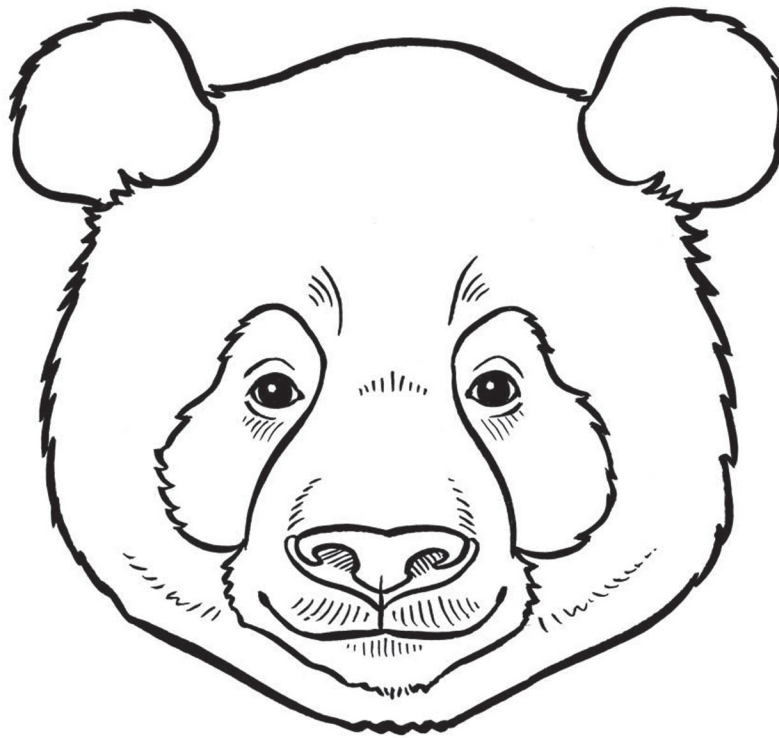
Sometimes I'm called the moon bear because I have a large moon-shaped mark on my chest. The rest of me is dark brown or black in colour.

I live in south Asia and southeast Russia.

I spend much of my time high up in the trees where I build nests out of broken branches to sleep in.

Total global population: approximately 60,000.

Giant Panda



Getting to Know Me

I am the giant panda.

My fur is black and white. Removed "teddy bear" statement.

I live only in southwestern China.

I eat mostly bamboo. I have six toes on my front paws and I use the sixth toe to hold bamboo shoots while I am eating.

Total global population: Giant pandas are endangered because there are only about 1,000 left in the world.

Grizzly Bear



Getting to Know Me

I am the grizzly bear.

I live in more countries than any other bear in the world.

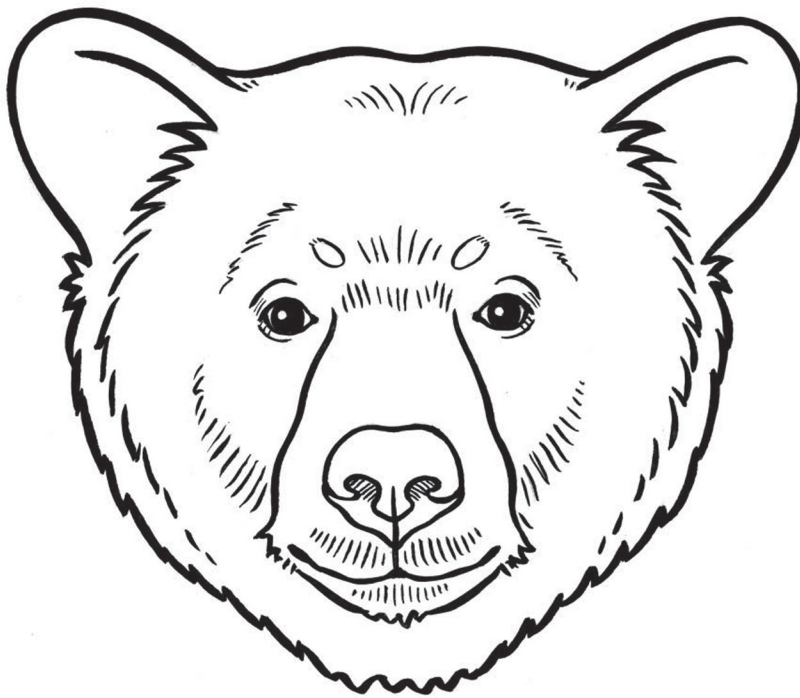
I live in Canada, the United States, Russia, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Mongolia, Pakistan, Korea, Japan, China, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

I am one of the biggest bears in the world.

My fur is usually brown, but can range from black to cream in colour.

I have very long claws that I use for digging. Total global population: Approximately 125,000.

Polar Bear



Getting to Know Me

I am the polar bear.

I am the biggest bear in the world

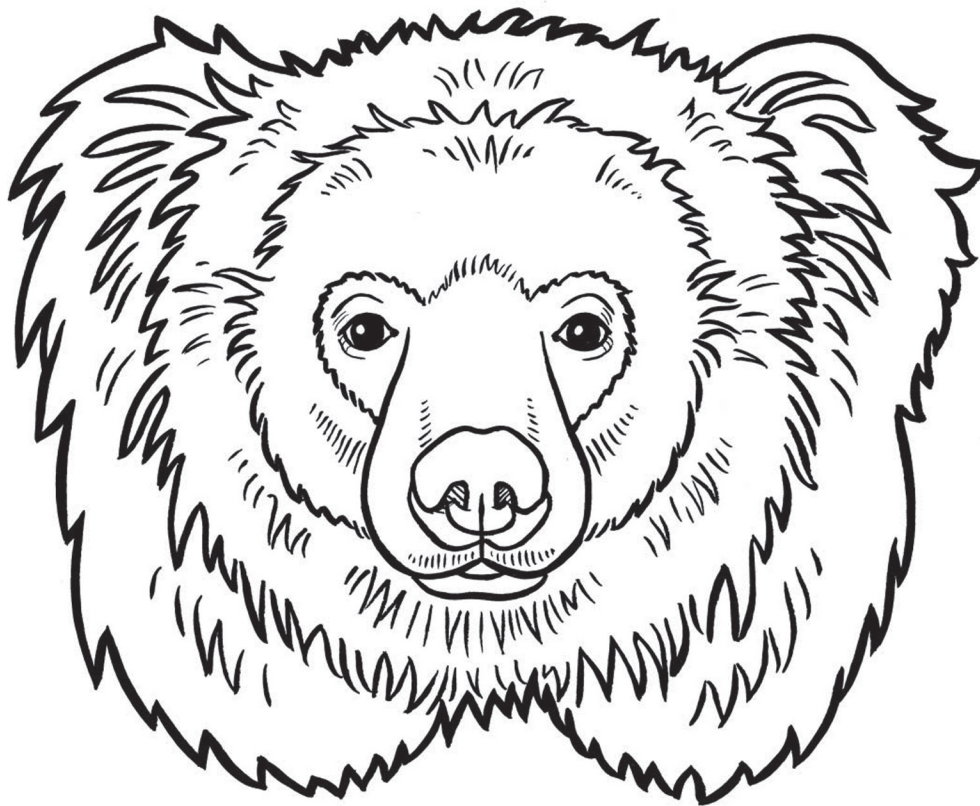
I live at the top of the world in countries including Canada, Alaska, Russia, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Greenland.

It is very cold on the tundra and Arctic Sea where I live. I have dense white fur and a thick layer of fat to keep me warm.

I'm a good hunter and like to eat seals and walruses. My webbed feet make me a great swimmer.

Total global population: up to 27,000.

Sloth Bear



Getting to Know Me

I am the sloth bear.

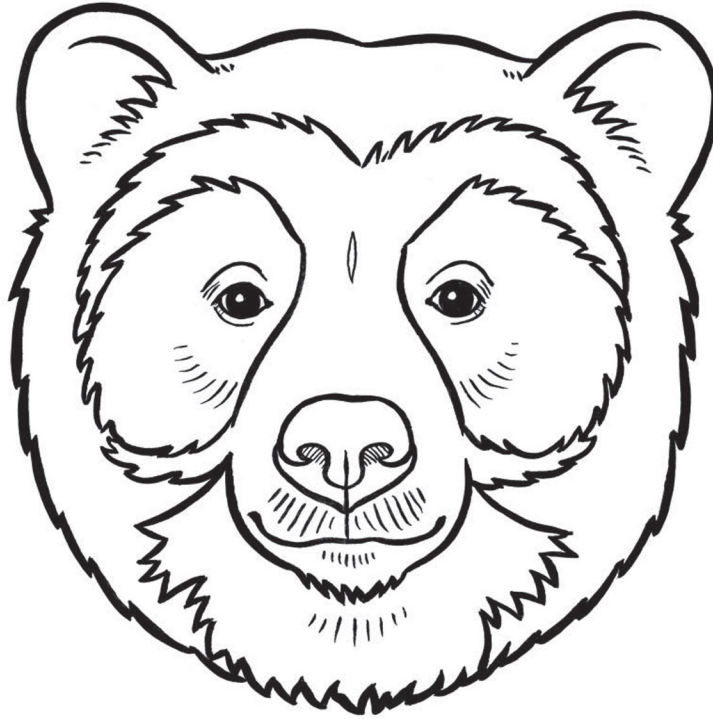
I have long black hair with a light-coloured patch on my chest in the shape of a "U".

I live in Asia in the countries of Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

I LOVE termites. I eat them by sucking them up like a vacuum. I've been told that you can hear my slurping from far, far away.

Total global population: fewer than 25,000.

Spectacled Bear



Getting to Know Me

I am the spectacled bear.

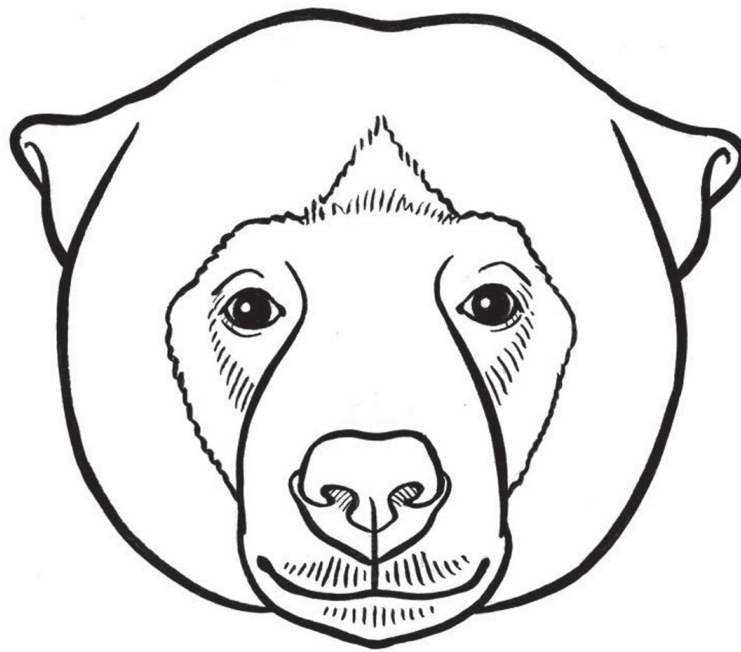
I am dark brown or black with light-coloured rings around my eyes that look like spectacles or eyeglasses.

I am the only bear that lives in South America.

I have strong teeth and jaws and can eat tough plants like cactuses that most animals won't touch.

Total global population: fewer than 18,000

Sun Bear



Getting to Know Me

I am the sun bear.

I am the world's smallest bear. At 45 kg, I am about as big as a medium-sized dog. I live in Southeast Asia.

I have short, thick black fur with a light muzzle and light "U" shape on my chest.

I usually like to look for food at night. During the day I sleep high in the trees in a nest I build from broken tree branches. I don't hibernate because I can find food all year round in the tropical forest.

Total global population: unknown but listed as endangered.

Activity 1 Worksheet

Getting to Know Me

Name: _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Discover and record at least one difference and one similarity between the bear you are and the eight bear species you meet.

I am the _____ bear.

	SIMILARITY	DIFFERENCE
Grizzly Bear		
Polar Bear		
Black Bear		
Sloth Bear		
Asiatic Bear		
Spectacled Bear		
Giant Panda		
Sun Bear		

