

Polar Bear



Pair work to extract and exchange information about Polar Bears from two different texts and record on a scaffolded answer grid.
A template for producing other information gap activities.

Polar bears have
black skin.
true / false

Polar bears have
webbed toes.
true / false

Polar bears live in
Antarctica.
true / false

Polar Bear

Information gap activity developed by Sharman Bailey in Leicester in 2009

Webaddress: <http://www.collaborativelearning.org/polarbear.pdf>

Last updated 27th March 2020

Two texts about the same topic. Some of the information is in both texts but a lot more information is unique to one text. This creates a situation where two people work and talk together to answer the questions jointly. One of these people can be a teacher or a parent. When the pair have answered the questions they can then compare their answers with another pair. They can also go on to research deeper answer through joint research. This is a simpler version of our more complex information gaps for older pupils such as the one on the Ebola virus and the funding of drug development:

www.collaborativelearning.org/ebolanomics.pdf

Our aim is to create a catalyst for purposeful collaborative exploratory talk. We hope that you might be tempted to create a similar activity and share it with our network.

Collaborative Learning = Oracy in Curriculum Context
makes challenging curriculum accessible.
improves social relations in the classroom.
provides scaffolding for exploratory talk.
creates EAL empowering talk environments.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of oracy. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of talk.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

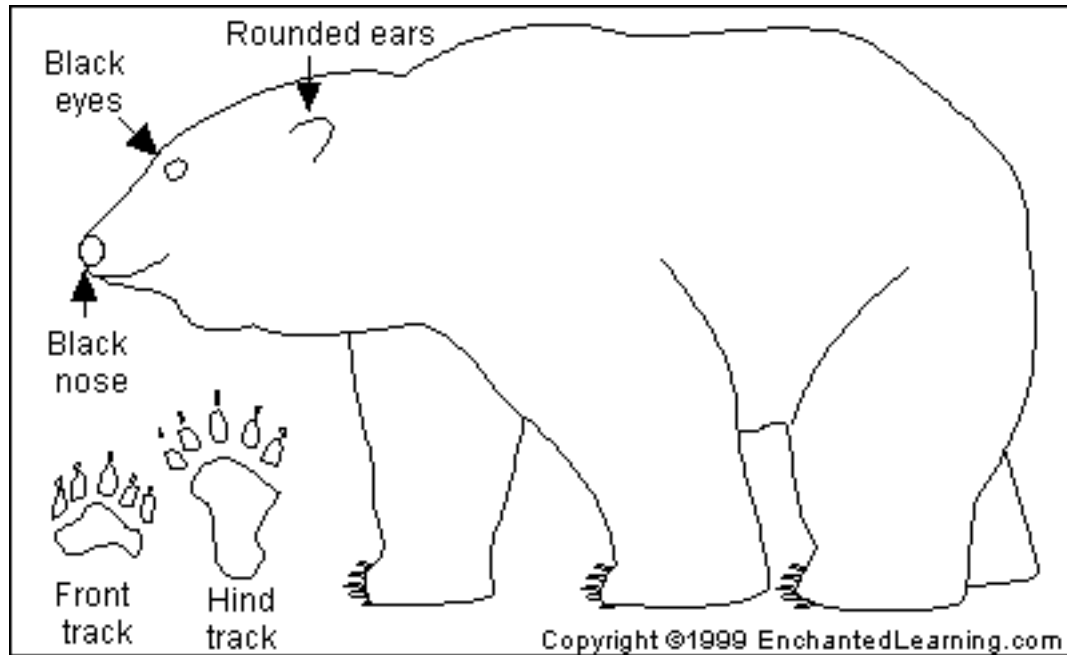
*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

Polar Bear

Text A



Polar Bears are large, meat-eating bears who live in the Arctic. They are powerful swimmers who hunt seals in the water.

Polar Bears can be up to 3 metres long and weigh about 770 kilograms. Polar bears have a small head with a black nose and tongue. They have a good sense of smell. They have wide front paws with slightly webbed toes that help them swim. These bears paddle with their front feet and steer with the hind feet.

Polar Bears have thick woolly fur that keeps them warm. The white coat camouflages them well in the snow and ice. They also have a thick layer of fat under the skin that helps keep them warm.

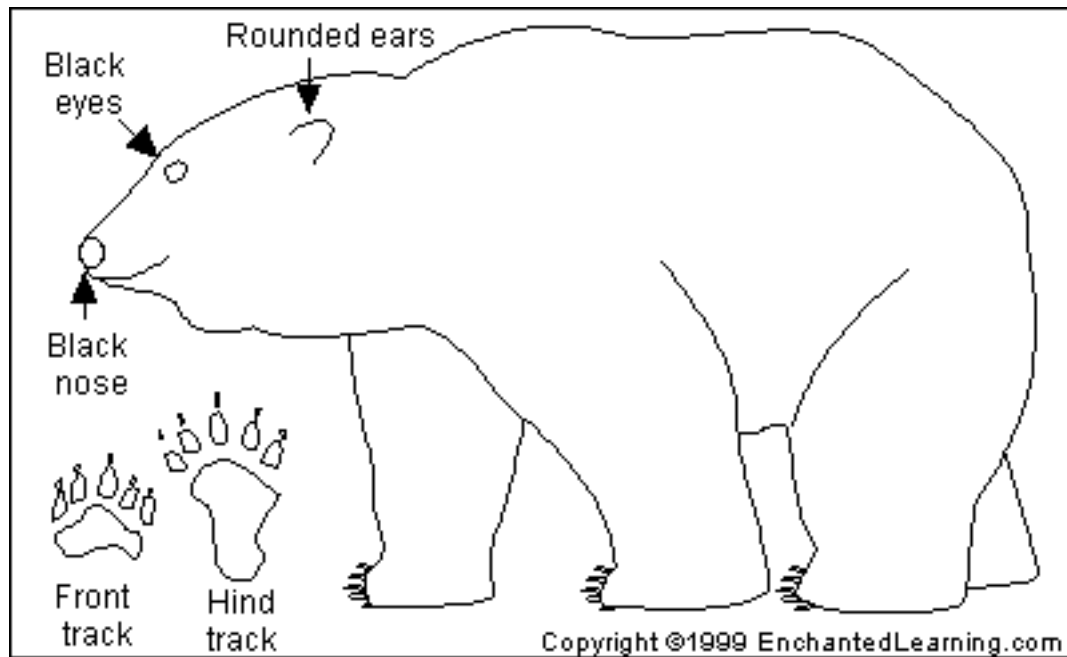
Polar Bears live in icy Arctic areas of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Norway, and Russia. They spend much of their time swimming in the sea.

Polar Bears are carnivores (meat-eaters) who frequently hunt and catch their prey in the water. They are fierce predators who eat mostly seals.

When they are pregnant female polar bears usually give birth to twin cubs.

Polar Bear

Text B



Polar Bears live in the Arctic.

They are good swimmers. They hunt seals in the water.

Polar bears can run up to 25 mph.

Polar bears have a small head with a black nose and tongue. They have a good sense of smell. They have 42 teeth. They have wide front paws that help them swim.

Polar Bears have thick fur that keeps them warm. The white coat camouflages them well in the snow and ice. Polar Bears have black skin under their fur.

Polar Bears are meat-eaters who often hunt and catch their prey in the water. Polar bears don't drink water.

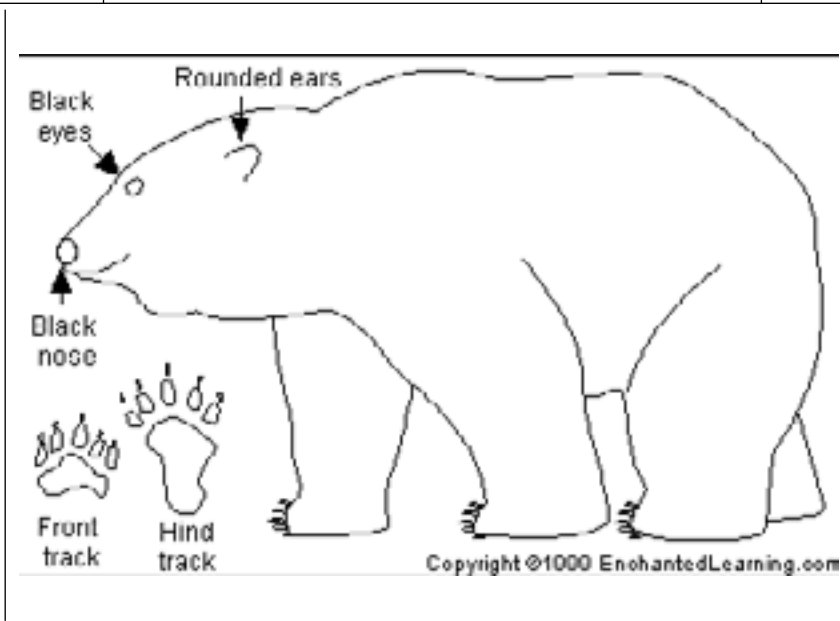
When they are pregnant female polar bears build snow dens to spend the winter in.

What do polar bears have to keep warm? 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____	A polar bear can be up to _____ metres long	Polar bears have black skin. <i>true / false</i> Polar bears have webbed toes. <i>true / false</i> Polar bears live in Antarctica. <i>true / false</i>
	How many teeth does a polar bear have? <input type="text"/>	
	An adult polar bear can weigh up to _____ kilograms.	
	How fast can a polar bear run? <input type="text"/>	

Choose the right answer

Do polar bears drink water?

- yes
- no



Choose the right answer

Female polar bears usually have

- 1 cub
- 2 cubs
- 3 cubs

What do *carnivores* eat?

- plants
- berries
- meat

Where do polar bears live?
✓ or x

Alaska	
Norway	
England	
Canada	
Africa	
Greenland	
Russia	
India	

What do polar bears have to help them swim?

- wide paws
- flippers
- webbed toes

What *camouflages* polar bears in the snow?

Where do female polar bears spend the winter?
