



Bear Safety Lesson

Background Information

Being aware and using safety measures is important when in areas populated by bears, whether that be grizzly bears or black bears. This lesson is meant to teach students about how to stay safe around bears and be more knowledgeable about human-wildlife coexistence with large carnivore species.

This lesson comprises of a worksheet, visuals/diagrams to explore, and class discussion exercises.

Time: 2 hours

Supplies:

1. Printed worksheets and visuals

Educational Outcomes:

1. Students gain an understanding of safe practices when bears are present.
2. Students will learn about human-wildlife coexistence.
3. Students will be able to think critically on their feet

Steps:

1. Have students explore the webpage that is listed at the top of the Bear Safety Worksheet. A key has been provided for teacher use.
2. Discuss the worksheet answers with the class.
3. Follow the discussion guide with the class, asking students to engage and share their thoughts with the class.



Bear Safety Worksheet

<https://grizzlyctr.givecloud.co/education/bear-country-safety>

Explore this bear safety webpage from the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center and answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Your risk of being hurt by a bear is lower than _____

_____.

2. List three things to avoid doing in order to decrease your chances of an aggressive bear encounter:

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3. True or False: If a grizzly bear is chasing after you, you can out-run it.

4. Why might a bear be acting aggressively?

5. Circle one: Most grizzly bear attacks are **defensive** / **offensive** in nature.

6. True or False: Bear Spray is more effective than a firearm for preventing injury from a bear attack.

7. What is Bear Spray made out of?



Bear Safety Worksheet

<https://grizzlyctr.givecloud.co/education/bear-country-safety>

Explore this bear safety webpage from the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center and answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Your risk of being hurt by a bear is lower than **__your risk of being hit by lightning OR being hurt in a car accident as you drive to bear country_____** .

2. List three things to avoid doing in order to decrease your chances of an aggressive bear encounter:

- **Avoid giving bears access to your food**

- **Avoid sleeping close to your cooking and food storage areas**

- **Avoid turning your back to a bear**

Other answers also apply

3. True or **False**: If a grizzly bear is chasing after you, you can out-run it.

4. Why might a bear be acting aggressively?

It could be defending cubs, food, or a space. It could also be human food habituated.

5. Circle one: Most grizzly bear attacks are **defensive** / **offensive** in nature.

6. **True** or False: Bear Spray is more effective than a firearm for preventing injury from a bear attack.

7. What is Bear Spray made out of?

Capsicum from hot peppers



Class Discussion Worksheet

1. Co-Existence

Co-Existence: Have the class try to define this word. Brainstorm and discuss, and define it all together.

Definition from [Pooley et. al. 2020](#):

- A sustainable though dynamic state, where humans and wildlife co-adapt to sharing landscapes and human interactions with wildlife are effectively governed to ensure wildlife populations persist in socially legitimate ways that ensure tolerable risk levels.

2. Grizzly vs. Black Bears

Explore [this website](#) as a class. Pay special attention to the images of grizzly bears and black bears.

Watch [this video](#) as a class and discuss what students found interesting and what they learned.

3. Conflicts with bears

Brainstorm potential conflict causes with grizzly bears, and solutions for these conflicts. Conflicts include things that attract bears, cause bears to act aggressively, and/or create issues between humans and bears.

Some answers include:

- Outdoor Recreation: Food, garbage, and pets
 - Solutions: Do not leave food out, use bear resistant containers, use proper trash management, keep pets and pet food secure, be careful with birdfeeders and bring them inside at night, keep BBQ's clean.
- Ranching: Bears attracted to dead and live livestock
 - Solutions: Remove carcasses, set up compensation for losses for ranchers, install electric fences.
- Farming: Bears attracted to fruits, corn, wheat, honey
 - Solutions: Install electric fences.
- Hiking and Hunting: Bears do not like being scared and may become aggressive due to noise or gunshots.
 - Solutions: Hike in groups, make noise, carry bear spray, understand bear behavior, know the difference between black and grizzly bears and their behavior, practice bear spray drills. Can share [this video](#) with students about bear spray:
- Roads: Bears can get hit by cars.
 - Solutions: Install over- or under-crossings to give bears a safe passage space.



Black Bear



Front track

No prominent shoulder hump



Short claws

Front claw



1-2" long

Tall ears

Straight face profile

Grizzly Bear



Front track

Shoulder hump



Long claws

Front claw



2-4" long

Short rounded ears

Dished face profile

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**Color and Size can be misleading.
Look for a combination of characteristics.**