

For Creative Minds

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Bear Math

When standing on their hind feet, adult black bears can be between five and six feet tall (1.5 to 1.8 meters). They can weigh between 100 and 600 pounds (45 to 272 kilograms).

Adult grizzly bears are six to eight feet tall (1.8 to 2.4 meters) when standing on their hind feet. They can weigh between 300 and 600 pounds (136 to 272 kilograms). The largest grizzly on record was over 10 feet (3 meters) tall!

How tall are you?

How much do you weigh?

How tall is an adult in your life?

How do those heights and your weight compare to a black bear and a grizzly bear?



Both black and grizzly bears are fast runners because of their powerful front legs. They both can hit a top speed of 35 miles (56 km) per hour. That's faster than an Olympic runner and a racehorse at full speed.

Do you think you could outrun a bear?



Bear Teeth

Black and grizzly bears have 42 teeth designed for helping them eat a diet of plants, leaves, nuts, berries, insects, and some meat. That's ten more teeth than an adult person.

Using the information below, can you find the teeth in the skulls?

Black and grizzly bears' front teeth are **incisors**. These teeth are shaped like ours, except they are all pretty much the same size. It uses these teeth for clipping and tearing grasses and other emerging plants. They may also use them when cutting meat.

The large, pointed teeth are the bear's **canine** teeth. They use their canines to grab prey, tear open logs, and defend themselves.

Behind their canine teeth are four **premolars** on the top jaw. Most grizzly and black bears are missing two of their premolars on each side of their lower jaws. This space helps them strip leaves off branches as they pull the stem through the gap.

They have two **molars** on each side of their top jaw and three molars on each side of their bottom jaw. Like our teeth, the bears use them for crushing and grinding up plant materials and chewing meat.

Can you find each kind of teeth in your mouth? Which ones are similar? Which ones are different?



Bear True or False?

Using what you read in the book, determine whether these statements are true or false.

1 Bears are mammals that live in a variety of habitats including forests, swamps, and mountain meadows.	2 There are three species of bears native to North America.
3 Black bears are always black.	4 Grizzly bears can be brown, blond, reddish-blond or even almost black.
5 Grizzly bears have longer claws than black bears.	6 Bears have good eyesight and an excellent sense of smell.
7 Black and Grizzly bears can only stand or walk on four feet.	8 Black bears are omnivores but eat more plants than animals.
9 Grizzly bears are also omnivores but eat more plants than animals.	10 Bears that get too close to or too comfortable with people are often relocated or destroyed.

Answers: 1-True; 2-True: they are brown/grizzly, black and polar; 3-False: They can be black, brown, cinnamon, blond or a combination of light and dark hair; 4-True; 5-True; 6-True; 7-False: They can stand on two or four feet; 8-True; 9-True; 10-True

Bear Fun Facts



Black and grizzly bears like to swim. One adult black bear swam nine miles along the Gulf of Mexico.

Black bears weigh 30 percent more in autumn than do in spring.

Grizzly bears are apex predators, which means they sit on top of the food chain without natural predators.

Bears that live in cold-weather areas in the winter do not truly hibernate. They do go to sleep for most of the winter but can be awakened if people approach too close to their dens.

Both black and brown bears are used in stories, cartoons, and as advertising symbols. Some of the famous bears are listed below. Can you think of any others?

- Yogi and Boo Boo bears are cartoon brown bears who live in Jellystone Park.
- The three bears in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* are brown bears.
- Mowgli's friend Baloo in the *Jungle Book* is based on a sloth bear.
- Smoky the Bear, who became a symbol for the US Forest Service's campaign to stop forest fires, was a real black bear cub who was orphaned and injured in a forest fire.
- The *Tales of Winnie the Pooh* started with a real black bear named Winnipeg (after the capital city of Manitoba, Canada) or Winnie for short. Lieutenant Harry Coleburn bought the cub in Manitoba, Canada, after its mother died. Winnie became the unofficial mascot of his regiment in World War I. After the war, Winnie lived at the London Zoo, where A.A. Milne's son Christopher Robin saw him and named his teddy bear Winnie the Pooh.

Koalas are sometimes called "koala bears," but they are marsupials (like kangaroos).

The grizzly bear is listed as threatened in the contiguous United States and endangered in parts of Canada.

North American black bears are not threatened or endangered.

The Kermode or Spirit Bear is one of the world's rarest mammals. There are only about 400 of them living in their native Canada habitat.



Kermode or Spirit Bear