

For Creative Minds

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Thinking it Through



Both pandas can hold onto things with special wrist bones that act like our thumbs.

Can you think of any other animal that can hold onto things with their paws (hands)?



All living things are classified to see how they relate to each other. Like humans, both pandas are mammals. Looking at the chart below, can you describe how these animals are classified alike and where they differ from each other?

- Where do giant pandas and red pandas break off from each other?
- Where do humans break off from the pandas?
- Of all animals shown in the chart, which is most closely related to the giant panda?
- Of all animals shown in the chart, is the red panda more closely related to the black bear or the raccoon?

	Human	Black Bear	Giant Panda	Red Panda	Raccoon
Kingdom	Animal				
Phylum	Chordata (spine/backbone)				
Class	Mammal				
Order	Primate	Carnivora			
Superfamily				Musteloid	
Family	Hominidae	Ursidae		Ailuridae	Procyonidae
Genus	<i>Homo</i>	<i>Ursus</i>	<i>Ailuropoda</i>	<i>Ailurus</i>	<i>Procyon</i>
Species	<i>sapiens</i>	<i>americanus</i>	<i>melanoleuca</i>	<i>fulgens</i>	<i>lotor</i>

Giant or Red? Adaptation Identification

Using what you read in the book, can you identify whether it is a giant panda, a red panda or both pandas?

I use my “wrist thumb” to hold onto bamboo.

1



I can't stand on my hind legs for long but I am good at climbing trees.

2



I can partially pull my claws in and out.

3



4



I use my long tail to help me balance.

5



I can stand on my two hind feet. If needed, I can use my front paws to protect myself.

6



Like other bears, I have a small tail.

Answers: 1: both; 2: giant panda; 3: red panda; 4: red panda; 5: both; 6: giant panda

Panda Fun Facts

Giant pandas are four to six feet long and weigh 200 to 300 pounds—a little smaller than an adult American black bear. Males are larger than females.

Red panda adult males and females weigh up to 17 pounds and measure 43 inches from the nose to the end of their tails.



*How tall are you? How does that compare to a panda's length?
Are you closer in size to a giant panda or a red panda?
What is something that weighs about the same as a red panda?*



The unique colors of both pandas help them hide from predators (camouflage).

Giant panda's black and white pattern helps them blend into the snow and bamboo forests.

Red pandas' orangish color blends into the red moss and white lichens where they live. The dark stomach fur makes it hard to see them from below as they sleep in the trees during the day.

Can you think of other animals that use camouflage to hide?

While both pandas mostly eat bamboo, giant pandas might also eat other plants and even hunt and eat small rodents.

Red pandas will also eat fruit, insects, bird eggs, and small lizards. They sometimes get fruit treats in zoos.



What is your favorite food? What things do you eat that pandas also eat?

Help or Hurt?

Which of these things do you think helps pandas and which do you think could hurt or harm them? Can you describe why?

cutting down panda habitat



breeding programs



roads that isolate pandas from each other so they can't mate



4



panda education and conservation programs

5



panda poop helps spread bamboo seeds

6



cutting down bamboo forests

STEM Project: Design a way for giant pandas to cross roads to get from one isolated habitat to another. Could this be used for other endangered animals too?

Answers: 1: hurt, 2: help, 3: hurt, 4: help, 5: help, 6: hurt