



Sample Reader's Theater Lesson Plan for World Read Aloud Day

Text: Do Bears Sleep All Winter? Questions and Answers About Bears
by Melvin and Gilda Berger

Script: By C. Grimes and her students

This is a nonfiction Readers' Theater for a large group of multi-leveled readers. One cast of readers can have as few as four participants up to as many as you like- there are lots of parts in this script!

Extending Activities:

- Research further by looking for books and/or searching the internet for information on different types of bears to learn details about their habits and habitats.
- Locate content-specific words in this story and use them as new vocabulary words.
- Have the children act-out parts whenever possible. For example, act-out how a sow (the female bear) may discipline her cubs or how a boar (the male bear) may attack its prey. Be careful that the scene doesn't get *too* animated!
- Create a large group drawing or collage of a bear's den and hang it on the wall.

Text: Do Bears Sleep All Winter? Questions and Answers About Bears
by Melvin and Gilda Berger

Characters:

Narrators (3)

Readers (any number)

Narrator 1: Do Bears Sleep All Winter? Questions & Answers about BEARS
Everyone seems to love the bear. This may be because they remind us of ourselves. We use the word bear in many of our everyday expressions. Think about what we compare our feelings or actions to... when we're hungry...as hungry as a bear, when you carry something you "bear" it or when you are brave, you "bear up" and when you "bear down" on something you press on it.

Narrator 2:

Bears, bears, bears...They are interesting to observe; we can learn how each species adapts to their different habitats across the world. They look so cute and cuddly which is why they have been made into stuffed animal toys but have you ever wondered why the word bears or cubs is used for sports teams? Do you think a team wants to be seen as cute and cuddly? Probably not.

Narrator 3: Here are a few fast facts about bears. *(All members of the group can share in the reading of these facts)*

- Bears are smart, curious, and playful.
- Most bears like sweets and eat the same foods we do. They even get cavities like us.
- Bears sit up and eat with their hands which are called paws.
- Many bears can walk on two legs.
- Almost all bears snore.
- Bears represent many states and provinces.
- Bears are the state animal of Arkansas, California, Kentucky, Montana, New Mexico, Texas, and West Virginia.
- The bear is the provincial animal of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec in Canada.
- The female bears are called sows or she-bears, male bears are called boars and baby bears are called cubs.

Narrator 3: The Bear Facts...get it...using the word b-e-a-r is a play on the word because we mean the important, basic facts not the animal bear. We will teach you about Sleep Habits, Bear Cubs, The Bear as the Predator, Bear Life, and More Random Fascinating Facts About Bears.

Narrator 1: *(Introduce the subheading)* Sleep Habits

Reader: Do bears sleep all winter?

Bears can sleep as long six months in their underground dens. A bear's heartbeat and breathing slow down. The bear doesn't eat, drink, or go to the bathroom the entire time! That's because they stuffed themselves with 20,000 calories each day in the fall.

Reader: Do the sleeping bears sometimes wake up?

Sometimes noises can wake them up. On a warm day they sometimes get up and take a stroll and then go back to sleep. Sometimes we say bears hibernate but scientists say this is not true hibernation. Bats, frogs, snakes, turtles and woodchucks hibernate by going into a really deep sleep. They never wake-up to noises or a once in awhile warm day.

Narrator 1: *(Introduce the subheading)* Bear Cubs

Reader: When are the cubs born and how big are they at birth?

In the winter, half-asleep pregnant bears give birth to one to two cubs. Sows can have up to five cubs at one time. This would be quintuplets.

Reader: How fast do cubs grow?

Very fast! After a few weeks, the cubs open their eyes and take their first steps. Baby bears have blue eyes like many human babies. They drink their mother's milk like human babies, too. They'll be adults before humans...it only takes cubs 5 to 10 years to reach full growth.

Reader: Are mother bears good parents?

Yes they are! Mother bears are very strict. If the cubs don't follow their signals like "stay there," or "Come down," the she-bear swats them with her paw. Some mother bears feed their cubs milk for up to three years. The cubs copy their mothers to learn how to get their food like catch salmon, pick fruit and find insects.

Narrator 2: The Bear as the Predator, which means they hunt down their prey, their food.

Reader: Are bears strong & fast?

Well, since they have really bad eyesight because most bears are nearsighted, they have okay hearing but can run really fast and are really strong!

Reader: When do bears attack?

Bears attack when they are hungry. They charge, gallop fast and take giant leaping bounds. They use one front paw to crush their prey. One whack is usually enough to kill a large moose or deer.

Reader: Do bears give “bear hugs”?

No. It only looks like their squeezing the life out of their prey. They sometimes stand up when attacking their prey which is better for biting, too.

Narrator 2: *(Introduce the subheading)* Bear Life

Reader: How many kinds of fur do bears have?

Bears have two kinds of fur: the first layer is close to their skin which is soft, short hairs called the underfur. This Layer keeps them warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Then comes the guard hairs that stick up above the underfur. They are long and stiff and protect the bears from insects and dirt. There is also a thin coating of oil on both the underfur and guard hairs that keeps water from reaching the bear's skin.

Reader: Do bears shed their fur?

Most bear's fur is camouflaged. Black, brown or white helps them blend in with their environments. Think about it...can you see something white against the white, glistening snow? PROBABLY NOT VERY EASILY. They do shed their fur every spring or summer. This is called molting. It helps them get rid of their old coat. Other animals like your pet dog, a wolf and coyote do the same thing. They look pretty mangy when they molt.

Reader: How long do bears live?

They live about 24 years in the wild! Bears in zoos live longer because they have lots of food and protection from enemies. They have medical care, too. These zoo bears can live up about 40 years.

This is cool: you can tell how old a bear is by counting the rings on one of its teeth like the rings on a tree. Each tiny ring is equal to one year of life.

Reader: Do bears live alone or in groups?

Mostly alone. They come together during mating time. Mother bears raise her cubs by herself which is totally different than the story "Goldilocks and the Three Bear".

Reader: How big is a bear?

Most adult bears are about 5 feet long and weight 300 pounds. But big brown bears reach lengths of 9 feet and weigh 1,700 pounds. That's as heavy as a big truck.

Narrator 3: *(Introduce the subheading)* More Random Fascinating Facts About Bears

Reader: Bears appeared on Earth about 27 million years ago. Fossils show that they looked like a mixture of dog and bear and were as large as the fox terrier dog. That's so small compared to today's bears.

Reader: Bears live everywhere in the world except for three continents: Africa, Australia, and Antarctica.

Reader: There are eight main species of bears but four large kinds are: brown bears in North America, Europe and Asia. Polar bears live in the North Pole and the Arctic. American black bears live in North America and giant panda bears live in China.

Reader: Brown bears are the biggest bear. They can weigh up to 1 ton, which is 2,500 pounds or 1,134 kilograms.

Reader: Grizzly bears are most popular because they live in the mountains and everyone hears how ferocious they are. They can weigh up to 860 pounds. Grizzly bears eat baby animals like deer. In the summer they like to be vegetarians and eat grass, berries and roots.

Reader: Polar bears' favorite food is seal.

Reader: The giant panda lives in China in bamboo forest. They are shy, stocky bears with big heads. They have 42 teeth like most bears.

Reader: Bears are celebrated in some countries. Austria, Hungary and Poland celebrate Bear's Day on February 2nd which is Groundhog's Day in the United States of America. They have the same tradition. If they come out of their den and sees their shadows on February 2nd that means there will be six more weeks of winter.

Reader: What's up with bear constellations? Ursa Major means the Great Bear and Ursa Minor means the little bear. The two constellations move around the North Star. Many travelers have used the North Star and the Ursas to find their direction.

Reader: Bears are sued for entertainment, too. There are trained bears that dance. The Asiatic black bear is usually the performer type because they have excellent balance and coordination.

Reader: The word teddy bear came from President Roosevelt whose nickname was teddy. This American president was a hunter who once refused to shoot a small bear cub. A toymaker made a toy version of the little bear and called it Teddy.

Reader: How about Smokey Bear? The first fire prevention bear back in 1944 was on a poster for the U.S.A. Forest Service. When a fire broke out in New Mexico's National forest the firefighters saved a black cub from the blazes. They named him Smokey and placed him in the

All Narrators: Last fact of all and very important- bears do not usually attack humans because they are shy animals and try to avoid us.

All Readers: BEAR, BEARS, BEARS