

# Panda Goes to School

## Lesson Plan for Kindergarten through Grade 2

<b>Timing</b>	Preparation Time: About 30 minutes Presentation Time: 20-25 minutes.
<b>Program Objectives</b>	<u>Panda Goes to School</u> is designed to teach elementary school students about the endangered giant panda. Through this program Panda Express is helping children to become aware of the rich heritage of the panda in China and what they can do to help preserve this endangered species.
<b>Presentation</b>	We have prepared a detailed outline for your presentation. Depending on the students' grade level, you may want to adjust the presentation somewhat. For example, in a Kindergarten class, you may choose to cover just one or two points from each section.

### Introduction

Explain to the students that you are there today to talk to them about the giant panda, which is an important endangered animal. Let them know that you will teach them about:

- Where giant pandas live
- What pandas look like
- What pandas do all day
- Why pandas are an endangered species
- How people are helping to save the giant pandas

### Where the Panda Lives

Visual Tip: If there is a world map or globe in the classroom, ask if any students can point to the country of China. Be prepared to point out the mountains where pandas are found.

- Begin by holding up your photograph of a giant panda so that all the students can get a good look. Ask if any students can tell you what this animal is called?  
Answer: panda or giant panda
- Ask if they know where this animal lives? If there are more than 2 or 3 incorrect answers, tell the students that the right answer is China.
  - Pandas live in the mountains in China.
  - Pandas live in forests where they make homes in the hollow trunks of trees. Their homes are called their den.
- Ask if any students have seen a real giant panda and if so, where did they see it, what did it look like, what did they think about it?

### How Pandas Look

Visual Tip: You may want to take along a visual aid to show the size of a newborn panda. A small "beenie baby" type stuffed animal would be a good example.

- When they are fully grown, pandas are almost as big as a full-grown human, which means they are almost as big as you (the presenter) are.
- But when they are born, they are very, very small . . . about the size of a stick of butter.
- When pandas are born they don't have any hair at all.
- Pandas are always black and white, but no two pandas look exactly alike, as there are small differences in their markings.

## How Pandas Behave

**Visual Tip:** If there are bamboo plants in your yard or neighborhood, try to take along some branches as a visual aid.

- Pandas are very shy and for the most part they like to live alone.
- Pandas spend most of the day eating. They will eat about 16 hours a day.
- Why do they eat so much? Because their favorite food is bamboo. Do any of you know what bamboo is? Bamboo is a giant grass that grows in China. Unfortunately, bamboo is not very nutritious, so the panda must eat lots of it each day to get the energy it needs. Grown up pandas may eat as much as 40 pounds each day. Forty pounds is about as much as a Kindergarten student weighs!
- Pandas can be very playful. They may try to run but often they will trip and roll forward – like a somersault. They think this is a lot of fun too so they'll roll over and over again.

## Why are Pandas an Endangered Species?

- You have already told the students that pandas like to eat bamboo – lots of bamboo – which means that they need to live in a place where lots of bamboo grows.
- But in China there are many, many people – in fact, China is the largest country on the planet – and the people need more and more land for their towns and farms. As a result, the areas where pandas can live are growing smaller and smaller.
- Ask the students if anyone knows what it means when an animal is called an endangered species.  
Answer: When an animal is called an endangered species it means that there are very few of these animals left in the world. There is a danger that one day there will be none left.
- There are only about 1000 giant pandas still living in the mountains of China. That is not very many at all so that is why giant pandas are an endangered species.

## How People are Helping to Save the Giant Panda.

- Ask the students:  
“Do you know that today YOU are doing something to help save the giant panda? Do you know what you are doing?”  
Answer: They are helping today because they are learning about the giant panda. And the more that people of all ages learn about pandas, the more careful they will be to protect them from disappearing.
- What are the other ways that you can learn more about pandas?  
(Ask students for their ideas.)
  - Library/books
  - Television shows (such as Animal Planet)
  - Internet
  - Visiting the zoo

## Activity

- Distribute the Panda Kids Worksheet Level 1 - the activities are fun and help the students to find out how much they have learned.
- Congratulate the students for learning about the giant panda.