

Bear Craft



Objective: Kids will know how to tell grizzly and black bears apart and be able to recognize these vocabulary words: Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, dished face, omnivore, hibernate, bounty. They will cut, tear out, and assemble a paper plate bear. This craft is adapted from the [ABCs of Literacy](#).

Audience: This craft is suitable for preschool- second grade students.

Science Standards: K-LS1-1 Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive; 1-LS1-1 Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and/or animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs; 2 LS4-1 Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

Background: In the lower 48 states, we have two types of bears, the grizzly and the black bear, but most people have trouble telling these species apart. They have many similarities, but also many differences. Black bears are more common than grizzly bears in the US. They can be found throughout most of the country, from New England to Florida on the east coast, across the southern states, all the way up the west coast and into the northern midwest, as well as the Rocky Mountain states. Only a few states right in the middle of the country do not have black bears. Grizzly bears, on the other hand, can only be found in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho in the lower 48, but also in Alaska and Canada.

Here in the **Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem** (the area surrounding Yellowstone National Park), we have both bears, living side by side. In general, grizzly bears are bigger than black bears, but a full grown male black bear can be a lot bigger than a sub-adult female grizzly, so size is not always a good way to tell the bears apart. On the east and west coasts, black bears are black, but in the Rocky Mountain states, black bears can be a variety of colors, from black to brown, blond, and a reddish cinnamon color. Grizzly bear coloration can also vary from the silvery tipped, grizzled color of their name to dark brown, black, and light blond. Color is not a good way to tell these bears apart.

One of the best ways to tell if a bear is a grizzly is to look for a hump on its back. The hump is actually shoulder muscles because grizzly bears are very strong animals that love to dig. These muscles help

them tear apart logs and tree roots while they look for food. Another way to tell them apart is by looking at their claws or paw prints with claw marks. Because grizzlies are diggers, they have long straight claws. Black bears, on the other hand, aren't great diggers, but they are strong climbers. Like other climbing animals, including the mountain lion, black bears' claws are shorter and more curved. This helps them to stick their claws into tree bark and climb. When looking at a track, a black bear's claws will appear as little dots right at the end of their paw, while the grizzly's claw marks can be 2 inches away from the end of their paw.

Facial features are a great way to tell the bears apart. Black bears' faces are elongated and have a straight profile from the top of their heads to the ends of their noses. Their ears are long compared to the size of their heads and sit right on top of their heads. Grizzly bears' faces are wide and round. Their ears are rounded and small compared to the immense size of their faces and sit on the sides of their heads like our ears do. Grizzlies have a **dished face**, meaning that they have a flat forehead that then scoops out to a piglike nose.



Both species of bears are **omnivores**, meaning that they eat meat and plants. In fact, most of their diets consist of non-meat foods like berries, nuts, plants, mushrooms and roots. They also eat fish, insects, and other animals. Because bears **hibernate** (sleep over winter) once all their food has disappeared in the winter months, they have to eat a lot while they're awake, so a bear will constantly forage for food.

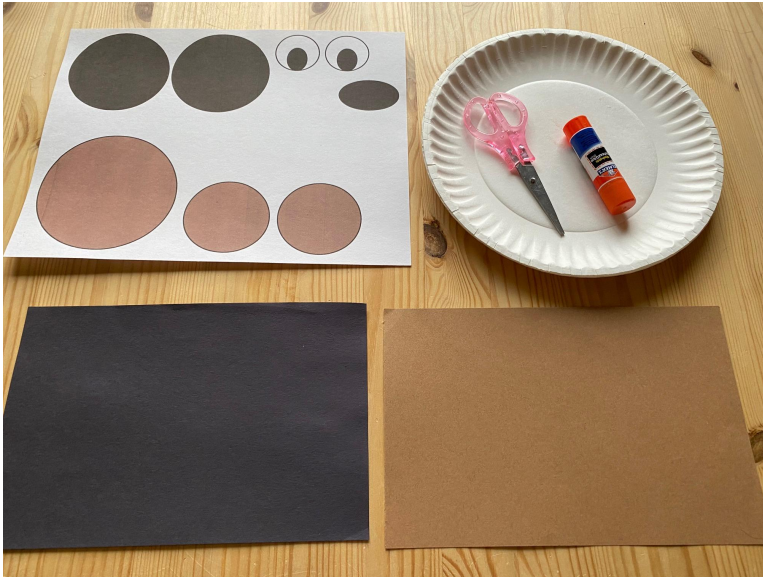
Grizzly bears and black bears were hunted extensively for their coats and meat, but also for **bounties** (money paid for dead animals). In spite of this, black bears' populations never fell to dangerous levels. Grizzly bears, however, were almost extinct in the lower 48. It was only after they were classified as an endangered species, that they were able to recover. Their populations are still quite low and they are not found in most of their historic range, but those in the Northern Rockies are flourishing and expanding. Many states and individual people are not ready to deal with such a large

predator on the landscape, but here in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, they are a huge tourist draw and beloved by most of the population.

To learn more about grizzly bears, check out our Predator of the Day [fact sheet](#). Now it's time to make a bear of your own! Remember that both black bears and grizzly bears can be brown, black, other colors, or a combination of colors.



Supplies: brown and/ or black construction paper, paper plate, scissors, glue, bear face print out.



Instructions:

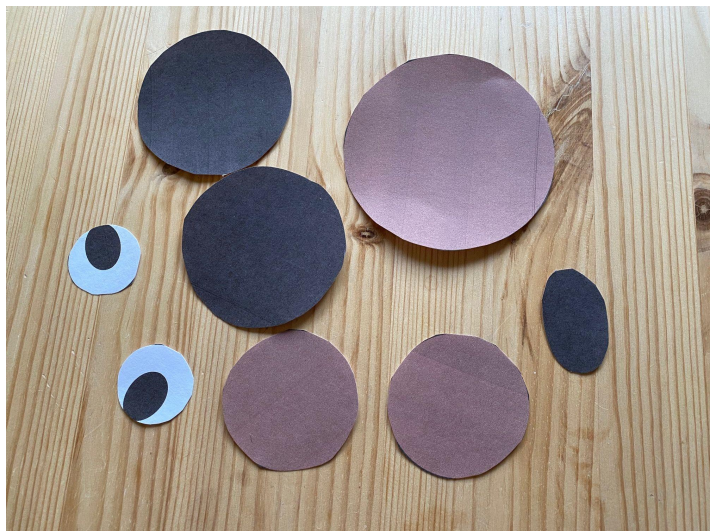
1. Print out bear snout, ears, and eyes found at the end of this lesson.
2. Tear the construction paper into small pieces.



3. Glue the pieces onto the paper plate making a mosaic on the plate.



4. Cut out all the circles from the bear face print out.



5. Glue the small brown circles onto the black circles and the black oval onto the large brown circle creating the ears and snout of the bear.



6. Glue the bear face parts onto the bear plate and you're all done!



Extensions:

1. Research other types of bears and use different colored construction paper to create a polar bear, panda, or sun bear.
2. Instead of construction paper, use felt or other textured materials to make the bear look more realistic.
3. Instead of gluing on eyes, cut out holes where the eyes would be and make a mask.

Discussion:

1. What are some similarities between grizzly and black bears?
2. What are some differences between grizzly and black bears?
3. Why are grizzly bears only found in a few states?

