Staying Safe Around Bears

Coloring & Activity Book

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Courtesy of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC), which consists of representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey, and the state wildlife agencies of Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming. The Committee’s purpose is to support the recovery of viable grizzly bear populations and their habitat in the lower 48 states, through interagency coordination of policy, planning, management and research.

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Let's learn about staying safe around bears!

It's best to see bears from far away!

Grizzly bears once thrived in most of the western US. But as communities grew, grizzly populations dipped to a low of only 800 bears.

Grizzly bears are one of America’s “keystone species”—species that anchor entire ecosystems. When keystone species disappear, the entire ecosystem changes, habitats degrade, and additional species begin to go extinct. Today with our help, grizzly bear populations are recovering. Up to 2,400 roam the mountains of Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and perhaps Washington.

Grizzly bears can thrive only if we keep their habitat intact, avoid negative encounters, and prevent them from developing interest in human food, livestock, and garbage.

To learn how to keep bears away from your home, garbage, campsite, compost, animals, fruit trees, beehives, etc., go to igbconline.org. When hiking, make noise, stay with your group, and (for adults) carry bear spray. See a bear from a distance? Avoid surprising it; find another way around. In a close encounter, NEVER RUN! Stand your ground, talk calmly to the bear, use clothes to look big and tall, and wave your arms. When it moves away, walk in the opposite direction, keeping an eye out for the bear.

With your support, grizzly bears can live wild and free in the forests, rivers, and plains of North America.

Activity Answer Key

- Safe: "Hey bear!" while hiking
  - Grizzly
  - Food left inside the tent
  - Bear hiding in bush
  - Bear eating berries
  - Bear in rock
  - Bear in the mountain
  - Bear in the cloud
  - Pet food

- Unsafe: Picking berries near a bear
  - Black
  - Feeding a bear!
  - Too close to cub
  - Hiking alone in bear country
  - A gummy bear

Historic Grizzly Bear Range

Current Grizzly Bear Range

Food left inside the tent
The smell of a grill left unattended
Trash cans
Open and non bear-resistant coolers
Food left out on the table
Dirty dishes
Dishwasher should be disposed of in a drain or far away from camp sites

Pet food
Leaving food on the grill
Not using a bear-resistant garbage can
Food left out on the table
Dirty dishes
Dishwasher should be disposed of in a drain or far away from camp sites

grizzly
black
shy
hiking
singing while hiking
Can of noisy rocks
Finding alternate routes

Safe:

- Hey bear! while hiking
- Hiking with an adult
- Bear-resistant trash can
- Singing while hiking
- Can of noisy rocks
- Finding alternate routes

Unsafe:

- Picking berries near a bear
- Feeding a bear!
- Too close to cub
- Hiking alone in bear country
- A gummy bear
Now you know how to stay safe around bears.

ACTIVITY: Circle the safe activities and put an X where you spot danger.

What are some differences between black bears and grizzly bears?

Grizzly Bears

- States where you might see grizzly bears

Black Bears

- States where you might see black bears

ACTIVITY: Fill in "Grizzly" or "Black" next to the sentence describing their features

1. _______ bears have a smooth back without a big shoulder hump
2. _______ bears have a big shoulder hump
3. _______ bear tracks usually have visible claw marks
4. _______ bears are often black-colored, but can be blonde, reddish or brown
5. _______ bear claws are less than 2 inches long and more curved
6. _______ bears live in fewer states
7. _______ bear foreheads are straight between their eyes and nose
8. _______ bear foreheads curve inward between their eyes and nose
9. _______ bear tracks do not usually have visible claw marks
10. _______ bears are often brown-colored, but they can be blonde, reddish, or very dark brown
11. _______ bear claws are 2-4 inches long and slightly curved

Hey bear!
What should you do if you see a bear that is far away?
ACTIVITY: Can you spot the 6 hidden bears in the picture?

What do you call a bear without teeth?

ACTIVITY: Fill in the blanks using the “word bank” below.
Then use the numbers to answer the question at the bottom!

What do you call a bear without teeth?

WORD BANK
outside     shy     black     hiking     tall     garbage  plants
loud     animals    grizzly      noise     food      hear       big
When you are hiking and bears might be nearby...

- Use noisemakers
- Clap
- Sing
- Shout Hey Bear!
- Stay within sight of adults.
- Make noise so that bears know you are coming.
- Talk

Can you make up a bear song to sing on the trail?

If you live or play in bear country, you know that bears are always hungry, and can smell your food and garbage.

What do you know about bears and staying safe?

ACTIVITY: Draw an X over everything that will attract a bear to a campsite!
What's wrong with this campsite?

ACTIVITY: Bears are always sniffing around for food. Can you circle all the things that will attract bears?

When you meet a bear too close, DO NOT RUN!
You cannot outrun a bear.

Talk in a calm voice, saying something like
"Whoa bear -- Easy bear"

Wave your arms
Keep your backpack on

Get close to your friends, especially to adults

When the bear walks away
Leave slowly, staying close to your friend...always facing the bear, but never following the bear.
What if a bear comes toward you?

If you’re wearing a jacket or a hat, take it off and wave it over your head.

Adults should carry bear spray and know how to use it.

STAND TALL
GET BIG
BE LOUD!

If a bear doesn’t go away, stand up, get close to your friends, and make yourself look as big as possible.

Make that bear think twice about messing with you!

Don’t invite bears into your camp!

The best way to keep bears from searching your campsite is to keep it clean!

Never leave food, garbage or anything smelly in your tent!

Remember, regular coolers are NOT bear-resistant.

Always put your garbage in a bear-resistant container too. Many campgrounds have bear-resistant garbage cans or dumpsters.

Store food in resistant containers. See ighbconline.org for a list of tested and certified bear-resistant containers your family can buy.

Never leave food, garbage or anything smelly in your tent!
What do bears do?

- Bears dig for ground squirrels
- Bears eat grasses and other plants
- Bears climb trees
- Bears fish
- Bears eat bugs
- Bears eat berries
- Bears sleep for months in winter
- Mother bears protect their cubs