

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Compare and Contrast

Read the short story and answer each question.



Polar Bears – Ice Hunters

Polar bears are the largest land carnivores on Earth. They live in the Arctic, where they hunt seals on floating ice. Their thick white fur and black skin help keep them warm, even in freezing temperatures. These bears are strong swimmers. They can paddle for miles in icy water. Their large paws help them walk on snow without sinking and act like paddles in the water. Polar bears rely on sea ice to hunt. When ice melts, it's harder for them to find food. That's why many scientists study polar bears to understand how climate change affects the Arctic.

Arctic Foxes

In the winter, Arctic foxes have thick white fur. This coat keeps them warm in the cold weather and helps them blend in with the snow.

When spring comes, an Arctic fox's fur turns brown or gray. This allows the fox to stay camouflaged during the summer.



Arctic Foxes – Masters of Disguise

The arctic fox is much smaller than the polar bear, but just as well adapted to cold weather. Its fur changes color depending on the season. In winter, it's white to blend in with snow. In summer, it turns brown or gray to match the ground. Arctic foxes eat small animals, berries, and leftovers from polar bears. They don't hibernate. Instead, they use thick fur and curled-up sleeping positions to stay warm in the snow. Like polar bears, arctic foxes are affected by the shrinking sea ice and rising temperatures. Their homes and food sources are changing as the Arctic warms.



Name: _____

Polar Bears - Ice Hunters & Arctic Foxes - Masters of Disguise

1. How are polar bears and arctic foxes alike?

- A. They are both very large animals
- B. They both live in warm deserts
- C. They both use adaptations to survive in the cold
- D. They both hibernate all winter

2. What is one key difference between the two animals?

- A. Only polar bears change color
- B. Only foxes eat plants and berries
- C. Only bears can survive cold temperatures
- D. Only foxes are strong swimmers

3. Fill in the blank:

Polar bears and arctic foxes are both _____ to live in the Arctic, but they survive in different ways.

4. What is one way the two animals are similar? What is one way they are different? Use information from both texts.

5. How does reading both articles help you better understand life in the Arctic?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: P

Lexile Level: 645L-795L

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Paired Informational Nonfiction – Animal Adaptations

Introducing the Text

“Today we’re reading two short texts about animals that live in the Arctic: polar bears and arctic foxes. As we read, we’ll think about how they are similar and different, and how reading both helps us understand the Arctic environment better.”

Vocabulary: adaptation, carnivore, climate change, camouflage, hibernate

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you already know about the Arctic?
 2. What kinds of animals might live there?
 3. Why might animals need special features to survive in cold places?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What helps polar bears survive in the icy water?
 2. How does the arctic fox use camouflage?
 3. How are both animals affected by climate change?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How are polar bears and arctic foxes alike?
 2. What does each animal eat, and how do they hunt?
 3. What new ideas did you learn from reading both texts?
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Activity Idea

Have students complete a double-bubble map (or Venn diagram) comparing the two animals' adaptations, diets, and survival strategies. Then ask them to write a paragraph explaining how each animal is suited to life in the Arctic, using details from both passages.

