MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

EUROPEAN BROWN BEAR

Ursus arctos arctos · also called Eurasian brown bear

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · © **2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.**
Teachers may copy and share this sheet freely as long as they credit Plumpton Park Zoo.

Fast facts

ANIMAL GROUP	Mammal (bear family)
NATIVE REGION	Europe
DIET	Omnivore, mostly plants: grasses, roots, berries, nuts, insects
SIZE	5 to 8 feet tall
WEIGHT	330 to 780 lb
FRONT CLAWS	Up to about 3 inches
LIFESPAN	20 to 30 years in the wild
STATUS	Least Concern
OUR BEARS	Frankie and Hope, both rescued



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- Grizzlies, Kodiak bears and European brown bears are all the same species, Ursus arctos.
- Before winter, a brown bear can eat up to 20,000 calories a day. That is about 66 pounds of apples.
- A newborn brown bear cub weighs only about 1 pound.
- Brown bears are excellent swimmers and surprisingly fast over short distances.
- Brown bear cubs stay with their mother for two to three years.

Words to know

Hyperphagia: A time of very heavy eating before winter.
Subspecies: A group within a species that lives in one area and looks a little different.
Delayed implantation: When a pregnancy waits months before it starts to grow.
Omnivore: An animal that eats both plants and meat.

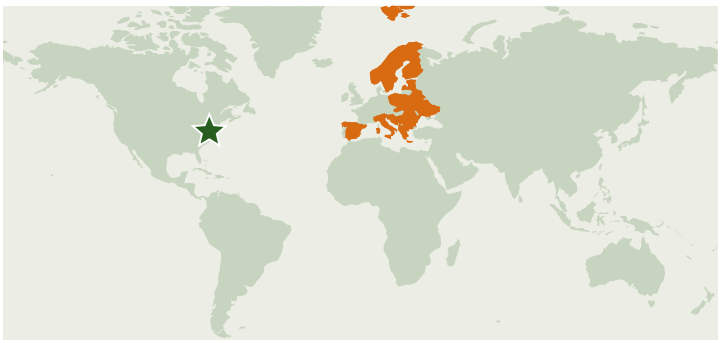
Think about it

1. Is a brown bear the same as a grizzly? Explain.
2. Why are European brown bears more secretive than North American brown bears?
3. What do brown bears do in winter, and how is it different from true hibernation?
4. What is a brown bear's shoulder hump made of, and what is it for?
5. How is a brown bear different from Louie, our American black bear?

Draw it

Draw a brown bear digging. Label its dished face, its shoulder hump, its long front claws and its thick fur.

Where it lives in the wild



Lives in the wild ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

STANDARDS · GRADES 3–4 **WRITTEN FOR GRADES 3–5**

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS4-3 · 3-LS3-1**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.G · 3.1.3.C**

Draw here

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/brown-bear/ · **Sources:** International Association for Bear Research and Management; Animal Diversity Web (University of Michigan); EuroNatur; IUCN.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A) · 3-LS4-3 (3.1.3.G) · 3-LS3-1 (3.1.3.C)
Plumpton Park Zoo · 1416 Telegraph Rd, Rising Sun, MD 21911 · (410) 658-6850 · plumptonparkzoo.org · a 501(c)(3) nonprofit zoo

EUROPEAN BROWN BEAR

Before and after your visit

 © 2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.
Teachers may copy and share this sheet freely as long as they credit Plumpton Park Zoo.

Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the European brown bear live?

Circle one (or more if it lives on more than one):

Africa | Asia | Australia | Europe | North America | South America

2. Predict: what does it eat?

☐ plants ☐ other animals ☐ both

3. Word hunt: find these words on page 1. Put a check by each one you already know.

☐ Hyperphagia ☐ Subspecies ☐ Delayed implantation ☐ Omnivore

Pick one word and write what it means in your own words:

_____

_____

4. My question: one thing I want to find out when I see the European brown bear.

_____

_____

At the zoo · look closely

Watch for one minute. What is it doing?

☐ resting ☐ eating ☐ moving ☐ watching ☐ with others

Draw or describe one body part that helps it survive, and say how it helps.

Draw here

After your visit · talk it over

1. Check your prediction. Native region: Europe. Was your guess right?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Omnivore, mostly plants: grasses, roots, berries, nuts, insects. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

_____

_____

3. Discuss with a partner, then write your best answer.

- Why are European brown bears more secretive than North American brown bears?

_____

- What do brown bears do in winter, and how is it different from true hibernation?

_____

4. Exit ticket.

One thing I learned: _____

One thing I still wonder: _____

ADJUST IT

Grades K–2: talk and draw instead of writing; read the questions aloud. **Grades 6–8:** add evidence from the fact sheet and the animal page to every answer.

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/brown-bear/ · Fact sheet page 1 has the fast facts, map and vocabulary this page refers to.

Grades 3–4 · Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS4-3 · 3-LS3-1** · Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.G · 3.1.3.C**

Plumpton Park Zoo · 1416 Telegraph Rd, Rising Sun, MD 21911 · (410) 658-6850 · plumptonparkzoo.org · a 501(c)(3) nonprofit zoo