ANIMAL LEARNING CENTER · NOT CURRENTLY AT THE ZOO

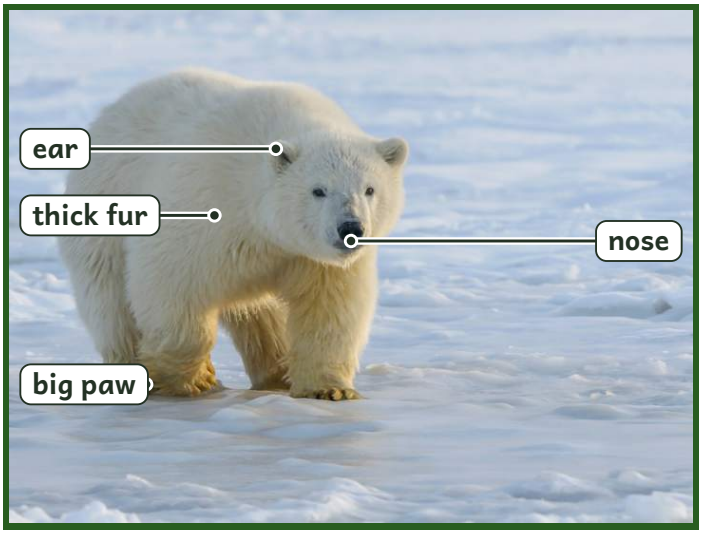
POLAR BEAR

Ursus maritimus

GRADES K–2

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.

Teachers: read this page aloud, one part at a time (about 5 minutes). Children follow along and say the bold words.



A young polar bear on sea ice.

Its body

A polar bear looks white.
Its skin is black!
It has 2 layers of fur.
Bumps on its feet may help on ice.

Its home (habitat)

It lives in the Arctic.
It lives on **sea ice**.



Lives in parts of this area ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

Its food

K-LS1-1

It hunts seals from the ice.

Its babies (life cycle)

1-LS1-2

A baby bear is a **cub**.
A mother often has 2 cubs.
They are born in a **den**.
They stay with her over 2 years.
They learn to hunt.

Fun facts

It is a strong swimmer.
It paddles with its front paws.

Words to know

cub: a baby bear
den: a safe place for a mother and cubs
sea ice: frozen ocean water

Talk about it

1-LS1-2

1. What color is a polar bear's skin?
2. How do bumps on its feet help?
3. How long do cubs stay with their mother?

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/polar-bear/ · **Sources:** Canadian Wildlife Service; COSEWIC (2018); Norwegian Polar Institute; IUCN Red List; Mammalian Species 145; Durner et al. (2011); Gjertz & Lydersen (1986); Polar Bears International.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: K-LS1-1 (3.1.K.A) › Its food · **1-LS1-2** (3.1.1.B) › Its babies · Talk 3
Plumpton Park Zoo · 1416 Telegraph Rd, Rising Sun, MD 21911 · (410) 658-6850 · plumptonparkzoo.org · a 501(c)(3) nonprofit zoo · Photo: Hans-Jurgen Mager on Unsplash

POLAR BEAR

Before and after you read

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

PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

GRADES K–2

Name _____ **Date** _____

Before you read · 5 minutes

What do you think? Circle **YES** or **NO**.

1. A polar bear has black skin. **YES** **NO**
2. Polar bears cannot swim. **YES** **NO**
3. It lives in a hot desert. **YES** **NO**
4. A baby polar bear is a cub. **YES** **NO**

Look closely · with a partner

Look at the photo on page 1. Check each one you see.

- ☐ ears
- ☐ nose
- ☐ thick fur
- ☐ big paws
- ☐ sea ice
- ☐ eyes

Where does it live? Find the dark part of the map, then circle.

the Arctic · Africa · Australia

After you read · 10 minutes

Draw a polar bear on the sea ice. Add a cub.

Draw here

A polar bear has _____

I learned that _____

ADJUST IT Kindergarten: read everything aloud; children talk and draw, and an adult writes their words. **Grade 2:** children read page 1 on their own. **Grades 3–5:** use the regular polar bear sheet on Teacher Resources. **Second source:** read about this animal in your class database or a library book too, then ask what both said and what was new. **Answers:** 1 yes, 2 no, 3 no, 4 yes. Map answer: the Arctic.

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/polar-bear/ · Page 1 of this sheet has the words and picture this page refers to.
Science standards (NGSS · PA STEELS): K-LS1-1 (3.1.K.A) › page 1 · **1-LS1-2** (3.1.1.B) › page 1
Reading and writing, grade 1: Maryland and Delaware: RI.1.1 · RI.1.7 · RI.1.9 · W.1.8 · Pennsylvania: CC.1.2.1.B · CC.1.2.1.G · CC.1.2.1.I · CC.1.4.1.W
Reading, grade 2: Maryland and Delaware: RI.2.1 · Pennsylvania: CC.1.2.2.B
Plumpton Park Zoo · 1416 Telegraph Rd, Rising Sun, MD 21911 · (410) 658-6850 · plumptonparkzoo.org · a 501(c)(3) nonprofit zoo