

## GRADE 8 English Language Arts Reading and Responding: Lesson 23

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol ( $\rightleftarrows$ ) by them.

*Optional:* At some point during the lesson, you may read the passage aloud so students can hear fluent, expressive reading and the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words. You may read the passage aloud at any point during the lesson as you feel appropriate. The decision to read the passage aloud should depend on student needs, the degree of text difficulty, and the particular lesson.

### *Purpose of Lesson 23:*

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- read a nonfiction passage taken from the newspaper,
- practice answering multiple choice questions, and
- practice answering short answer questions.

### *Equipment/Materials Needed:*

- Student Worksheet: Reading and Responding Lesson 23-1
- Student Worksheet: Reading and Responding Lesson 23-2
- pencils

Introduction:

**You have practiced using many reading, thinking, and test-taking strategies during the last several lessons. Today you will get the opportunity to apply these strategies by reading a nonfiction passage taken from the newspaper and answering a few questions about it. This activity will be good practice for the LEAP test.**

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet: Reading and Responding Lesson 23-1.

**Before reading the passage silently, let's look together at the title and scan for bold print. Look at the title. Read the title aloud: *Giant Pandas*. Notice the heading in bold print that is directly beneath the title. It says *On the Brink of Extinction*. This heading tells you the main point of the passage.**

**Now scan the passage for paragraphs. How many paragraphs are there? Pause. (six) As you read this passage, make a mental note of the main idea in each paragraph. Making mental notes should help you remember information needed to answer the multiple choice and short answer questions.**

**Now you are ready to begin reading the passage. Read carefully and then answer the questions on this worksheet.**

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet: Reading and Responding Lesson 23-2.

**After students have finished reading the passage and completed the worksheet, go over the answers together. Discuss the reasons for eliminating incorrect choices as well as the reasons for choosing correct answers.**

Answers to Worksheet (Key words in the question and correct answers are highlighted.)

1. Which of the following statements **does not** explain why pandas are on the **brink of extinction**?
  - A. Breeding pandas in captivity has met with little success.
  - B.** The panda fails to intimidate other animals, which find pandas to be easy prey.
  - C. Many of the bamboo forests with the large quantities of bamboo required for the panda's diet have been destroyed.
  - D. Scientists know very little about the panda's reproductive biology.
2. In the fifth paragraph, the second sentence says, *The theory gaining widest acceptance is that the giant panda's coloring is in keeping with its solitary nature: the **conspicuous** coat helps pandas **avoid one another-except** during the **breeding season**, at which time the coloring makes it easier to spot a potential mate.*  
What does **conspicuous** mean?
  - A. camouflage
  - B. hidden
  - C.** very noticeable
  - D. shiny
3. Which statement **does not** describe the **nature** of **giant pandas**?
  - A.** Giant pandas are sociable creatures.
  - B. Even in their natural habitats, giant pandas are not likely to be seen.
  - C. Except during the breeding season, a giant panda prefers to stay away from other pandas.
  - D. Giant pandas are reclusive, solitary creatures.
4. Which statement **best describes** **scientists' research** and **beliefs** concerning the **behavior** of giant pandas?
  - A. Few scientists agree that giant pandas are solitary and reclusive animals.
  - B. All scientists agree that giant pandas are solitary and reclusive animals.
  - C. There is very little agreement among scientists concerning the behavior of giant pandas.
  - D.** Although one study suggests that giant pandas live in groups, most scientists believe them to be solitary animals.

*(Answers to worksheet continued)*

5. Give **two reasons** giant pandas are **near extinction**.

- ◆ The destruction of the giant panda's natural habitat, the bamboo forests, which supplies most of the giant panda's diet, has made it difficult for the pandas to find food.
- ◆ Because scientists know little about the panda's reproductive biology, pandas in captivity are not reproducing enough to replace those pandas that die.

6. The first sentence of the fourth paragraph says *Though the subject of much research, giant pandas remain very much a mystery*.

**Why do you think** giant pandas are ***much a mystery?***

Pandas are solitary and reclusive, or they keep to themselves. These traits make it difficult for anyone to observe and study them in their natural surroundings.

Much of the panda's natural habitat, the bamboo forests, has been destroyed. This situation limits the places pandas can be found.

There are so few pandas that it is difficult for scientists to find an available one to study.

(Accept any one of these responses as a correct answer.)

## **Giant Pandas** **On the Brink of Extinction**

*by Educational Services*

Giant pandas are among the world's most endangered species. Only about 1,000 pandas exist in the wild, and only 110 exist in captivity. Scientists the world over are working feverishly to save these solitary and reclusive animals, about which much remains unknown.

The giant pandas' threatened existence is a result of the destruction of its natural habitat, the high-altitude bamboo forests of central and western China. While the panda will occasionally eat other food, 99 percent of its diet consists of bamboo. Because bamboo contains relatively little nutrition, pandas must eat large quantities in order to survive. During an average day, a panda will spend up to 16 hours eating and will consume between 23 and 40 pounds of shoots and leaves.

China, aided by other countries, is working to protect its panda population but success has been limited. Attempts to breed pandas in captivity have failed more often than not. Conservation efforts are hampered by a lack of knowledge regarding the panda's reproductive biology. Though progress is being made, the captive panda population is presently unable to reproduce at a rate capable of even maintaining its present number.

Though the subject of much research, giant pandas remain very much a mystery. Only recently were pandas classified as true bears. For years, scientists classified them among the raccoon family. And while most experts consider giant pandas to be solitary creatures, one recent study suggests that they live in groups of up to 28.

Even the panda's distinctive markings have long been a mystery to scientists. The theory gaining widest acceptance is that the giant panda's coloring is in keeping with its solitary nature: the conspicuous coat helps pandas avoid one another-except during the breeding season, at which time the coloring makes it easier to spot a potential mate.

Student Worksheet: Reading and Responding Lesson 23-1 (continued)

It is also thought that the panda's black ears and eye patches may be defensive: the eye patches may make the panda appear more threatening to other animals, and the black ears may look like another pair of eyes, thereby doubling the intimidation. This theory is bolstered by observable behavior. A threatened panda will move its head in a way to make its ears and eyes very visible, but a submissive panda will turn its head to one side or even cover its eyes.

*The Advocate, Mon., April 17, 2000*

Student Worksheet: Reading and Responding Lesson 23-2

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which statement *does not* explain why pandas are on the brink of extinction?
  - A. Breeding pandas in captivity has met with little success.
  - B. The panda fails to intimidate other animals, which find pandas to be easy prey.
  - C. Many of the bamboo forests with the large quantities of bamboo required for the panda's diet have been destroyed.
  - D. Scientists know very little about the panda's reproductive biology.
  
2. In the fifth paragraph, the second sentence says, *The theory gaining widest acceptance is that the giant panda's coloring is in keeping with its solitary nature: the conspicuous coat helps pandas avoid one another-except during the breeding season, at which time the coloring makes it easier to spot a potential mate.* What does conspicuous mean?
  - A. camouflage
  - B. hidden
  - C. very noticeable
  - D. shiny
  
3. Which statement *does not* describe the nature of giant pandas?
  - A. Giant pandas are sociable creatures.
  - B. Even in their natural habitats, giant pandas are not likely to be seen.
  - C. Except during the breeding season, a giant panda prefers to stay away from other pandas.
  - D. Giant pandas are reclusive, solitary creatures.
  
4. Which statement best describes scientists' research and beliefs concerning the behavior of giant pandas?
  - A. Few scientists agree that giant pandas are solitary and reclusive animals.
  - B. All scientists agree that giant pandas are solitary and reclusive animals.
  - C. There is very little agreement among scientists concerning the behavior of giant pandas.
  - D. Although one study suggests that giant pandas live in groups, most scientists believe them to be solitary animals.

Student Worksheet: Reading and Responding Lesson 23-2 (continued)

5. Give two reasons giant pandas are near extinction.

6. The first sentence of the fourth paragraph says *Though the subject of much research, giant pandas remain very much a mystery.* Why do you think giant pandas are *much a mystery*?