

ProTalk
Discussion Files

C2. Giant panda no longer endangered

Afaq Language Center

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Goals

- Can read and understand a complex text about giant panda populations.
- Can share my own views on conservation strategies and evaluate the importance of protecting endangered species.



Did you hear the news?

The **giant panda** is no longer **endangered**!

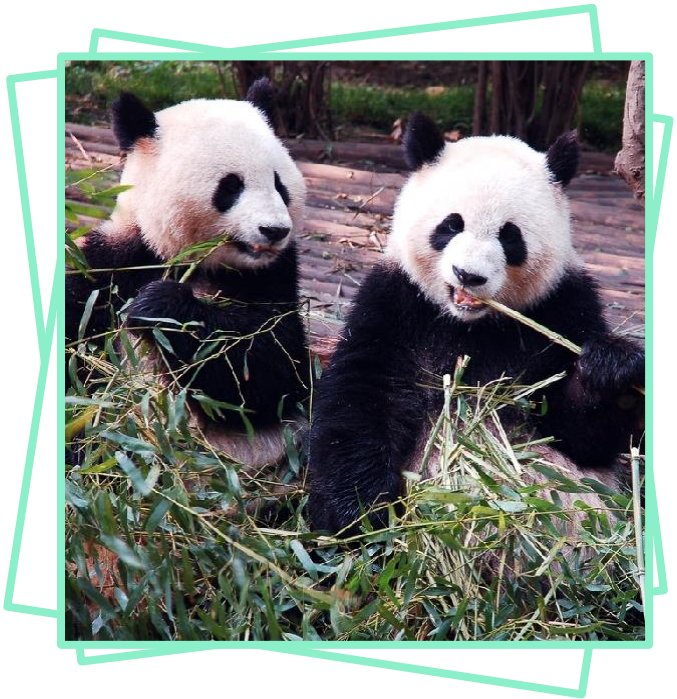
There's no time to celebrate.

Many other **endangered species** can benefit from dedicated **conservation** strategies too!

The giant panda

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you see a photograph of a loveable **giant panda?**

Tell your teacher.



Define

What does it mean when a species is classified as '**endangered**'?



Endangered species

What are some reasons why an animal might be classified as 'endangered' in the first place?

Talk to the teacher.





Human behaviour?

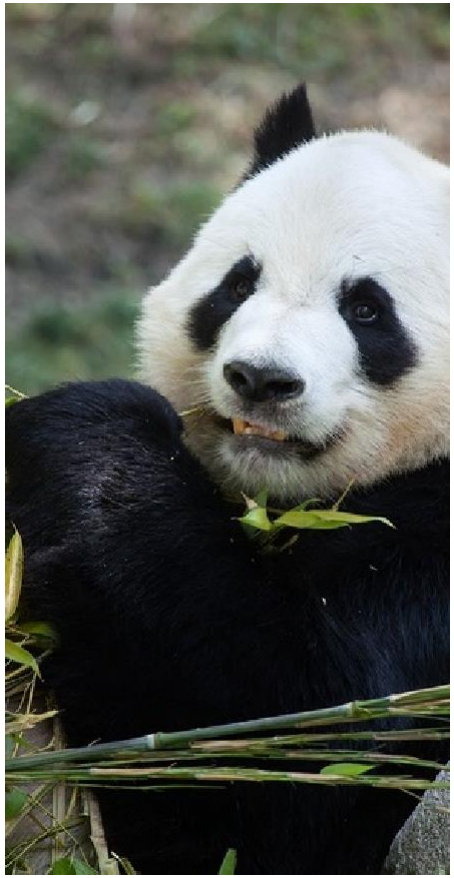




Threats and risks?

Read the text and summarize it.

Giant panda no longer endangered



No animal represents efforts of nature conservation like the giant panda. The black and white **mammal** also serves as one of the Chinese nation's national symbols and is regarded fondly by people around the world. Despite growing awareness, the loveable panda, with its appetite for **bamboo**, has suffered in the wild as China's population has boomed. In a refreshingly positive conservation story however, the slide in the panda population appears to have been prevented. Recent data collected by the International Union of Conservation of Nature (I.U.C.N) shows a growth in panda numbers in the wild. As a result, the status of the giant panda in the wild has shifted from '**endangered'** to 'vulnerable'.

Read the text and summarize it.

Giant panda no longer endangered

Native to southern and central China, the most significant threat to the giant panda's wellbeing has been farming, deforestation and urban development. The animal's **infamously** low birthrate adds to its vulnerability. The birth of giant panda cubs in captivity is newsworthy, as it is a rare feat to develop interest in pandas for the opposite sex.



Do you know these words from the text? Discuss the meanings with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

mammal	Human beings are warm-blooded **mammals**.
bamboo	90 percent of a giant panda's diet is **bamboo**.
endangered	The species was recently classified as **endangered** by a conservation group.
infamously	The three-toed sloth is well-known for its **infamously** sleepy demeanour.

Categorise

Categorise the potential causes for population loss of giant pandas.

Lack of reproductive drive

Habitat pollution

Lack of food

Natural predators in the wild

Climate change

Hunting and poaching

Urban growth in China

Disappearing bamboo forests

Very likely	Somewhat likely	Unlikely

Analysing the text

"Recent data collected by the International Union of Conservation of Nature (I.U.C.N) shows a growth in panda numbers in the wild."

- How might the I.U.C.N have collected this data?

- Where does it come from?

- Can we be sure it is reliable?



stakeholder

A person or group with a vested interest in something is a **stakeholder.**



Different groups of **stakeholders** gathered at the town hall in an attempt to resolve their dispute.

Stakeholders

Describe the positions of the different stakeholders in the issue of giant panda conservation. Do you think the descriptions below are applicable?

Frustrated at limitations to agricultural development



Farmers



Members of the public

Concerned about long term health of the species

Cautiously optimistic about the recent data suggesting a rise in the population



Conservationists



Loggers

Disregard the plight of pandas in their desire for more profits

Discuss the scenarios

Which scenario is most likely? Discuss each potential reason why giant pandas are so reluctant to breed in captivity.



1. The panda's diet of bamboo doesn't give it much energy for love.

2. Pandas only mate with partners they feel attached to.

3. Pandas bred in captivity simply haven't learnt their normal instincts, only learning this in the wild.

Conservation

Despite rising populations in the wild, the plight of the giant panda is not yet over.

What can people do to support conservation efforts of giant pandas and other endangered species? Try to come up with strategies at a local and global level.



Risks

Looking to the future, what do you think are the biggest risks facing the wellbeing of the giant panda? Order these threats from most likely to least likely, justifying your answer to your teacher.



1 Environmental degradation and shrinking of habitat.

2 Lack of reproduction on species' part.

3 Unchecked urban and population growth in China.

A matter of opinion

Read the different statements and opinions below.

- Nothing is more important than preserving the natural heritage of the Earth.
- Yes – considering the looming impacts of climate change, now is the time to invest in conservation.
- Governments have a range of economic pressures – every situation is different.
- Spreading awareness of conservation at a local level is more important than a top-down approach.
- Governments should look to take care of their human populations first, wildlife populations second.
- Conserving species is a strong investment in itself, encouraging tourism and other opportunities.

Now consider these statements in relation to the quote and question on the following slide.

Conservation and government

Should conservation organisations be given more support and resources from goverments?

Discuss with reference to the quote below and the statements on the previous slide.

> The story of the giant panda is heartening. It shows that concentrated effort and careful planning between conservation groups and national governments can lead to stable populations in the wild.

Talk

Conservation

If you could work as a conservationist, what species or region in the world would be passionate about saving?

"I love blue whales. They are the largest living mammal on the planet and are graceful, majestic creatures. Working to protect them would also give me a chance to work with marine ecosystems, which are critical for the health of the planet."

Presentation

Prepare a two-minute presentation about giant panda populations in the wild.

Your purpose is to spread awareness of the giant panda's situation in China – use the categories below to structure your presentation.
Include several reasons to support your point of view.
Give your presentation to the class. Answer questions and get feedback.

Facts about the panda	Importance of the species
Population trends	Conservation efforts so far
Threats and risks	Future outlook