

Comprehension Workbook 9

Gone fishing!

Bears fishing for salmon



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

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Bears fishing for salmon

Salmon fishing



Grizzly bear, Alaska

Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

River

Matches the requirements of the Literacy Strategy and designed to integrate with the study of river. (This material is independent of any specific text book and can be used alongside any publisher's books including our River Book.)

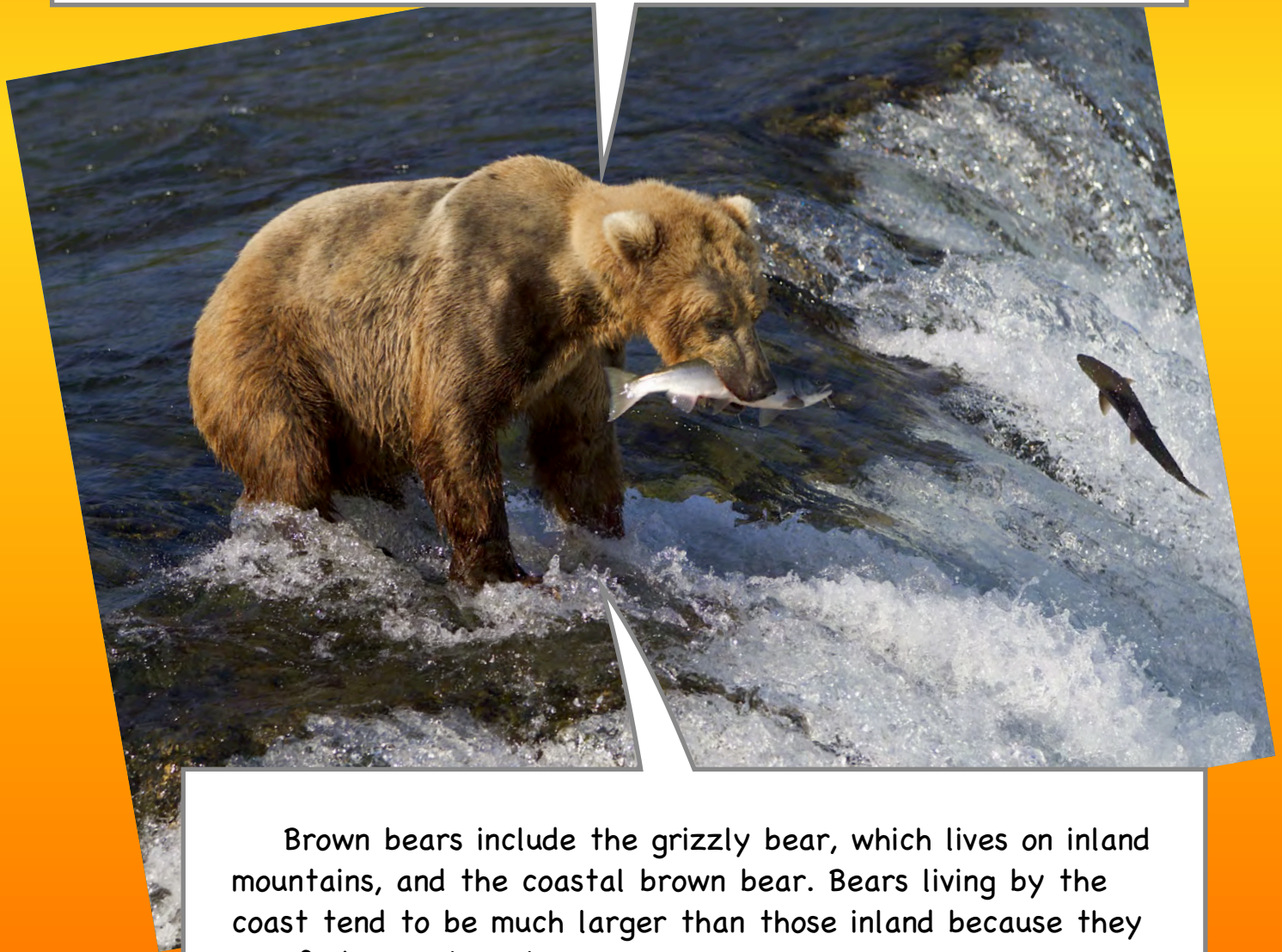
Contents

Unit 9: Gone fishing!

	Gone fishing!	2
	Understanding words	4
	Finding key words	5
	Summarising	6
	Sequencing	7
	Get to the facts (AF 2-3)	8
	Whys and wherefores (AF 4-5)	9
	Opinions matter (AFs 6-7)	10
	Talking it through	11
	Make a story...	12
	Print the story (from PDF)	13

Gone fishing!

The brown bear is a large bear which lives in wilderness forest areas in much of northern Europe, Asia and North America.



Brown bears include the grizzly bear, which lives on inland mountains, and the coastal brown bear. Bears living by the coast tend to be much larger than those inland because they can find more to eat.

Brown bears can be nearly 3m tall. It is the world's largest land-based hunter.

Brown bears have long, thick fur, up to 12cm long. The fur changes from summer to winter, being shorter and less thick in summer.

A brown bear can weigh as much as 780 kilos. However, their weight can change quite dramatically during the year. They weigh least after winter hibernation. This means they have to find food fast in spring. They are at their heaviest (often nearly 200kg more) just before they hibernate in the autumn.

Brown bears have very large, curved claws up to 10cm long. Brown bears also have very strong teeth with large canine teeth that can cut into the animals they catch. However, brown bears do not have very strong jaw muscles, so they cannot break bones and simply have to gnaw as much food as they can off the bones of animals they catch.

Bears hibernate in dens, such as caves and even hollow logs. Brown bears are active mostly at night (they are nocturnal).

Brown bears are mostly solitary, although they will gather together when there is lots of food about, such as when salmon go upstream to lay eggs (spawn).





Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'hibernation'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'hibernation' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'hibernation'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'hibernation'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'hibernation' means.



Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: canine	pointed front

3

Summarising

(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

1 Write a heading for your summary.

2 Now write the main idea in one sentence.
e.g. "This story tells us..."

3 Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.

**Finally,
can you rewrite your
summary to make it better?**

1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.
2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.
3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.
4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?

**There is
nothing wrong
with rewriting; even
the best authors
rewrite their
work.**

123
4

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.



Brown bears are at their heaviest in autumn.

Bears need to find food quickly in spring.

Bears will gather when there is lots of food about, such as when salmon go upstream to lay eggs.

Bears hibernate in dens.



Get to the facts

Copy this paragraph and use the words from the boxes to fill in the gaps.



hibernates

claws

solitary

autumn

hunter

weight

A brown bear lives mainly alone except when rearing cubs. It is a _____ animal. It is the largest land _____. It has long, curved _____ and strong teeth.

It changes _____ dramatically from spring to _____. It is heaviest in the autumn just before it _____.



Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.

1 What sort of animal is a bear?

2 Why do you think bear weights are lowest after hibernation?

3 Why has the author given us so many facts?

4 Why do you think brown bears are sometimes found together?

5 If you were out in the wilderness where bears are found, what would you do?



Opinions matter

Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.

1 Do you think a bear would keep clear of a person? Explain why.

2 Using words from the story, write the words that you think best describe the nature of a bear as a hunter.

3 Bears are omnivorous, which means they eat meat and vegetable food. That is just like us. Bears also have a very good sense of smell. What might the consequences of this be?

5 Here is a waste bin with a special kind of lid that stops bears from getting to the rubbish inside. What would you have written on the label after the main heading? Your task is to encourage people to be responsible and also to care for bears.





Talking it through

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.

Discussion topic: Fishing in bear country

An otter is a river hunter which mainly eats fish. But, of course, it is much smaller than a bear. If a bear were to catch it unawares, it would stand little chance. Discuss how you think the otter manages to get its food AND survive being eaten.



Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.



The one that got away

From what you have read, imagine you were the photographer who took this picture. It shows a fisherman trying to catch salmon, but in the distance there is a brown bear who also wants the salmon. Write a story about what might have happened next.

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