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IELTS Listening - Pandas

Ok, I'm here today to talk to you all about the Panda. It is a species of bear that is under great threat from the damage that humans are doing to the places where they live.

The panda is a peaceful animal that has a black and white coat and is loved around the world. It is a distinctive symbol of China and The Panda has also been the logo of the WWF, that's the World Wide Fund for Nature, since it was set up in 1961.

It is a member of the bear family. They live mainly in bamboo forests high in the mountains of western China. A Panda's daily menu consists almost entirely of the leaves, stems, and shoots of various bamboo plants. Bamboo contains very little nutritional value, so pandas must eat 12-38 kg every day to meet their energy needs. New born pandas are about the size of a stick of butter, so that is really small. But they can grow to up to 330 pounds as adults.

Q11

They are dependent on their mothers for the first few months of their lives. Panda cubs start to climb trees when they are only 6 months old, and as adults the pandas make excellent climbers, despite their big weight. A panda's average life in the wild is 14-20 years, but a panda can live up to 30 years when they are looked after in places such as zoos.

Q12

So why do we worry about Pandas so much? Why are they important? Well, Pandas play a very important part in the bamboo forests where they live by spreading seeds which helps plants and trees to grow. In the Yangtze Basin where pandas live, the forests are full of a vast variety of amazing wildlife, such as dwarf blue sheep, multi-coloured pheasants and other species that are in danger of extinction, including the golden monkey. Also, Pandas bring huge economic benefits to local communities through ecotourism.

Pandas have two main threats. The first is hunting, which is a constant concern. Poaching or killing the animals for their fur has declined due to strict laws and greater public awareness of the panda's protected status. But hunters seeking other animals in panda habitats continue to kill pandas accidentally.

Q13

They are also threatened by habitat loss. In other words, by the loss of the home where they live. China's Yangtze Basin region is where the panda's main home is. But this area is an important economic region for this booming country. So roads and railroads are being built and these are increasingly destroying the forest. This means that panda populations get separated and so they can't find a partner to mate with and have babies.

Q14



So, what is being done to protect the Panda? The Chinese government has established more than 50 panda reserves. Reserves are places in the wild where animals are protected. However, only around 61% of the country's panda population is protected by these reserves. The WWF is also playing a big part in protecting the Panda. The idea for the WWF logo came from Chi-Chi: a giant panda that had arrived at London Zoo in 1961, the same year WWF was created. The people who set up the WWF were aware of the need for a strong symbol that everybody around the world would recognize. They agreed that the big, furry animal with her cuddly, black-patched eyes would make an excellent logo. This has helped to encourage many people to help support the panda.

Q15

Q16

Controversially, a well-known television presenter called Chris Packham, who has hosted programs about animals for many years on British TV, said pandas might not be worth saving. He explained that pandas are extraordinarily expensive to keep going. We spend millions and millions of pounds on this one species, but much less on others. He argues that it would be better to take all this money we spend on pandas and look after other natural places such as rain forests around the world.

Q17

He says we have to accept that some animals are stronger than others. The panda is a bear that eats a type of food that isn't very nutritious, it gets diseases easily and it is very difficult to breed. He thinks that extinction is very much a part of life on earth, and we are going to have to get used to it in the next few years because climate change is going to result in all sorts animals disappearing.

Q18

However, I don't agree with him. The panda is quite a weak animal, but this is not why it is going to die, or become extinct. When he says that if you leave them be, they will die out, that's simply not true. The reason it is in danger is because of the damage that humans are doing to the forests that they live in. If we don't destroy this, then they will survive in the same way that they have for thousands of years. And also, the places where the pandas live should be protected anyway. The panda shares its home with the red panda, golden monkeys, and various birds that are found nowhere else in the world. The panda's numbers are increasing in the wild, so I don't see them dying out.

Q19

Q20

Ok, I hope you've enjoyed my short talk on pandas. Are there any questions?