



# CAPTAIN CURIOSITY'S GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSE

## Topic: Pandas & Bamboo

**EVER WONDER WHERE GIANT PANDAS LIVE?** Giant pandas live in southwestern China. They mostly live in the high mountains and forests.

**EVER WONDER IF GIANT PANDAS ARE BEARS?** Some scientists think that Giant Pandas are

not really bears. Giant Pandas don't hibernate, don't walk on their hind legs and eat very little meat unlike other bears. This makes some scientists believe that Giant Pandas may be more closely related to raccoons than bears, or may just be in a family of their own.

**EVER WONDER WHAT GIANT PANDAS EAT?** Giant pandas eat mostly bamboo. Bamboo does not give pandas many nutrients, so they have to eat a lot of it. They eat about 30 pounds of bamboo a day; this can take up to sixteen hours each day! Pandas also eat flowers, mushrooms and small animals like mice and fish. In the zoo, giant pandas also eat rice cereal, carrots, apples and sweet potatoes.



**EVER WONDER HOW GIANT PANDAS HOLD THINGS LIKE BAMBOO?** Giant pandas have five claws on the front of their paws and an extended or long wrist bone on the bottom that acts like a thumb. Their extended wrist bone helps them to pick-up and hold things such as bamboo.

**EVER WONDER WHAT BAMBOO IS?** Bamboo is a fast-growing, woody plant that is related to grass. Bamboo grows in hot and

cold places and can grow to be almost 100 feet tall!

**EVER WONDER WHAT ELSE BAMBOO CAN BE USED FOR?** Bamboo isn't just for pandas to eat. Bamboo is used to make things such as fences, shelter, toys, tools and even paper! People eat bamboo too; bamboo shoots are often found in Chinese food dishes.



## You Can Do It!



Make your own stalks of bamboo by rolling and taping green or brown construction paper or brown grocery bags into tubes that are about one inch wide. You can make them as fancy as you want by cutting out and adding leaves. Hide them around the room and have your little one pretend to be a panda gathering up 16 pounds of bamboo! Be sure to point out how the human thumb helps us hold the bamboo. Pandas don't have thumbs, but they do have a wrist-bone that acts like a thumb!