

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## The Life Cycle of a Panda

The life cycle of a panda is a journey full of growth and change. Pandas typically live about 20 years in the wild, but those in captivity can live up to 30 years because they receive special care. Their life can be divided into several stages: birth, cub, juvenile, and adulthood.

Pandas begin their life as tiny, helpless cubs. At birth, a panda cub weighs just 3 to 5 ounces, which is about the size of a stick of butter! They are pink, hairless, and cannot see or hear. During this stage, the cub depends entirely on its mother for warmth, milk, and protection. The mother panda keeps her cub close, holding it in her paws and rarely leaving its side. By the time the cub is about three weeks old, it begins to grow its iconic black-and-white fur.

At around six weeks, the cub opens its eyes for the first time and starts exploring its surroundings by crawling. By the time it reaches three months, the cub is much stronger and can walk and play. During this juvenile stage, pandas grow quickly and learn to eat bamboo, though they continue drinking their mother's milk.

When a panda cub turns one year old, it enters the sub-adult phase. At this point, it is much larger and weighs around 70 to 100 pounds. The young panda starts becoming more independent and eats mostly bamboo. By the time it is two years old, the panda is ready to leave its mother and live on its own.

Adulthood begins around the age of four to six years, which is also when pandas are ready to reproduce. Adult pandas spend most of their time eating bamboo, resting, and exploring their territory. Males and females usually live alone, meeting only during the spring mating season.

The life of a panda is closely tied to its habitat and food supply. Protecting forests and bamboo is essential to help pandas live long and healthy lives. Each stage of their life shows how these unique animals adapt and grow in their environment.