

BOY'S QUEST

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Tug of War

By: Mike Blake

Photographs by: Jessica Shaw and Roxanne Weaver

Mei Xiang (pronounced--May-Shong) bursts out from among the trees and shrubs. She bounces toward her playmate, Tian Tian (pronounced tee-Yen tee-Yen), who is climbing down a rock near a pond. They happily greet each other and begin a playful game of tug of war over a bamboo stalk.

These lifelong playmates are giant pandas located in the Smithsonian Zoo in Washington, DC. They arrived from China's Research and Conservation Center for the Giant Panda on December 6, 2000. Mei Xiang, the female, was born on July 22, 1998; Tian Tian, the male, was born on August 27, 1997.



The giant panda is an endangered species. This is the reason Mei Xiang and Tian Tian were born on a Chinese reserve. A reserve is an area set aside especially for giant pandas so they can play, sleep, eat, and live without threat of dying at an early age. Reserves also help to make sure that giant pandas do not become extinct. Mei Xiang and Tian Tian are two of only 1,100 giant pandas living in the wild.

Pandas Mei Xiang and Tian Tian at the Smithsonian Zoo



In Washington, DC, Mei Xiang and Tian Tian are the stars of the zoo. Maybe it's their friendly smile, the twinkle in their eyes, or how they look as if they are wearing sunglasses and black socks. Whatever the reason is for this stardom, these lovable animals draw a cheering crowd every day.

Visitors flock around the Panda House inside the zoo. The Panda House is where Mei Xiang and Tian Tian live. This exhibit opened in 1972 and has been a favorite feature for over three decades. Zoo curators built the Panda House to look like Mei Xiang and Tian Tian's natural habitat in the wild. The two playmates bathe in the cool, clear ponds to keep clean. They splash each other as they roll around for fun. When Mei Xiang finishes bathing and playing in the water, she leaves behind her footprints in the squishy, brown sand for Tian Tian to follow. Soon Tian Tian charges ahead and races toward the big, gray rocks nearby. The two giant pandas chase each other around the Panda House until lunchtime.



Bamboo is their favorite treat. Mei Xiang and Tian Tian quickly rush to a grove of trees where they find many big, green, hollow stalks of bamboo. Together, both giant pandas eat over 100 pounds of bamboo a day! After filling their tummies, the playmates walk to a small cave for a nap. All that playing and eating has made them tired!

With the help of the Smithsonian Zoo's Panda House and the giant panda reserves in China, the giant panda population will multiply. These gentle, fun-loving creatures will no longer be endangered. This special care also allows Mei Xiang and Tian Tian to live full, healthy lives, to continue to splash each other in the pond's cool, crystal blue waters, and to play tug of war.

1) What words help the reader to know what reserve means?

A *endangered species*

B *area set aside*

C *play, sleep, and eat*

D *Mei Xiang*

2) What words help the reader to know what stardom means?

A *loveable animals*

B *cheering crowd*

C *friendly smile*

D *stars of the zoo*

3) What is paragraph 3 mostly about?

A the reason why the pandas are on a reserve

B what the pandas eat

C what an endangered species is

D how the pandas play

4) What is the author's purpose for writing this article?

A To tell the reader about the Smithsonian Zoo

B To give information about what pandas eat.

C To give information about the pandas at the Smithsonian Zoo

5) The title of this article is –

A Vol. 8 Issue 5 Page 22

B Tug of War

C Boy's Quest

D By: Mike Blake

COMPARE AND CONTRAST DIAGRAM

Name: _____ Date: _____

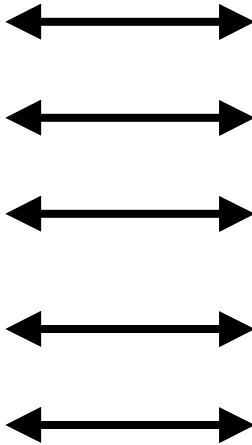
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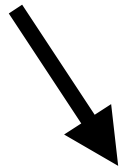
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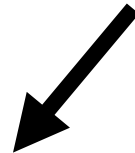


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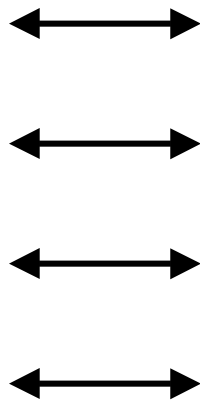
How The Same





How Different





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