

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Science – Learning About Hibernation

What do you like best about winter? I like warm sweaters, hot chocolate and a cozy fire. None of the wild animals can pull on a sweater though, or make a fire to keep warm, and it's really hard for them to find food. Animals have to **adapt** to the cold weather. They grow warm coats. Some, like the hare, change color. Their fur becomes white so they can't be seen by predators against the snow. But many others adapt by **hibernating** until spring.

What is **hibernation**? It looks like sleep, but it is different in many ways. When we sleep, we move around in our beds. A loud noise will quickly wake us. When an animal hibernates, its heart rate slows right down. Sometimes its heart only beats a few times a minute. Its body can become almost as cold as the temperature outside and it breathes so slowly that it appears to be dead. You could move a hibernating animal and it wouldn't even know that you had touched it. I wouldn't try this though!


What about food? Don't they need to eat? Food gives animals the energy they need to walk and run and hunt and all kinds of other things. Because their bodies slow down so much, and they don't move around at all, they don't use much energy. What they do is prepare for winter by collecting and eating as much food as they can during fall. Then, when winter comes, they can find themselves a safe den or burrow to sleep in and live on the fat they have stored in their bodies.

Some animals do not go into true hibernation. Their heartbeat and breathing slows down much less than that of a true hibernator. They store food in their burrows or dens and wake up once in a while during winter to walk around and eat before going back to sleep. This is called **temporary hibernation**. Bears and chipmunks go into temporary hibernation. That is why a mother bear can have her cubs during winter. Ground squirrels are an example of true hibernators.

## Science – Learning About Hibernation Questions

### A: What do you know about hibernation?

Here is a dormouse. A dormouse is a true hibernator. Some of the statements about it in the boxes are true and some are not. Draw a line from the true statement to the dormouse. The first one has been done for you.



it is in temporary hibernation

its fur becomes white

it is in true hibernation

it breathes very slowly

a loud noise will quickly wake it

its heart rate slows right down

it adapts by hibernating until spring

it prepares for winter by collecting and eating as much food as it can

it stores food in its burrow

its body becomes very cold

it lives on the fat it has stored in its body

### B: Temporary hibernation

Can you fill in the missing words in the following sentences?

Bears are \_\_\_\_\_ hibernators. Their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ slows down much less than that of a true hibernator and they often \_\_\_\_\_ for a while. Mother bears have their \_\_\_\_\_ during winter.

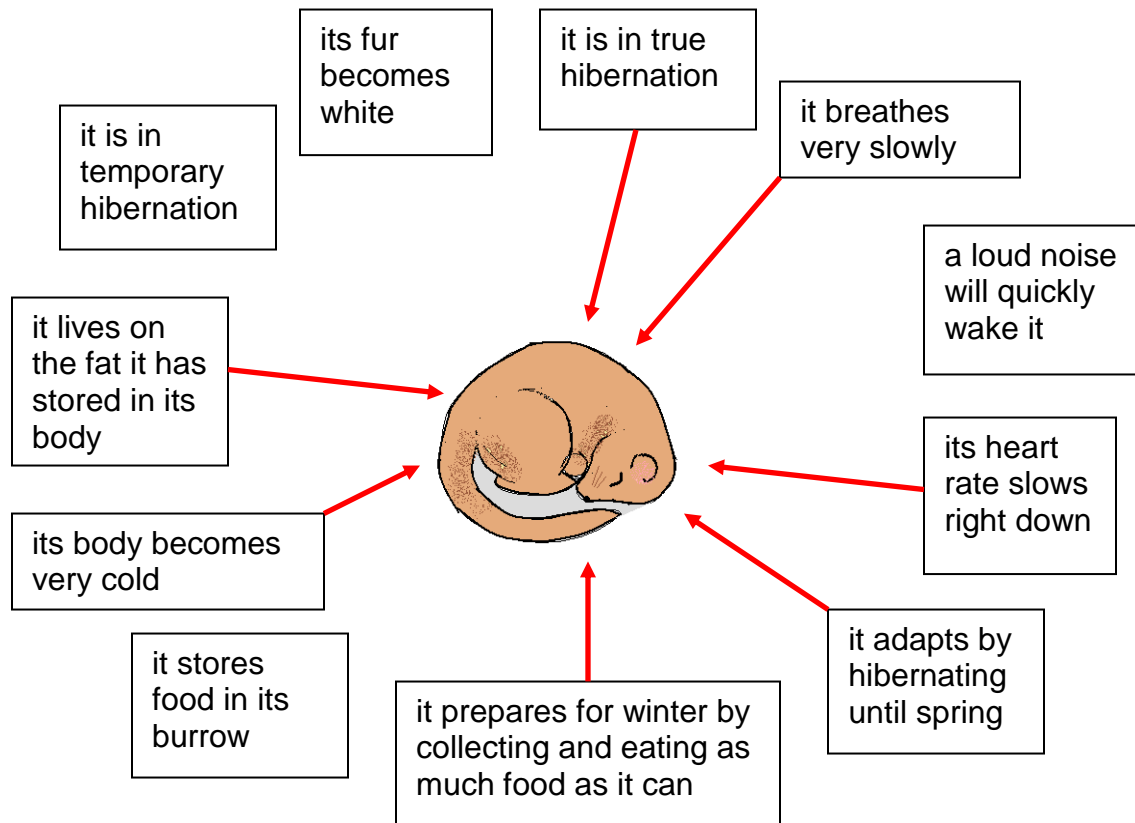
Now draw a picture of a mother bear and her cubs in their den

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## Science – Learning About Hibernation Answers

### Activity A



### Activity B

Bears are **temporary** hibernators. Their **heartbeat** and **breathing** slows down much less than that of a true hibernator and they often **wake up** for a while. Mother bears have their **cubs** during winter.