

# Churchill

## Activity 1 - Choose the correct option in these sentences

1. Churchill is just a small town in the arctic \ northern part of Canada
2. Yes, people come to this remote, lonely \ frozen place to see Polar Bears.
3. Now, the Polar Bear may seem a cute and lovable \ cuddly animal, but in fact it's extremely dangerous.
4. . .the bears return to the bay to hunt their favourite food - the whale \ seal
5. In fact, if the temperature goes above 10° \ 20° it suffers from the heat.
6. However, this number is decreasing as their diet \ habitat changes.
7. 60% of bear cubs die in the first year - many are killed by male bears \ hunters



## Activity 2 - Answer the following questions:

1. How many people live in Churchill?

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2. Why can't you drive to Churchill?

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3. What can't you use in Churchill?

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4. What is a Tundra Buggy?

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5. When is the best time to see the bears? Why?

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6. How much does a female bear weigh?

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7. How tall is a male bear?

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8. How long does the mother bear go without eating?

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**TRANSCRIPT**

Churchill is just a small town in the arctic part of Canada, specifically the province of Manitoba. It has a population of almost 1000 people, although very often you find many more people in the town because of its very special tourist attraction. Yes, people come to this remote, frozen place to see Polar Bears. It's remote because the only way to get here is by ship, plane or by train. There are no roads to bring you here! Oh, and you won't need your mobile phone - there is no signal here.

Now, the Polar Bear may seem a cute and lovable animal, but in fact it's extremely dangerous. For this reason the tourists have to observe the bears from special buses, locally known as 'Tundra Buggies'. These buggies can carry between 26 and 48 passengers and are heated and have toilet facilities - it's not advisable to step off the bus if you need some relief if there are hungry bears walking around! The most popular time to come is in the autumn, when the water starts to freeze and the bears return to the bay to hunt their favourite food - the seal. Because Churchill has a large river which flows into Hudson bay, the first ice of the season usually appears here - as you know fresh water freezes before seawater because it has no salt. Note that the temperature in this period ranges from 0 to -20 degrees, so you should bring plenty of warm clothes.

So, what about these bears? Here's some information for you.

- \* An adult male weighs between 300 and 600kg. A female is approximately half that.
- \* The males are taller too. On average 2.5 metres as opposed to 2 metres for a female.
- \* A polar bear's fur provides excellent insulation. In fact, if the temperature goes above 10° it suffers from the heat. They have a layer of fat 5 inches thick.
- \* Current estimates say there are 20,000 polar bears alive today. However, this number is decreasing as their habitat changes.
- \* Their main diet is the seal, although they eat most things that they can catch.
- \* Their only predator is the killer whale and man.
- \* They are excellent swimmers.
- \* They can run faster than a human.
- \* They have an incredible sense of direction - nobody knows how they find their way around but some scientists think they have a type of internal compass to guide them.
- \* A mother bear usually has two cubs. When they are born she stays with them to feed them milk. The mother does not eat or drink anything for four to eight months!
- \* 60% of bear cubs die in the first year - many are eaten by male bears.

So there you are. If you come to Churchill in autumn, enjoy the bears. Just be careful - you can't swim away from them or run away from them, so just don't get too close.