

Meet the Koala

by Kit Murphy



- 1 Imagine you are visiting a friend in Australia. You go for a hike in the forest. Suddenly, your friend shouts, "Look up!"
- 2 There's a furry gray animal in a leafy tree. What is it? No, it's not a squirrel. It's not an opossum, either. Can you guess what it is? It's a koala.
- 3 The koala looks like a teddy bear. However, it's not a bear at all. The koala is a marsupial. A marsupial is a mammal with a pouch. A kangaroo is a marsupial too. A female marsupial has a pouch on her underside. This is where her babies live after they are born.
- 4 A newborn koala is about the size of a lima bean. The baby cannot protect itself and must crawl into its mother's pouch. Inside the pouch, the baby gets milk. Gradually, it grows larger. After eight months, the baby is ready to come out. It can start eating the koala's favorite food—leaves from the eucalyptus, or gum, tree.
- 5 At one time these trees covered large parts of Australia. Koalas filled the forests. Then people cut down the trees. It looked as if koalas might disappear.
- 6 Now koalas are protected. They live in parks and in the wild. If you ever go to Australia, remember to look up. You might see a koala.

COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a* or *b*.

- 1 Another good name for this story is
 - a The Bear from Australia.
 - b Fascinating Facts about the Koala.
- 2 A koala lives in its mother's pouch
 - a before it is born.
 - b after it is born.
- 3 Koala babies stay in their mother's pouch because
 - a they need food.
 - b they don't have any legs.

- 4 If people cut down all the eucalyptus trees,
 - a koalas might disappear forever.
 - b koalas would live in caves.
- 5 You know people want to save koalas because
 - a they raise lots of lima beans.
 - b they have laws to protect them.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 covered with a coat of hair (2)
- 2 outside pocket in which a marsupial carries its young (3)
- 3 a baby born not long ago (4)
- 4 keep from harm (4)
- 5 stop existing (5)

C Read the words you wrote. Which one best fits in each sentence? Write the word.

- 6 A _____ koala must crawl into its mother's pouch.
- 7 People were once afraid that koalas would _____.
- 8 A grown koala is cute and _____.
- 9 The pouch will _____ the baby until it grows bigger.
- 10 A mother koala carries its baby in a _____.

THINK ABOUT IT

- D** What did you learn about baby koalas? What do they do first? What do they do second? What do they do third, fourth, and last?

first	second	third
fourth	last	

Read the sentences. They tell about baby koalas. However, they are not in the right order. Choose the word from the box that tells when each sentence happens. Write the word.

- 1 There, the newborn koala gets milk.
- 2 The tiny, baby koala is born.
- 3 The koala learns to eat eucalyptus leaves.
- 4 The koala crawls into the mother's pouch.
- 5 The koala crawls out of the pouch.

- E** A contraction is a short way of writing words. An apostrophe (') shows where letters are left out.

there's is made from *there is*

that's is made from *that is*

Read each sentence. Make a contraction from the two underlined words. Write the contraction.

- 6 "What is that furry animal at the top of the tree?" I asked.
- 7 "It is a koala," said my friend from Australia.
- 8 "Where is the koala's pouch?" I asked.
- 9 "That is not a mother koala," said my friend.
- 10 "Here is the mother in this tree."