

FIELD TRIP ACTIVITIES FOR GRADE 4 CHAPERONES

THEME: Where Are Koalas in the Food Chain?

Dear Chaperone: Use these activities to add fun and focus as you guide your student group around the Zoo.

EXPLORE AND FIND



- **An exhibit with a koala.**

Describe what the koala looks like.

Observe the koala's behavior. What is the koala doing? Why?

Why would koalas not want to "share" living space?

How many trees do you think one koala needs? Why?

Can you think of other ways a koala uses plants?

- **A koala eating.**

What does the koala eat? Where does the koala find its food?

What body parts do you think a koala uses to find and eat its food?

Is a koala an herbivore, an omnivore, a carnivore, or a decomposer?

What might eat a koala?

- **A koala drinking water.**

How can a koala get a drink high in the trees?

If you don't see a koala drinking, how else might it get moisture?

Are plants "juicy" foods? What juicy plants do you like to eat?

- **Koala poop.**

Where is it located?

How might koala poop help the environment?

Who would clean up the poop in the wild?

I wonder...

Could you draw a food chain that includes a koala? Be sure to include the sun, producers (plants), consumers (herbivore, omnivore, carnivore) and decomposers (millipedes, isopods, worms). Label your drawing.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES: GRADE 4

THEME: Where Are Koalas in the Food Chain?

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will use their observation skills.
2. Students will describe the physical attributes of a koala.
3. Students will investigate these concepts from the National Science Content Standards:
 - Science as Inquiry
 - The Characteristics of Organisms
 - The Life Cycles of Organisms
 - Organisms and Their Environments

PREVISIT ACTIVITIES

- **Inquiry Lesson:** Ask the students what they know about koalas. Write down their answers. Ask the students what they would like to know about koalas. Write down their answers. Write this question on the board: *Where are koalas in the food chain?* Ask the students to “guess” some answers. Ask the students how they might find the answers to this question (e.g. books, visit to a zoo, watch a movie or a television show, ask an expert, etc.).
- Read Deborah Dennard’s book, *Koala Country: A Story of an Australian Eucalyptus Forest* to your students. The koala is an amazing animal with a specialized diet! Make a list all of the animals mentioned in the book. Discuss what each animal eats. What adaptations do they have for finding and eating their food? Where are they on the eucalyptus forest food chain? Are they herbivores, carnivores, omnivores, or decomposers?
- Ask students which foods are grown in their environment. Are there berries, grains, citrus fruits, or potatoes? If they could only eat one locally grown food for the rest of their life, which would it be? How much would they need to eat each day? Would the seasons affect the availability of their food? How would they protect their crops from environmental threats? Koalas only eat eucalyptus. What hazards might threaten a eucalyptus forest? What can people do to protect koala habitat?

POSTVISIT ACTIVITIES

- Ask students what they have learned about koalas. Review the list of what they wanted to know about koalas to see if their questions were answered. Review the question: *Where are koalas in the food chain?*
- Koalas have a very sensitive nose! They must be able to recognize a male’s territorial boundary, locate female koalas, avoid predators, and determine the toxicity of eucalyptus. How does your nose measure up? Can you smell your way around the forest? Teachers will distribute a variety of scented cards (perfume, extracts, essential oils) throughout the classroom. Students will then be asked to find food (extracts and oils), friends (perfumes) or foes (garlic or onion) using only the information gathered by their nose.
- Writing activity... sloganeering. Given koalas live in their food, *The Australian Koala Foundation* has a powerful slogan to remind people of the importance of koala habitat conservation. “**NO Tree... NO me.**” A slogan has to be concise yet persuasive (not offensive). What local, state or international conservation effort is most important to you? Which words would you put on a button or bumper to motivate people to take action? Design a poster or ad campaign promoting conservation.