

## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

Written by Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss

### ABOUT THE BOOK

#### GUIDED READING:

I

#### LEXILE LEVEL:

530L

#### CHARACTER

##### TRAITS:

Fairness  
Resourcefulness  
Sharing

#### REGION:

Australia

#### ISBN:

978-0-874838-79-4

### COMMON CORE

#### STANDARDS

#### NOTE:

Find correlating  
Common Core  
Standards at the  
head of each activity  
section.

### Outcome

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the story through discussion, reading, writing, phonics, drawing, graphing, and acting.

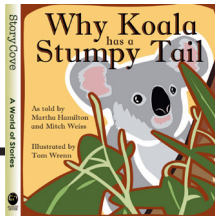
### Overview

Students will read and explore a folktale from Australia while utilizing interdisciplinary connections in language arts, math, social studies, art, and dramatic arts.

### Materials

#### General

- Book, *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*
- World map or globe
- Pencils
- Lined and unlined paper
- Crayons or markers
- 8 Small transparent tokens of one color per student (each pair of students should have two colors)
- Scissors
- 22 Index cards
- Pen
- Library books about animals
- Blackboard or Whiteboard



## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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### Optional: Extension Activities

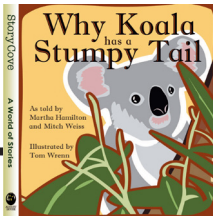
- Computer with Internet access
- Hamilton, Martha and Mitch Weiss. *How and Why Stories*. "Why Bear Has a Stumpy Tail," Little Rock: August House, 1999. 74-75.

### Assessment Tools

- "Adjectives" worksheet
- "Reading Directions" worksheet
- "Reading Checkers" worksheet
- "Collective Nouns" worksheet
- "Consonant Blends" worksheet

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## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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### Introduction

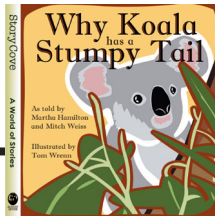
#### Introducing the Story

##### Materials:

- World map or globe

##### Directions:

- Teacher asks students what they know about Australia.
- Helps students locate Australia on a world map or globe. Shares the following facts about Australia as appropriate:
  - Australia is an island, a country, and a continent. It is the world's 6th largest country, but the smallest continent.
  - Australia's nickname is the "Land Down Under" because it is located in the Southern Hemisphere. Winter occurs June – September and summer occurs December – March.
  - People in Australia speak English with a distinct accent.
  - Many parts of Australia do not receive much rainfall. In some locations droughts occur seasonally and in other locations droughts occur occasionally.
  - Much of the wildlife found in Australia is only found there and nowhere else. Many people associate Australia with marsupials.
- Asks students what marsupials are (animals whose young are born while still in an underdeveloped state. The babies complete their development inside a pouch in their mother's abdomen.)



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- Asks students to name marsupials. (Australian marsupials include, (but are not limited to): koalas, kangaroos, and wallabies.) Teacher asks students to share what they know about these animals.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RF.2.4.B:

Oral fluency

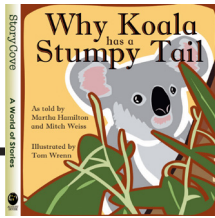
### Teacher Reads the Story

Materials:

- Book, *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*

Directions:

- Teacher tells students that they will be reading a folktale from Australia.
- Teacher distributes the books to students.
- Students take turns each reading one page aloud.



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### Discussion Questions

#### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.2.1:

Key details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.2.3:

Character response

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.2.7:

Illustrations

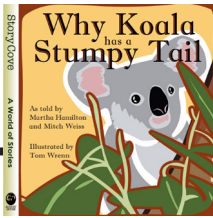
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.2.2:

Recount stories, central  
message

#### For Assessing Comprehension

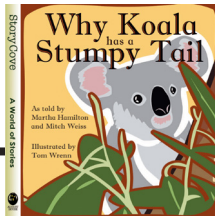
- Where does this story take place? If you were not told that it takes place in Australia, how would you know?
- Who are the main characters in the story?
- Describe Tree Kangaroo.
- Describe Koala.
- What kind of relationship did Tree Kangaroo and Koala have at the beginning of the story?
- What is this story about?
- What did Koala have at the beginning of the story that he did not have at the end of the story?
- One year there was no rain. What happened because of this?
- How would your environment be different if it did not rain for a year?
- Why were Koala and Tree Kangaroo worried about the lack of rain?
- Look at the illustration on page three. How can you tell that the leaves are drying up?
- What idea did Tree Kangaroo have to find water?
- How much water were they hoping to find in the streambed?
- The streambed was as dry as the desert. What does that mean?
- Who started digging in the streambed?
- What deal did Koala make with Tree Kangaroo about digging?
- Was it hard or easy for Tree Kangaroo to dig in the dry streambed?



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- What did Koala do while Tree Kangaroo was digging?
- After Koala woke up from his nap, he started to climb down from the tree. What excuse did he give for not digging?
- What was the third excuse that Koala gave for not digging?
- When Koala said that he needed to rest a little longer, do you think he intended to help?
- How did Tree Kangaroo feel when Koala did not help him dig?
- What did Koala do when Tree Kangaroo found water?
- How did Tree Kangaroo feel when Koala pushed him out of the way and began gulping the water?
- What did Tree Kangaroo do?
- What happened to Koala's tail?
- Why did Koala lose a good friend?
- What two words did the author use to describe Koala on the last page of the story?
- What lesson did Koala learn?
- What lesson did Tree Kangaroo learn?
- Choose another title for this story.



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### Language Arts

#### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.2.6:

Point of view

CCSS.ELA-

LITERACY.W.2.3:

Narratives

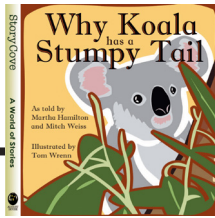
### Story Rewrite

#### Materials:

- Pencils
- Lined paper
- Crayons or markers

#### Directions:

- Teacher shares the following information about koalas with students:
  - The koala's diet consists almost exclusively of eucalyptus leaves.
  - Eucalyptus leaves are not very nutritious and do not provide a lot of energy for the koalas.
  - Since they do not get much energy from their diet, koalas spend about 18 hours each day sleeping.
  - Koalas receive most of their hydration from eucalyptus leaves. Koalas only drink when ill or when there is not enough moisture in the leaves, such as in times of drought.
- Teacher asks students to read the information in the back of the book, on pages 21-24.
- Teacher instructs students to keep all of this information in mind as they rewrite the story from the point of view of Koala.
- Students share their stories with the class and discuss how their versions differ from the original story.



## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-  
LITERACY.L.2.1.E:

Adjectives/  
adverbs

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.  
RL.2.2:

Recount stories, central  
message

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.  
SL.2.1:

Collaborative  
conversations

### Adjectives (Differentiated Learning)

#### Materials:

- Book, *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*
- “Adjectives” worksheet
- Pencils
- Lined paper

#### Directions:

- Teacher reviews adjectives with students.
- Students give examples of adjectives from the story.
- Teacher divides the class into three groups.

#### Group A:

- Reread the book with the teacher.
- Find the adjectives on each page.
- Tell who or what they describe.

#### Group B:

- Complete “Adjectives” worksheet with a partner.
- Use the book to find the adjectives that describe the words listed.

#### Group C:

- Complete “Adjectives” worksheet individually as per Group B.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.  
RL.2.7:

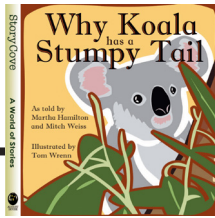
Illustrations

### Reading Directions

#### Materials:

- “Reading Directions” worksheet
- Crayons or markers





## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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Directions:

- Read and follow the directions to complete the picture. Be sure to read all the directions before beginning to draw.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.  
RF.2.3:  
Phonics and word  
recognition

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.  
RL.2.3:  
Character response  
CCSS.ELA-  
LITERACY.L.2.1.F:  
Complete sentences  
CCSS.ELA-  
LITERACY.L.2.1.G:  
Legible handwriting  
CCSS.ELA-  
LITERACY.L.2.2:  
Punctuation

### Reading Checkers

Materials:

- “Reading Checkers” worksheet
- 8 Small transparent tokens of one color per student (each pair of students should have two colors)

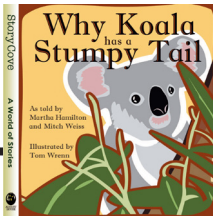
Directions:

- Class is divided into pairs.
- Tokens are distributed so that each student receives eight tokens of one color and no two students in a pair have the same color tokens.
- Using the “Reading Checkers” worksheet, each player places one token on each word square in the two rows closest to where he or she is sitting.
- Players read each word before placing the checkers on the word squares.
- Players play a traditional game of checkers while reading the word on each square on which the token lands.

### Making Comparisons

Materials:

- Book, *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*
- Blackboard or Whiteboard



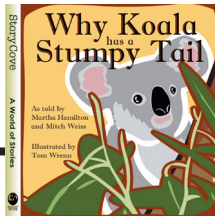
## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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Directions:

Teacher:

- And students read the “About the Story” section on pages 21-24.
- Gives students the following information about tree kangaroos and koalas:
  - A tree kangaroo, like a koala, is a marsupial. Each newborn kangaroo and koala is very small when born and lives in its mother’s pouch for several months while it fully develops.
  - A koala usually leaves its mother’s pouch when it is 7 months old.
  - A kangaroo usually leaves its mother’s pouch when it is about a year old.
  - Tree kangaroos and koalas spend much of their time in trees.
  - Tree kangaroos feed mostly on leaves and fruit and sometimes other foods such as grain and flowers. Koalas eat eucalyptus leaves almost exclusively.
- When on the ground, tree kangaroos travel by hopping. Tree kangaroos are different from many other types of kangaroos because they can move each back leg independently.
- And students work together using story information and pictures, the “About the Story” pages, as well as this additional information about koalas and tree kangaroos to create a Venn diagram to compare koalas and tree kangaroos.
- Ask students to create comparing sentences about koalas and tree kangaroos from the information on the Venn diagram.



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### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-  
LITERACY.L.2.1.A:  
Collective nouns

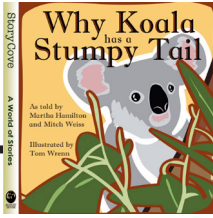
### Collective Nouns

#### Materials:

- “Collective Nouns” worksheet
- Pencils

#### Directions:

- Teacher tells students that a group of kangaroos is called “a troop.”
- Students work with a partner to complete the “Collective Nouns” worksheet by choosing words from the word bank to match each collective noun to the group of animals it describes.



# Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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## Phonics

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RF.2.3:

Phonics and word  
recognition

### Consonant Blends

#### Materials:

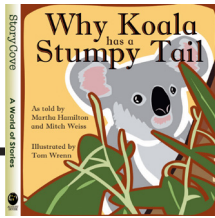
- Book, *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*
- “Consonant Blends” worksheet
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Lined paper

#### Directions:

- Teacher reminds students what “blends” are.

#### Students:

- Identify the words in the story that begin with consonant blends.
- Cut out the squares with consonant blends and single letters on the “Consonant Blends” worksheet.
- Combine the consonant blends and single letters to make words.
- Write the words they have created on a separate piece of paper.
- (Words that begin with blends include: tree, stumpy, stream, friend, dry, drink, break, stuck, grabbed, and broke)



## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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### Math

#### Bar Graphs

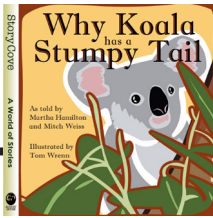
##### Materials:

- Blackboard or Whiteboard
- Yardstick or tape measure

##### Directions:

##### Teacher:

- Tells students that the average size for a male koala is about 30 inches long. The average size of a female koala is about 19 inches long.
- Helps students measure each other and record the results on the board.
- And students work together to create a bar graph showing the average size of koalas and the height of all class members.
- And students analyze the data and make comparisons between the height of class members and the average height of male and female koalas.



## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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### Social Studies

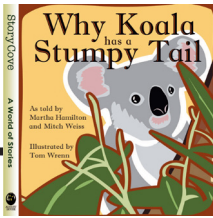
#### Talk Like an Australian

Materials:

- 22 Index cards
- Pen

Directions:

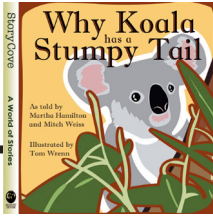
- Teacher writes the following words, one per index card:
  - Barbecue
  - Barbie
  - Countryside
  - Bush
  - Friend
  - Mate
  - Hello
  - G'day
  - Sweater
  - Jumper
  - Candy
  - Lollies
  - Large farm
  - Station
  - Billabong
  - Waterhole
  - Bonzer
  - Great
  - Grizzle



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- To complain
- Yakka
- Hard work
- Students match up the Australian word with the American word that has the same meaning.
  - Barbecue – barbie
  - Countryside – bush
  - Friend – mate
  - Hello – g'day
  - Sweater – jumper
  - Candy – lollies
  - Large farm – station
  - Billabong – waterhole
  - Bonzer – great
  - Grizzle – to complain
  - Yakka – hard work



## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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### Dramatic Arts

#### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

##### RL.2.2:

Recount stories, central message

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

##### SL.2.1:

Collaborative conversations

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

##### SL.2.4:

Facts and relevant details

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

##### SL.2.6:

Complete sentences

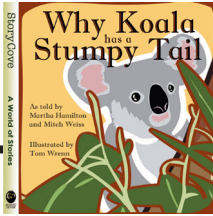
### Pourquoi Stories

Directions:

Teacher:

- Explains that *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail* is a “pourquoi” (“pour kwa”) story. Pourquoi means “why” in French. Pourquoi stories explain why an animal, plant, or natural object or element looks or acts the way that it does. These stories have been told since ancient times to help people understand why things are the way they are.
- Asks students what *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail* explains.
- Gives examples of possible pourquoi story ideas. (Why a rainbow comes out after the rain, why snakes have no hands or feet, why zebras have stripes, why pigs grunt, etc.)
- Divides the class into small groups. Each group creates a pourquoi story of their choice and shares it with the class.





## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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### Art

#### Illustrating Character Traits

#### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.2.7 :

Illustrations

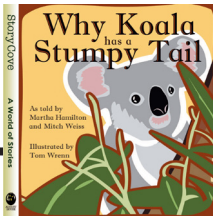
#### Materials:

- Unlined paper
- Markers

#### Directions:

#### Teacher:

- Tells students that the story *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail* teaches about the character traits of fairness, resourcefulness, and sharing.
- Asks students what each word means.
- Asks students how these character traits relate to the story.
- Asks students how these character traits relate to their lives.
- Tells students to draw a picture showing one of the character traits.
- Asks students to share their picture with the class and explain how the picture illustrates one of the character traits.



## Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

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### Extension Activity

#### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RF.2.4.A:

Fluency

#### Compare and Contrast

Materials:

- Book, *How & Why Stories*

Directions:

- Teacher reads “Why Bear Has a Stumpy Tail” on pages 74-75 in *How & Why Stories* by Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss.
- Students compare and contrast this folktale from Norway with *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*. Both tales feature an animal losing its long tale, but the plots are very different.

#### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.2.6:

Point of view

#### Technology Connection

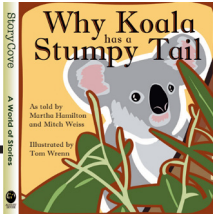
Materials:

- Computer with Internet access

Directions:

Students:

- Access [www.storycove.com](http://www.storycove.com) with help from the teacher.
- View the animation for *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail* narrated by the authors.
- Think about how the storytellers use their voices to convey emotions throughout the story.
- Explore the animations and activities for other stories on [www.storycove.com](http://www.storycove.com).



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## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-  
LITERACY.W.2.7:  
Research  
CCSS.ELA-  
LITERACY.W.2.8 :  
Recall information

### Animal Family Names

#### Materials:

- Blackboard or Whiteboard
- Library books about animals
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

#### Directions:

- Teacher informs students that a baby kangaroo is called a “joey.” A mother kangaroo is a doe and the father is a buck.
- Makes three columns on the board and writes the headings “Mother,” “Father,” and “Baby,” at the head of a column.
- Asks students to research the names for other animal mothers, fathers, and babies, and write them on the board.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.  
RF.2.3:  
Phonics and word  
recognition

### Word Making

#### Materials:

- Blackboard or Whiteboard
- Lined paper
- Pencils

#### Directions:

- Teacher writes the word “marsupial” on the board and asks students what it means.
- Asks students to use the letters in the word “marsupial” and write as many other words as they can in two minutes using only the letters in “marsupial.” (example: map, lap, mail, sail, pal....)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Adjectives

**Directions:** Using the book, *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*, find and write the adjectives that describe the words given.

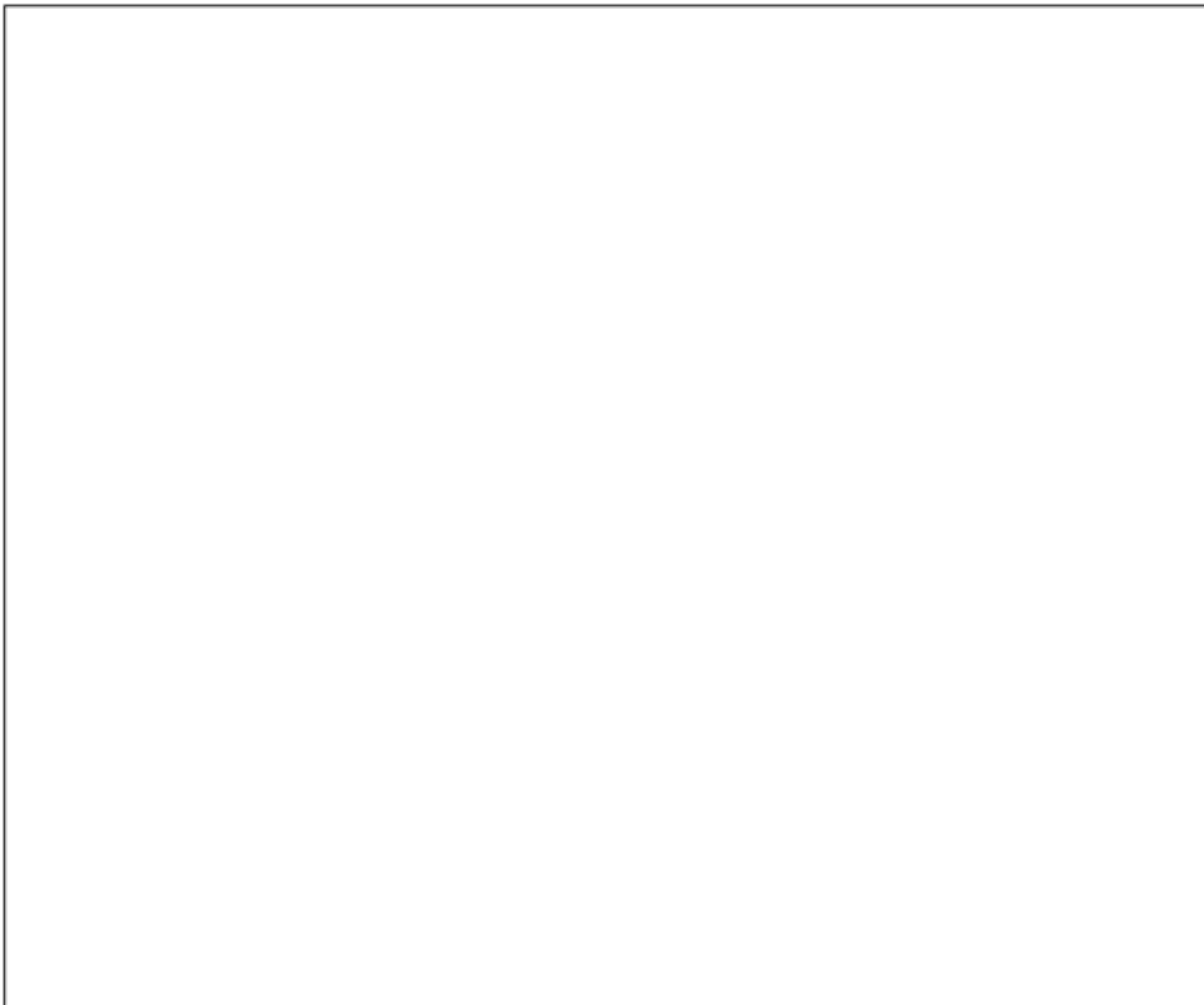
- Page 1** friends: \_\_\_\_\_  
tail: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
tail: \_\_\_\_\_
- Page 4** season: \_\_\_\_\_  
streambed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Page 5** drink: \_\_\_\_\_
- Page 6** water: \_\_\_\_\_
- Page 8** Koala said he was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Page 9** work: \_\_\_\_\_  
water: \_\_\_\_\_
- Page 14** hole: \_\_\_\_\_
- Page 15** Tree Kangaroo: \_\_\_\_\_  
Koala: \_\_\_\_\_
- Page 18** Tree Kangaroo: \_\_\_\_\_
- Page 20** Koala's tail: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
Koala: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Reading Directions

**Directions:** Read and follow the directions to complete the picture. Be sure to read all the directions before beginning to draw.

1. Draw a large tree with many green leaves.
2. Draw a koala in the tree.
3. Color the koala gray.
4. Draw a dry streambed in front of the tree.
5. Draw a tree kangaroo next to the streambed.
6. Color the tree kangaroo brown.





# Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail

**Second Grade**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reading Checkers

	thorn		season		taste		gulp
	thorn		season		taste		gulp
o Kangaroo Tree		rain		selfish		stumpy	
Tree Kangaroo		rain		selfish		stumpy	
	dried		too		gug		lizzy
	dried		too		dug		dizzy
good		both		friends		dn	
good		both		friends		dn	
	drink		long		water		soon
	drink		long		water		soon
cool		leaves		climb		tail	
cool		leaves		climb		tail	
	Koala		idea		hole		streams
	Koala		idea		hole		streams
broke		kept		lazy		furry	
broke		kept		lazy		furry	

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Collective Nouns

**Directions:** Work with a partner to choose words from the word bank to match each collective noun to the group of animals it describes.

1. An army of \_\_\_\_\_
2. A swarm of \_\_\_\_\_
3. A pride of \_\_\_\_\_
4. A tower of \_\_\_\_\_
5. A colony of \_\_\_\_\_
6. A litter of \_\_\_\_\_
7. A school of \_\_\_\_\_
8. A leap of \_\_\_\_\_
9. A parcel of \_\_\_\_\_
10. A herd of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
11. A pack of \_\_\_\_\_
12. A flock of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
13. A pod of \_\_\_\_\_
14. A crash of \_\_\_\_\_
15. A troop of \_\_\_\_\_

### Word Bank:

ants   beavers   bees   buffalo   chickens   deer   dolphins  
 elephants   fish   geese   giraffes   kangaroos   leopards   lions  
 penguins   puppies   rhinos   sheep   wolves

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Consonant Blends

tr	st	fr	str	dr	dr
br	st	gr	m	br	e
o	k	e	a	d	k
u	a	u	e	e	e
c	d	i	p	e	b
n	k	y	n	y	a
k	b	s	e	i	m