

## Koala

Website: <https://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/koala>

Live Cam: <https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/cams/koala-cam>

Did you know that the koala is a bear? Or is it? Either way, it's an adorable little mammal that only lives in one part of the world: Australia. Surprisingly, the Koala eats only eucalyptus leaves, which are poisonous to most animals. Did you know that Koalas can sleep up to 18 hours per day? When you visit the live zoo cam above, don't be surprised if the koala is taking a nap. Look carefully in the crook of the trees to find the koala. Let's learn more.

- 1) Let's look at this critter before we answer questions about it. Visit the live cam. Write two sentences about what this animal looks like. Use adjectives (descriptive words). What is this animal like? (*Hint*: Large, small, fluffy, rough, ugly, cute)

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Now visit the koala website. Go to this section: 

- 2) What type of animal is the koala? (circle **many**)
  - a. Bear
  - b. Mammal
  - c. Marsupial
  - d. Rodent

- 3) How long do koalas usually live for?
  - a. Five years
  - b. Ten to fifteen years
  - c. Fifteen to twenty years

**LIFE SPAN**  
Usually 10 to 15 years

- 4) Look at the *Fun Facts* on the right side of the webpage. According to fossils, how big was the ancient koala from 100,000 years ago?
  - a. Size of a teacup
  - b. Size of a small dog
  - c. Size of a bull
  - d. Size of a whale

Eucalypt leaves have strong-smelling oils that make koalas smell a bit like menthol cough drops.

To conserve energy, koalas sleep 18 to 22 hours a day.

In Australia, fossil findings of a prehistoric koala from 100,000 years ago indicate that koalas may have once been the size of a full-grown bull.

Go to this section: 

- 5) Find the paragraph "Eucalypt forest are home, shelter..." What are some adaptations that the koala has for living in the trees? (circle **many**)
  - a. A big head
  - b. Small tail
  - c. Rounded bottom
  - d. Sharp teeth

- 6) Find the paragraph that begins with “Koala hands and feet...” How many opposing thumbs does the koala’s hand have for climbing trees?
- One
  - Two
  - Three
  - Four

Go to this section:  FAMILY LIFE

- 7) What is a special trait or characteristic of a marsupial, like the koala?
- They have hair.
  - Females have pouches for the baby joey.
  - They climb trees.
  - They eat leaves.
- 8) Find the paragraph “Even after it starts...”. At what age does the koala joey climb on its mom’s back?
- Right away
  - When it’s two years old
  - When it no longer fits in the pouch
  - When it is happy

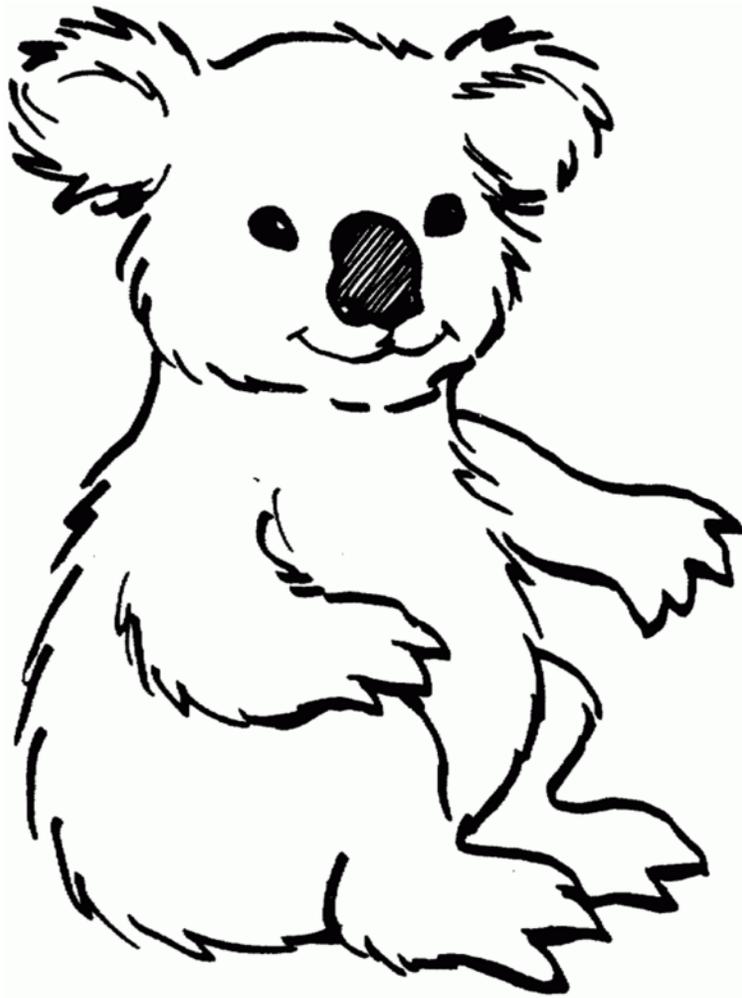
Go to this section:  AT THE ZOO

- 9) Find the paragraph “The San Diego Zoo received its first two koalas...” **True or false.** No koalas have ever been born in the San Diego Zoo.
- True
  - False
  - The paragraph doesn’t say.
- 10) Find the paragraph that begins with “In August 2009,...”. What is the main point of this paragraph?
- Baby koalas sometimes fall out of their mother’s pouch.
  - Tonaleah, the baby koala, was an amazing and lucky rescue.
  - Baby koalas can survive on their own right away.
  - Koalas eat only leaves from certain eucalyptus trees.

Go to this section:  CONSERVATION

- 11) Find the paragraph that begins with “In the past, koalas were...” What are some threats to the koala’s survival? (circle **many**)
- Dogs
  - Disease
  - Car accidents
  - Loss of habitat
- 12) Find the paragraph “Since 1983, San Diego Zoo Global...”. Why does the San Diego Zoo loan or share koalas with other zoos?
- To make money
  - Because they have to
  - So more people can learn about koalas
  - Because the San Diego Zoo sometimes runs out of eucalyptus leaves

Color in your own Koala. Don't forget to give him or her a name, age, and favorite sport!



Your koala's name \_\_\_\_\_

Your koala's Age \_\_\_\_\_

Your koala's favorite sport \_\_\_\_\_

Is your koala a bear or marsupial? \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key

- 1) This answer is open-ended. Some ideas for adjectives include cute, gray, small, furry, big nose)
- 2) B, C
- 3) B
- 4) C
- 5) A, B, C
- 6) B
- 7) B
- 8) C
- 9) B
- 10) B
- 11) A, B, C, D
- 12) C

## Glossary

- **Adaptation** (*add-app-tay-shun*) – How an animal’s body changes over time to help it to survive (Example: Some animals can swim fast and their bodies are long and skinny).
- **Adjective** (*add-jek-tiv*) – Part of a sentence that describes a person, place, or thing (Examples: Large, small, red, winged).
- **Characteristics** (*Kare-act-er-is-tix*) – Parts of an animal that show us what it is like or what it looks like.
- **Crook** (*krooh-k*) – the part of something that is bent or hooked, as in where a branch of a tree connects to the trunk.
- **Eucalyptus** (*Ew-kuh-lip-tus*) – A plant, tree or shrub that is only found in and around Australia.
- **Fossils** (*Fah-sill*) – Ancient bones of animals and ancient plants buried in rocks and dirt that tell us about ancient animals.
- **Loan** (*Lone*) – To lend, share, or give to someone for a short period of time.
- **Joey** (*Joh-ee*) – A baby marsupial.
- **Marsupial** (*Mar-soup-e-al*) – A mammal that gives birth to very young, immature babies that live in a pouch that the female has. Koalas and kangaroos are marsupials.
- **Opposing** (*Uh-pose-ing*) – That push against or opposite. Your thumb opposes your other fingers when you grab things.
- **Poisonous** (*Poy-zun-us*) – It can make you sick. Venomous or toxic.
- **Trait** (*Tr-ate-s*) – Similar to characteristics but describes parts of the animal that cannot change.