

Life in the Leaves

It has a large, round head with large, round ears. Its plump body is covered with 16
 gray fur. Its legs are short; its feet are long. It has a big, black nose. At first 34
 you might mistake it for a teddy bear, but koalas aren't bears at all. They belong 50
 to a special group of animals called marsupials. That means they carry their babies 64
 in pouches. A koala baby, or *joey*, is born blind, earless, and hairless. It lives in its 81
 mother's pouch for five or six months. After that it rides on its mother's back until 97
 it is full grown. The word *koala* comes from a word meaning *no drink*. Although 112
 they do drink sometimes, koalas usually get all the water they need from leaves. 126
 They only eat leaves from gum trees and can chomp through nearly two 139
 pounds of leaves each night! Gum trees are important for koalas. Not only 152
 do they provide tasty meals, but they also give koalas a home. Koalas often remain 167
 in the same tree for days just eating and sleeping. Koalas are slow and inactive. In 183
 fact, koalas sleep up to 22 hours a day! Koalas were once hunted for their soft, 199
 thick fur. Now it is against the law to kill koalas, but they are still disappearing. The 216
 major reason for this is the loss of their forests, or *bushland*, to make way for 232
 houses. Today there are less than 100,000 koalas left in Australia. 243

	day 1	day 2	day 3	day 4
words read in 1 minute				
– number of mistakes				
= total words read correctly				
adult initials				

Parent Tips

The number of words read correctly per minute is an important indicator of a student's progress in all aspects of reading—decoding (figuring out unknown words), fluency, and comprehension. Twenty years of research...[have] shown strong correlations between standardized achievement test scores and the number of words read correctly per minute (wcpm).

-- Wiley Blevins, *Building Fluency: Lessons for Strategies for Reading Success*, p.10

Ending of 2nd grade goal: 90 wcpm

1. Which word describes newborn joeys?

- hairier
- hairless
- hairable

2. What is the main idea of this passage?

- Koala babies live in pouches.
- Koalas can sleep for a long time.
- Koalas are interesting animals.

3. Why would an author write this passage?

- To get you to do something.
- To teach you about koalas.
- To tell you an exciting story.

4. What is something new you learned about koalas?

