

Science Story Adventures

Marvelous Marsupials

Learning outcomes

» Students know plants and animals have structures that serve different functions in growth, survival, and reproduction. (Grade 3 - Life Sciences)

» Students know how to observe and describe similarities and differences in the appearance and behavior of plants and animals. (Kindergarten - Life Sciences)

From: California's Science Content Standards

Books we read

About Marsupials: A Guide for Children by Cathryn Sill.

Diary of a Wombat by Jackie French.

Activities we did

» We talked about what we use pockets for and what marsupials use their "pockets" or pouches for.

» We did the activity, "Mother Opossum's Pouch," adapted from *Mother Opossum and Her Babies* by Jean C. Echols, et al.

» We talked about how various marsupials are similar and different.

» We examined a North American opossum skull and pelt, the only marsupial that lives in North America.

» We looked at a wombat skull and compared it to the opossum skull.

Today's craft: Mother and Joey Valentine

Directions:



You will need:

- » Brown construction paper
- » Toilet paper rolls
- » Kangaroo templates (see end of document)
- » Scissors
- » Colored pencils or crayons
- » Elmer's or Tacky glue
- » Staplers

1. Color and cut out the kangaroo templates.
2. Cut the construction paper into a size to wrap around the toilet paper roll. Glue the paper to the tube.
3. Glue the heart to the pouch.
4. Glue the pouch, mom and baby heads, and arms to the tube.
5. Staple the feet and tail to the bottom of the tube, folding them inside the tube.

Adapted from <http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/mhobby.html>

Want to find out more?

Here is a selection of further resources to explore in the Naturalist Center, in the public library or at home. Please ask if you can't find what you're looking for.

Books

How to Scratch a Wombat by Jackie French. Nat. Ctr. Juv. QL737 .M39 F74 2009

A follow-up to French's *Diary of a Wombat*, which provides more detailed information about wombats.

Kangaroos by Judith Jango-Cohen. Nat. Ctr. Juv. QL737 .M35 J36 2006

A beginning chapter book about some of the largest marsupials.

Koalas by Sandra Lee. Nat. Ctr. Juv. QL737 .M384 L456 2007

An in-depth look at one of Australia's most famous marsupials.

Koalas and Other Marsupials by Bobbie Kalman and Robin Johnson. Nat. Ctr. Juv. QL737 .M384 K34 2006

Excellent introduction to the variety of marsupials in the world, including where they live, what they eat and what they do.

Marsupials by Nic Bishop. Nat. Ctr. QL737 .M3 B57 2009

With his amazing photos and engaging text, Bishop introduces readers to the diversity of these amazing animals.

DVDs and Videos

Australia's Improbable Animals. Nat. Ctr. Media QL338 .A97 1993

A colorful look at the many unusual animals of Australia including marsupials.

Bone Diggers: Australia's Lost Marsupials

This NOVA special looks at the giant marsupials that roamed Australia a million years ago.

Websites

Marsupial Mammals—Animal Diversity Web
<http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Metatheria.html>

This article on a site overseen by the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, is a thorough introduction to marsupials. You can also find additional entries on specific marsupials.

Marsupial Mammals—University of California Museum of Paleontology
<http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/mammal/marsupial/marsupial.html>

A good overview of marsupials from both today and the geologic past.

Opossum Society of the United States

<http://www.opossumsocietyus.org/>

Educational information, including games and coloring sheets, about North America's only marsupial.