

# Science Story Adventures

## More 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 infer what animals eat from the shapes of their teeth (e.g., sharp teeth: eats meat; flat teeth: eats plants). (Grade 1 - Life Sciences)

*From: California's Science Content Standards*

### Stories We Heard

*Diary of a Wombat* by Jackie French.

"Why Possum Has a Naked Tail" from *Keepers of the Animals: Native American Stories and Wildlife Activities for Children* by Michael J. Caduto & Joseph Bruchac

*Don't Laugh, Joe!* by Keiko Kasza

### 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.

### Today's craft: Mother Opossum



### You will need:

- » Mother and baby opossums template (see end of document)
- » Scissors
- » Glue
- » Scotch tape
- » Colored pencils or crayons
- » White chenille stick
- » Small pieces (about 1/2 inch) of gray yarn

### Directions:

1. Cut out the opossum and pouch.
2. Tape the pouch to the underside of the opossum on three sides, leaving one side open.
3. Color the baby opossums and cut out the squares. Put the babies in the pouch.
4. Draw some eyes, ears and a nose on the opossum.
5. Tape the pipe cleaner on the end of the opossum for its tail.
6. Glue the pieces of yarn on the opossum's back for its fur.

*Adapted from Mother Opossum and Her Babies by Jean C. Echols, et al.*

# 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.

*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.

*Opossum and the Great Firemaker* by Jan M. Mike. Nat. Ctr. Juv. F1221 .C6 M54 1993

In this folktale from the Cora people of Mexico, small and often overlooked opossum outwits the larger and more powerful iguana to return the stolen fire to the people of the Earth.

*Possum Baby* by Berniece Freschet.

This delicately illustrated book follows the life of an opossum from his birth and time spent in his mother's pouch to his going out to make it on his own.

## 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

Biokids: Virginia Opossum

[http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Didelphis\\_virginiana/](http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Didelphis_virginiana/)

An overview of Virginia opossums--what they look like, where they live, how they act, and what they eat. The website also has information on other animals you might find in your neighborhood or around your school.

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.

# Mother Opossum and Babies Template

