

KOALA JOEY

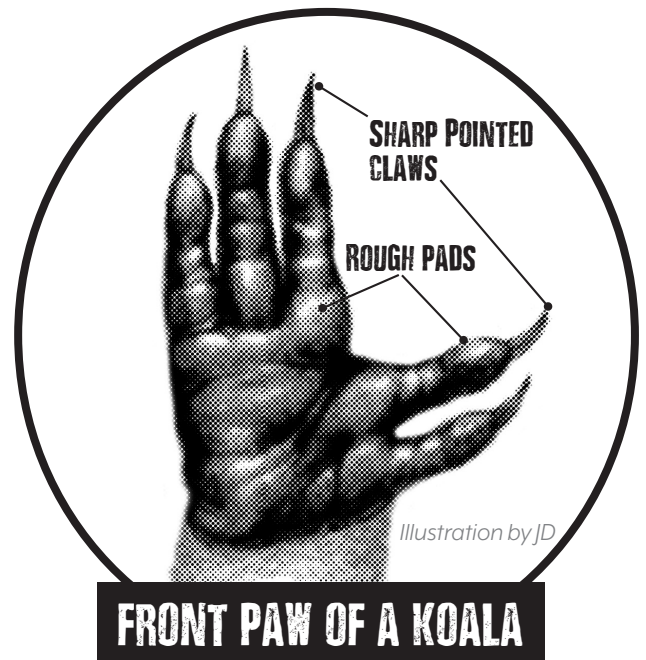
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ILLUSTRATED BY DIANE BLASIUS



- 1 Far away in Australia, a koala sits high in a eucalyptus tree. She grips a branch with the rough pads and sharp claws on her paws. In her pouch, she hides something special—her baby.
- 2 At birth, the baby koala, called a joey, does not look like his furry mom. He is pink and bald and as small as a jelly bean. Although he cannot see, he moves his legs and crawls. His first instinct is to sniff. He smells milk and, without any help, starts to feel his way to his mother's pouch. Five minutes later, he slips inside. After the joey climbs in, the mother koala tightens her pouch muscles. Now her joey cannot fall out.
- 3 Inside the pouch, the joey drinks his mother's milk and grows. His eyes open. His ears form, and he hears his mother's calls. Soon, thick fur covers his body. By the time the joey is ready to explore the world, he looks like his mother.
- 4 At five to six months old, the joey peers out of his pouch. He eats a special soft food from his mother called pap. When the joey eats pap, he gets bacteria from his mother's stomach in his tummy too. He will need the bacteria to eat eucalyptus leaves, like grown-up koalas do.
- 5 In another month, the joey leaves the pouch for the first time. He clings to his mother's

belly while she climbs in the treetops. By the time he is eight months old, the joey no longer fits in his mother's pouch. But he still drinks her milk. A nipple sticks out of the pouch, and the joey sucks.

- 6 Now, for a few hours each night, the joey climbs on his mother's back for a ride. While riding piggyback, he reaches for eucalyptus leaves. Just like his mom, he nips off leaves and chews them. The leaves have plenty of water in them, so koalas rarely go to the ground for a drink. But the leaves don't give koalas much energy, so most of the time, mother and joey curl together in the fork of a tree and sleep.
- 7 When the joey is about one year old, his piggyback days are over. Now he climbs to the treetops by himself.



- 8 The young koala spends more and more time away from his mother. He no longer drinks her milk. He dozes alone on tree branches. Soon he will move to another tree and live on his own.



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Test Questions

Circle the correct answer.

- 1. A baby koala uses instinct to survive. Select two things that a baby koala does out of *instinct*.**
 - a. A baby koala isn't born with fur like his mother.
 - b. A baby koala finds his way to his mother's pouch.
 - c. A baby koala is born as small as a jelly bean.
 - d. A baby koala drinks his mother's milk for about a year.

- 2. What information does paragraph 3 add to the passage?**
 - a. It tells why koalas live in trees.
 - b. It tells how joeys change in the pouch.
 - c. It shows how koalas eat.
 - d. It compares koalas to other animals.

- 3. What happens before the joey leaves the pouch for the first time?**
 - a. The joey still does not have fur on his body.
 - b. The joey grows too big for the pouch.
 - c. The joey starts eating pap.
 - d. The joey learns how to climb trees.

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Test Questions (*continued*)

4. What do grown-up koalas eat?

- a. pap and milk
- b. tree branches
- c. milk and bacteria
- d. eucalyptus leaves

5. What would happen if koalas did not eat pap when they were babies?

- a. They wouldn't be able to eat eucalyptus leaves.
- b. They wouldn't be able to drink water.
- c. They wouldn't be able to climb trees.
- d. They wouldn't grow fur on their bodies.