

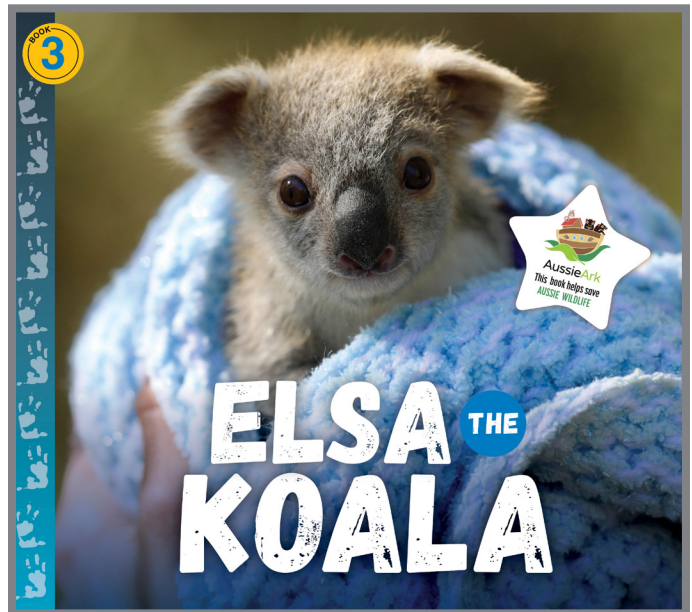
Elsa the Koala

CREATORS
AUSSIE ARK

SCIS: 5433699

ISBN: 9781922800145

RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

Elsa the Koala is the story of an orphaned koala joey called Elsa who was raised by Hayley, the koala expert at the Australian Reptile Park, when her mother was too sick to look after her. This positive and happy book features actual photos of beautiful Elsa and Hayley and follows Elsa growing up and then eventually moving to the Australian Reptile Park and having her own joey. This adorable story also aims to educate kids about Australian native animals and the people that care for them. Included is a koala fact file and a QR code that links to video footage of Elsa as an extra bonus. Part of the proceeds from this book go towards supporting Aussie Ark, a charity that supports endangered Australian wildlife.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Aussie Ark is a conservation organisation committed to creating a long-term future for Australia's threatened wildlife and their ecosystems. Through the creation of insurance populations, Aussie Ark is breeding endangered wildlife fit for return to the wild. Australia's biodiversity is both rich and unique, but is rapidly disappearing—Aussie Ark is committed to helping prevent further extinctions.

STUDY NOTES

BEFORE READING

- As a class look closely at the cover and title and discuss what you can learn about a book from its cover. What type of story do you think this will be?
- Discuss conventions of nonfiction (table of contents, glossary, page numbers, title, photographs/pictures, diagrams, and labels) and fiction (setting, plot development, conflict, descriptive language, themes, point of view, characters, characterisation).
- Where do you think this story might be set, and what makes you think this?
- Read the writing on the back cover: What is the purpose of a back cover blurb?
- Have students research The Australian Reptile Park and discuss why it is such an important Australian institution.
- See <https://www.reptilepark.com.au>. Ask students to find out what other Australian animals are endangered and to prepare a fact file on an endangered animal of choice. Students could also create illustrated posters of their animals of choice, aimed at drawing attention to their plight.
- If possible, arrange for students to visit The Australian Reptile Park or an animal conservation group to see first hand the important work they do.
- Celebrate Save the Koala Day, organised by the Australian Koala Foundation, on September 30 each year.

DURING READING

- Chart what students already know about koalas. Add additional facts located during subsequent research or as you progress through the text.
- Create a vocabulary wallchart to record new and interesting words as they are encountered in the text or in wider reading.

AFTER READING

- Look closely at different kinds of nonfiction and discuss as a class where this book fits with them.
 - Traditional nonfiction includes writing that gives readers an overview of an entire topic. It is great to use to gauge interest in or to begin researching a topic. Readers who don't need specific details but who want to get a general feel for something will enjoy traditional nonfiction.
 - Expository nonfiction is great for investigating a specific subject. It takes a unique point of view and examines a specialised concept. Readers who want an entertaining look at a specific topic will gravitate towards expository nonfiction.
 - Narrative nonfiction is a true story written in the style of a fictional story.
 - Browsable nonfiction allows young readers to explore topics of interest in a fun way, without the stress of longer chapter books. Based on the popular magazine format of quirky, fun facts that many young readers love.
- If possible, gather a range of information texts on koalas and have students examine these, comparing and contrasting them to this text. Discuss how authors have treated the same subject matter differently.
- Ask students to write a fictional narrative about a koala. Discuss how their story will differ from the approach used in this book. Highlight that the knowledge they have gained about koalas from this book could help them to write a fictional piece.
- Create a class diagram of vertebrate and invertebrate animal classifications, identifying what traits they have in common. Ask students where Elsa would sit in this diagram and why.

Comprehension

- Test knowledge gained from reading the book by asking:
 - What type of animal is a koala?
 - Where do koalas live?
 - Why do koalas sleep so much?
 - Why have koalas become endangered?
 - What is pap and why do koalas need to eat it before they start eating gum leaves?
 - How did Elsa's keeper prepare her to go back into the wild?
 - How did Hayley know when Elsa was ready to go back into the wild?
 - What important work is done by The Australian Reptile Park?