

FIELD TRIP ACTIVITIES FOR GRADES 6-12 STUDENTS

THEME: How would you design a koala exhibit?

Dear Chaperone: Ask the students the following questions then have them draw the exhibit.

Directions: Find and explore a Koala Exhibit

- The exhibit should meet the koala's needs.

Where does the koala find its food? Does it have water?

What type of shelter is provided?

Is the exhibit well maintained (clean)?

Is the koala restless or at ease? What does a contented koala look like?

- The exhibit should meet the guests' needs.

Was the koala easy or hard to find on the perch? Why?

Is the viewing area accessible to guests with special mobility needs?

Are you comfortable in the viewing area? (temperature, crowd control, noise)

- Review the signage.

How old is the target audience? Does the sign include graphics?

Does the display area include interactive items to hear, smell, or touch?

Have you found any other animals native to Australia on exhibit? Are those enclosures similar to the koalas' exhibit? How are they different?



Draw the Exhibit:

Name: _____

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thick black border, intended for students to draw their exhibit design. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the worksheet.

I wonder...

Do you think it is important to exhibit koalas in zoos? Why or why not? How might exhibiting koalas in a zoo save them in the wild?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES: GRADES 6-12

THEME: Exhibit Design

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will use their observation skills.
2. Students will investigate these concepts from the National Science Content Standards:
 - Environmental Quality
 - Evidence, Models and Explanation
 - Natural and Human-induced Hazards

PREVISIT ACTIVITIES

- **Inquiry Lesson:** Ask the students what they know about koalas. Write down their answers. Ask the students what they would like to know about koalas. Write down their answers. Write this question on the board: *How would you design a koala exhibit?* Ask the students to “guess” some answers. Ask the students how they might find the answers to this question (e.g. books, visit to a zoo, watch a movie or a television show, ask an expert, etc.).
- Review what animals need to survive (i.e., food, water, shelter). How might the needs of animals with highly specialized diets change when they live in a zoo?
- Have the class brainstorm a list of factors a zoo would need to consider when designing a koala exhibit. (Refer to the background information below to help guide students.) Divide the class into groups and assign an adult chaperone to work with each group. Give each student a copy of the *Field Trip Activities* sheet to review before visiting the Zoo.

POSTVISIT ACTIVITIES

- Ask students what they have learned about koalas. Review the list of what they wanted to know about koalas to see if their questions were answered. Review the question: *How would you design a koala exhibit?* Have each group design an enclosure for a koala, developing a scale drawing and a narrative description of the enclosure. Have each group present their final plan to the class.
- Did the exhibit tell a story about the koala and its home? Read a selection of tales from [Klassic Koalas: Ancient Aboriginal Tales in New Retellings](#) to the class. How might Australian Aboriginal folklore be integrated into a zoo exhibit? Ask the students to research and design signage.
- Watch the DVD, **Yindi: the Last Koala**. Ask students to share their thoughts and feelings about the impact of humans on the lives of koalas. What do they feel are the most important conservation messages in the film?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Listed below are some of the factors that zoos consider when designing enclosures:

- Location(s) of drinking water and feeding area
- Space and structures that enable animals to climb, run, dig, swim, fly, or exercise
- Areas where animals can perch, rest, nest, or have privacy from zoo visitors
- Adequate light for diurnal animals and darkness for nocturnal animals
- Method for heating and/or cooling the enclosure
- Barriers between the animals and visitors that are safe for both
- Safe and efficient ways for keepers to clean the exhibit
- Signage
- Crowd and noise control

