



# MARVELOUS MARSUPIALS A GUIDE TO KANGAROOS

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**TEXT TYPE:** Non-fiction: Description—Guide  
**GUIDED READING LEVEL:** R

**SUMMARY:** In this guide students will have the opportunity to learn a variety of fascinating facts about kangaroos, ranging from the number of kangaroo species to the unique characteristics of this type of marsupial. Additional facts include learning about kangaroo diets, habitats, and what dangers they face.

## TEXT FEATURES

- headings/subheadings
- captions with comprehensive information
- Did You Know? boxes

## VISUAL LITERACY

- photographs
- two-column charts
- illustrated diagram with labels

## TEXT SUPPORTS

- photographs with captions
- illustrated diagram
- bright, consistent two-page layouts
- two-column charts
- unique topic

## POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- unfamiliar topic matter
- sentence complexity
- condensed scientific vocabulary
- specific vocabulary, e.g., ‘pademelons,’ ‘bettongs,’ ‘potoroos,’ ‘marsupials’

## FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- making connections: text to self, text to text

## FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- synthesizing

## ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Say Something strategy
- discussing with a group
- discussing with a partner
- sharing ideas
- marsupial panel (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

## WORKING WITH WORDS

- word solving and building: using chunking and syllabication
- language predictability: using textual definitions to work out word meanings

## ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student’s ability to:

- use background knowledge to make connections with text
- link text to other texts read
- contribute to group discussions
- incorporate multiple strategies to word solve

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Making Connections Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

## BEFORE READING

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### **Activate and build prior knowledge**

**ESL NOTE:** To increase oral participation, ask your ESL students to share what a kangaroo is called in their first language and have them describe any known characteristics of kangaroos. Also, have pictures, books, or even props related to kangaroos on hand in order to provide further visual support.

#### **Making Connections: Text to Text**

- Ask students if they know what a marsupial is. Point out that this is 'A Guide to Kangaroos.' Ask students what type of text they will be reading. If no one mentions a 'guide' take a few moments to discuss other guides students have seen and read previously. Ask, *What are some characteristics of guides?* Bring up the fact that many guides give information on a range of key and important facts that involve the subject being looked at in the guide. Have students find partners and 'Say Something' (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 5 Literacy Support Guide*) about this form of text, including where and when they may have encountered something similar.

#### **Word Solving and Building**

#### **Introduce supports and challenges**

- Note with students that there are a number of challenging words they will encounter during their reading. Write some of these words, including, 'marsupials,' 'pademelons,' 'bettongs,' and 'quokkas,' on a white board or on word cards, and review with students how they can break these words into syllables to help read them.

#### **Language Predictability**

- There are some words in this text that students might find challenging, but in fact have their meanings provided within the text itself. Have students take advantage of some definitions that are given in the text. Words like 'Marsupials,' 'joey,' 'Gestation,' and 'arboreal' have their meanings stated within the text. Remind students to pay close attention to these definitions, as they are not always highlighted or easy to spot. Their inclusion in the text is important and provides students with good references for understanding new words.

#### **Making Connections: Text to Self and Text to Text**

#### **Set a purpose for reading**

- Provide each student with three sticky notes and instruct them to identify each of the following with a sticky: a fact they already knew, a fact that reminds them of something they might have seen on TV, and a fact or feature of the text that reminds them of another text read in class.

#### **Provide for early finishers**

- When students are finished have them share where they placed their sticky notes with other students and discuss their reasoning for why they identified these sections.

**Making Connections: Text  
to Self and Text to Text**

## **DURING READING**

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### **Monitor reading**

- As students read independently, have them read a portion of the text aloud to you. Ask a comprehension question about making connections, such as: *Does this type of text remind you of any others you have read or seen? What does this text remind you of? Have you ever read another nature or animal guide?*

### **Observe**

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Making Connections Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 5 Literacy Support Guide*.)

## **AFTER READING**

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### **Revisit the purpose for reading**

- Discuss with students where they placed their sticky notes. Explore the connections made and talk about how this aided them in their reading.

### **Check on outstanding challenges**

- Discuss with students how they fared reading the text relating to science. Did words and concepts like ‘breaking down cellulose’ and ‘fermentation’ (page 9) provide challenges for students? Support students who find these parts tricky. Go over strategies they can use to help them build comprehension.
- Discuss and clarify any other challenges students experienced that you noted from your observations.

### **Note successful strategy use**

- Invite students to share a strategy they used to overcome any challenges as they were reading with the group.
- Explain a successful reading strategy you observed, e.g., *I noticed that as Lyda was reading the chart on page 5 she first read both columns individually and then began to match information between the smallest and tallest kangaroos. As she did this she commented that she was able to identify how different these two kangaroos are from one another. Then she told me it reminded her of comparing her German Shepherd to a Chihuahua that lived on her street. I liked the way she was able to make connections to her own life when reading this chart.*

## FOCUSED REREADING

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Three options are provided for focused rereading in the next Guided Reading lesson. Choose an activity that meets the needs of your students, or you might select a Reader Response activity from the *Grade 5 Literacy Support Guide*.

### Synthesizing

#### **Written**

- Provide students with 12 blank cards or pieces of paper. Have students write a question about kangaroos on one of the cards and then the answer on another card. Students will need to use complete sentences in writing their questions and answers.
- Once students have written six questions and answers have them join with a partner and place the 24 cards upside down to play a game of ‘Marsupial Concentration.’ Students will need to flip over two cards at a time, reading them aloud. If the question and answer match then they keep the set of cards and take another turn. If they do not match they need to flip them back over, completing their turn. The student with the most question and answer cards wins.

#### **Artistic**

- Have students create a restaurant menu for kangaroos. Students are to design a menu similar to one they might see in a restaurant. Students can choose what kind of restaurant the menu will be written for, but remind them that different kinds of restaurants have varying menus, both in appearance and structure. A fine dining menu might have multiple sections for appetizers, main entrées, and so on, while a fast food menu may focus on ‘combos’ and pictures. Whatever form their menu takes, instruct students that the menu items must be food that kangaroos eat and look for. Have them use the text, as well as other reference sources, to find out more about what different species of kangaroo eat. Ensure students use correct spelling in their menu—having a misspelled menu is not professional, and embarrassing!

### Making Connections: Text to Self and Text to Text

### Synthesizing

#### **Oral/dramatic**

- Students will need to submit three questions about marsupials/kangaroos which they feel they could confidently answer. Questions should be written on file cards with the ‘expert’s’ (student’s) name on it, and then placed in a box.
- Form a panel of marsupials experts by having participating students sit around a table. Select one of the students to be the moderator who will ask the expert panel their questions about marsupials. The moderator would draw a card from the box and direct the question to the expert as indicated on the card. After groups have had some time to practise their question and answer routine invite the ‘Marvelous Marsupial Experts’ to share their knowledge with their classmates.