

# Why Koala Has No Tail

adapted from an Australian myth

Back when the world was new, Koala and Kangaroo were best friends. They enjoyed 14  
 hunting with their boomerangs. And they were both proud of their fine, long tails. 28  
 Then came a time with no water. The ground cracked and trees died. None of the 44  
 animals could drink. Kangaroo remembered when his mother had dug a hole in a 58  
 dry riverbed. The hole filled with water and they were saved. This story excited 72  
 Koala. He begged Kangaroo to take him to the riverbed. The two friends crossed 86  
 rocks and burning sand before finding the spot. Both animals were very tired. Since 100  
 Kangaroo knew the most about finding water Koala told him to dig first. Koala 114  
 promised to take a turn when Kangaroo became tired. Under the blazing sun 127  
 Kangaroo toiled. When he could dig no more, he asked his friend for help. Koala 142  
 said he felt too sick to dig. He looked so weak laying there with his tail covering his 160  
 head. Kangaroo felt sorry for his friend. So Kangaroo kept digging. At last, a tiny 175  
 bit of water trickled into the hole. Kangaroo asked poor Koala if he was too sick to 192  
 walk, but Koala dashed to the hole and knocked Kangaroo out of the way. As he 208  
 greedily slurped the water in the hole, all that could be seen of Koala was his long, 225  
 bushy tail. Kangaroo had been tricked! Angrily he threw his boomerang high into 238  
 the sky. As it sailed back to earth, it cut off Koala's tail. Koala was so ashamed of 256  
 losing his tail that he climbed into a gum tree and has lived there ever since. 272

	day 1	day 2	day 3	day 4
words read in 1 minute				
– number of mistakes				
= total words read correctly				
adult initials				

## Parent Tips

In their book, *Classrooms That Work*, Patricia Cunningham and Richard Allington stress the importance of repeated readings as a way to help students recognize high-frequency words more easily, thereby strengthening their ease of reading. Having students practice reading by rereading short passages aloud is one of the best ways to promote fluent reading.

1. How do Kangaroo's feelings toward Koala change in this story?
  - Kangaroo is angry with Koala for beating him in a race.
  - At the beginning they're friends, but by the end they aren't.
  - They start out as enemies, but become friends at the end.
2. A myth is a story that tries to explain the way the world is. What does this myth explain?
  - Why boomerangs are dangerous.
  - Why kangaroos don't like koalas.
  - Why koalas are tailless.
3. What clues in the story tell you Koala really wasn't too tired to dig?
  - Because he could run fast as soon as there was water.
  - Because he asked Kangaroo to find water for them.
  - Koala was proud of his tail and was ashamed when he lost it.
4. How is this passage different than the one you read last week about koalas?

