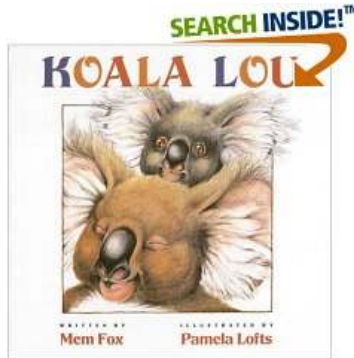


Fox, Mem. (1988). Koala Lou. New York: Harcourt.

Koala Lou is a 3.2 grade level of reading for the accelerated reader program and a 4.9 level using Flesch-Kincaid analysis in MS Word. Twenty percent of the 580 words contained in the text are kindergarten sight words as listed below.



Mem Fox is also the author of Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to our Children Will Change their Lives Forever. She says reading is “*getting the message*” from the text on the page and there are three secrets that help us get the message: the magic of print (decoding the marks on the page), the magic of language (syntax, semantics, pragmatics, phonemic awareness, etc.), and the magic of general knowledge (schemata). “*When an understanding of the world, language, and print act together as a team, reading happens.*”

Read-aloud resources for parents and teachers:

Codell, Esme. (2003). How to get your child to love reading. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.

Fox, Mem. (2001). Reading magic: why reading aloud to our children will change their lives forever. New York: Harcourt.

Trelease, Jim. (2006). The read-aloud handbook (6th edition). New York: Penguin Books.

Trelease, Jim. (1992). Hey! listen to this: stories to read aloud. New York: Penguin Books.

Zimmerman S. and Hutchins C. (2003). 7 keys to comprehension: how to help your kids READ IT and GET IT! New York: Three Rivers Press.

Other relevant children’s literature resources:

Nonfiction text-to-text connection:

Sotzek, H. & Kalman, B. (1997). A koala is not a bear. New York: Crabtree Publishing.

Fiction text-to text connection:

Fox, Mem. (1983). Possum magic. New York: Harcourt.

Intended Grade Level: Beginning of first grade

Objectives:

- Teacher will model fluent reading for students and introduce sounds of written language.
- Students will review kindergarten sight words through interaction with the book, Koala Lou.
- Students will be introduced to seven new vocabulary words and build their background knowledge of Australia and the animals that live there.
- Students will be introduced to comprehension strategies such as determining importance through story mapping the beginning, middle and end and using background knowledge (text-to-self and text-to-text connections).

Materials

Koala Lou book by Mem Fox

Book box and props, *optional* (globe, stuffed or picture of a koala(s), a picture of an emu, platypus and kookaburra, hat, and a meter stick)

Kindergarten sight words on flash cards (these words will vary per school district): the, me, go, a, I, my, and, mom, cat, dad, we, see, can, it, like, is, no, to, dog, yes, love, at, in, you, by.

New vocabulary words on flash cards (koala, emu, platypus, kookaburra, bush, gum, and meter)

Copies of Koala Lou text with highlighters or crayons for sight word and new vocabulary word hunt

Story maps (on 9x14 paper, tri-folded) for students to write/draw beginning, middle and end of book.

Supplies to make koala puppets for story retelling – koala template on cardstock, crayons, Popsicle sticks, glue (see http://www.first-school.ws/activities/shapes/animals/koala_hearts.htm)

Pre-Reading

Book introduction

Start the read-aloud by showing the students the cover of Koala Lou. Ask them what they think the story will be about based upon the pictures on the cover. Tell students that today we are going to read a story that is based in Australia about a koala bear named Koala Lou {show students Australia on the globe}. Ask students if they know what a koala is {show students stuffed koala and/or a picture of a koala bear}. Koala Lou was written by a woman named Mem Fox who lives in Australia and writes children’s books. This book is full of familiar words that we learned last year and are posted on our word wall and many new unfamiliar words that we will learn about today. Did you know that it took Mem Fox 2 years and 49 drafts of the story before she finished the book, Koala Lou? WOW!

Sight Word Review

Last year in kindergarten, the students learned 25 “*sight*” words. Tell students that lots of their kindergarten sight words are in this book. Review the sight words with the students by holding up the flash card words and asking students to chorally read them aloud. Tell students that 11 of the 25 words are present in this book. Ask students how many times they are written in the book {write guesses on board}. Tell students that when we are done reading the book, they are going to get a chance to do a “*word hunt*” for their wall words and we will find out then how many are in the book (120 of the 580 words are kindergarten sight words – 20%).

Vocabulary Support

Tell students that in our book there are lots of new words. Show students flash cards of the new vocabulary words. Ask students to get their lips ready. What sounds does each of our new words start with (/k/ in koala, /long e/ in emu, /p/ in platypus, b in /bush/, /k/ in kookaburra, /hard g/ in gum and /m/ in meter)? Show students pictures of each of the new vocabulary words. Tell students they will also get a chance to “*word hunt*” these words in the book.

During Reading

Because this is such a beautiful story and this is the first reading, minimal disruptions will be made during the read-aloud in order to let the story flow and let the children experience the “*wind beneath the book’s wings*” in the words of Jim Trelease. The teacher will read with lots of expression... stretching out the “*husssshhhh*” and getting quieter as Koala Lou steps toward the tree and a “*hush fell over the crowd,*” for example. The teacher will also use props to help bring the story alive.

After Reading

Q&A

After reading the book, teacher will ask some “*why*” questions of the students to help stimulate their thinking. Examples could include: “*How did Koala Lou feel after losing the race?*” “*What does her mother tell her?*” “*How does she feel at the end of the book?*” “*How would you feel?*”

Word Hunt

Students will be provided a Xeroxed copy of the book, Koala Lou. (Teacher could pair students and have them work together to save copies). They will then be challenged to find all of their kindergarten wall words. They will highlight them one color. They will then copy their new vocabulary words into their word study notebooks and then find them in the text and highlight them a different color. (Different color crayons could also be used, or circling sight words and underlining the new vocabulary as well). When students are completed, they can count the number of sight words they found in the text and compare to their original guesses they made during pre-reading.

Comprehension

Students will pair up with a book buddy and do a “*retelling*” of the story aloud to each other. They will then complete “*story maps*” and determine importance with pictures and a sentence or two from the beginning of the story, the middle of the story and the end of the story. When they are completed, they may create Koala Lou puppets for fun.

Follow-up – Building Comprehension with Text-to-Text Connections

The next day(s), the teacher will read and discuss the nonfiction book, A Koala is Not a Bear, as well as, another one of Mem Fox’s books, Possum Magic. Students will compare and contrast the books. Building background knowledge through text-to-self, text-to-text and text-to-world connections helps to enrich what we read and in the words of Zimmerman and Hutchins, “*background knowledge is like Velcro. It helps new information adhere.*” At the end of the week, the teacher can reread Koala Lou.



“If we didn’t know chocolate was delicious, we’d never crave it....so it is with books.”

Mem Fox (from www.memfox.com)