

Name: _____

What Is a Wombat?

By Guy Belleranti

Despite its name, the wombat isn't a bat. It's a marsupial from Australia. Have you ever heard of a marsupial? It's a mammal that stays in its mother's pouch for many months to nurse and develop.



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underground burrows. The wombat hangs out in these burrows to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Inside the burrows, the wombat can hide from predators such as dingoes and Tasmanian devils.

The wombat is an herbivore, or plant-eater. It grazes on grass, roots, moss, and even bark with its rodent-like teeth. It's most active at night. However, occasionally it does come out during the day to sun itself.

There are three species of wombats. The largest is the common wombat, or bare-nosed wombat. This wombat usually lives alone. Some common wombats

can be over three feet long and weigh 80 pounds. The two smaller species are both types of hairy-nosed wombats. These wombats live in groups called colonies.

Although a wombat looks pudgy and slow, it can run faster than a track star to get to its burrow. A predator in pursuit of a wombat may be surprised by its defense tactics! First, the wombat's tail is too short to grab. Second, the wombat can fight back with its sharp claws and teeth. Third, it has a tank-like rump of matted hair, thick skin, cartilage, and bone that makes a great burrow blocker.



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injuring the joey when she digs.

- Wombats can go long periods without drinking water. Like its relative, the koala, the wombat gets most of its moisture from the vegetation it eats.
- Wombats don't climb trees like koalas do, but they are very good swimmers.

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1. In which part of the world would you see a wombat in its natural habitat?
- a. the Northern Hemisphere
 - b. the Southern Hemisphere
 - c. the Eastern Hemisphere
 - d. both b and c



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4. Which animals are predators of the wombat?
- a. koalas and Tasmanian devils
 - b. Tasmanian devils and dingoes
 - c. kangaroos and dingoes
 - d. koalas and kangaroos
5. Identify the statement about wombats that is false.
- a. The wombat lives in extensive underground burrows.
 - b. The wombat is an omnivore; it eats both meat and plants.
 - c. The wombat doesn't climb trees, but it is a good swimmer.
 - d. The wombat is nocturnal, or active at night.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.



1. _____ pudgy

a. tangled; knotted



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5. _____ complex

e. the act of following, or pursuing, someone or something

6. _____ demise

f. plump; chubby

7. _____ cartilage

g. groups of wombats living together

8. _____ pursuit

h. grow and mature

9. _____ develop

i. plant life

10. _____ immediately

j. intricate; complicated

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In the article, "What Is a Wombat?" you learned that a wombat is a type of marsupial, which is a mammal that stays in its mother's pouch for many months to grow and develop.

Choose another marsupial and write about it on the lines below. Provide three interesting facts about your marsupial. Also give one similarity between your marsupial



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9. h. develop

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