

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## The Life Cycle of a Kangaroo

Kangaroos are fascinating marsupials native to Australia. They have a unique life cycle that includes several stages from birth to adulthood. Understanding the life cycle of a kangaroo helps us learn more about how these incredible animals grow and survive.

A kangaroo's life begins when a tiny, underdeveloped baby, called a joey, is born after a very short gestation period of about 30 to 36 days. At birth, the joey is about the size of a jellybean, blind, and hairless. It must crawl into its mother's pouch immediately after birth, where it will continue to develop.

While inside the pouch, the joey latches onto one of the mother's teats and drinks milk. It stays in the pouch for about six months, growing bigger and stronger. During this time, it begins to develop fur, open its eyes, and move around more.

At around six months old, the joey starts to peek out of the pouch. It may hop in and out for short periods but will return for safety and feeding. By eight to ten months, the joey leaves the pouch permanently but will continue to nurse occasionally until it can eat solid food, such as grass and leaves.

Once fully weaned, the young kangaroo becomes more independent but often stays close to its mother. Kangaroos reach adulthood at about two years old. Male kangaroos, called boomers, and female kangaroos, called flyers, can live up to 20 years in the wild.

Kangaroos grow through clear life stages: birth, pouch development, weaning, and adulthood. Each stage is important in helping the joey grow into a healthy, strong kangaroo capable of surviving in the wild.