

Level
2

Penguin Young Readers Factsheets

The Velveteen Rabbit

Teacher's Notes

Summary

A boy plays with his toy rabbit that he loves very much. Then the boy becomes ill. He has an infectious illness. So as not to spread the illness, it was the practice at the time when this story was written, for toys to be taken away. His mother puts them in the garden. There the unhappy and cold rabbit sees real rabbits for the first time. Then he too with the help of magic from a fairy, becomes a real rabbit and joins the wild rabbits. One day, when the boy is better and older, he sees one of the rabbits and is reminded of his favorite old toy.



Background to the story

The Velveteen Rabbit is an adaptation of a well-known and well-loved story about a boy's love of his toy rabbit which turns it into a real rabbit. It was first published in the United States in 1922 by Margery Williams (1881–1944).

Topics and themes

Animals: Pupils can talk about the differences between the toy rabbit and real rabbits. What does the fur of real rabbits feel like? What do toy rabbits feel like? This toy has long ears and a short fluffy tail, like real rabbits, but has back legs which make it difficult for him to hop like real rabbits.

Health: Tim has spots: he is ill. What childhood illnesses do the pupils know? (For example, chickenpox, measles, mumps.) The story took place in the early 1900s, when there were no vaccinations for childhood illnesses. Children sometimes died or were left disabled, so it was especially important to stop other children catching the illness. One way to prevent the spread of germs was by destroying toys.

Friendships: It is an important feature of the story that the toy rabbit becomes real because of Tim's love for him. Tim's toy was like a real friend, he played games and had dreams with him. Have pupils had a very special toy that they play with and consider a friend?

Toys: Tim has many toys: a rocking horse, a plane, a train and a boat. They were probably made of wood. Look together at the cover, and find as many toys as possible. What toys do the pupils have? What are they made of?

Making use of the Reader

Warmer: Vocabulary recognition: act out or ask some pupils to act out: *rabbit* (nose twitching, hopping), *airplane* (wings outspread), *train* (choo choo noise), *horse* (gallop, neigh). Can the pupils guess what you are?

I spy: Choose a page from the book, and an object on the page and say, "I spy with my little eye something beginning with (first letter)". Pupils can try and guess what it is and the one who guesses correctly can find an object and say, "I spy with my little eye..."

Rabbits tail: Pupils can make rabbit's tails or 'pom poms'. They need cardboard to make two circles with a hole in the middle. They need lengths of wool too. The wool is wound round the two identical circles through the hole. When no more can pass through the hole, cut the wool

round the outer edge of the cardboard and tie the middle by sliding a length of wool between the two circles and tying a knot. Remove the circles and fluff out the wool so that the tie cannot be seen and there is the tail!

Rabbit chart: Over the length of a term, pupils collect pictures of rabbits. At the end of term pupils make a chart which has columns of colours, size of rabbits, size of ears, kind of tails...

Touch: Collect items of soft material, such as wool, velvet, cotton wool, and items of rough texture, sacking, sandpaper. The class use materials to make a wall collage. Pupils can close their eyes and go up to the picture and describe what they feel. "It's rough," "It's soft," "It's like" and so on.



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Chants

Chants help pupils become familiar with the sounds and rhythm of English in a fun way. The language in each chant recycles language from the story.

Pupils listen to the chant a few times, clapping in time with the rhythm. Then they say the chant, verse by verse, with the cassette, beating out the rhythm as they say it.

A possible activity with the chants, is to split a class into groups and each group says one verse.

Using the accompanying audio cassette

Tell pupils you have some questions they need to find answers for from the cassette recording. Write the questions on the board and read them through until everyone understands them. Then the pupils listen to the tape. Ask the questions. If there are any that no one can answer, play the relevant section of the tape again. This can also be repeated at a later time in the term after pupils have read the book. Suggested questions: When does Tim get his presents? (Answer: Christmas Day) What is his best present? (Rabbit) What color is the train? (Red) Who tells Tim he is sick? (The doctor) Who puts the toys in the garden? (Mom) Who uses magic? (The fairy)

Notes on using the activities in the Factsheet

Activity 1

This activity practices color vocabulary, using the three colours of the toys, red, blue and yellow.

Activity 2

Pupils label the rabbit's ear, tail, nose and eye. They read the two sentences and tick the correct one.

Activity 3

This activity practices third-person singular present simple forms.

Activity 4

Pupils talk in pairs about the faces describing the hairstyle and types.

Answers to the activities

In the back of the Reader

Before you read

- (b)
- sack: page 8; real rabbit: pages 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14; a rocking horse: pages 1, 7; a toy rabbit, pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 (but about to become real); a fairy: page 11

After you read

- The rocking horse is white, the train is red, and the airplane is blue.

In the factsheet

Activity 1

Red: tomato, apple
Yellow: apple, banana, sun, cheese
Blue: sea, sky
The word that can go in two circles is: apple.

Activity 2

Sentence b is correct. A rabbit has a short tail and long ears.

Activity 3

- It flies – plane
- It jumps – rabbit
- It grows – tree
- It rocks – horse
- It runs – dog
- It swims (done as example) – fish

Activity 4



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The Velveteen Rabbit

Name:

Activity 1

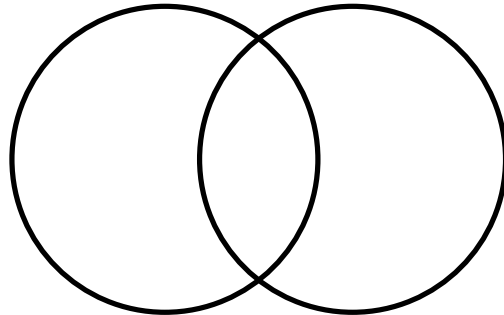
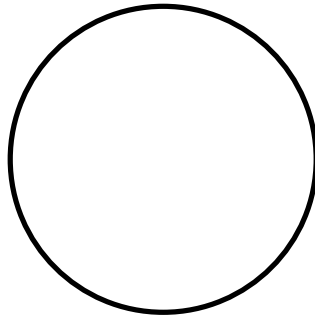
Put the words in the correct circle. One word can go into two circles, which is it?

- sky
- sun
- banana
- tomato
- cheese
- sea
- apple

Blue circle

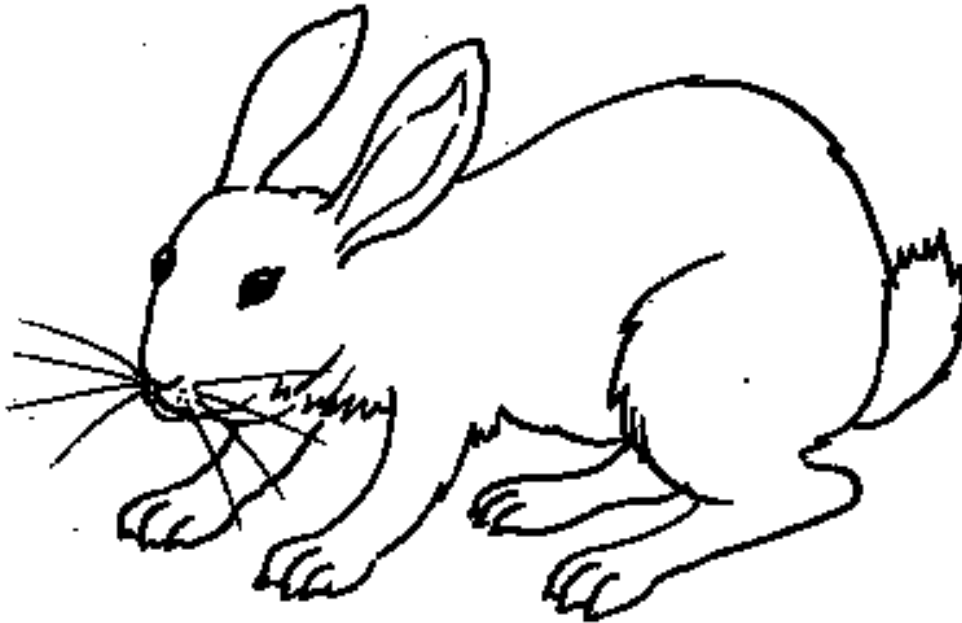
Red circle

Yellow circle



Activity 2

Label the rabbit and answer the question.



ear tail nose eyes

Which is right?

- a. A rabbit has a long tail and short ears.
- b. A rabbit has a short tail and long ears.



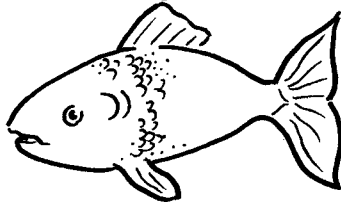
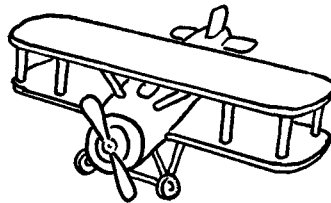
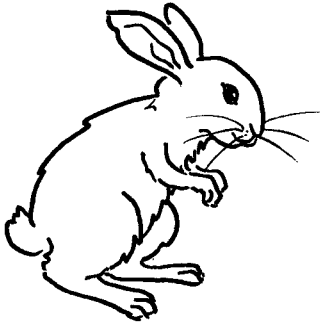
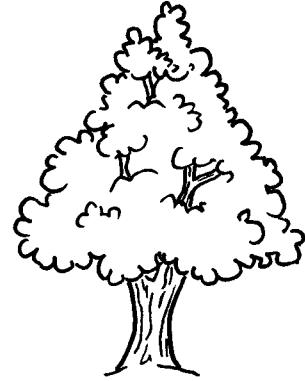
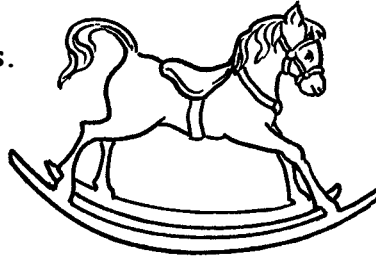
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Name:

Activity 3

Match the words to the pictures.

- a. It flies
- b. It jumps
- c. It grows
- d. It rocks
- e. It runs
- f. It swims



Activity 4

Two faces are the same, which are they?

