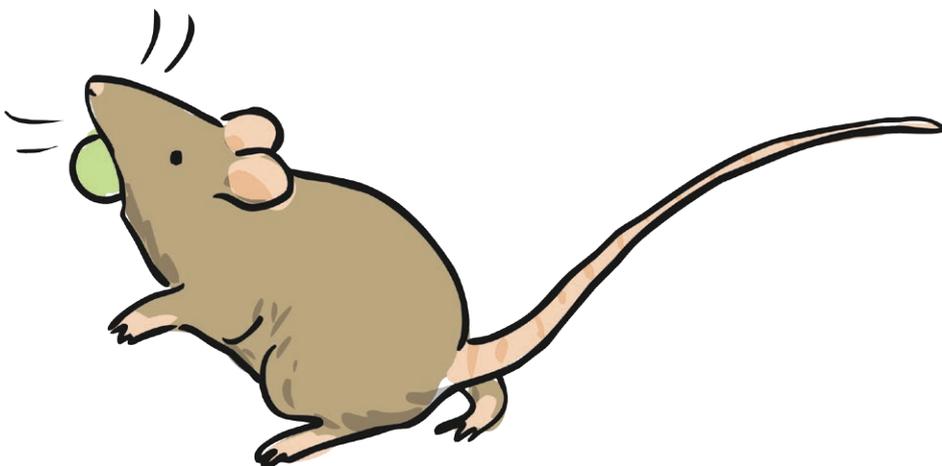


The Tale of Peter Rabbit

Fact Sheet for Adults

Beatrix Potter

- Helen Beatrix Potter was born in 1866. She was known as Beatrix.
- Beatrix enjoyed drawing and painting, especially pictures of nature and wildlife.
- The Potter family had many pets, including two rabbits called Benjamin Bouncer and Peter Piper.
- They often had holidays in the Lake District and Scotland, which enabled Beatrix to further study nature.
- As she grew up, Beatrix continued to study animals and plants.
- During her twenties, Beatrix developed a particular fascination with fungi and produced many detailed drawings and paintings of different types of fungi. She also produced a scientific paper about the reproduction of fungi, which was presented to the Linnean Society in 1897. It was presented by botanist George Masee, as women were not allowed to attend.
- Also in the 1890s, Beatrix began illustrating greetings cards and also sold illustrations for other stories and rhymes. These illustrations often featured animals such as frogs, mice and rabbits.
- When Beatrix went on holiday, she liked to write letters to her friends. These often included little sketches too. She particularly enjoyed writing to the children of the previous governesses, in particular Annie Moore and her children.
- In 1893, Beatrix was on holiday and wrote a letter to Annie Moore's son, Noel. She included a story about four rabbits: Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail and Peter. This was to become a very important letter in children's literature.
- In 1900, Beatrix tried to get a publisher for her story but was unsuccessful. So, in 1901, Beatrix printed a few copies of the story for friends and family. The story proved very popular and a publisher reconsidered their decision and decided to publish the book, as long as it contained Beatrix's illustrations.
- The story was published by Frederick Warne and Co in 1902. It became a best-seller and Beatrix soon wrote and published other animal stories, including 'The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin' and 'The Tailor of Gloucester'.
- Beatrix bought several farms in the Lake District, including Hill Top Farm which features in many of her stories.
- Beatrix bred Herdwick sheep and won a number of prizes at local shows.
- Beatrix died in 1943. She left her farms and several acres of land in the Lake District to the National Trust.



The Tale of Peter Rabbit

Fact Sheet for Adults

Rabbits

- Rabbits are small mammals that can be found in different countries around the world. They can be wild or domesticated. They belong to the Leporidae family, which also includes hares.
- Rabbits live in varied habitats, including meadows, woods, forests and grasslands.
- Some species of rabbit live underground in burrows. A group of burrows is called a warren.
- Male rabbits are known as bucks and females are called does. Baby rabbits are known as kits or kittens. 'Bunny' is an informal term for a rabbit and 'coney' is also an old-fashioned name for a rabbit (but is not used very often today). Baby hares are called leverets but this term is sometimes used for young rabbits too.
- Rabbits are mainly crepuscular animals, which means they are most active during dawn and dusk hours.
- Rabbits are herbivores, mainly eating grass and hay. Domesticated rabbits often eat pellet foods and sometimes green, leafy vegetables.
- Rabbits are very social animals and live in large groups in the wild, known as colonies.
- A rabbit's strong hind legs mean they can jump and run very quickly. Sometimes, rabbits will thump the ground with their hind paws to warn others of danger.
- Rabbits have very long ears, which can grow to around 10cm long. Their ears can move independently from each other, which enables them to detect where sounds are coming from.
- Rabbits have almost 360° vision. This means that they can see almost all the way around them without moving their heads. They only have a small blind-spot, right in front of their nose. However, their vision is best at seeing movement at long distances so they also rely on their other senses too.
- Rabbits have a good sense of hearing, sight and an excellent sense of smell. These senses help them to detect predators.

Fun Facts

- In 1903, Beatrix Potter designed and made a Peter Rabbit doll. She registered it at the patent office, which makes Peter Rabbit one of the world's oldest licensed literacy characters.
- There are 24 original stories published between 1902 and 1930. Other books were also published by Beatrix Potter, based on the characters from these stories, including painting books.
- In 2015, a manuscript for a previously unpublished story written by Beatrix Potter was found. The story was called 'The Tale of Kitty-in-Boots'. It was published in 2016 to mark the 150th anniversary of Beatrix Potter's birth.
- Also, to mark the 150th Anniversary, the Royal Mint published a set of 50p coins showing popular characters from Beatrix Potter stories, including Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddleduck, Mrs Tiggy-Winkle and Squirrel Nutkin.
- A rabbit's teeth and claws continually grow. Their claws need to be trimmed regularly and they need wooden toys and hay to gnaw and eat to make sure their teeth don't grow too long.
- When rabbits are happy they 'binky'! Rabbit binkies are when rabbits jump, bounce, twist and spin and run around. They do this when they are happy!

Take a look at our [Tale of Peter Rabbit Fact Cards](#) within this [Tale of Peter Rabbit Discovery Sack](#) for some more fun facts!