

The Velveteen Rabbit

Based on the book by Margery Williams

Tears of Joy Theatre and Bag&Baggage presents

The Velveteen Rabbit

About this story

Written by Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit or How Toys Become Real*, became a beloved fixture of children's literature since it was first published in 1922. Gifted to the boy as a Christmas present, the Velveteen Rabbit is teased by the other toys for being too plain. When the boy's former favorite toy goes missing, he plays with the Velveteen Rabbit and the two soon become inseparable. Unfortunately, the boy becomes gravely ill and the doctor advises that all of his belongings, including the rabbit, must be thrown away. Distraught, the Velveteen Rabbit sheds a single "real" tear, out of which a magical fairy appears. In return for his loyalty and love to the boy, the fairy turns the toy rabbit into a real rabbit.

About the Author

Margery Williams was born in 1881 in London. After the death of her father in 1890, her family moved to the United States. She began writing at the early age of 19. The birth of her first son and the impact of World War I stalled Margery's writing career for several years. In 1921, Margery returned to writing, inspired by the imaginative play of her own children. *The Velveteen Rabbit* instantly gained Margery success and continued to be her most popular publication. She continued to write children's stories for the rest of her life, continually bringing toys to life and giving animals human characteristics.

About the Play

Tears of Joy Theatre is excited to join Bag&Baggage to present the World Premier of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Written by Bag&Baggage's own David Jenkins, this adaptation brings the love and magic of the original tale to life through a mix of live actors and bunraku puppetry.

About Tears of Joy Theatre

Tears of Joy Theatre is recognized as one of the nation's outstanding puppet theatres, known internationally for its innovation and excellence. Each year the programs of the theatre serve over 200,000 children and adults. The company was originally founded in Hawaii in 1971 by Reg and Janet Bradley. In 1973 the Bradleys returned to the Portland area accompanied by Norman and Dale Kaneko and began touring throughout the Northwest. In 1980 Tears of Joy Theatre was reorganized as a not for profit corporation governed by a board of directors. Tears of Joy is a resident company in the Winningstad Theatre at the Portland Center for the Performing Arts.

About Bag&Baggage

The story of Bag&Baggage (B&B) was founded in 2005 by a small group of theatre practitioners. B&B's mission is to inspire Oregonians to engage in creative, accessible and moving live-theatre experiences. B&B moved to Hillsboro's Venetian Theatre and started their first season in 2008.

Lobby Exhibit

We are excited to partner with Portland's Rabbit Advocates for an educational Lobby experience (See pg. 6, Life of a "Real" Rabbit). We hope your students will enjoy this exhibit while they learn about how they can be a rabbit advocate. Also on display, are several vintage cameras, photographs, and toys from the era of the play (See pg 5, Toys and Photography in History). You'll also see a collage of

pictures of patrons and their favorite stuffed animal as well as a Tears of Joy Family Tree. Reference these educational lobby displays as you work through this curriculum guide with your students.

List of Characters

Velveteen Rabbit – A toy

Nana – The Boy's grandmother

Boy – a child who was given the Velveteen Rabbit as a Christmas gift

Charles – household employee

Dickens – household employee

The Nursery Fairy – Magical fairy

Rocking Horse – old toy

Pirate - toy

Jack-In-the-Box - toy

Robot - toy

Plane - toy

Doctor

Sister – Daughter of Boy

Brother – Son of Boy

Rabbits One and Two – Real rabbits

Terms

Velveteen – a cotton fabric resembling velvet.

Heirloom – a valued possession passed down through the family.

Scarlet Fever – a contagious disease characterized by scarlet skin and high fever.

Contagious – a type of disease that can be transmitted by direct or indirect contact

Curriculum Guide

About this Guide:

Hello teachers! We hope you enjoy this study guide and use it to increase your students' overall experience of Classic Children's Literature in relation to their attendance of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. The goal of this guide is to increase curriculum connections and provide supplemental activities and lessons that enhance their attendance to a Tears of Joy's Theatre Adventures Field Trip.

Six engaging lessons and activities are provided below. At the end of this guide you will also find supplemental material for you to freely use in conjunction with each lesson. Enjoy!

Contents

Language Arts

Pg. 4 Lesson 1 – Understanding the Story

Pg. 4 Lesson 2 – Writing for Self Esteem

Pg. 5 Lesson 3 – Writing your History

History and Social Sciences

Pg. 5 Lesson 4 – Toys and Photography of the 1920s

Science

Pg. 6 Lesson 5 – Life of a “Real” Rabbit

Concept objectives:

1. Students will understand how to read and recognize literature and art as records of human experience.
2. Students will report on a topic, refer to the story, and recount appropriate facts using descriptive details.
3. Students will understand historical context.

Why teach *The Velveteen Rabbit*?

The Velveteen Rabbit is one of the most famous pieces of Children's Literature of all time. The story inspires a child's imagination to understand the themes of unconditional love and inner beauty. Many students can relate to the Velveteen Rabbit's experience of being teased by the fancier toys and learning the lesson that beauty is on the inside. Ultimately, the Velveteen Rabbit's quest to become real through the love of his owner reminds us of the power of love. As we explore the context and background of this beautiful tale closely, we discover historical and cultural lessons of the 1920s, scientific lessons about mammals (rabbits), and various Language Arts activities including creating family trees and learning about our heritage through heirlooms.

Language Arts

Lesson 1

Understanding the story

Supplemental Page #9

Introduction: The story follows the quest of a Velveteen Rabbit toy to become real through the love of his owner. (See About this Story).

Activity 1.1

1. Teacher distributes the Supplemental page #9 or has students create their own story map.
 - a. Students depict characters, setting, and events (through drawing and writing) that happened in the story in the squares given.

Supplemental Questions:

1. Why did the other toys in the nursery tease the Velveteen Rabbit?
2. When did the Velveteen Rabbit turn into the Boy's favorite toy?
3. When did the Velveteen Rabbit first meet "real" rabbits? How did they treat him?
4. What made the Velveteen Rabbit "real?"

Lesson 2

Writing for Self Esteem

Beauty on the Inside

Supplemental page # 10

Introduction: The other toys in the nursery tease the Velveteen Rabbit for being "Cloth and sawdust stuffing." The real rabbits he meets in the field also tease him for not being an actual live rabbit. After years of playing with the Boy, he becomes threadbare and worn. He learns that the boy loves him unconditionally and through that love he comes to realize that beauty is on the inside. Many children can identify with the teasing the Velveteen Rabbit faces and can benefit from that same lesson.

Activity 2.1

1. Teacher asks the following questions to the class for discussion:
 - a. Why did the other toys and the Rabbits tease the Velveteen Rabbit?
 - b. How did this make him feel?
 - c. When did the Velveteen Rabbit stop feeling bad about his appearance? Why?
2. Teacher distributes the supplemental page #10 or asks students to write about the discussion questions.
 - a. Students draw a picture of the Velveteen Rabbit and list 3 good qualities.
 - b. Students draw a picture and list 3 good qualities about themselves.

Lesson 3

Writing your history

Creating a Family Tree

See Lobby Exhibit: Tears of Joy's Family Tree

Supplemental page # 11, 12

Introduction: The play *The Velveteen Rabbit* begins with the children of the central Boy character, looking through a box of his belongings. They unearth pictures, toys and family heirlooms that teach them about the life of their father and their own history. Genealogy and the creation of Family Trees help students understand their own context in history.

Activity 3.1

Family Tree

1. Teacher has the students create their own family tree or distributes supplemental page #11.
2. Students fill in the names of their relatives in the appropriate spaces.
 - a. Younger students can draw pictures or decorate the family tree.

Activity 3.2

My Toy, Your Toy

1. Teacher distributes the My Favorite Toy supplemental page #12.
2. Students draw a picture of their favorite toy in the square on the left.
3. Students interview their parents to find out their favorite toy and draw a picture of it in the square on the right.

Supplemental Questions

1. What do the children find in the box in the attic?
2. How many branches are on your family tree?
3. How is your favorite toy similar or different from your parents'?

History and Social Studies

Lesson 4

Toys and photography of the 1920s

See Lobby Exhibit: cameras, photographs, toys
Supplemental page # 13, 14

Introduction: Margery Williams wrote *The Velveteen Rabbit* in 1922 and both the story and our theatrical adaptation reflect this vibrant era. Students can see vintage toys, cameras and photographs used in the play and on display in our Lobby Exhibit. Looking at pictures and comparing toys from a different era allow the student to explore history through engaging visual examples.

Activity 4.1

Toys in History

1. Teachers read these fun facts about 1920s toys and shows students pictures.
 - The 1920s were the beginning of modern mass-production of toys. This allowed for more wind-up and mechanical toys to be produced.
 - The Teddy Bear started to become popular in the 1920s.
 - The development of a new type of plastic allowed toys to be cheaply produced and made more durable than previously built wooden counterparts.
2. Teacher distributes the supplemental page #13.
 - a. Students compare their own toys to those from 1920s, detailing 5 similarities and 5 differences.

Activity 4.2

History as seen through Photography

1. Teachers have the student look at various photographs from the 1920s and/or distribute the supplemental page #14.
 - a. Students write down 5 similar and 5 different details from the pictures.

Supplemental Questions:

1. What do the toys and photographs from the 1920s tell you about that era?
2. How are the 1920s different than 2012?

Lesson 5

The Life of a "Real" Rabbit

See Lobby Exhibit: Rabbit Advocates

Supplemental page # 15

Introduction: The Velveteen Rabbit yearns to become real. He learns that by being truly loved by someone, he becomes beautiful and real in their eyes. Nevertheless, the toys and the real rabbits tease him. In the end, the magical nursery fairy turns the Velveteen Rabbit into a real rabbit. Rabbits are central characters of many nursery tales, known for their cute noses and twitchy ears. Real rabbits are also popular pets.

Lobby Exhibit: We are excited to present Portland's Rabbit Advocates who will share their furry friends and teach patrons about proper care and behavior.

Visit their website for more information: www.adoptarabbit.org

Activity Lesson 5.1

1. Teachers read these fun facts to their students. For further information on Rabbits, see Further Reading (pg. 7)
 - a. Rabbits are mammals.
 - b. Although they may look similar to mice, they are not rodents.
 - c. They are most active during the evening and early morning.
 - d. A group of wild rabbits is called a "warren."
 - e. Rabbits have a great sense of smell and eyesight.
 - f. A rabbits teeth continue to grow throughout their life.
 - g. A rabbit can almost see all the way around themselves without turning their head.
 - h. The rabbit's average life span is between 8 and 12 years.
2. Teachers hand out the supplemental page #15 or have students write their own story about a rabbit.
 - a. Students draw a rabbit and write a story about their rabbit in the prompt given.

Further Reading and Resources

The Velveteen Rabbit, Margery Williams

Photography, a handbook of history, materials, and processes / Charles Swedlund, with Elizabeth Yule Swedlund

George Eastman : bringing photography to the people / Lynda Pflueger

Climbing your family tree : online and offline genealogy for kids / by Ira Wolfman

Me and my family tree / by Joan Sweeney ; illustrated by Annette Cable

Dig up your roots and find your branches : a child's guide to genealogy / by Susan H. Hubbs

Rabbits / Ruth Bjorklund

Rabbits / Annalise Bekkering

Internet resources

Children and Rabbits: <http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/children.html>

For info on toys of the 1920s: <http://www.1920-30.com/toys/>

Victorian toys (and general info):

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/victorians/toys.htm>

<http://www.thepeoplehistory.com/20stoys.html>

Amazing info on all things Victorian: <http://www.thecompletevictorian.com/>

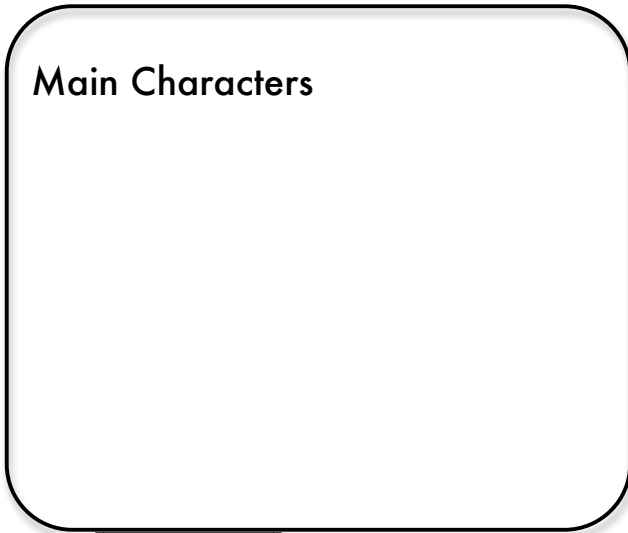
Margery Winifred Williams bio:

http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/bios/Bianco_Margery_Williams.html

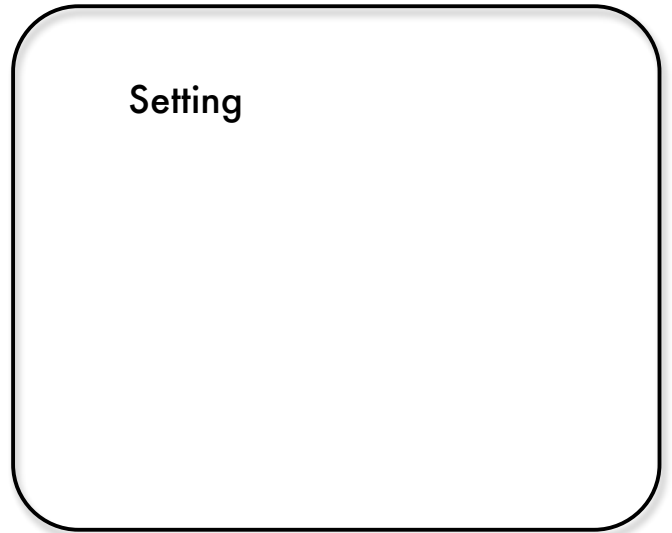
Vintage Portland photos from McMenamins <http://www.mcmenamins.com/galleries/kntimeline>

The Velveteen Rabbit

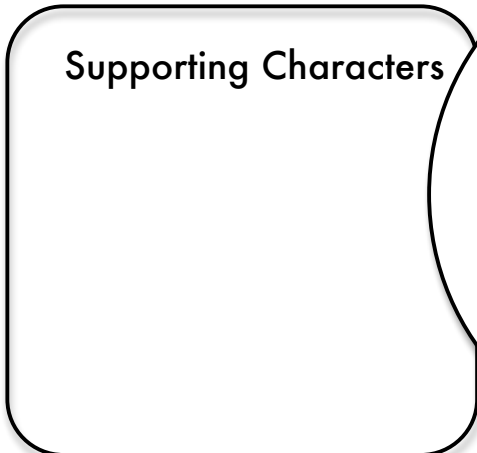
Main Characters



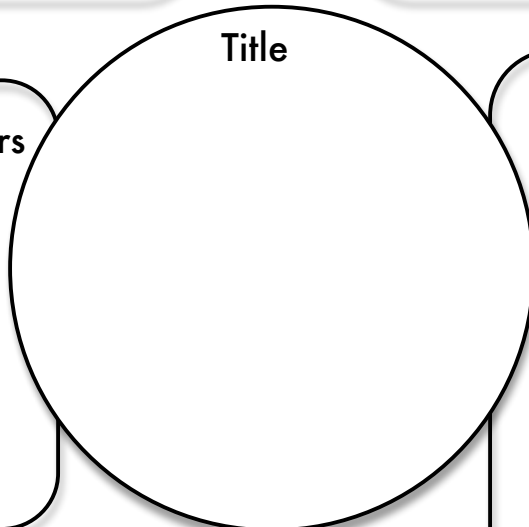
Setting



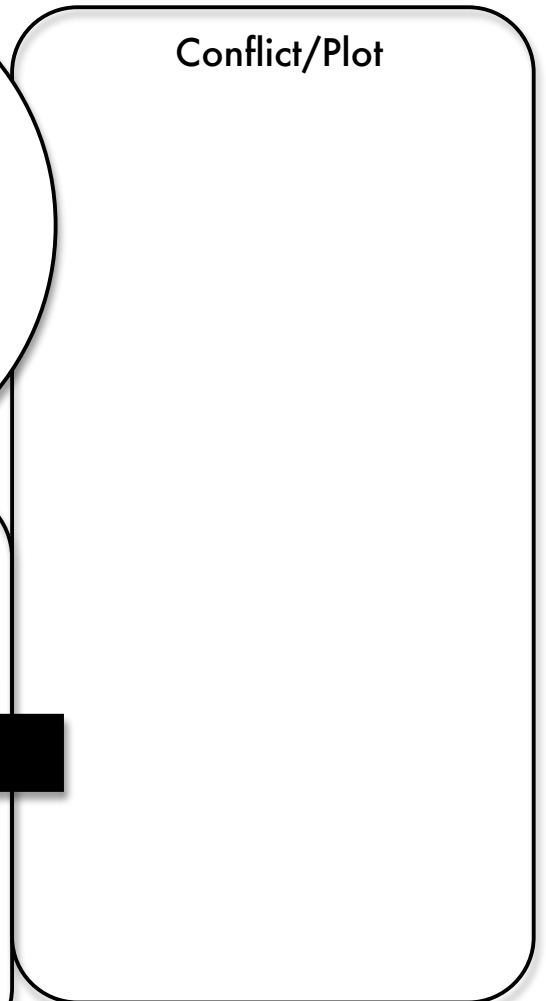
Supporting Characters



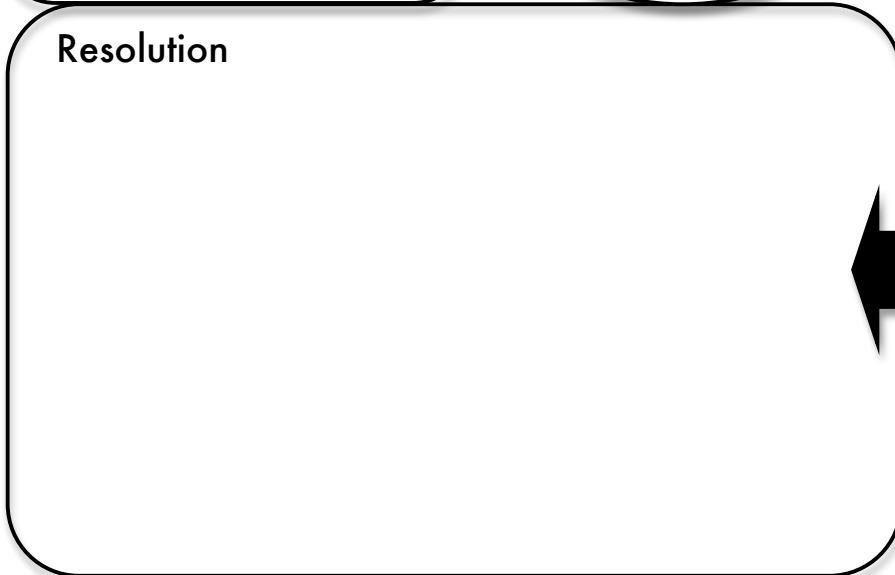
Title



Conflict/Plot



Resolution



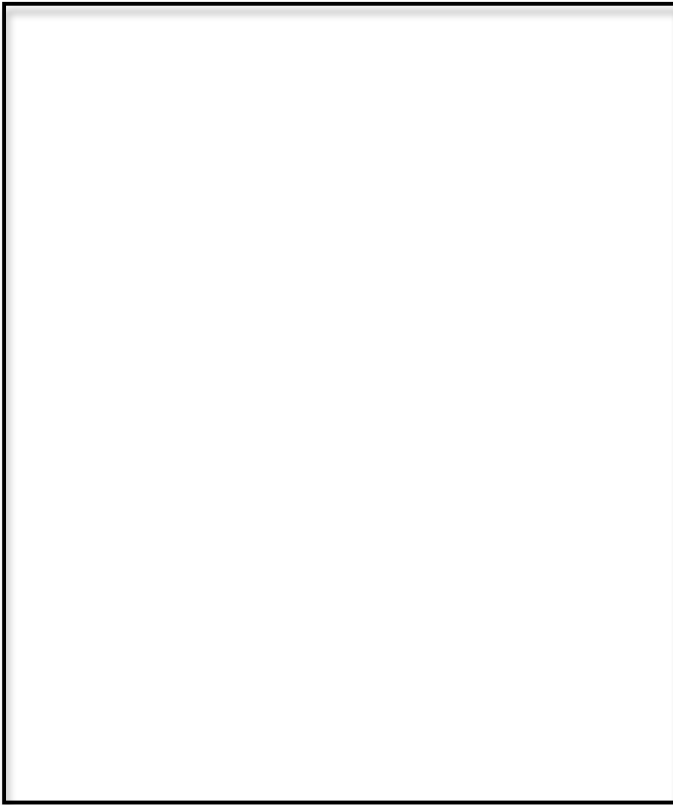
Activity 2.1
Language Arts

Beauty is on the Inside

The nursery toys and live rabbits tease the Velveteen Rabbit for being different.
Through the love of the Boy, he learns that beauty is on the inside.

Draw a picture of...

The Velveteen Rabbit



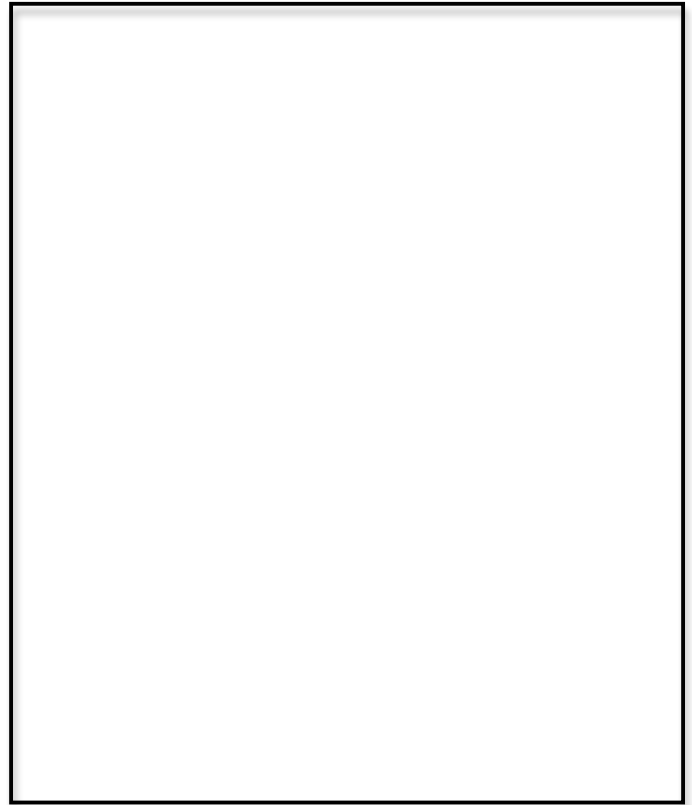
List 3 good qualities about the Velveteen Rabbit:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

You



List 3 good qualities about the YOU!

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Activity 3.1
Language Arts

Creating a Family Tree

Write the names or draw pictures of your relatives in the squares given then draw a tree around the chart. This is your family tree! Feel free to add extra limbs for your siblings (brothers and sisters) and aunts and uncles.

Grandfather

Grandmother

Grandfather

Grandmother

Mother

Father

YOU

Activity 3.2
Language Arts

My Favorite Toy

**Draw a picture of your
Favorite Toy**

**Draw a picture of your
Parent's Favorite Toy**

My favorite toy is:

My parent's favorite toy was:



Activity 4.1
History and Social Sciences

Toys in History

Children enjoyed many different toys in the 1920s and 1930s. Check out these fun pictures of toys kids played with!



"Flossie Flirt"

How are these toys different than your toys?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How are they the same?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activity 4.2
History and Social Sciences

History As Seen Through Photography



Look at these pictures
From the 1920s



How were the 1920s different than today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How are they the same?

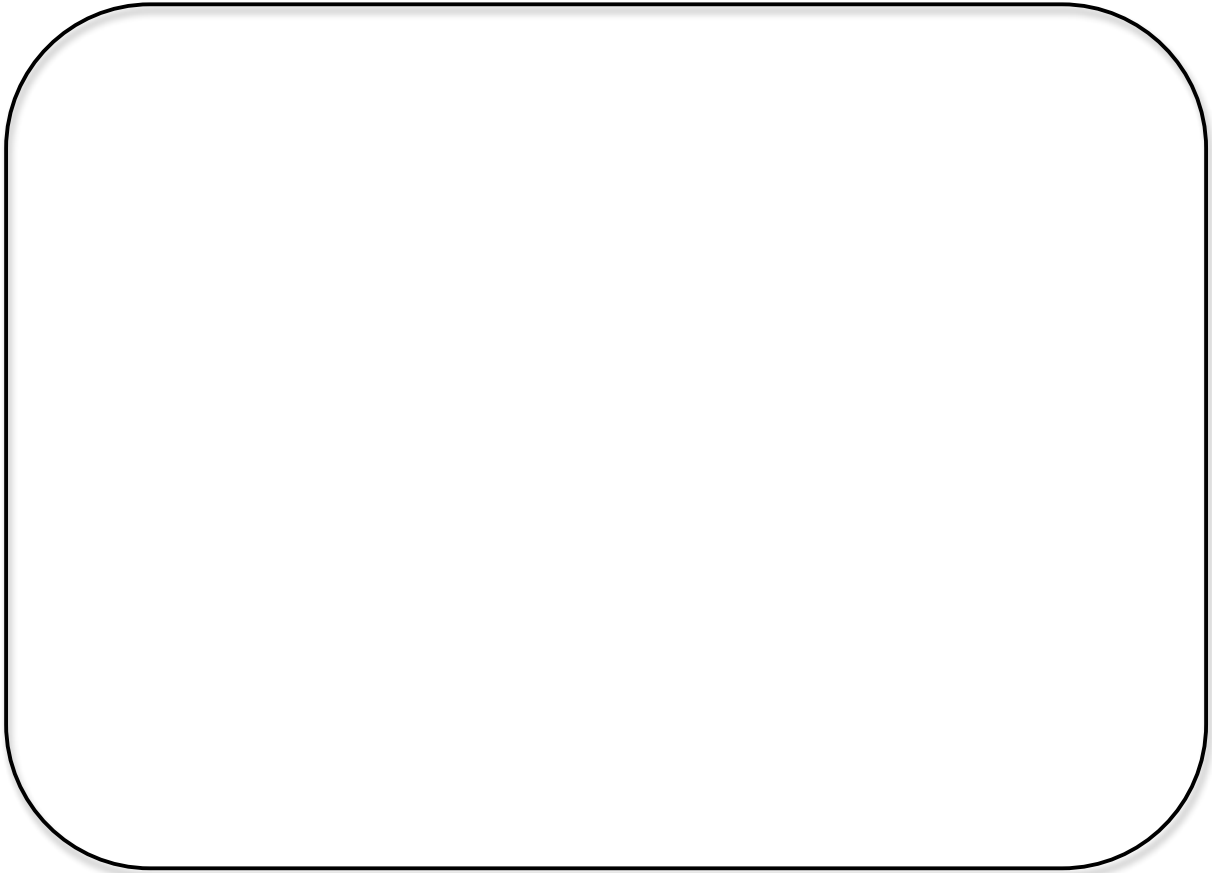
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activity 5.1

Science

The Life of a "Real" Rabbit

Draw a picture of a rabbit



My Rabbit's name is: _____

Color: _____ Age: _____

One day, _____, the rabbit _____
