

What's a rabbit?

A tame rabbit loves to be held and cuddled. Rabbits usually live to be seven or eight years old.

Most rabbits have big, long **ears**. That's why they can hear extremely well. Can you hear the cat sneak through the grass? Can you hear the fox in its den? The rabbit hears everything. It moves its long ears in all directions. It knows the location of each noise.

Did you know the biggest rabbit on earth measures more than three feet long? That's almost your length!

Rabbits have a phenomenal **nose**, with which they smell everything. They can easily distinguish between what's food and what's not. They can sniff out their friends and their enemies. They can even smell you from the opposite end of the forest!

The rabbit's **eyes** are on the side of its head. That way, it can see what's happening next to it and even behind it. Rabbits see the world differently than you do. They can see far and detect moving objects. And just like a cat, they can see extremely well in the dark and at dusk.

Thanks to its **whiskers**, a rabbit can easily sense its surroundings. This is useful when it crawls through dark tunnels. Rabbits also have responsive nerve endings all over their body. These help them easily find their way in the dark.

A rabbit has sharp **incisors**. The more it nibbles, the more they shrink. Luckily, a rabbit's incisors are always growing—just like your nails.

Rabbits have a good sense of **taste** too. They prefer sweets.



The rabbit family

Though the rabbit and hare are related, they're quite different from each other. Take a look.

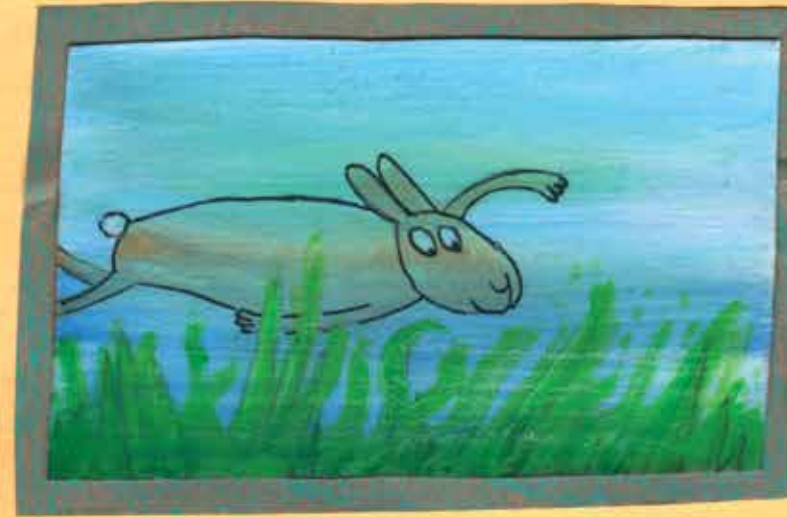
A hare is bigger and stronger than a rabbit. Hares have small black spots on the tips of their ears. Their eyes are lighter, and their ears are longer. A hare also has a longer snout and bigger paws.

Hares prefer to live alone, while rabbits live in groups. Hares like open spaces, like a meadow. Rabbits prefer the woods or the dunes. They like having shelter, like shrubberies, or a hill in which they can make a hole. Hares don't dig holes. Instead, they dig a place in the grass (a form).



Did you know
a hare can run
almost twice as
fast as a rabbit?

Here you see some **other family members** of the rabbit.



The marsh rabbit lives in the swamp. It has short ears and likes swimming. When it dives underwater, it holds its breath. Marsh rabbits love water plants.



The pika, or whistling hare, looks like a small mouse. And yet, it's related to the rabbit! It has small, round ears and no tail.



The arctic hare is well equipped to withstand the cold. Since its fur is white, it can easily hide in the snow.



The brush rabbit enjoys high temperatures. It lives in dry and hot surroundings. It has big, long ears to cool down.