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Are you a fan of books about Peter Rabbit and Squirrel Nutkin? These longtime favorites were written by Beatrix Potter, an Englishwoman born in 1866.

When Potter was in her late 20s, she sent a letter to Noel, the son of her former governess, or teacher. Noel was ill, and when Potter ran out of things to talk to him about, she told a story about four little bunnies. Several years later, she published the story as a book.

“The Tale of Peter Rabbit” became one of the most popular children’s books of all time. It was the first of her 23 “little books.” All were small so kids could hold them easily.

Early life

Potter was born in London, England. From age 8, she spent much of her time drawing. She drew her pets, which included mice, lizards and rabbits. She also painted landscapes and plants.

As a child, she enjoyed family vacations in a part of England with lots of lakes. She learned to love the countryside.

In 1905, she bought a farm there called Hill Top. Many of her books are set in this area.



Beatrix Potter at age 9.

photo courtesy the Warne Archive

Drawing talent

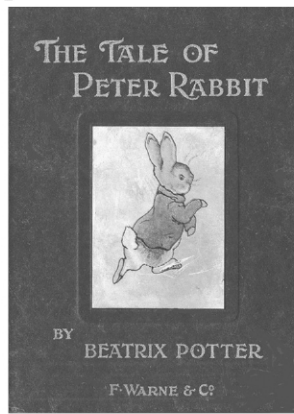
Not only did Potter draw animals in make-believe scenes, but she also drew nature as it truly was. Her attention to detail was so good that she might have become an illustrator for science books.

The books

At first, Potter had a hard time finding a publisher for her first book, “The Tale of Peter Rabbit.” Many that she sent it to turned it down. But she did not give up, and a publisher, Frederick Warne & Co., published it in 1902.

Other books followed, including “The Tale of Benjamin Bunny,” “The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies,” “The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin” and “The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck.” The last one she wrote was “The Tale of Little Pig Robinson,” in 1930.

This is the cover of the first edition of “The Tale of Peter Rabbit.” Millions of copies have since been sold.



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One of Beatrix Potter’s illustrations of fungi, or mushrooms.

photo courtesy the Armitt Museum

Mini Fact:

“The Tale of Peter Rabbit” has been translated into many languages.



photo courtesy the National Trust

Beatrix Potter relaxes with her sheepdog, Kep. She loved animals all her life.

Later years

At the age of 47, Potter married a country lawyer, William Heelis. She bought more land to add to her farm and became so interested in raising sheep and in country life that she had little time for drawing or writing. She also cared for her parents.

She worked the rest of her life to protect both the environment and older buildings near her farm.

Potter died in 1943 at the age of 77. Because she was so interested in preserving nature, she left a lot of land for the Lake District National Park in England.



Beatrix Potter and William Heelis.

Resources



On the Web:

- peterrabbit.com

At the library:

- “Saving the Countryside: The Story of Beatrix Potter and Peter Rabbit” by Linda Elovitz Marshall

Try ‘n’ Find

Words that remind us of Beatrix Potter are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

BEATRIX, BOOK, BUNNIES, COUNTRYSIDE, DRAWING, ENVIRONMENT, FARM, GOVERNESS, HEELIS, ILLUSTRATOR, LAKES, NATURE, PARK, PETER, POTTER, PUBLISHER, RABBIT, SCIENCE, SHEEP.

N C O U N T R Y S I D E K S D
P U B L I S H E R Q I U O E R
Y E N V I R O N M E N T O I A
Y P E E H S H E E L I S B N W
W U O S E K A L E R U T A N I
K I L L U S T R A T O R K U N
R J G O V E R N E S S I J B G
A H R E T T O P V R E T E P Z
P R A B B I T E C N E I C S A
B D B E A T R I X T V M R A F



Cook’s Corner

Fun Fruit Sticks

You’ll need:

- 8 (10-inch) wooden skewer sticks
- 1/2 cantaloupe (cut into bite-size chunks)
- 10 to 12 grapes (green or red)
- 8 to 10 pineapple chunks

What to do:

1. Soak wooden skewer sticks in water for 30 minutes so that the fruit slides on easily.
2. Cut whole fruits into chunks.
3. Skewer fruits on sticks in alternate patterns. Make it colorful! Makes 8 servings.

- 1 apple (cut into 12 bite-size chunks)

Be creative!
Add other fruits you like, or small marshmallows.



* You’ll need an adult’s help with this recipe.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. vegetable on a cob (4) _____
2. allowed by law (5) _____
3. stomach area (7) _____
4. U.S. capital city (10) _____
5. dog with curly fur (6) _____
6. what you put on before shoes (5) _____
7. amazing (9) _____

HING	DER	LEG	RN
PO	OMEN	WON	ODLE
KS	TON	FUL	WAS
CO	ABD	AL	SOC

Answers: corn, legal, abdomen, leg, legal, Washington, poodle, socks, wonderful.



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Mini Jokes



Bea: Which rabbit has lots of fleas?

Ben: Bugs Bunny!

Eco Note



Kangaroos have shown they can use body language to ask humans for help, busting earlier beliefs that only domesticated animals have such an ability. After blocking food from the kangaroos with a transparent box door that made it impossible for the marsupials to get it, scientists observed the animals’ behavior. The roos almost always turned to a nearby human for help. “They’d look straight up at my face, like a dog or a goat would do, and back at the box,” said one of the scientists from City University of Hong Kong.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about land conservation.

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