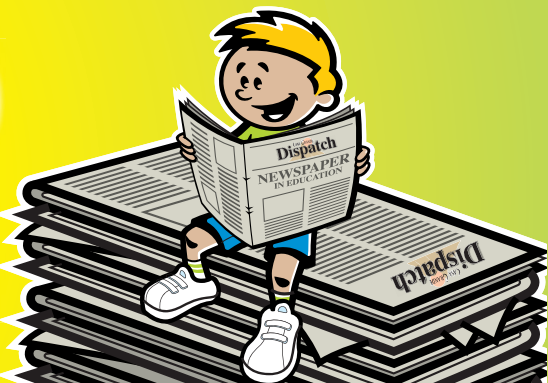


KEEPING STUDENTS WELL INFORMED AT HOME DURING SUMMER VACATION



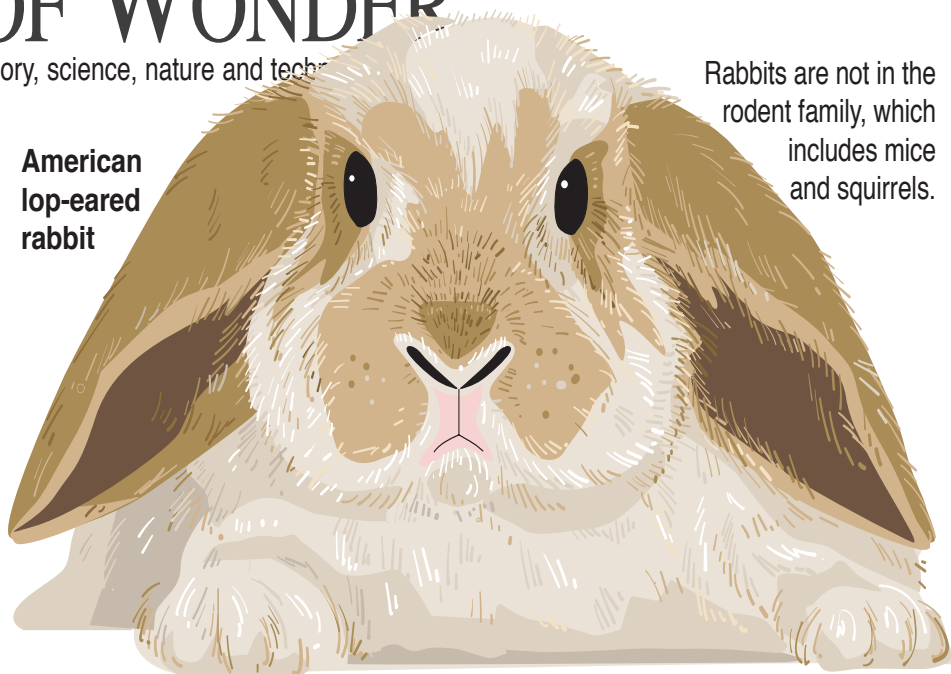
WORLD OF WONDER

Exploring the realms of history, science, nature and technology

Rabbits

Rabbits are not in the rodent family, which includes mice and squirrels.

American lop-eared rabbit



There are few things in this world more adorable than rabbits. Their soft fur, big eyes and ears, and charming personalities have made this little animal a popular pet around the world. Rabbit breeds come in all shapes and sizes. The American Rabbit Breeders Association officially recognizes 50 unique breeds.

In a word

A female rabbit is called a **doe**; the male is a **buck**. Baby rabbits are called **kits**, **kittens** or **bunnies**. A group of domesticated rabbits is called a **herd**.

The basics

People sometimes get rabbits and hares confused, but while rabbits and hares both are **lagomorphs** and belong to the **Leporidae family**, they are different species. Hares have not been domesticated. Hares are born with hair and good vision, while rabbits are born hairless and blind.

Domestication

Since ancient times, people all over the world have raised domestic rabbits for meat and fur.

Many breeds of domesticated rabbit have been bred for show and for pets. The **lop-eared rabbit** is a popular pet breed. Rabbits make great pets. They are quiet and friendly.

Wild rabbits rarely live long in captivity, and it is best to leave seemingly orphaned wild bunnies alone. More than likely, their mother is hiding nearby.

Food for thought

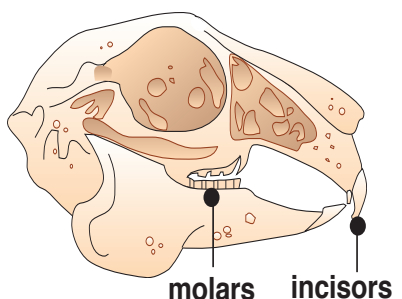
Rabbits are **herbivores**. In the wild, they eat vegetation, mainly grass, but sometimes gardens and crops. In captivity, rabbits should be fed mostly hay, small amounts of fresh vegetables, and special pellets made from hay. Carrots have a lot of sugar and should be given only as a rare treat.

A rabbit's teeth are always growing, and chewing hay helps to grind them down and avoid dental problems.

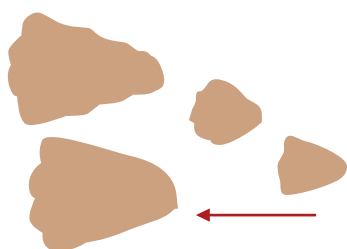
Leporids eat their meals twice. They have two kinds of waste pellets (droppings). Moist, soft droppings called **cecotropes** contain essential nutrients and are eaten and digested. Hard droppings are true waste and are not eaten again.

Anatomy 101

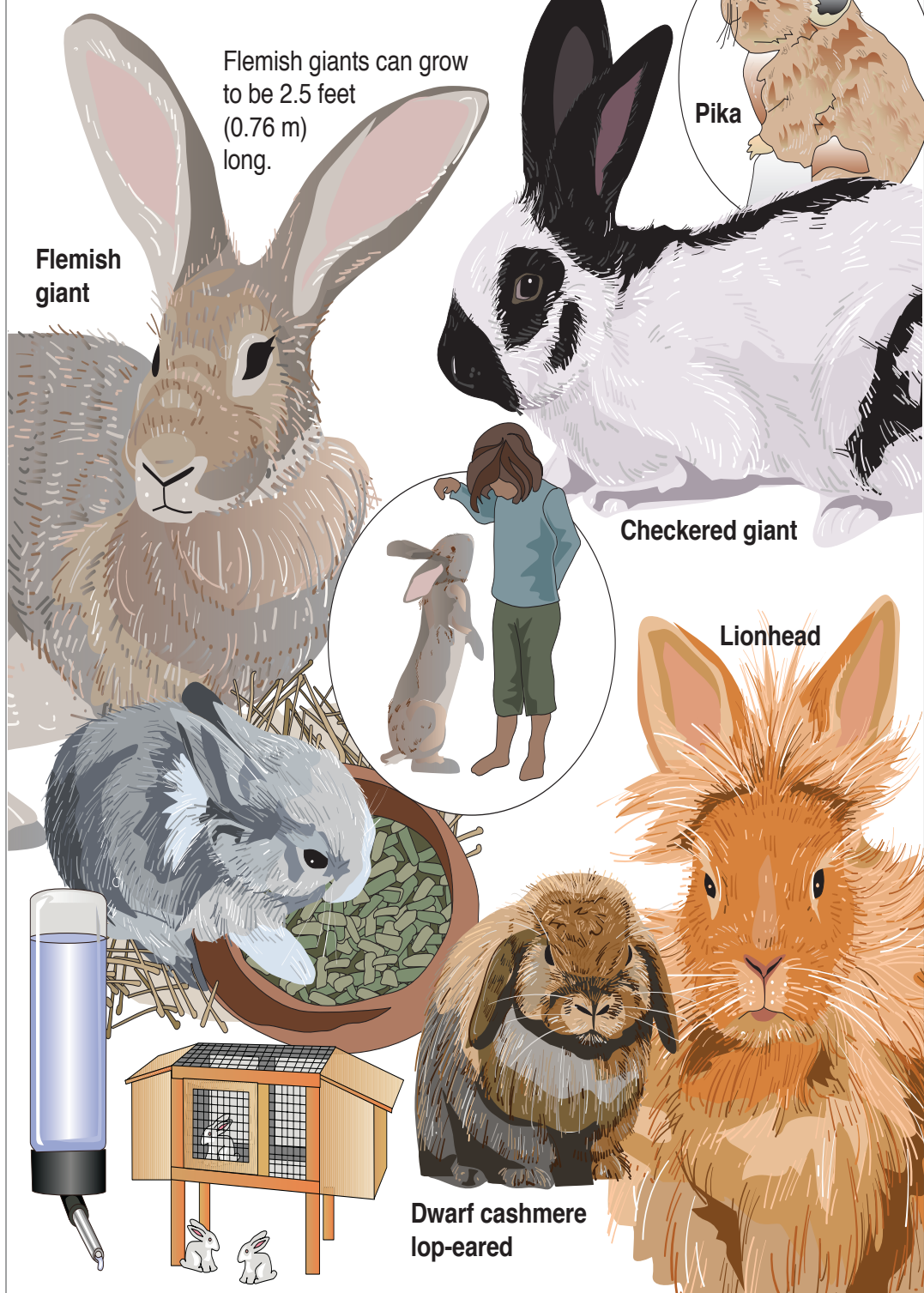
Rabbits and hares have excellent hearing and a keen sense of smell. Their strong back legs allow them to move by hopping. The eyes are located on the sides of the head, giving them a wider view.



Rabbits need to chew constantly to wear down their incisors, which never stop growing. They chew with a side-to-side motion, not up and down.



An unusual feature of rabbit footprints is that the hind leg precedes the front.



Flemish giant

Flemish giants can grow to be 2.5 feet (0.76 m) long.

Pika

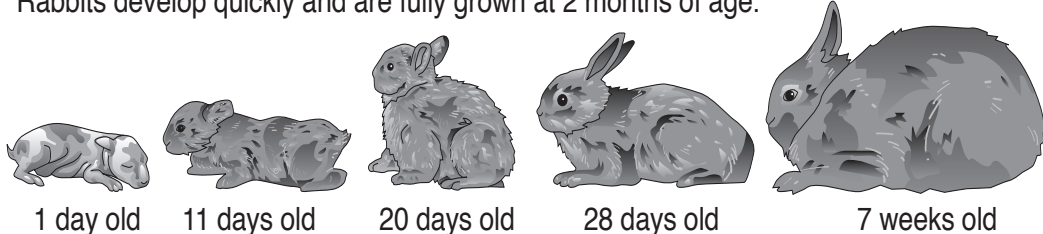
Checkered giant

Lionhead

Dwarf cashmere lop-eared

Growing up fast

Rabbits develop quickly and are fully grown at 2 months of age.



1 day old

11 days old

20 days old

28 days old

7 weeks old

Did you know?

Rabbits were not found naturally in Australia, they were introduced by humans. Today, leporids can be found on every continent except Antarctica.

Hares and wild American rabbits (cottontails) are not genetically compatible with other lagomorphs, so they cannot interbreed. There is a domesticated breed of rabbit called a Belgian hare, but it is really a rabbit, not a hare.

Rabbits and hares are related to the **pika**, a small mammal that looks like a large mouse and lives in colder climates.

Lagomorphs were originally classified as rodents, but in 1912 scientists made them a separate family.

A rabbit symbol is often used to show that a product was not tested on animals. This is because rabbits have been used in product safety testing.

A rabbit's life span is about 8 years, though if spayed or neutered, they live up to 12 years.

Rabbits cannot vomit.

Rabbits perform an athletic leap known as a **binky** when they're happy — making twists and kicks in the air.

Rabbits are **crepuscular**, which means they are most active at dawn and dusk.

Bunnies are the third most common animal at shelters, after dogs and cats. Before you adopt a rabbit, be sure you are committed to investing the time and care needed.

Rabbits are social animals that thrive in the company of other rabbits. If you get two as pets, make sure you have them spayed or neutered, or you will end up with many unwanted bunnies (and they may fight and be aggressive).

Some rabbits purr when they're content and relaxed.

Rabbits' eyes are on the sides of the head, so they can see almost all the way around them.

Rabbits can be litter box trained.

SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia, World Book Inc.; https://www.goodhousekeeping.com; https://www.mentalfloss.com; https://www.mspca.org; https://www.peta.org

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