

# Rabbits

# Rr

How the **r** sound in English evolved is anybody's guess. Equally mysterious is why some children have no trouble with the sound and others use a **w**. Spoken sounds are acquired in a developmental order, and many children are in second grade before they get their **r** right. So if your preschooler says "**wabbit**" instead of "**rabbit**," most speech experts will tell you to relax and let nature take its course.

# 10

If **r** can be difficult, **10** is magically simple. Because of those fingers, it comes a lot easier than seven, eight, or nine. Have you noticed that for a toddler and some preschoolers, holding up **10** fingers is much easier than holding up four? Learning to isolate those fingers takes time. Less fine motor control is needed to "give me **10**."

## Where in the WORLD? ● Rabbits

Though they are not native to most continents, rabbits and hares have been introduced to many places. They can now be found in nearly all parts of the world.



## Reading Resource

Every title in the *Zootles* series is designed to be used for fun and learning, and as a reading resource as well. The pages are written simply and address various stages of emerging literacy, and they encourage new readers to exercise their new skills at just the right level.

Reading *Zootles* together will provide "together time" for you and your child—and reinforce vocabulary, comprehension, and early reading skills, too.

## It's a ZOO out there!

You may not have to go to the zoo—or even far—to see rabbits. They can be found in city parks, suburban backyards, and any well-kept vegetable garden. Ask around the neighborhood to find out the best rabbit-sighting spots, then head out some evening for some bunny-watching. Look for:

- Rabbits swiveling their ears to catch nearby sounds.
- Rabbits standing very still and alert when they sense your presence.
- Rabbits dashing across open spaces to hide.
- Rabbits nibbling at some lettuce that you set out for them to find.

# In the Garden

Rabbits love to roam in gardens, nibbling on whatever tasty things they can find. Can you find all of the **radishes** in this garden? Then can you find all the **carrots**, **dandelions**, and **clovers**?

# 10

There are lots of tasty things in the garden. There are **10** of one kind of plant. Can you find them?

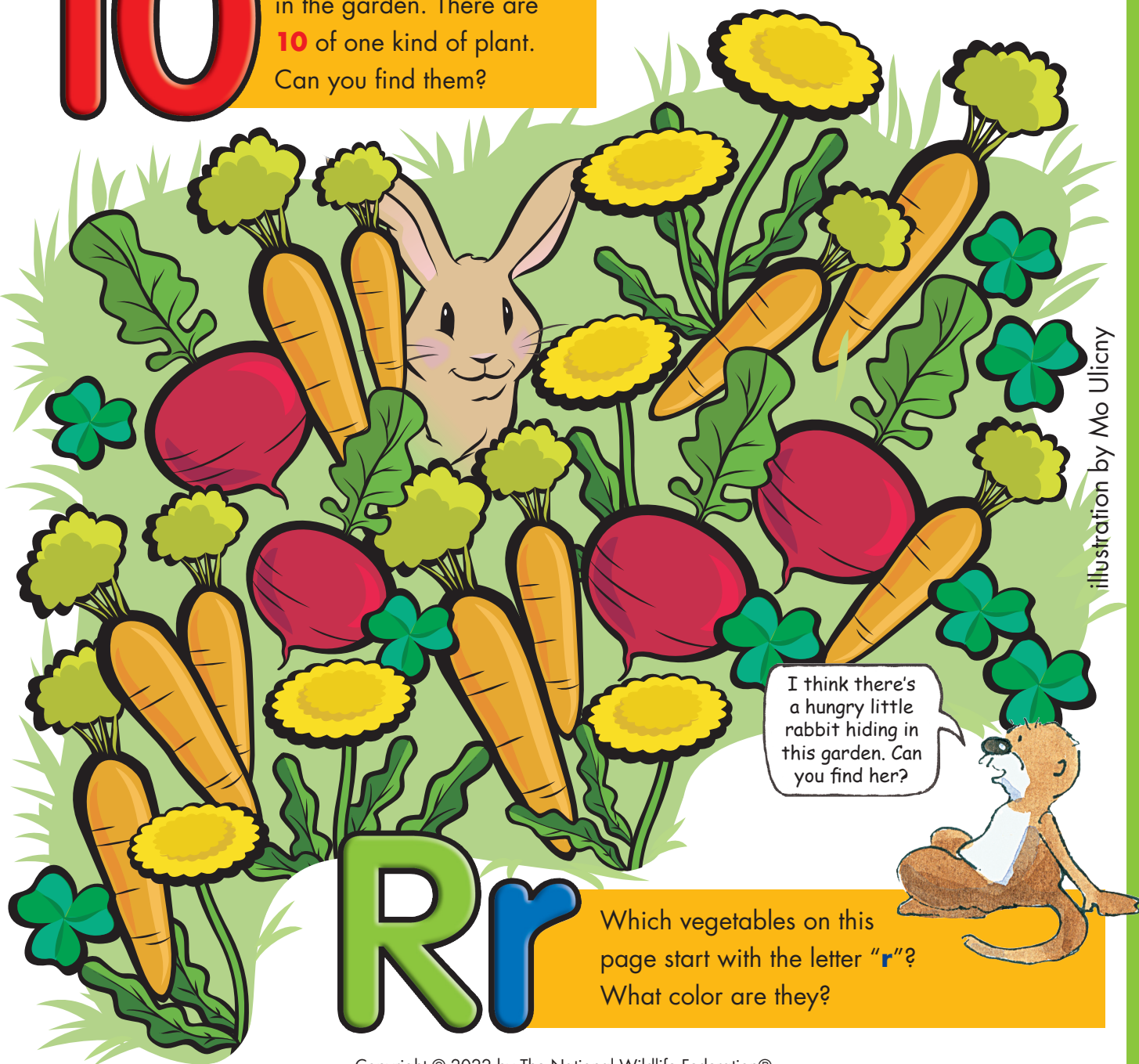


illustration by Mo Ulicny

# Rr

Which vegetables on this page start with the letter "r"?  
What color are they?

# Rhyming R's

# Rr

Do you know how to rhyme? Rhyming words sound alike, but usually start with different letters. For example, **cat** rhymes with **hat**, and **blue** rhymes with **clue**. You can make rhymes by putting an "r" at the beginning of the words below. (The pictures are there to give you a hint!)

nose → \_\_ose



sing → \_\_ing



cake → \_\_ake



toad → \_\_oad



hope → \_\_ope



## What ELSE can we DO?

- **Pardon Me . . . (p. 2-3)** Rabbits use every part of their bodies—from the tip of their noses to the fluff of their little tails—to communicate. Their gestures may be cute to us, but they're also key to rabbits' survival.
- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Help your child discover the different ways she uses her face and body to express feelings. How would she show she's paying attention, is happy, sleepy, or likes you?
- **The Better to Hear You With, My Dear (p. 4-5)** The big bad wolf isn't the only thing with big ears. Rabbit Radar shows how a sense of hearing keeps rabbits safe.
- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Play a listening game. While your child covers his eyes, hide a kitchen timer (the kind that ticks) set for five minutes. See if he can listen very carefully and find it. The game's even harder with a group of kids, because they have to suppress their giggles, too!
- **Wild or Pet? (p. 6-7)** The Leporidae family can also be broken down into rabbits and hares. Hares are usually bigger, are born with their eyes open, and can run just after birth. Rabbits are born blind and naked, and stay in their fur-lined nest for a few days before they venture out. Just to make things confusing, a jackrabbit isn't even a rabbit—it's a hare!
- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Taxonomy, or sorting creatures like hares and rabbits into categories, is a game grown-up biologists like to play, but kids like to sort things too. With pictures from books, magazines, or the internet, help your child distinguish "wild" and "domestic" animals. Then refine your domestic categories into "pets" and "farm animals."
- **Rabbit Sun to Sun (p. 8-9)** Children love to pretend to be animals. Is it because they get to examine different emotions . . . the meek rabbit, the angry lion? Is it because they want to sort out how animals and people are the same but different? Or is it just because it's fun?
- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** As you read the first verse, have your child hop like a baby rabbit. Second verse,

nibble those carrots. Recite the third verse while holding hands and hopping together. And with the last, curl up nice and cuddly.

- **Funny Bunny (p.10-11)** Who knew that rabbits came in so many shapes, sizes, and colors? If you'd like to see unusual domestic rabbits in the flesh (or fur), head to the nearest county fair or 4-H youth fair. Check your state's county fair schedule online.
- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** If it isn't fair time, make your own funny bunny. Take a paper plate, draw a line across the middle, and draw two ears on the top half. Cut out the remainder of the top. Now your children can decorate the rabbit however they like. Try cotton balls, macaroni, wrapping paper, drinking straws, etc.
- **Can You Say "Crepuscular"?** (p. 12-15) Rabbits and hares are neither nocturnal (active at night) nor diurnal (busy during the day), but crepuscular—which means you're most likely to find them at twilight, dawn, or when the moon is full. (Deer are also crepuscular.)
- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Plan to stay up past bedtime on a cloudless night when the moon is full. Pack a dinner picnic and drive away from the city lights to a place where you can watch the moon rise in the east and appreciate its reflected light. Just like a rabbit, use all of your senses—see the shadows, hear the noises, touch the dew, and taste the hot chocolate!
- **Otto and Allie (back cover)** Not too many of us have as many siblings as a rabbit, but even a family of two can be plenty of fun when you make sure there's time to be silly.
- **ZOOTLES TO-DO:** Your neighborhood rabbits may not let you sit down to lunch, but you can pretend. Make a rabbit lunch of shredded lettuce, carrots, and perhaps some fresh pea pods. (You can transform your "funny bunny" into a mask and wear it for some extra silliness!)

