

# Classroom Guide - The Forgotten Rabbit

Guide written by Stephanie Itle-Clark and Erin Comaskey  
And provided courtesy of The Gryphon Press  
[thegryphonpress.com](http://thegryphonpress.com)



Provided courtesy  
The Gryphon Press:  
[thegryphonpress.com](http://thegryphonpress.com)

*The Forgotten Rabbit*  
Written by Nancy Furstinger  
Illustrations by Nancy Lane

---

This classroom guide provides language arts activities that will involve other learning areas such as math and science. The purpose of this guide is to extend the themes of this story into learning activities that help to reinforce the main ideas of the book and to deepen understanding.

---

## Story Summary

A baby rabbit is bought as a gift for the children of a family during the Easter holiday. At first, the children take good care of the young rabbit and provide care and attention. However, over time, as the rabbit grows up, she is 'forgotten' by the children, her cage kept outside. When winter comes, the rabbit receives little or no care. She is saved and adopted by a young caregiver, Rosalita, and taken to a new home. Rosalita, who names the rabbit Bella, offers her shelter and excellent care, proper nutrition, and stimulating exercise. Rosalita teaches Bella how to navigate a rabbit agility course, so that at an agility event, she wins a ribbon. Both girl and rabbit are happy with their lives together.

## Vocabulary Words

Some of the vocabulary in this story is uncommon. We have provided definitions based on the context and use of the word in the story. Ask your students to use context clues to create meaning for these words. The Vocabulary Words section correlates to:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.4](#): Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

- Huddle:** to come close together in a group.
- Binky:\*** to jump with extreme joy and happiness.
- Gnaw:** to bite or chew something repeatedly: to make a hole in something by biting or chewing repeatedly.
- Periscoped:\*** based on its use in a submarine of looking up at the view from below.
- Torpedoed:** to move through an obstacle like a "torpedo" in a small, speedy, direct manner.
- Chinning:** Rabbits have scent glands on their chins and rub their chins on people to indicate that they belong to them.
- Pause table:** The table where the agility participant stops after completing the event.

\* Words with an asterisk are not found in traditional dictionaries.

## General Comprehension Questions

1. Why do you think the children who first brought Bella home played with her less and less? What do you think might have helped them to take better care of her?
2. Do you think a cage is a good place for a rabbit to spend most of his or her time?
3. When Rosalita first brings Bella home, Bella tells us that she shakes and shivers when she is petted and quakes and quivers when Rosalita interacts with her. Why do you think she responds in this way?
4. At the end of the story, Bella “chins” Rosalita. Why does Bella do that?
5. Have you ever seen a rabbit exercise with the equipment described in the story? Would you like to?

## Lesson One: Reading and Writing

Lesson Title: Choose Your Own Adventure

Grades: 3-5

Objectives: To apply writing skills to create alternative endings for *The Forgotten Rabbit*.

*Students will be able to:*

- Identify elements of setting development within multiple texts.
- Recognize picture books as model texts that exemplify multiple literary elements.
- Identify four types of conflict in literature (character vs. character, character vs. self, character vs. nature, and character vs. society).
- Apply the elements of plot development and conflict resolution to revisions of their own writing.

Standards Addressed:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.2](#)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3](#)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.6](#)

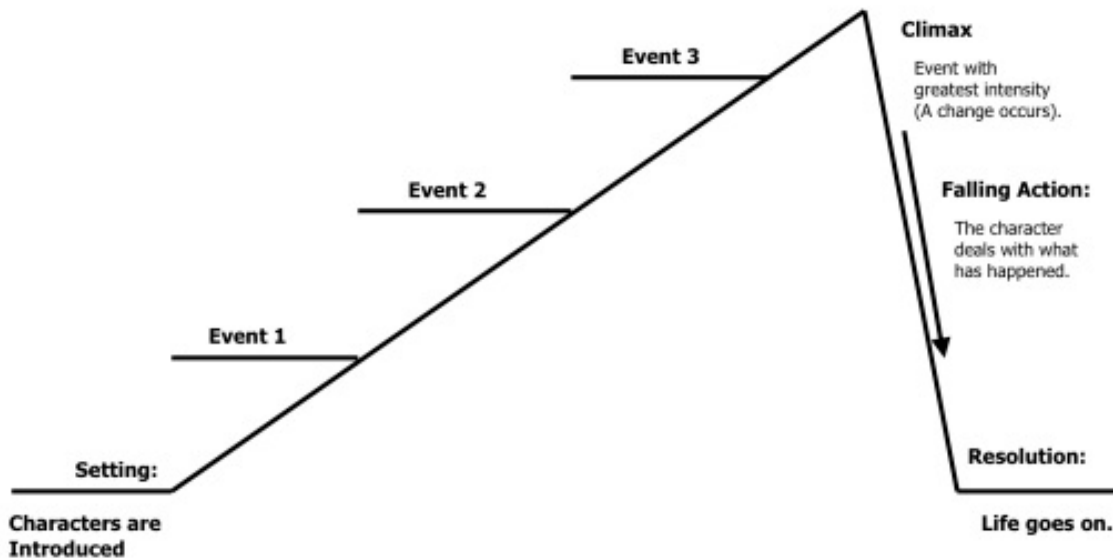
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3](#)

### Materials:

Writing Materials (pencils, paper, and drawing materials) for each student. Plot diagram (optional) [a model is provided below; you may also wish to use Read\*Write\*Think’s virtual interactive plot diagram found at

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/plot-diagram/>

# Plot diagram for a story



**Preparation:** none

## Opening:

1. Ask students to help you summarize the story of *The Forgotten Rabbit*. If necessary, read pieces of the story again out loud.
2. Introduce the vocabulary word 'PLOT.' Define plot as the main events in a story. In every story, the main character or characters face a conflict, or problem, and try to find a resolution, or an answer. We can think of 'PLOT' like a story road map.
3. Show the students a copy of a plot diagram and review each section.
4. Describe how on the plot diagram or story map there are events that are particularly important. Important events lead to the 'CLIMAX.' This is a "turning event," or one that changes the direction of the story and ultimately leads to the resolution or outcome.

## Body:

1. Ask the students to share some of the important events from the story. For example, in *The Forgotten Rabbit*, one turning event is that Bella was sold in a pet store and removed from her mother in order to be sold at Easter time. Another event is that Bella was taken into Rosalita's home after being forgotten and uncared for outside.
2. Ask the students to think about how they could change the story by re-writing **one** of the plot events that happens before the climax. For example, what if Bella had been able to remain with her mom and live on the farm? Or, what if a family who loved rabbit agility had taken her home from the time she was a baby? What

if Rosalita hadn't come to rescue her? Let the students work individually on drafting alternatives to the plot.

3. Allow students to rewrite the story beginning at the chosen plot event. Remind students that they should still include a climax and resolution. Younger students can draw the pictures of their story and dictate the words to you. You can use the template provided or create your own.

\*NOTE: This section may take more than one language arts/reading period.

### **Closure:**

1. After students have written their new story, ask them to illustrate the change of events.
2. After completing the illustrations, gather the students together in a circle and ask for volunteers to share their creations. Ask students to share what plot event they changed, how they changed it, and discuss the new resolution or ending.
3. Bind the students' collected stories and exhibit them in the classroom library. (Optional: Type the beginning of the story and place it at the beginning of the classroom book. At the point that the story changes, make a note that this is where they can choose their favorite new ending.)

**Extension:** If time allows, ask each student to plot his or her new story to show the important events, climax, and resolution

### **Lesson Two: Comprehension**

Lesson Title: Recipes for Rabbits and People Too!

Grades: 3-5

Objectives: To apply information from the story in a different context.

*Students will be able to:*

- Read a story and retrieve specific information.
- Apply information from the story to create a recipe.
- Identify key characteristics of a writing style (recipe) and follow the pattern.
- Understand the idea of 'appropriate' and 'healthy' food.

Standards Addressed:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.3.4.a](#)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.4](#)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.8](#)

## Materials:

- example recipe guides
- chart paper, poster paper, or blackboard or whiteboard
- paper and writing and/or art materials
- hat or bucket
- list of HEALTHY CHOICES and UNHEALTHY CHOICES
- video “Want a Pet Rabbit?” <http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/rabbits/>
- tip sheets (several of each printed for small group work) : You can get the more detailed sheets from the following websites OR use the abbreviated sheets provided.

*What to Feed Your Pet Rabbit* by The House Rabbit Society

<http://myhouserabbit.com/rabbit-care/what-to-feed-your-pet-rabbit/>

*Rabbits and Vegetables* by The Humane Society of the United States

[http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/rabbits/tips/rabbit\\_vegetables.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/rabbits/tips/rabbit_vegetables.html)

*Rabbits are Nuts about Fruit* by The Humane Society of the United States

[http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/rabbits/tips/rabbit\\_fruit.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/rabbits/tips/rabbit_fruit.html)

## Preparation:

- Review the tip sheets from the Materials section above
- Draw the two-column chart on the board or large paper
- Print list of HEALTHY CHOICES and UNHEALTHY CHOICES and cut into individual strips

## Opening:

1. Introduce the concept that humans, like rabbits, need healthy food. Explain to the students that today they are going to discuss healthy food choices for themselves and for Bella from *The Forgotten Rabbit*.
2. Ask students to watch the video “Want a Pet Rabbit?” and to look for some foods that are good for rabbits-and that the students might eat too!
3. After the video is over, call student attention to (or draw) a two-column chart with the following titles: HEALTHY and UNHEALTHY. Ask the students to list healthy foods that they saw on the video. Discuss if any of these foods are considered healthy for humans to eat.

Once all foods from the video are listed, ask students to take turns pulling a healthy or an unhealthy choice slip that applies to them and to rabbits from a hat or bucket. Ask the students to decide if the slip should be placed on the healthy or unhealthy choice column.

HEALTHY CHOICES	UNHEALTHY CHOICES
Eating a variety of foods	Eating the same foods every day
Eating at similar times each day	Eating whenever you want
Eating the right portion for you	Eating large amounts of food
Drinking as much fresh water as you want	Snacking on a lot of treats
Eating greens	

(Optional: ask students to complete the activity themselves, using the master chart included below the lesson.)

Review what rabbits and humans have in common, such as needing to limit treats because too many sweets are bad for one's health.

### Body:

1. Discuss with students that they will be helping to create a recipe book with recipes that can be for rabbits and people too.
2. Divide the students into small groups. Provide each group with one of the 'tip sheets.' Have the students read the tip sheets and ask each student to note the important concepts related to what a rabbit should eat as part of a healthy diet. (You may wish for each group to share what they've learned with the rest of the class if time allows.) They can use and share these notes and the tip sheets to create their recipe.
3. Before students create their own recipe, as a class review the important components in a recipe. Ask the students to examine the samples and describe the way recipes are organized. The class should note that good recipes are explained step-by-step and are very descriptive.
4. Hand out the recipe template and art supplies to every student.
5. Ask students to create a recipe page in the new class cookbook: *Recipes for Rabbits and People Too*. They should write a recipe that is just for a rabbit or one that could be eaten by a rabbit and a person. Encourage them to be creative and use appropriate language and pictures.

### Closure:

1. After their recipes are complete, compile them and put them into a recipe book in your classroom library accompanying *The Forgotten Rabbit*.
2. Your class may wish to make a copy for the school library or to share with a local rescue group working to find homes for rabbits.

HEALTHY CHOICES	UNHEALTHY CHOICES

## **TIP SHEET ONE: Great Food Choices for Rabbits**

### **Hay**

Fresh hay should make up the bulk of your rabbit's diet and needs to be readily available at all times. Adult rabbits can eat timothy, grass, and oat hays, while younger rabbits should be fed alfalfa. Alfalfa should not be given to adult rabbits because of the higher protein and sugar content. Hay is important for rabbits because it provides the essential fiber needed for good digestive health and it helps wear down a rabbit's teeth (which continuously grow) for good dental health. Placing hay at one end of a litter box will also encourage the use of the litter box, as rabbits tend to eat hay and poop at the same time.

When choosing hay, make sure it looks and smells fresh. Do not choose hay that looks brown or moldy or no longer smells like fresh cut grass. Store hay in a dry place in a container that allows airflow to keep it from getting moldy. Buying hay in bulk from a local farmer tends to be much more economical than buying bags from a pet store.

### **Water**

Fresh water must always be available to your rabbit. If you have a cage, a hanging water bottle is a fine option. Rabbits will also drink from a water bowl. On a hot day you can drop an ice cube or two in your rabbit's water dish. If your rabbit does not seem to be drinking enough water you can leave the vegetables fairly wet when you present them.

### **Pellets**

These should be purchased so that they are fresh, as bunnies will turn their noses up at stale pellets. Look for pellets that are high in fiber and low in protein. You will need to limit your rabbit's pellet intake as he/she ages. Pellets that are high in protein can lead to obesity and other health issues in rabbits. Do not give pellets that have "treats" mixed in (dried corn, etc.). These additives are never healthy for rabbits and can cause digestive problems.



## **TIP SHEET TWO: Rabbits and Fruit**

### **Carrots**

Carrots are not a fruit, but they should also be considered a treat for rabbits. While popular cartoon rabbits are constantly seen eating carrots, such a diet would be terrible for a real-life rabbit. Carrots are very starchy and should only be given in limited quantities. A carrot should never be the basis of a rabbit's diet, but a few baby carrots each day is fine.

### **Fruits to give to your rabbit**

- ✓ Apple (no stems or seeds)
- ✓ Blackberry
- ✓ Blueberry
- ✓ Cherry (no pits)
- ✓ Mango
- ✓ Melon (no seeds, if applicable)
- ✓ Papaya
- ✓ Peach (no pits)
- ✓ Pear (no stems or seeds)
- ✓ Raspberry
- ✓ Strawberry

### **Extra-sweet fruits**

These treats should only be given very sparingly because they're so high in sugar.

- Banana (one or two half-inch slices)
- Dried fruit (two or three raisins; a comparable amount for other dried fruits)
- Grapes (one or two)

## TIP SHEET THREE: Preparing Rabbit Salads

Always wash vegetables before giving them to your rabbit. Non-organic vegetables should always be rinsed thoroughly in cold water. Even though your grocer may wash the vegetables before putting them up for sale, washing them at home ensures the removal of all pesticides and other chemicals.

A rabbit should get at least three different vegetables each day. However, three lettuces don't make a great meal, so try to choose three very different vegetables. Introduce new vegetables slowly, as noted above.

The size of your rabbit salad will depend on the size of your rabbit(s). Ideally, your rabbit will eat one to two cups of veggies per five lbs. of body weight per day. This can be broken up into multiple meals. If you're not sure, consult with your veterinarian about appropriate quantities.

### The Vegetable List

Butter/Bibb/Boston (green and red versions)	Bok Choy	Collard greens	Radicchio
Leaf (both green and red)	Broccoli	Dandelion greens	Radish tops (radish bottoms are root vegetables which are too high in starch)
Romaine (and red romaine)	Carrot tops (the green part)	Endive	Swiss Chard
Arugula	Celery (cut into small pieces)	Kale	Watercress
Basil	Cilantro	Mustard greens	

### Vegetables to limit

- Celery: it is not as nutrient-dense as other vegetables.
- Mint (**any kind but Pennyroyal**): the menthol in spearmint and peppermint can relax the intestinal walls in people and other animals, aiding with certain digestive problems.
- Parsley (rabbits usually prefer the taste of the flat leaf variety): parsley may initially cause some liquid in cecotropes.
- Spinach: the substances in spinach reduce the availability of its calcium.

## **Vegetables to avoid**

- Corn: too high in starch to be part of a healthy rabbit's diet.
- Iceberg lettuce: nutrient-weak compared to other lettuces; in addition, its high water content can cause diarrhea, so your bunny is better off without it.
- Peas
- **Pennyroyal mint: it's toxic**
- Potatoes

**FROM THE KITCHEN OF:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RECIPE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**INGREDIENTS:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**DIRECTIONS:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**MAKES \_\_\_\_\_ SERVINGS**

## Lesson Three

Lesson Title: Rabbit Agility Course

Grades: 3-5

Objectives: to understand the importance of physical activity

Standards Addressed:

[CCSS.Math.Content.3.MD.A.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.1](#)

### Materials

- Video clip “Amazing Rabbit Agility”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJK\\_1dbNtog](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJK_1dbNtog)
- Agility fact sheet from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)  
<http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/rabbits/behaviour/agility8pJ2I>
- Rabbit ears for each student (optional) directions to make ears  
<http://spoonful.com/crafts/rabbit-ears-for-kids>
- Agility equipment (either official agility or gym equipment or homemade using cardboard boxes and tubes)
- 2 stopwatches
- Paper and writing utensil
- Pet Rabbit word puzzle

### Preparation:

- Read *Rabbit Agility* <http://mncompanionrabbit.org/rabbit-agility/> and *The Rabbit Advocate-Get Training*  
[http://www.rabbitadvocates.org/newsletters/Summer\\_14.pdf](http://www.rabbitadvocates.org/newsletters/Summer_14.pdf)
- Ideally the Opening of the lesson can be take place in the classroom and the Body can be completed in a gymnasium or outside. Set up the agility course for the students in the gymnasium or outside before beginning the lesson. Create hoops to jump through, jumps, pause tables, see-saw, jump and cross bars, tire jumps, tunnels, A-frames, weave poles, etc.

### Opening:

1. Ask students to recall the name of the sport in which Bella participated with Rosalita. (A: Agility)
2. Ask students to watch the video clip “Amazing Rabbit Agility” and look at the types of obstacles the rabbits have on their courses.

3. After the video clip is over, ask students to share and describe the types of activities and equipment they saw. (Answers should include, but are not limited to: jumping, climbing, and going through items, and crawling, and equipment made of hoops, rods, and even a teeter-totter.)

### **Body:**

1. If you decide that the students should create rabbit ears, do so with the students before taking them to the agility course.
2. Once at the course, walk the students through the order of the items, reminding them that the rabbits have to complete items in the proper order.
3. Ask for two volunteers to be referees and to time each student. Referees should alternate timing to allow each person to share the final results with the runner and to write down the students name and time. Referees will also need to make sure the runner stays on the track and completes each portion of the course in order.
4. Let students know that while they are waiting for others, they should be working on the "Pet Rabbit" word find.
5. Allow students to take turns completing the course. If time allows, permit each student to run the course twice.

### **Closure:**

1. After each student has run the course, gather students together in a circle and announce the three individual fastest result times. You may wish to provide ribbons to the fastest students.
2. Ask the students what they enjoyed about running the course. Explain that physical activity and challenging yourself is a great way to stay healthy and happy. Appropriate exercise is important for all animals too.

### **Extension:**

1. Ask students to create posters detailing the importance of exercise for both people and pets. Share the posters by displaying them in the school or community.
2. Have the students plot and graph the times of the completed course

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pet Rabbits

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

CHIN  
NIBBLE  
HUDDLE  
GREENS  
HAY  
VEGETABLES  
PELLETS  
STRAWBERRIES  
APPLES  
PARSELY  
DILL  
CARROT  
TOPS  
BROCCOLI  
LEAVES  
AGILITY  
RADDISH