

Faces™

Bunnies

Rabbits are small mammals with short fluffy tails, whiskers, and adorable long ears. Prevalent in children's story books, they are also meaningful in different ways to cultures around the world. "Hop" into this issue of MUSE magazine and learn how rabbits are widely represented in myths and traditions.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What is the cultural significance of rabbits?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how rabbit symbolism varies among cultures.
- Students will learn how and why the moon is celebrated during the Mid-Autumn Festival.
- Students will learn about rabbit jumping competitions.
- Students will identify the beliefs of various civilizations.
- Students will learn how sociocultural factors influence celebrations.
- Students will distinguish between fact and opinion statements.
- Students will rewrite the legend of the Chinese zodiac.
- Students will research and plot the names of all of the full moons that will occur in 2023.
- Students will create a travel brochure for Sweden.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **Hop into the Year of the Rabbit**
Expository Nonfiction, ~960L
- **The Legends of the Mid-Autumn Festival**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1070L
- **Hop to It! Rabbit Show Jumping**
Expository Nonfiction, ~920L

Hop into the Year of the Rabbit

pp. 8–11, Expository Nonfiction

Perhaps best known for producing lots of offspring, rabbits have fascinating cultural significance around the world. This article explores the beliefs and superstitions surrounding these small, gentle mammals.



RESOURCES

- Hop to It: Identify Beliefs

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how rabbit symbolism varies among cultures.
- Students will identify the beliefs of various civilizations.
- Students will rewrite the legend of the Chinese zodiac.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **astrology (p. 9)** the study of how the movements and positions of the sun, moon, planets, and stars have a supposed influence on the lives and behavior of people
- **mythology (p. 9)** the myths or traditional stories concerning the history and beliefs of people belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is the cultural significance of rabbits?

Help students brainstorm a list of rabbit characters from stories and movies. (Examples: white rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, and Peter Rabbit in *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, Roger Rabbit in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, and the Hare in “The Tortoise and the Hare”) Discuss and list the traits shown by the different rabbit characters. Then tell students they will learn how rabbits figure into Chinese culture through astrology and the traits they represent.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Discuss the key vocabulary words and definitions with the class. Ask students to identify how these words (*astrology*, *mythology*) relate to each other. Invite them to share prior knowledge or experiences (make connections) relating to these terms. Have students circle other corresponding words in the reading.

READ & DISCUSS

Read the article aloud with the class. Have students reread the text in small groups to answer the questions below. Discuss responses.

1. According to Chinese astrology, what personality traits describe someone born in the Year of the Rabbit?
2. What superstitions are connected to the rabbit?
3. Why isn't the cat one of the animals of the Chinese zodiac?
4. How were African folktales about rabbits brought to America?
5. How does a rabbit's color affect its symbolism?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Identify Beliefs

INSTRUCT: The article presents the reader with detailed information regarding the symbolism and cultural influence of rabbits. These furry creatures are the object of much (positive and negative) influence around the world. Distribute the *Hop to It: Identify Beliefs* graphic organizer and tell students they will use it to record each civilization's beliefs about rabbits.

ASSESS: Review the graphic organizer. Challenge students to discuss the symbolism of the other animals of the Chinese zodiac.

EXTEND

Language Arts Have students reread the text box on the top of page 10, which displays the Chinese zodiac signs. Students should be able to match their birth year to one of the animal signs. Read aloud the legend below the animals. Then have the students rewrite the legend to create a new story about how and why these 12 animals are represented in the zodiac. Remind students to be creative and to include reasons why a particular animal is NOT included. Encourage students to share and compare legends.

Hop to It

Identify Beliefs Use information from the article to describe each civilization's beliefs about rabbits.

Civilization	Beliefs and Influences
Chinese	
Ancient Celtic Tribes	
Native American Tribes	
Aztecs	

Faces® Teacher Guide: January 2023

The Legends of the Mid-Autumn Festival

pp. 12–15, Expository Nonfiction

The tradition of honoring the moon dates back almost 2,000 years in Chinese history. Readers will learn how the moon is celebrated during China's Mid-Autumn Festival.



RESOURCES

- Sociocultural Factors: Full Moon Rising

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how and why the moon is celebrated during the Mid-Autumn Festival.
- Students will learn how sociocultural factors influence celebrations.
- Students will research and plot the names of all of the full moons that occur in 2023.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **glimmering** (p. 12) shining faintly with a wavering light
- **summoned** (p. 12) ordered someone to come to a place
- **immortality** (p. 12) the ability to live forever

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is the cultural significance of rabbits?

Read aloud the first sentence of the article: “Mid-Autumn Festival is the second most important festival of the year (after Chinese New Year).” Explain that the Chinese New Year usually occurs sometime between January 21 and February 20 and is determined by the lunar calendar. According to the modern Gregorian calendar—the calendar used in most parts of the world—New Year’s Day is celebrated on January 1. Discuss with students why cultures around the world celebrate the new year. Invite students to share their New Year’s Eve or Day traditions.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and discuss the three vocabulary words and definitions. Have students Think-Pair-Share with a partner. Give them the following directives, one at a time:

1. What **glimmering** objects have you seen? Where?
2. Why would you be **summoned** to the principal’s office?
3. Would you choose **immortality** if you could? Why/why not?

READ & DISCUSS

Pose the following questions to prompt meaningful discussion.

1. Why did the Jade Emperor summon the best archers in the land to shoot down the suns?
2. What was Hou Yi awarded for his success in saving the Earth?
3. How did Chang’é become the Moon Goddess?
4. How and when does Hou Yi get to be with Chang’é?
5. Who is Jade Rabbit?

SKILL FOCUS: Sociocultural Factors

INSTRUCT: The article presents readers with two legends of the Mid-Autumn Festival in China. The legendary characters Chang’é and Jade Rabbit have come to represent the festival, which occurs when the full moon is at its roundest and brightest all year. The values of tradition, food, and togetherness are expressed throughout this celebration. Have students use the *Sociocultural Factors: Full Moon Rising* worksheet to record the factors that influence this happy ceremonial event.

ASSESS: Reconvene and review the worksheet with the class. Have students consider whether the Mid-Autumn Festival is similar to celebrations in other parts of the world.

EXTEND

Science Teach students about the (12 or 13) full moons that occur during each year. Tell the students that there are ancient names associated with the full moon that occurs during each month. For example, January’s full moon is the Wolf Moon, named after hungry wolves howling in grief over the scarcity of food in midwinter. Have students use online resources to list the names and meanings of all of the full moons. Distribute a 2023 blank calendar, and have students plot them on the correct day of the month.

Full Moon Rising

Sociocultural Factors Consult the article to answer the questions below.

Who are the two figures that represent the Mid-Autumn Festival?

Where is the Mid-Autumn Festival celebrated?

When does the festival take place?

Why is Chang'é, the goddess of the moon, worshipped?

What do the celebrants do to worship Chang'é and Jade Rabbit?

How are these foods used to symbolize ideas and values?

1. Moon cake:

2. Pumpkin dishes:

3. Sweet fruits:

Hop to It! Rabbit Show Jumping

pp. 30–32, Expository Nonfiction

Rabbit show jumping began in Sweden in the 1970s. The sport is now so popular that a national contest was held. This article includes training tips and racing strategies.



RESOURCES

- Fact or Opinion: Rabbit Show Jumping

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about rabbit jumping competitions.
- Students will distinguish between fact and opinion statements.
- Students will create a travel brochure for Sweden.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **obstacles** (p. 31) objects that people or animals in a race have to jump or climb over, go around, or go under
- **agility** (p. 32) ability to move quickly and easily
- **coax** (p. 33) to persuade a person or animal to do something using careful and persistent words or actions

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is the cultural significance of rabbits?

Entice students into a game of “20 Questions” in which they try to guess the topic of the article (rabbits). In this game, the players are allowed to ask yes/no questions one by one in order to unravel the mystery. Instead of calling out the answer, have students write their guess on a piece of paper after each question. At the end of the questions, did all students have the word *rabbit* written?

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and discuss the vocabulary words and definitions. Then display the prompts below and have students discuss responses with a partner.

1. List a synonym and an antonym for the words **obstacles** and **coax**.
2. How can you improve your **agility**?

READ & DISCUSS

Preview the questions below, and have students read the article independently. Then read the article aloud, pausing for discussion when answers to the questions are revealed.

1. Which countries worked together to hold a national rabbit show jumping contest?
2. What kinds of obstacles are placed on the rabbit course?
3. How does a rabbit win the contest?
4. How could you encourage your rabbit to come up onto your lap?
5. Why is rabbit show jumping becoming more popular?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Fact and Opinion

INSTRUCT: Remind students that being able to distinguish between facts and opinions will help them judge the credibility of information. (**Facts:** can be proven, true for everyone / **Opinions:** can’t be proven, personal judgment) Have students classify each statement on the *Fact or Opinion: Rabbit Show Jumping* worksheet as a fact or opinion.

ASSESS: After reviewing answers, have students choose one fact statement and one opinion statement and explain to a partner WHY it qualifies as a fact or an opinion.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students locate the home of rabbit show jumping—the country of Sweden—on a world map. Instruct them to fold a piece of paper into thirds and to create a travel brochure. Alternatively, many computer programs will have easy-to-use templates. Using information from various resources, students should include the following in their brochures: location, climate, land features, plant/animal life, recreation, interesting facts. Remind them to include information about quite possibly the cutest sport ever—rabbit show jumping! Video clips can be viewed online.

Rabbit Show Jumping

Facts and Opinions Mark each statement below as FACT (**F**) or OPINION (**O**). *Helpful Hints:* Facts can be proven. Opinions are personal judgments.

- _____ 1. Rabbit sports are exciting for the spectators and the handlers.
- _____ 2. By 1987, the sport of rabbit jumping had become so popular that a national contest was held.
- _____ 3. Bunnies are adorable and fun to watch.
- _____ 4. During competitions, owners lead their rabbits around a course using a special harness and a leash.
- _____ 5. Rabbit show jumping is a lot more interesting than just judging rabbits by their looks.
- _____ 6. Each rabbit has two minutes to complete the course without knocking down bars or falling on any obstacles.
- _____ 7. Guinea pig agility contests will be more fun to attend than bunny contests.
- _____ 8. Food rewards and a few gentle nudges in the right direction are the usual training methods.
- _____ 9. In some 4-H clubs, students are learning to train rabbits.
- _____ 10. The best place to get a rabbit is from a farm.