



# What's Hopping?

Level



Dutch



Holland Lop



Californian



## Rabbit Project Activity Guide

Name \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_



REVIEWED & RECOMMENDED  
National 4-H Curriculum

# Note to the Adult Helper

**C**ongratulations! A young person has asked you to be his/her rabbit project helper. As a helper you are in a great position to help youth grow and develop in positive ways as they learn about rabbits and themselves. You can nurture and cultivate their interest in this project by guiding their planning, helping them carry out their projects and recognizing them for a job well done.

## Your Role

- Become familiar with the material in this activity guide and the *Helper's Guide*
- Support youth in their efforts to set goals and complete each achievement program
- Date and initial the activities on the Rabbit Achievement Program as the youth completes them and the two of you discuss them
- Help them to get to know themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses
- Encourage the use of the experiential learning cycle described on this page

## The Rabbit "Skills for Life" Series

This guide, *What's Happening?*, is the first in the series of three for youth, that also includes *Rabbit 2 Making Tracks*, *Rabbit 3 All Ears* and the *Rabbit Group Activity Helper's Guide*. The three youth guides have been designed to be developmentally appropriate for grades 3–5, 6–8 and 9–12 respectively, but may be used by youth in any grade based on their project skills and expertise.

All activities have several parts: A description of the skills to be practiced, discussion questions, suggestions for additional activities and other helpful information. The "Success Indicator" for each activity is an excellent way to evaluate the youth's success. Classroom teachers can measure against the science standard listed for each activity. Each of the guides also includes an achievement program to encourage youth to learn more about rabbits while developing important life skills. In the *Helper's Guide* you will find another evaluation piece titled "Evaluating the Impact." Use this before beginning each level and after the youth has completed each level; this tool will help you assess the educational impact of each book of activities.

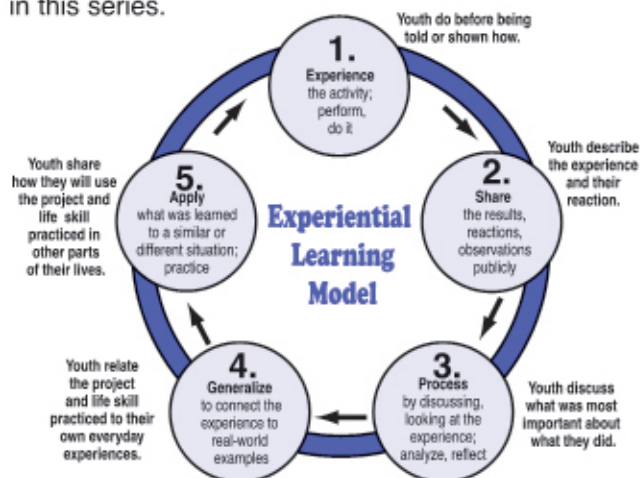
Each activity is designed so the young person has an opportunity to learn by doing before being told or shown how. Your challenge is to "sit on your hands" while the

youth explores the activity and learns from the experience, even when it doesn't work the way it's expected to. You can help most effectively by listening as the young person considers the questions and draws conclusions. At times the activity may call for you to be a resource person for content or ideas.

The fourth publication in this series, *Rabbit Helper's Guide*, provides additional learn-by-doing activities that can be adapted to the family, the classroom, after school child care, 4-H project groups, clubs or other groups. You'll also find helpful hints about characteristics of youth, life skill development, teaching experientially, club meeting ideas, as well as answers to many of the activities in the youth guides.

## Experiential Learning Model

This five-step model is utilized in each activity in this series.



Pfeiffer, J.W., & Jones, J.E., "Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals" © 1983 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

As you can see, the youth first attempt the activity on their own. After the youth do as much as they can and answer the questions, you then meet together and discuss: What did they do? What was important about what they did? How does what they did relate to their lives? And finally, how might they use the life and project skills practiced in the future? Your ability to ask additional thought-provoking questions and to clarify and expand the youth's ideas will add to the educational experience.

*Good luck in your helper role and thank you for contributing to the positive development of youth.*

## Acknowledgements

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# What's Hopping?

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Level 2



BU-08081

Level 3



BU-08082

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Helper's Guide



BU-08083

# Learning How This Book Works

**A**re you ready to learn more about rabbits?

You have many interesting and exciting activities ahead in this book. You'll learn about rabbit parts, breeds, costs of raising a rabbit, how to care for a rabbit and much, much more. If you don't have a rabbit, some of the activities will help you decide what kind of rabbit might be best for you. Don't be afraid to jump right in and don't give up if the activity doesn't work right the first time. You're still learning, right? The most important thing is trying.

Each chapter teaches skills about related topics. Through a short activity, you'll learn rabbit, life and science skills.

## **“Hop to it!”**

### **Activities**

Activities are a part of each lesson. You're required to do up to 21 of the activities and the More Challenges if you use this book for three years. You're required to do seven activities each year.

## **“Rabbit Rap”**

### **Talk it Over**

Questions that will help you think through what you've learned and how it applies to your life.



### **Facts**

Additional rabbit information to enhance the activity.



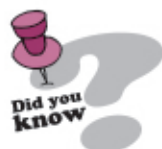
### **References**

Other places to check for information that will enhance the lesson.

## **“Bounding Ahead”**

### **Bounding Ahead**

These are ways to learn more about rabbit or life skills. These are optional activities that will add to your understanding.



### **Rabbit Trivia**

Interesting facts that will expand your rabbit knowledge.

## **Your Project Helper**

Your project helper is on your team, supporting you and making learning more fun. This person may be a parent, project leader or advisor, a neighbor or an older friend who enjoys rabbits. The choice is yours. As you do the activities, you'll discuss what you did and the questions in the “Bounding Ahead” part of each activity with your helper. Sometimes your helper will need to work with you to find people, groups, events, magazines and books to help complete an activity. Once you have successfully completed each activity, your helper will date and initial your achievement program.

Write the name and phone number of your project helper here:

My Project Helper \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_



**Good luck with Rabbit 1  
What's Hopping?**



# Achievement Program

## Guidelines

- Do at least seven of the Required and Optional activities each year
- Complete at least 21 of the Required and Optional activities within three years to complete this achievement program.
- Have your helper date and initial the activities as you complete and discuss them with your helper.

## Rabbit Project Goals

(Beginning of Year)



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Rabbits \_\_\_\_\_ Breed(s) \_\_\_\_\_

What I want to do and learn.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

## Rabbit Project Highlights

Date and list the exciting things you do and learn.

## Required Activities

Complete at least 11 of the activities.

	Date Completed	Helper's Initials
<b>Chapter 1 Rabbit Selection and Handling</b>		
Hop On Board		
Furry Future		
Handling and Showing		
Parts Are Parts		
<b>Chapter 2 Rabbit Management</b>		
Caring for Rabbits		
Gear, Goods and Gadgets		
Hutch Sweet Hutch		
Keeping a Pedigree		
<b>Chapter 3 Rabbit Health and Nutrition</b>		
Recognizing the Normal Rabbit Sanitation Situation		
Chef Hare		
<b>Chapter 4 Rabbit Breeding and General Care</b>		
Buck or Doe		
Rabbit Breeding		
Kits 'N Kaboodle		
Baby Boom		



## Bounding Ahead

## Optional Activities

Select and do any of the Bounding Ahead activities in *What's Hopping?* or make up your own. Record the page and number of each one you complete and have your helper initial.

Page	#	Date Completed	Helper's Initials

## Chapter

# 1

# Rabbit Selection and Handling



## Hop on Board

In the rabbit project you will make decisions about housing, feeding and breeding. There are more than 40 breeds (kinds) of rabbits. Your first choice is to select your rabbit.

**Rabbit Skill:** Create a rabbit breed chart.  
**Life Skill:** Decision making  
**Success Indicator:** Uses decision making skills to select a rabbit project breed.  
**Science Standard:** Characteristics of organisms

“**Hop** to it!”

Visit with your project helper, county Extension educator, local breeder and/or teen leaders in the rabbit project about various breeds of rabbits.

Pick 10 breeds from Rabbit Facts. Show in the chart what you discover about each breed. Tape or draw a picture of your favorite breed in the picture frame.

My Favorite Breed

I like this breed best because \_\_\_\_\_

**My Rabbit Breed Chart**

Breed	Ideal Weight	Color(s)	Origin of Breed	Size	Class	Comments





# Rabbit Rap

## Share What You Did

- Which breed did you like best? Why?
- Why do you like the rabbit you chose?

## Process What's Important

- How did you decide on this breed? If you choose this rabbit what will you have to do to take care of it?

## Generalize to Your Life

- What other decisions did you make today?

## Apply What You Learned

- How does making a chart help to make better decisions?



See breeds and varieties on front and back covers. The ARBA Standard of Perfection contains all the breeds recognized in the U.S.



## Rabbit Breeds and Ideal Weight Groups

Four Class Rabbit Breeds	
Small (2 to 6 lbs.)	Medium (over 6 to 9 lbs.)
American Fuzzy Lop Britannia Petite Dutch Dwarf Hotot Florida White Havana Himalayan Holland Lop Jersey Wooly Mini Lop Mini Rex Netherland Dwarf Polish Silver Tan	American Sable Belgian Hare English Angora English Spot French Angora Harlequin Lilac Rex Rhinelander Satin Angora Silver Marten Standard Chinchilla
Six Class Rabbit Breeds	
Large (over 9 to 11 lbs.)	Giant (over 11 lbs.)
American American Chinchilla Beveren Blanc de Hotot Californian Champagne D'Argent Cinnamon Creme D'Argent English Lop New Zealand Palomino Satin Silver Fox	Checkered Giant Flemish Giant French Lop Giant Chinchilla Giant Angora



A rabbit hide is called a pelt.

## Bounding Ahead

1. Visit a rabbitry or show. Make a list of the different kinds of rabbits you see. Go to the library and check out a book on your favorite kind of rabbit. How many breeds did you find?



# Furry Future

What do you want to be when you grow up? A doctor, a police officer, a rabbit breeder? These are all decisions you will make as you get older. Much like your life, you will also need to make decisions about the future of your rabbit project. Decide what you will use your rabbit project for. This will help you choose what to feed and where to have your rabbit live.



**Rabbit Skill:**

Determine the use of your project rabbits.

**Life Skill:**

Decision making

**Success Indicator:**

Describes the use of various rabbit breeds.

**Science Standard:**

Form and function

*What is your breed used for?*



## “Hop to it!”

Put the breeds of rabbits you found in the Hop On Board exercise in the first activity into the six (6) possible rabbit uses listed below. Some breeds may be used more than once.

**Uses of Rabbit Breeds**

Breeding Stock	Meat Production	Fur	Wool	Laboratory Use	Pets





# Rabbit Rap

## Share What You Did

- What is the use of each rabbit breed you picked?

## Process What's Important

- Which breeds were better when used for meat? Why?
- Which breeds are better for fur? Why?

## Generalize to Your Life

- What other decisions do you make that are based on how you use a product?

## Apply What You Learned

- How do you compare different brands or kinds of items before you buy one? (Ex. toothpaste, soft drink, toy, etc.)



A rabbit has five toes on the front feet and four on the back feet.



## Uses of Rabbits

### Breeding stock

Rabbits raised for high quality offspring. Keep good records. Attend shows to have your rabbits' breed characteristics judged. Maintain a high level of quality in your animals.

### Meat Production

Rabbits raised to eat.

### Fur

Rabbits raised for fur to be tanned and made into novelty, craft and consumer products.

### Wool

Rabbits raised for wool. It is important for wool to be clean, durable and easily processed. The Angora rabbit is one breed raised for its wool. If you want to raise Angoras, learn where the wool can be marketed for a profit.

### Laboratory Use

Rabbits raised to be used by laboratories for research. Licenses may be required.

### Pets

Rabbits raised for companionship. Pet stores may be a place for you to sell extra rabbits.

## Bounding Ahead

1. Talk to two local rabbit breeders. Decide what they use their rabbits for. Ask why they made that choice.
2. Visit someone doing something you would like to do when you grow up. Talk to them about their job. List what the person likes and doesn't like about their job. Share your list with your helper.

# Handling and Showing

It is important to learn how to pick up and carry a rabbit. Rabbits can scratch or bite when they do not feel safe. Your rabbit will have to be handled a lot to present it for show.



**Rabbit Skill:**

**Life Skill:**

**Success Indicator:**

Handling rabbits for show  
Communicating with others  
Demonstrates how to hold  
and show a rabbit  
Organisms and environment

## “Hop to it!”



### 1. Picking Up a Rabbit

Use a stuffed model rabbit to practice picking up a rabbit. When you are ready, show your helper or your parent how you do this with a live rabbit. Tape a picture of you holding a rabbit in the frame.

### 2. Removing from a Cage

Place the palm of your right hand under the middle of the abdomen and lift. Take the rabbit out of the cage with the backside first and the head last. When the rabbit is taken out of the cage, place your left hand around the hindquarters.

### 3. Turning a Rabbit

When you are showing or checking your rabbit you will need to examine the underside of your rabbit. Try this style of turning your rabbit.

- \* Have the rabbit face your left side and firmly hold the rabbit's ears in the palm of your hand. Hold the head securely with a fold of fur and skin at the back of the neck between your fingers and the palm of your right hand.
- \* Lift the rabbit with your left hand cupped around the hindquarters. Support your rabbit with your left hand as you turn the rabbit over.
- \* Complete the turn, rest the hindquarters on a table so that your left hand is free to examine the rabbit. Finish the examination.
- \* Reverse the turn supporting the rabbit with your left hand on the hindquarters. Pose your rabbit after you set it down.

Picture of me  
holding a rabbit.

### 4. Showmanship

When participating in rabbit showmanship you will want to show that you and your rabbits can do all the required moves. You will also be demonstrating your knowledge and the ability to communicate to others. Sometimes the judge will ask all the participants to do the moves together as a group. Other times the judge will ask you to do them by yourself.

**Note:** Repeat the above process using the opposite hand listed if you are left hand dominant.



## Rabbit Showmanship Steps



### 1 Carry a Rabbit

To carry a rabbit, tuck the head under one arm and support the rabbit's weight by placing the other hand under the rump. One hand supports the weight of the rabbit, while the other hand controls the rabbit. Keep a firm grip since a rabbit dropped from this position can easily break its back. You may remove your hand when you feel confident about being in control. If the judge asks you to move to a different spot on the table, always pick up the rabbit for carrying before moving to a new location.



### 2 Pose Rabbit

When you arrive at the exhibit table place the rabbit on the table immediately and pose it. Pose the front feet even with the eyes. Rear feet should be firmly on the table with toes even with the haunch (thigh joint) with tail up. Facing left is the natural position for a right handed presenter.



### 3 Checking Ears

Check the ears for bugs or sores, legible tattoo in rabbit's left ear, torn or missing portions of ears that distract from general appearance, ear carriage.



### 4 Check Eyes

Check each eye for signs of blindness or abnormalities. Check for walleyes or moon eye (this is an eye with a milky appearance), unmatched eyes (two eyes not of the same color), spots or specks in the eye, off colored eyes (eyes other than color called for in breed standard). Abnormal eye discharge.



### 5 Turn Rabbit Over

Turn the rabbit over, supporting the rabbit on the table or against your body. The rabbit will remain in this position until checking the tail.



### 6 Check Nose

Check nose for sign of cold. The animal shows a white nasal discharge when they have snuffles. Matted fur on inside of front legs may indicate presence of cold.



### 7 Check Teeth

With your hand over the area of the eyes, place a thumb and index finger on each side of the split lip and push back lips to expose teeth. You are checking for tooth defects such as malocclusion broken or missing teeth.

### 8 Check Front Legs

Extend the front legs to check for straightness. Run your index finger and thumb the length of each front leg.

### 9 Neck Area

Check neck for a dewlap (some breeds do not allow a dewlap), fur mites, fungus and abscesses.



### 10 Check Front Feet

Check toenails by pushing thumb into center of paw. Push back fur with index finger if necessary to see toenails. Don't forget to check dew claws. You are checking for missing or broken toes, toenails, unmatched toenails on corresponding feet, (including dew claws), proper color toenails for the breed as stated in the breed standard.



### 11 Check Body for Rupture or Abscess

Run your hand over the chest and abdominal area to check for any abscesses, tumors, swollen teats, or abnormalities. Ruptures may appear as lumps or large bumps under the skin, normally in the belly area. Abscesses may appear as red lumps or sores in the belly, neck, or chin areas, or under the legs.

**12****Check Rear Legs**

Extend rear legs out straight by placing your cupped hand ahead of the rear legs and pushing toward the feet. Legs should not be bent, bowed, deformed or cow-hocked.

**13 Check Hocks**

Check the bottom of the hind feet for sore hocks. You are checking for sore, infected or bleeding areas. Bare areas may indicate fungal growth.

**14****Check Gender**

Check for the sex of the rabbit. Place your thumb below the vent area and push toward front of rabbit with the index finger. You are also checking for signs of vent disease (as indicated by a scabby, reddened sex organ), a split penis and testicles. All bucks in the regular show classes must show two normally descended testicles at the time of judging. Juniors must show both or neither testicle because juniors showing only one descended testicle at the time of judging would be disqualified from competition.

**15****Check Tail**

Return the rabbit to its posed position. Check to determine: if tail is straight, permanently set to either side or permanently out of line. A screw tail or bob tail will disqualify an animal from judging competition.

**16****Check for Surface Color, Undercolor, Ring Color, Foreign Spots, or Smut**

Check the fur for foreign colored spots (white spots in colored animal, or colored spots in white animal, unless specifically excepted in the breed standard). Inspect fur for smut on the usable portion of the pelt on a Pointed White, Californian, or Himalayan marked breeds and varieties. Check for color. Check surface color. Check undercolor and/or ring color by stroking fur forward or blowing into fur over the entire body. Tan Pattern: any tan pattern marking appearing in the marking pattern of Pointed White, Californians, or Himalayan marked breeds or varieties, is a disqualification. Wrong undercolor, color other than called for in the breed standard, white hairs (excessive white hairs in a colored section) are also disqualifications.

**17****Fur Quality and Cleanliness**

Stroke fur toward rabbit's head to show fur going back into natural position, either flyback/rollback. Check density (standing/upright fur) such as Rex, Mini Rex, Silver Fox, by patting and blowing into several areas. Some woolled breeds, such as Angoras and Fuzzy Lops should be felt and blown into to check density. Stroke rabbit from head to rear for a molt condition. Check for stains on fur.

**18****Evaluation of Overall Balance**

Pose the rabbit for evaluation. Check front, rear and side views for overall balance. Locate each of the following with your hand: shoulders, ribspread and fullness of loin. Check hindquarters for fullness by stretching your hand across width and depth of the rump. Check hips for smoothness and fullness by running your hand over the top of the hip to the tail.



# Rabbit Rap

## Share What You Did

- What happened the first time you picked up a rabbit?

## Process What's Important

- Why is practicing during the cooler part of the day important? Why don't you pick a rabbit up by its ears or legs? What did you learn about the rabbit by showing it?

## Generalize to Your Life

- How did showing others how to handle and show a rabbit help you learn better?

## Apply What You Learned

- How can you help others learn without telling them how?



**Did you know**

You are expected to show the front, rear and sides of your rabbit in the order requested by the judge so he or she can see the overall balance. If a judge asks you to move to a different spot on the table, you are expected to pick the rabbit up for carrying before moving to the new location.



You might want to use the model made from the National 4-H Curriculum Rabbit Pattern BU-07199 to practice your handling skills.



## Tips for the Participant



### Appearance

You need to demonstrate good posture, keep eye contact with the judge throughout the presentation, smile, dress neatly, remove chewing gum, hat or cap. Pull long hair back and wear a long-sleeved shirt or lab coat.

### Knowledge

Demonstrate quick, confident and correct response to questions asked about your rabbit.

### Actions

Carry out actions in a confident manner, always being considerate of your animals, fellow showmen and the judge. Demonstrate a gentle and smooth flowing presentation.

## Bounding Ahead

1. Show your group how to handle a rabbit. Tell what you are doing and why.
2. Demonstrate proper showmanship techniques at a rabbit show.
3. Assist a judge at a rabbit show.