
Teddy bears

WORKSHEET A

Just over a hundred years after it was invented, the teddy bear is possibly still the world's most popular toy for small children. No doubt many people reading this will remember having a teddy bear as a companion when they were very small – in fact some have probably kept that bear, perhaps in a box or a cupboard somewhere, as a souvenir from childhood.

It isn't only children who acquire teddy bears, of course: they are also a popular present on St Valentine's Day, for example, and some people also collect them, particularly if the bears are very old (in which case they are sometimes worth a lot of money) or in some way unusual.

The most common story about the invention of the teddy bear involves Theodore Roosevelt, who was president of the United States in the early years of the twentieth century and whose nickname was 'Teddy'. One day in 1902 the President was on a bear hunting trip in the state of Mississippi when, because he hadn't managed to shoot a bear himself, the other hunters asked if he wanted to shoot a bear that they had tied to a tree. He didn't think this was proper hunting, however, so he refused. A cartoonist working for a major newspaper heard about what happened and did a cartoon about it. The owner of a shop in New York saw the cartoon and decided to make a stuffed toy bear that he put in his shop window with a sign saying 'Teddy's Bear'. The new toy was immediately popular, and the name 'teddy' stuck.

Strangely, at almost exactly the same time the teddy bear was also invented in Europe by people who almost certainly didn't know about the Roosevelt story on the other side of the Atlantic. A small business in Germany run by a woman called Margarete Steiff had been producing stuffed toy animals such as dogs, cats and elephants for about twenty years when Mrs Steiff's nephew Richard suggested that the company start making bears as well. The new toy, first produced in 1902, was based on drawings of bear cubs that Richard had made at a local zoo. The first bears produced by the Steiff company had long snouts, just like real bears, while 'Teddy's Bear' in New York had a more rounded head and therefore looked more like modern toy bears.

Teddy bears

WORKSHEET B

Exercise 1

Team A

Here are the answers to some questions about the text on Worksheet A, but what are the questions? When you have prepared the questions, Team B will have to answer them as part of a quiz.

1. His nickname was Teddy.
2. Teddy bears that are very old.
3. The 'Teddy's Bear' story took place in 1902.
4. Dogs, cats and elephants.
5. Because he didn't think it was proper hunting.
6. He worked for a newspaper.
7. The shop was in New York.
8. Mrs Steiff's nephew suggested that the Steiff company start making stuffed toy bears.

Team B

Here are the answers to some questions about the text on Worksheet A, but what are the questions? When you have prepared the questions, Team A will have to answer them as part of a quiz.

1. Theodore.
2. The sign next to the first American teddy bear said 'Teddy's Bear'.
3. The Steiff company produced its first teddy bear in 1902.
4. Because they had long snouts.
5. On St Valentine's Day.
6. At a zoo.
7. They almost certainly didn't know about the 'Teddy's Bear' story.
8. In Mississippi.

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WORKSHEET C

Exercise 2

Student A: You and your partner have the same crossword, but with different words completed. Take it in turns to describe the words to each other and fill in the gaps. When you have finished, the names of two friendly bears will read from top to bottom: the first is a character in children's books (particularly popular in Britain), the second a character in a famous American TV cartoon.

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							11	T	E	D	D	Y			
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14															

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Student B: You and your partner have the same crossword, but with different words completed. Take it in turns to describe the words to each other and fill in the gaps. When you have finished, the names of two friendly bears will read from top to bottom: the first is a character in children's books (particularly popular in Britain), the second a character in a famous American TV cartoon.

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