

## Lesson Guide: Rabbit

### Vocabulary:

- Cottontail
- Rabbit
- Burrow
- Council
- Sun

*See the attached vocabulary sheet in Educators Guide.*

### Engage:

- Read the Story attached to the Educators Guide entitled: 'How Cottontail Got His White Markings: A Shoshone Legend'
  - Discuss with students: "Why do you think animals might hold a council? What problem were they trying to solve?"
  - Ask students to predict: "How do you think a small rabbit could help with such a big problem like the sun being too hot?"
  - After reading, identify the parts of Cottontail that turned white and why (neck, wrists, ankles, tail - these are where he got burned)

### Explore and Explain:

- **Activity 1: Drawing Cottontail's White Markings**
  - Students draw and color a cottontail rabbit, marking the white areas (neck ring, wrists, ankles, tail) where fire burned him
  - Label each white marking and explain why it's white
- **Activity 2: Cottontail's Journey Sequence - Picture Organization**
  - Students cut out and arrange picture cards showing story events in chronological order (1-6)
  - Write one sentence describing each scene

### Elaborate:

- **Activity 3: Rabbit Adaptations and Burrows**
  - Students match rabbit body parts (long ears, strong back legs, white tail, brown/gray fur, small size) with their survival functions
  - Draw and label a rabbit's burrow showing entrance, twisting tunnels, and sleeping area
  - Discuss how these adaptations helped Cottontail in the story
- **Activity 4: Animal Council Role Play**
  - Students use character cards (Eagle, Bear, Coyote, Deer, Cottontail, Snake) to act out the council scene
  - Each animal shares concerns about the hot sun
  - Discuss teamwork, listening to all voices, and courage

### ***Evaluate***

- **Activity 5: Story Comprehension Worksheet**
  - Separate worksheets:
    - Students K-2 (multiple choice, 5 questions)
    - Students K-5 (open ended, 10 questions)
- As a class guide students in discussion and individual shares of the following:
  - One fact about rabbits
  - One lesson from the story
  - One way they can show courage like Cottontail

### **Suggested Lesson Activities:**

- Indigenous Vocabulary
- Drawing Cottontail's White Markings
- Cottontail's Journey Sequence
- Animal Council Role Play
- Story Comprehension Worksheet

### **Additional Educator Resources:**

- [Rabbit Teacher Resources](#)
- [Rabbits as Indigenous Food Source](#)
- [Rabbit Tales of the Cherokee](#)
- [Eastern Cottontail Rabbit](#)
- [More on Eastern Cottontail Rabbit](#)

## **How Cottontail Got His White Markings: A Shoshone Legend**

Complete Story for K-5 Readers

### Part I: The Council of Animals

Long, long ago, when the world was still young and animals could speak to one another, the sun burned much, much hotter than it does today.

The animals suffered terribly from the heat. Every day, the blazing sun beat down on the desert. The earth cracked open like broken pottery. Water holes that used to sparkle with cool, fresh water dried up completely, leaving only dusty bowls in the ground. Plants that had once been green and full of life wilted and turned brown, their leaves curling up and falling off. Even the strong sagebrush, which could usually survive anything, drooped sadly in the relentless heat.

The animals had to hide in whatever shade they could find, panting and exhausted. Birds stayed in their nests instead of flying. Rabbits huddled deep in their burrows. Even the lizards, who usually loved the warm rocks, had to hide under stones to escape the burning sun.

One morning, when the heat seemed worse than ever, Eagle called out from his perch high on a cliff: "Enough! We must hold a council! All animals, come to the shaded canyon by the spring!"

Eagle was respected by all the animals because he flew higher than anyone and could see far across the land. When he called a council, everyone listened.

The animal people gathered in a deep, shaded canyon where a small spring still bubbled up bravely from the rocks. This was one of the last places that still had water, and the animals were grateful for the cool shade of the canyon walls.

Eagle came first, spreading his great wings wide as he landed on a tall rock. His feathers were dusty from the dry air, and his sharp eyes looked tired.

Bear lumbered in from the mountains, where even the high peaks were too hot. His thick fur made him suffer more than most, and he was panting heavily.

Coyote trotted up the canyon, his clever eyes darting around, watching everything and everyone. His tongue hung out as he panted from the heat.

Deer stepped carefully on her delicate hooves, moving gracefully even though she was weak from lack of water and green plants to eat.

Snake slithered slowly to a cool spot in the shade of the rocks. Even he, who usually loved to lie on warm stones, found this heat unbearable.

Mountain Lion came, and Hawk, and Badger, and Squirrel, and Prairie Dog, and many, many others. All the animals of the desert and mountains came to the council.

Even little Cottontail Rabbit hopped to the meeting, though some of the larger animals barely noticed him at first. He was so very small compared to Eagle and Bear and Mountain Lion. His long ears drooped in the heat, and his soft brown fur was covered with fine dust from the dry earth. His pink nose twitched nervously as he looked at all the bigger, stronger animals.

When all the animals had gathered, Eagle spoke in his loud, clear voice: "My friends, we have a serious problem. We must decide what to do about the sun."

"Yes!" agreed Bear, his deep voice rumbling. "The sun is killing us! It burns so hot that even I, with all my strength, can barely leave my den during the day. My cubs cannot play. They must hide in the darkness, and they grow weak and sad."

"I fly closer to the sun than any of you," said Eagle, "and I can tell you it burns hotter than ever before. My wings grow tired from the heat. The air is so hot it is hard to fly. Even high in the sky, where the air is usually cool, I feel the sun burning my feathers."

"My pups pant and suffer," said Coyote, his ears pressed flat against his head. "And there is almost no food anymore because the heat is killing all the plants. The rabbits and mice I usually hunt are hiding deep underground where I cannot reach them. We are all growing thin and weak."

Deer spoke in her gentle voice, though it trembled with worry: "The meadows where my fawns used to play are completely brown. There is no green grass left. The streams have dried up. We must walk for days to find water, and many animals are too weak to make the journey."

Snake hissed softly: "Even I, who love to lie in the warm sun, cannot bear this heat. The rocks are too hot to touch. If this continues, we will all perish."

All the animals murmured in agreement. Something had to be done, and soon, or they would not survive.

Eagle raised one wing for silence. "The question is: what can we do? The sun is very powerful. It is far away in the sky. How can we change it?"

The animals thought and thought. Finally, Bear said, "Someone must shoot the sun with an arrow. If we could bring it down or at least hurt it enough to make it less strong, perhaps it would not burn so hot."

The animals gasped. This was a bold and dangerous idea!

"But who could do such a thing?" asked Deer. "The sun is so far away. Who could shoot an arrow that far?"

The animals looked at each other nervously. This was clearly a dangerous task. Who would be brave enough to try? Who would be strong enough to succeed?

Bear shifted his weight and said slowly, "I am the strongest animal here. I could try... but my paws are too large and clumsy to hold a bow and arrow properly. I have tried before and I cannot do it."

"I am clever," said Coyote, "and I am a good hunter. But I do not think even I am strong enough to shoot an arrow all the way to the sun. It is too far, and the sun is too powerful."

Eagle ruffled his feathers. "I can fly high, but I cannot carry a bow and arrow while I fly. My talons are made for catching prey, not for shooting arrows."

One by one, the other animals explained why they could not do it. Mountain Lion was a great hunter but had never learned to use a bow. Hawk could fly but was too small to carry weapons. Badger was fierce but could not shoot arrows well.

The animals began to feel discouraged. How would they solve this problem if none of them could shoot the sun?

Then, a small voice spoke up from the back of the gathering. "I will do it."

The animals all turned to look. Who had spoken?

"I said, I will do it," the voice repeated, a little louder and more firmly.

The larger animals looked down, and there, standing on his hind legs trying to look as tall as possible, was little Cottontail Rabbit. His ears were standing straight up now, and his eyes were bright and determined, even though his little body was trembling slightly.

For a moment, there was complete silence. Then Coyote started to laugh. "You?" he said, his laughter echoing off the canyon walls. "Little Cottontail? You are too small! You are barely bigger than my paw!"

Some of the other animals laughed too, not in a mean way, but because they thought Cottontail must be joking. Surely such a small rabbit could not do what the great Eagle and the powerful Bear could not do!

"You could never shoot an arrow far enough to reach the sun!" said Badger, shaking his head.

"You would not even be able to pull back a bowstring strong enough!" added Mountain Lion.

Cottontail's ears flattened against his head for a moment. His feelings were hurt, and he did not like being laughed at. But then he took a deep breath, and his ears stood up straight again. He lifted his chin bravely and spoke in a clear, strong voice:

"You may laugh at me because I am small. That is true; I AM small. But I am also fast. I can run farther than any of you without getting tired. I can jump over rocks and squeeze through tight places. I am good at finding my way, and I never give up. Yes, I am small, but I am also strong in my own way. And most importantly, I am willing to try. I am not afraid."

He paused and looked around at all the larger animals. "Are any of YOU willing to try? You are all bigger than me, but you have all said you cannot do it. I may be small, but at least I am willing to try. Isn't someone willing, better than someone powerful, who does nothing?"

The other animals grew quiet. Cottontail was right. Size and strength did not matter if no one was willing to use them. Courage mattered. Determination mattered. And little Cottontail had both.

Eagle looked at Cottontail with his sharp eyes, and he saw something in the little rabbit that he had not noticed before. He saw bravery. He saw determination. He saw a spirit much larger than the small body it lived in.

Eagle nodded his great head slowly and said in a solemn voice, "Little Cottontail, you speak the truth. Courage is not about size; it's about the size of your heart and the strength of your spirit. If you are truly brave enough to try this dangerous task, then we will support you. You have our blessing."

Bear nodded. "You are braver than all of us, little one. We will honor your courage."

The other animals murmured in agreement. Some felt ashamed that they had laughed at Cottontail. They realized that he was showing them what true courage looked like.

Cottontail stood up even taller, his heart swelling with pride and determination. "Thank you, my friends. I will not let you down. I will travel to the place where the sun rises each morning, to the edge of the great water in the east, and I will shoot it down. When I return, the sun will be cooler, and we will all be able to live in peace again."

"How will you know where to go?" asked Deer gently.

"I will follow the sun," said Cottontail. "Every morning it rises in the east, over the great water that has no end. I will travel toward the sunrise until I reach that place. Then I will wait for the sun to rise and shoot it with my arrow."

"It is a long, dangerous journey," warned Eagle. "Many days of travel across the hot desert. You will face hunger and thirst and danger."

"I know," said Cottontail quietly. "But it must be done, and I am the one who will do it."

The animals were silent, moved by the little rabbit's bravery. Then, one by one, they came forward to give Cottontail their blessings and gifts for his journey.

Eagle gave him a feather for his arrow, saying, "This will help your arrow fly straight and true."

Bear gave him strength for the journey, touching his head gently.

Deer gave him her blessing of grace and endurance.

Even Coyote, who had laughed at first, came forward and said, "I was wrong to laugh, little brother. You have the heart of a warrior. Travel safely."

Cottontail felt the love and support of all the animals, and it filled him with courage for the journey ahead.

"I will leave tomorrow at first light," said Cottontail. "When you see me again, the sun will be cooler, and life will return to our land."

## Part II: The Long Journey

The next morning, before the sun rose, Cottontail prepared for his journey.

First, he needed to make his weapon. He found a strong, straight branch of juniper wood—juniper is sacred and powerful. Carefully, using his sharp teeth and nimble paws, he shaped it into a bow. It was small, just right for his size, but it was perfectly made. The wood was flexible and strong.

Next, he made arrows. He found the straightest sticks he could find and sharpened one end to a fine point. Eagle had given him one of his own feathers, and Cottontail tied it carefully to the arrow to help it fly straight. He made several arrows, choosing the best stone points he could find, sharp as thorns.

He gathered what food he could carry: seeds, dried roots, and some dried grass. He found a hollow gourd and filled it with water from the spring.

When everything was ready, Cottontail said goodbye to his family. His mother nuzzled him with her nose. "Be safe, my brave little one," she whispered. "Come back to us."

"I will, Mother," promised Cottontail. "I will make the world safe for all of us."

As the sun began to rise, hot and blazing as always, Cottontail set off toward the east, toward the place where the sun came up each morning.

He hopped through the sagebrush, his strong back legs pushing him forward. Hop, hop, hop, hop. He traveled steadily, not too fast, saving his energy for the long journey ahead.

The first day was very hard. The sun beat down on him mercilessly. His fur grew hot, and his ears drooped from the heat. His paws hurt from hopping over hot rocks and rough ground. But Cottontail kept going. He thought about all the animals suffering back home, and that gave him strength.

When the sun finally set and the air grew cool, Cottontail rested in the shade of a large rock. He ate a few seeds, drank a little water, and slept.

The next morning, he continued his journey east, always east, following the path of the rising sun.

Day after day after day, Cottontail traveled. He hopped through valleys filled with dry, cracked earth. He climbed over rocky hills that scraped his paws. He crossed sandy deserts where the wind blew hot and dry. His food supplies ran low. His water was almost gone. His paws became sore and blistered. His fur was full of dust. He grew thin and tired.

But Cottontail never gave up. Every morning, he would wake up, look at the rising sun in the east, and say to himself, "I must keep going. The animals are counting on me. I cannot fail them."

He met other animals along the way--Animals who did not know about the council or his mission. They would see this small, dusty rabbit hopping determinedly across the desert and ask, "Where are you going, little rabbit?"

"I am going to shoot the sun," Cottontail would answer proudly.

Some animals laughed, just as the animals at the council had laughed. But Cottontail did not let their laughter stop him. He knew what he had to do.

After many, many days, so many days that Cottontail lost count, the landscape began to change. The air smelled different, wet and salty. He could hear a strange sound in the distance, a rhythmic whooshing and crashing that he had never heard before.

Cottontail hopped faster, his heart beating with excitement. Could it be? Was he finally near the great water?

He climbed up one more hill, his tired legs trembling with effort. When he reached the top, he stopped and stared in wonder.

Before him stretched the great water, the ocean! It was bigger than anything he had ever imagined. It went on and on and on, all the way to where the sky met the water at the edge of the world. Waves rolled in, crashing against the shore with a sound like thunder. The water was a beautiful blue-green color, and it sparkled in the sunlight.

"This is it," Cottontail whispered to himself. "This is where the sun rises. This is where I will wait for it."

He was exhausted from his long journey, but he had made it! Now he needed to prepare.

Looking around, Cottontail found a tall tree growing near the water's edge. It was taller than any tree he had ever seen, with thick branches that reached up toward the sky.

"Perfect," said Cottontail. "From up there, I will be able to see the sun as soon as it begins to rise. I will be ready."

Even though his paws were sore and his body was tired, Cottontail climbed the tree. He had practiced climbing trees back home, and his strong claws helped him grip the bark. Up and up he climbed, higher and higher, until he found a strong branch near the top of the tree.

From this high perch, Cottontail could see everything. Below him, the great water stretched out endlessly. Above him, the sky was beginning to turn dark as evening approached. The stars began to come out, twinkling like tiny fires in the vast darkness.

Cottontail settled himself on the branch, making sure he had a firm grip. He took out his bow and his best arrow, the one with Eagle's feather attached. He tested the bowstring. It was tight and strong. He checked the arrow point. It was sharp and true.

"Tomorrow morning," Cottontail said to himself, "when the sun rises from the water, I will be ready. This is what I came for. This is what I must do."

The night was long. Cottontail tried to rest, but he was too excited and nervous to sleep much. He thought about his home, about his mother, about all the animals at the council. He thought about the hot, suffering land, about the dried-up water holes, about the dying plants.

"I must succeed," he whispered to himself. "I must."

The night was cool—much cooler than it ever got back home because of the ocean breeze. It felt wonderful after so many days of brutal heat. Cottontail let the cool air wash over him, gathering his strength for what was to come.

Slowly, very slowly, the eastern sky began to change. First, it was black. Then it turned to dark purple. Then the purple lightened to violet, then to pink, then to orange.

Cottontail's heart began to beat faster. This was it. This was the moment he had traveled so far for.

He stood up on the branch, gripping it firmly with his back paws. He held his bow in his front paws and placed the arrow against the bowstring. His muscles tensed, ready.

The sky grew brighter and brighter. Orange turned to gold. The whole eastern horizon seemed to be on fire with color.

And then, there it was!

The sun began to rise from the great water, enormous and blazing, more brilliant than anything Cottontail had ever seen. It was like a huge ball of fire climbing up from beneath the waves, steam rising around it where it touched the water. It was beautiful and terrible at the same time.

For a moment, Cottontail was frozen, overwhelmed by the sun's power and majesty. How could little he, a small rabbit, possibly hurt something so magnificent and mighty?

Then he remembered: the suffering animals, the dying land, the dried-up water, the withering plants. He remembered his promise. He remembered his purpose.

Cottontail's paws stopped trembling. His eyes focused. His breathing steadied.

He pulled back the bowstring with all his might. His small muscles strained and trembled with the effort. The bow bent almost double. Cottontail aimed carefully at the center of the rising sun, just as it cleared the horizon.

"For the animals," he whispered. "For the land. For balance and life."

And then he let the arrow fly.

### Part III: The Falling Sun

The arrow shot through the air like lightning.

It flew straight and true, Eagle's feather guiding it perfectly. The arrow climbed higher and higher into the brightening sky, heading directly toward the rising sun.

For a long moment, Cottontail watched, hardly daring to breathe. Would it reach? Was he strong enough? Was the arrow true enough?

And then, the arrow struck the sun!

For a heartbeat, nothing happened. The sun hung in the sky, the arrow buried in its blazing surface.

Then the sun seemed to shudder. It trembled and wavered in the sky like a reflection on water that has been disturbed. A deep, rumbling sound filled the air, a sound like thunder, but deeper and more powerful than any thunder Cottontail had ever heard.

The sun lurched to one side. Then it began to fall.

Slowly at first, then faster and faster, the sun tumbled from the sky. As it fell, it seemed to break apart, pieces of blazing fire spinning off in all directions. The whole world was filled with golden-red light, brighter than bright, burning and terrible.

Cottontail realized with horror what was about to happen.

The sun was going to hit the earth. And when it did, everything would burn!

"What have I done?" Cottontail cried out. He had wanted to help, but now it seemed he might have destroyed the world instead!

The sun hit the ground far away with a crash that shook the entire earth. Cottontail felt the tree sway beneath him. The ground rumbled and shook.

Then, fire exploded across the land!

Where the sun touched the earth, everything burst into flames. The dry grass caught fire instantly, the flames leaping from blade to blade. Trees exploded into towers of fire, their branches reaching up like flaming arms. Bushes became balls of fire. Even the rocks seemed to burn, glowing red and orange with heat.

The fire spread in all directions, racing across the land faster than any animal could run. It moved like a living thing, hungry and wild, consuming everything in its path.

Cottontail scrambled down from the tree as fast as his paws could move. He slid and jumped, scraping his paws on the bark, but he didn't stop. He hit the ground running.

The heat was really HOT! Worse than the worst day under the blazing sun. The very air seemed to be on fire. Cottontail's fur felt like it was about to burst into flames. His eyes watered from the smoke and heat. He could barely breathe.

He had to find shelter! He had to find somewhere to hide from the fire that was racing toward him like a terrible monster!

Cottontail ran as fast as his legs could carry him. His heart pounded in his chest. His breath came in gasps. Behind him, he could hear the roar of the approaching fire, could feel its heat getting closer and closer.

Then, through the smoke and confusion, Cottontail remembered something.

During his long journey to the ocean, he had passed a burrow--an empty hole in the ground. It had been a long way back, but maybe, just maybe, he could reach it before the fire caught him!

Cottontail changed direction and ran with every ounce of strength he had left. His paws pounded the earth. His muscles screamed with effort. His lungs burned from the hot, smoky air.

The fire was right behind him now, so close that he could feel it singeing the fur on his back. Sparks flew past him, landing on the ground ahead and starting new fires.

"There!" Cottontail spotted the burrow--dark hole in the ground, but it meant safety, it meant survival!

With one final, desperate leap, Cottontail dove headfirst into the burrow, tumbling and rolling into the cool darkness below.

But the fire was right behind him! He could see the orange glow at the entrance, could feel the heat pouring down the tunnel!

Cottontail scrambled deeper into the burrow, his claws digging into the earth. This burrow was straight, too straight! The fire would follow him down!

Using his powerful back legs, Cottontail began to dig frantically. He dug to the side, creating a new tunnel. Then he dug down, and then to the side again, making the burrow twist and turn like a snake.

And as he dug, he kicked the dirt behind him with his strong back legs, packing it tight to block the tunnel behind him. Kick, kick, kick! The dirt piled up, creating a barrier between him and the approaching fire.

Deeper and deeper Cottontail dug, making the burrow wind and curve, always kicking dirt back to block the path. His paws ached. His muscles screamed with exhaustion. But he couldn't stop, because his life depended on it!

The fire roared at the entrance of the burrow above. Cottontail could hear it crackling and snapping, could hear trees exploding, could hear rocks splitting from the heat.

He dug as deep as he possibly could, until his paws hit cool, damp earth that the sun had never touched. Finally, he could dig no more. He curled up in a tight ball at the very end of his winding burrow, making himself as small as possible, and waited.

Above ground, the world was burning. The fire raged for hours, consuming everything. The heat was incredible, even deep in the burrow.

Cottontail had done his best to block the tunnels with dirt, but the fire was so powerful, so hot, that some of the heat still found its way through the twists and turns of the burrow.

Cottontail felt the heat creeping closer. It found him at the end of his burrow, even though he had burrowed so deep and kicked back so much dirt.

The heat burned his neck, where his fur was softest and his skin was most tender. It burned his wrists, where he had no thick fur to protect him. It burned his ankles, those delicate parts of his back legs where the fur was thin.

Cottontail cried out in pain, but there was nowhere else to go. He curled up even tighter, tucking his burned paws under his body, pressing his neck against the cool earth, trying to make the pain stop.

"Please," he whispered to himself, to the earth, to whatever spirits might be listening. "Please let me survive. Please let the fire end. Please..."

The heat was unbearable. The pain was terrible. Cottontail felt like he might faint.

And then, gradually, slowly, the roaring above began to quiet. The terrible heat began to lessen, degree by degree. The fire was moving on, or perhaps it was running out of things to burn.

Cottontail waited in his burrow, trembling, afraid to come out. Hours passed. The roaring stopped completely. The awful heat faded to warmth, then to coolness. Still Cottontail waited, making sure it was truly safe.

Finally, when he could wait no longer, when his curiosity and hope overcame his fear, Cottontail began the long climb back up through his twisting burrow.

It took a long time. The dirt he had kicked back was packed tight, and he had to dig through it carefully. Up and up, he went, following the winding tunnel he had made in his desperate escape, until finally he reached the entrance.

Cottontail poked his nose out very, very carefully and looked around. It was safe to come out, but just enough fire reached him to burn his neck, wrists, and ankles, and tail turning those areas white or lighter in color, creating the distinctive white markings that cottontails have today.



### **For Teachers: Cultural Context**

This story comes from the Shoshone people, who have lived in the Great Basin region (parts of Nevada, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming) for thousands of years. The Shoshone traditionally lived in a challenging desert environment where temperatures could be extreme. They developed deep knowledge of the plants and animals that shared their homeland.

Stories like this one served many purposes:

- Teaching children about animal behavior and characteristics
- Explaining natural phenomena in memorable ways
- Passing down values like courage, cooperation, and respect
- Preserving cultural identity and history
- Teaching practical knowledge about hunting and survival

The cottontail rabbit was an important food source for the Shoshone people, hunted respectfully and used completely. Rabbit meat provided protein, and rabbit fur was woven into warm blankets. The Shoshone showed gratitude for the rabbit's sacrifice and took only what was needed, maintaining balance with nature—just as Cottontail in the story helped maintain balance by fixing the sun.

When teaching this story, emphasize:

- This is a sacred story from the Shoshone people
- It has been passed down for many generations
- It teaches important lessons while explaining natural features
- We should respect the cultures and knowledge of Native peoples
- These stories represent sophisticated understanding of the natural world

**TEACHER EXAMPLE**

**Indigenous Languages Vocabulary Sheet (K-5)**

**Directions:**

In Column 1, rewrite the word in English. In Column 2, write the definition of the word in your own words, then in Column 3 rewrite in Native language (if available). If it's not available, you may use the Native language of a neighbor, friend, or community member.

<b>Vocabulary Word</b>	<b>English Rewrite</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Shoshoni</b>
			<b>Language Rewrite</b>
Cottontail			Tapo'
Rabbit			Kamme
Burrow			Tsa'hote (hole dug by an animal)
Council			Taikwa wapeneen (Speakers/leaders)
Sun			Tapai (sun or day)

**STUDENT WORKSHEET**

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

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

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<b>Vocabulary Word</b>	<b>English Rewrite</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<hr/> <b>Language Rewrite</b>
Cottontail			
Rabbit			
Burrow			
Council			
Sun			

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

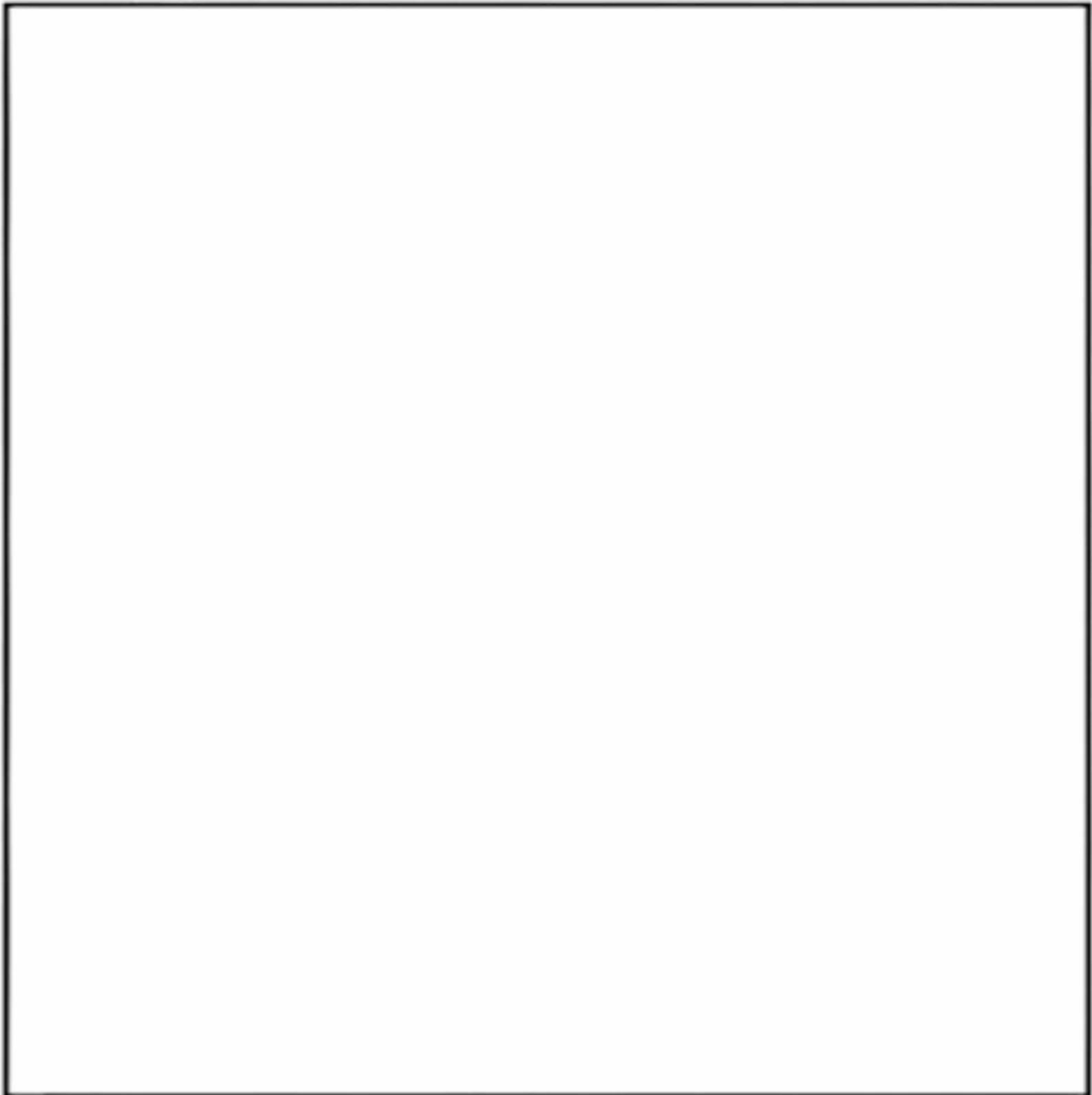
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# Cottontail's White Markings

Draw a cottontail rabbit in the box below. Color its body brown or gray. Then color these parts **WHITE**: tail, a ring around the neck, the wrists (front paws), ankles (back paws).

These are the places that got burned when Cottontail hid from the fire.

Draw your cottontail here:



Why are these parts white?

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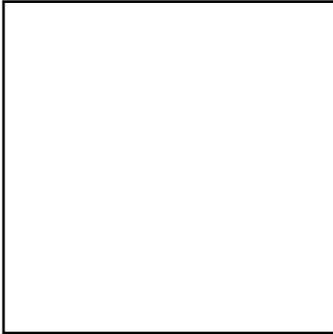
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# Activity 2: Cottontail's Journey Sequence

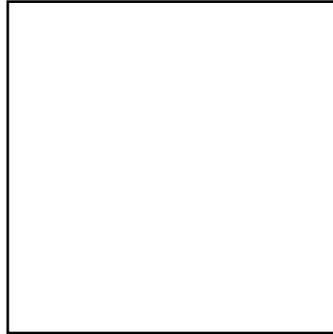
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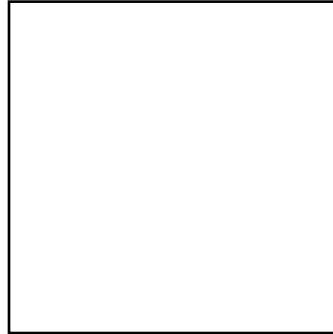
Directions: Cut out the pictures below and glue them in order from 1 to 7 to show Cottontail's journey.



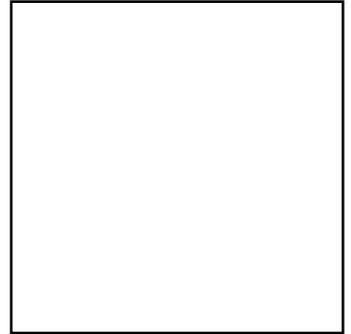
[Box 1 – FIRST]  
Council Meeting



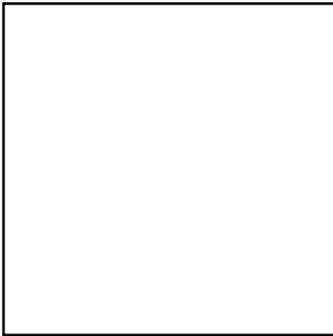
[Box 2]  
Traveling East



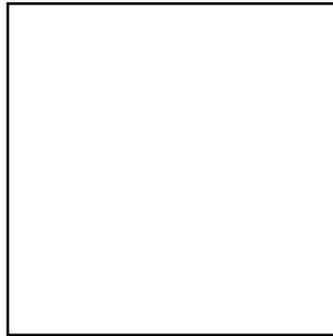
[Box 3]  
Aiming in a tree



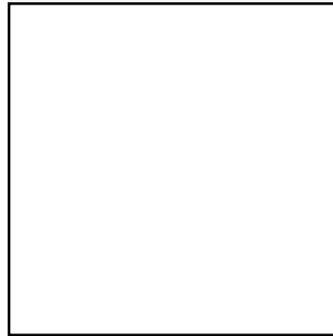
[Box 4]  
Arrow in the sun



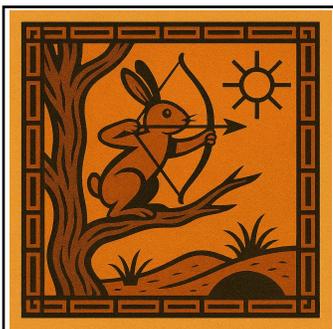
[Box 5]  
Fire upon the land



[Box 6]  
Diving into burrow



[Box 7 – LAST]  
Emerging with markings



# Activity 3: Rabbit Adaptations

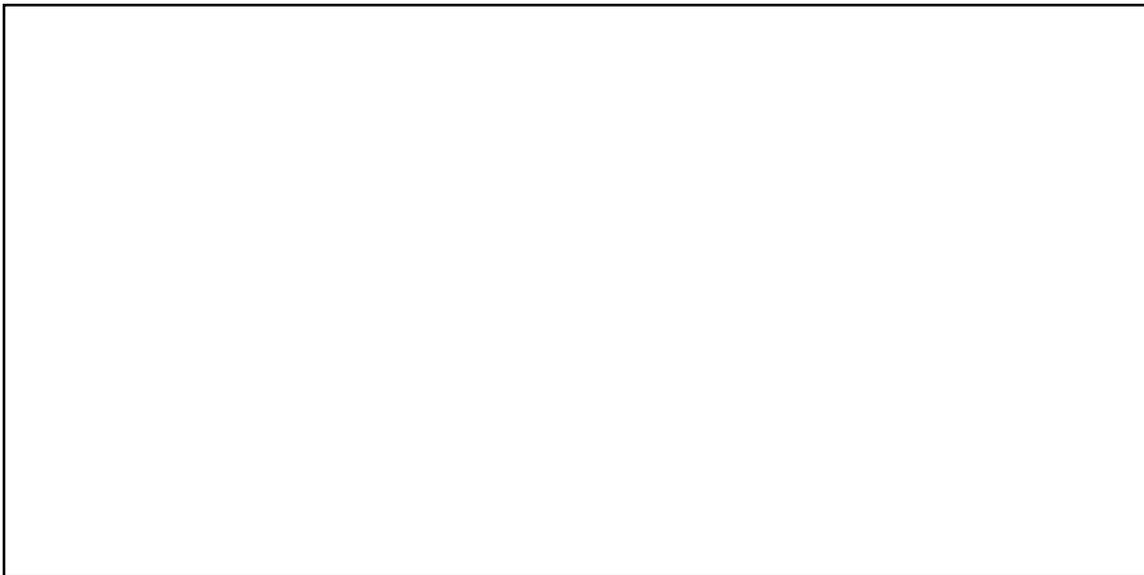
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Draw lines to match each **body part** with **how it helps the rabbit survive**.

Long ears	Helps rabbit hide from predators (camouflage)
Strong back legs	Can fit into small burrows and hiding places
White tail	Hears predators coming from far away
Brown/gray fur	Helps rabbit jump far and run fast to escape
Small size	Flashes when running away from predators

## Draw and Label a Rabbit's Burrow (Underground Home)

- Show:
- The entrance
  - The twisting tunnels
  - Where the rabbit sleeps



## Why Are Burrows Important for Rabbits?

Burrows keep rabbits safe from predators. A burrow gives rabbits a place to hide from animals that want to eat them. They provide rabbits protection from the weather. Underground tunnels stay cool in summer and warm in winter. Rabbits use burrows as a safe home for their babies. And burrows provide escape routes-- they often have more than one entrance so rabbits can run away quickly if danger comes.

## Activity 4: Animal Council Role Play Cards

(Teachers: Print and cut these out for students to use)

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### EAGLE

- You fly closest to the hot sun
- Your wings get tired from the heat
- You are wise and lead the council

#### What you might say:

"The sun burns too hot. We must find a solution."



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### BEAR

- You are very strong
- Your cubs cannot play in the daytime heat
- You have large paws that cannot hold a bow

**What you might say:** "My cubs suffer from the heat. I would help, but my paws are too big to shoot a bow."



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### COYOTE

- You are clever and tricky
- Your pups pant in the heat
- You notice everything

**What you might say:** "There is not enough food because the heat kills the plants. Someone must do something!"



### DEER

- You are gentle and fast
- You cannot find enough water
  - You speak kindly

**What you might say:** "The water holes have dried up. We need rain and cooler weather."

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### COTTONTAIL RABBIT

- You are small but brave
- Other animals sometimes ignore you
  - You are determined to help

**What you might say:** "I may be small, but I am willing to try. I will shoot down the sun!"

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### SNAKE

- You like warm rocks
- But even you think it's too hot now
  - You are quiet but wise

**What you might say:** "Even I, who love warmth, cannot stand this heat. The sun must change."



# Activity 4: Animal Council Role Play Instructions

Pretend to be an animal on the animal council, discussing the dilemma-- **the sun is too hot!**

Work together and listen to everyone's ideas to find a solution.

## What to do:

### 1. Get Your Animal Card

- You will be an animal in the council.
- Read your card to learn:
  - Who you are
  - What the hot sun is doing to you
  - A sentence you can say

### 2. Join the Council Circle

Sit in a circle with the other animals. This is your council meeting.

### 3. Speak Like Your Animal

- Take turns sharing your animal's problem.
- Use the ideas on your card. You can add your own words too!

### 4. Listen to Everyone

- Pay attention when others talk.
- Every animal's voice is important—even the small ones!

### 5. Talk About Solutions

After everyone shares:

- How can the animals work together?
- Why is listening important?
- What does it mean to be brave?

## Remember:

- Be kind and respectful.
- Use your imagination!
- Have fun acting like your animal.



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

**Grades K-2: Story Comprehension Worksheet****Circle the correct answer:**

1. What problem did the animals have?
  - a) Not enough food
  - b) The sun was too hot
  - c) Too much rain
  
2. Who volunteered to shoot the sun?
  - a) Bear
  - b) Eagle
  - c) Cottontail
  
3. Where did Cottontail travel to shoot the sun?
  - a) To the mountains
  - b) To the ocean (the east)
  - c) To the desert
  
4. Where did Cottontail hide from the fire?
  - a) In a tree
  - b) In a burrow
  - c) In a cave
  
5. What color did Cottontail's burned spots turn?
  - a) Black
  - b) Red
  - c) White

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

**Grades 3-5: Story Comprehension Worksheet**

1. Why did the animals hold a council?

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2. Why did some animals laugh at Cottontail when he volunteered?

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3. Where did Cottontail have to travel to shoot the sun?

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4. What happened when Cottontail's arrow hit the sun?

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5. How did Cottontail protect himself from the fire?

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6. Which parts of Cottontail's body got burned and turned white?

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7. What does this story teach us about being brave?

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8. What does this story teach us about working together?

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9. Write one fact about rabbits.

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10. How can you be brave, like Cottontail?

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