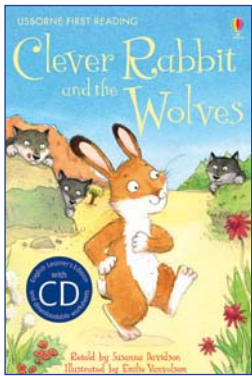


## Clever Rabbit and the Wolves • Teacher's notes



**Author:** Traditional, retold by Susanna Davidson

**Reader level:** Elementary

**Word count:** 196

**Lexile level:** 240L

**Text type:** Native American folk tale

### About the story

Clever Rabbit finds himself surrounded by wolves. Luckily, as his name suggests, he is good at thinking quickly. He suggests that the wolves watch him dance rather than eat him. Big Wolf is not convinced, but Little Wolf is eager to see the rabbit's dance and even more keen to join in. Before long, Clever Rabbit has all the wolves stomping their feet and turning around as he sings and dances to demonstrate. Encouraged by Clever Rabbit, the wolves dance faster and faster until they're so dizzy they fall to the ground... by which time Clever Rabbit has long since danced away into the long grass and made his escape.

The tale comes from the Cherokee people, Native Americans from the south-eastern area of what's now the USA. They have a rich and extensive range of myths and legends, developed over thousands of years and passed on orally from one generation to the next. The stories are inspired by the Cherokees' natural environment, and often have animals as their central characters. The rabbit is a common character and nearly always appears as a trickster.

### About the author

Susanna Davidson has written over 50 books for children. She grew up in the Surrey countryside, surrounded by all kinds of animals, from parakeets and terrapins to rats, rabbits and snakes (no wolves, though). She now lives in London, writing about animals rather than living with them.



### Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words, which are important in the story.

	clever	p9	stomp
	wolves		copy
p2	trapped	p12	fun
	ring	p20	dizzy
p3	dinner	p23	fell
p7	tapped		ground
	foot	p24	where
p8	sang	p25	chase

### Key phrases

p2	in the middle
p4	don't you want to
p9	on the word
p13	show us more
p15	turn around
p17	oh yes?
	try it faster
p22	keep dancing
p23	one by one
p25	far away



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## Before reading

You might like to search for some images of predator animals and their prey, or you could just write their names on the board. Put them into two lists or groups: on the left, the predators (e.g. lion, tiger, leopard, wolf, fox, jackal, hawk, owl); on the right, the prey (deer, sheep, goats, rabbits, mice). Can students guess what the groups have in common?

Show the cover and read the title. Do students think the rabbit has seen the wolves? What do the wolves want to do? What does the rabbit need to do? How many wolves are there? Do students think the rabbit can get away? It's three against one... but he's clever...

## Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

## During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

- |         |   |     |   |
|---------|---|-----|---|
| p2      | How do you think Clever Rabbit is feeling?  | p19 | What time of day is it now? How long do you think they've been dancing for?     |
| p4      | Do you think offering to dance is a clever idea? Have you ever seen a rabbit dance? | p20 | Have you ever turned around so much that you got dizzy? What does it feel like? |
| p9      | Little Wolf looks interested – but do the other wolves want to join in?             | p21 | Why does Clever Rabbit look so happy?   |
| pp10-11 | Do the wolves look like they're enjoying themselves now? How about Big Wolf?        | p25 | Can you see Clever Rabbit? How do you think Big Wolf feels now?                 |

## Puzzles (pages 26-29)

You might like students to work on these in pairs or small groups. If so, ask the "After reading" questions before doing the puzzles.

## After reading

Why don't the wolves eat Clever Rabbit straight away? Do you think Clever Rabbit's trick was a good one? Would it work without Little Wolf, the one who first wanted to see Clever Rabbit's dance?

What do you think will happen if Clever Rabbit meets the wolves again? Do you think they'll fall for the same trick? Try to come up with other ways that Clever Rabbit could use to distract the wolves and escape.

Can you think of any other animal stories where a hunted animal has tricked the hunter? The Billy Goats Gruff is one example, or Clever Rabbit and the Lion (also available as an Usborne English Learner's Edition).

## Did you know?

Rabbits stomp their feet in real life. They do it to try and scare off predators, and to warn other rabbits of danger. They have big, powerful hind legs that make the ground vibrate when they stomp down.

