

# WHERE DID YOU GET THAT TALE?

## The mysterious history of the Three Bears and a girl called Goldilocks.

In 1837 a writer called Robert Southey published a book called *The Doctor*. Made up from a series of essays connected by the history of Dr Daniel Dove of Doncaster, it included an interesting tale told to the doctor by his uncle.

This story, described as one that “never fails of effect with that fit audience for which it is designed, if it is told with dramatic spirit”, concerned three bears who lived in a house in a wood. One day, while the Great Huge Bear, Middle-Sized Bear and Little Small Wee Bear were out walking, leaving their porridge to cool, their home was visited by a horrible little old woman. This woman



was not a good honest old woman, “for first she looked in at the window, and then she peeped in at the keyhole; and seeing nobody in the house, she lifted the latch.”

Once inside, the woman tried the bears’ porridge (liking the little bear’s best, but complaining because it did not hold enough), their chairs (finding the little bear’s just right, until the bottom fell out), and their beds (the little bear’s being so comfortable she covered herself up and lay there until she fell fast asleep).



When the bears returned home they found their porridge had been tested, their chairs sat in, and when they got upstairs, their beds crumpled! “Someone has been lying in my bed!” said each bear, with the smallest adding “And here she is!”

With all the noise the old lady woke up, hurried out of the bed and jumped from the window, “and whether she broke her neck in the fall; or ran into the wood and was lost there; or found her way out of the wood, and was taken up by the constable and sent to the House of Correction for a vagrant as she was, I cannot tell; but the Three Bears never saw anything more of her.”

This story was very popular when it first appeared in *The Doctor* and, because no one had ever seen it written down before, everyone thought Robert Southey had made it up himself - even though he said he was simply re-telling an old tale. New versions were soon printed (one even telling the story in verse) and each one helped Mr Southey’s tale become even more popular.



So convinced was everyone that Southey was the author that in 1890 Joseph Jacobs, in his book *English Fairy Tales*, wrote that “the story was invented by Southey”. When Jacob’s illustrator John D Batten saw his work later, however, he said that this fact couldn’t possibly be true. He had heard a similar tale from a “Mrs H”, who had in turn been told it by her mother more than forty years earlier!

When Jacobs reprinted *English Fairy Tales* in 1894, Southey’s version was replaced by the tale told by “Mrs H”. The story still had the bears and their house, but instead of a little old lady, the intruder was a fox called Scrapefoot. In attempting to explain this difference in the two stories, Jacobs decided that Robert Southey had originally heard Mrs H’s version but had misunderstood the word “vixen”, thinking it meant a harridan or nasty old woman, rather than a female fox.

Now you might be forgiven for thinking that this was the end of the tale. And for over fifty years it was. But then, in 1951, a manuscript was discovered in the Toronto Public Library. It belonged to the Osbourne Collection of Early Children’s Books and was entitled *The Story of the Three Bears Metrically Related*. It had been written by a woman called Eleanor Mure to entertain her nephew Horace, and set at Cecil Lodge, Miss Mure’s father’s house in Hertfordshire. Said to be based on “the celebrated nursery tale”, it featured “an angry old woman” and had been written in 1831 - six years before Mr Southey had put pen to paper!

According to those people who know such things, it seems that the tale of the three bears - which Miss Mure may have heard as a child - is an ancient one from Scotland. In this story the bears, after being bothered by a fox, end up eating it - a particularly nasty warning to respect other people’s privacy and property!

Today, the story is still very popular - but as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Which leaves us with one last mystery: we know how the fox becomes the little old

woman, but how did the little old woman become Goldilocks?

Well, in 1850 a writer called Joseph Dunall published *A Treasury of Pleasure Books for Young Children*, in which he included the tale of The Three Bears. But because he thought there were too many stories featuring old women, he decided to make the bears’ visitor a little girl called Silver-Hair. This name remained for some years until she became Silver-Locks in *Aunt Mavor’s Nursery Tales* (1858) and then Golden Hair in *Aunt Friendly’s Book* (1868). And then, in *Old Nursery Stories* which was first published in 1904, she finally became Goldilocks. And Goldilocks she has been ever since.



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# THE BEAR FACTS!



Bears are really amazing animals. Although they are amongst the biggest, strongest and most dangerous of mammals (if provoked), they are also extremely popular with children and adults alike. Most children have a teddy bear at some time, and many of the most popular children's stories feature loveable bears.

Here then, is a selection of fascinating 'bear facts'. As you can see, the writers of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *Paddington* and other stories didn't always get everything right about bears...



## Not porridge again!

It's unlikely that many wild bears get the chance to try porridge, but most bears will eat almost anything. Like humans, they are omnivorous, which means they'll eat meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, berries and insects. The polar bear will normally only eat meat - usually seals - although, if it is offered fruit, it will devour it. Giant pandas, on the other hand, eat only bamboo and even have a special extra 'thumb' to help them hold it. The sloth bear is more like an anteater than a bear, as it eats only termites. Its specially adapted muzzle can form a tube through which the bear sucks up insects from their nests, making a sound that can be heard over 300 feet away!



## THE EIGHT BEARS

Bears have been living in the world for millions of years, although many early types are now extinct. One of these, the giant short-faced bear, used to be over 14 feet tall, making it the largest predatory land mammal of all time! Another, the European cave bear, was so fearsome it was worshipped by Neanderthal cavemen, although, in fact it only ate plants.

There are eight species of bear alive in the world today. Until recently there were thought to be only seven, but recent research has shown that giant pandas, thought to be a type of raccoon, are actually an early type of bear. On the other hand, koala bears, although they look bear-like, are in fact marsupials, related more closely to kangaroos than to other bears.

Of these, the sun bears are the smallest at only four or five feet in length, while polar bears are generally the biggest at nearly nine feet, although occasionally brown bears can be bigger - up to ten feet long.



One writer who did get his facts right was A A Milne, who wrote the *Winnie the Pooh* books. As we know, Pooh Bear loved honey more than anything else in the world. And so do some real bears. They love it so much that they will break open beehives with their heavy paws to get at it, even though it means they get stung all over by angry bees!



## THE EIGHT BEARS...

- SUN BEARS
- BROWN BEARS
- GIANT PANDAS
- ASIATIC BLACK BEARS
- SLOTH BEARS
- AMERICAN BLACK BEARS
- SPECTACLED BEARS
- POLAR BEARS

# What kind of bear was...?

There have been many famous bears in stories and films, but what kind of bears were they? Here are some possible answers:

## Winnie The Pooh

This foolish but loveable bear was based on a real American black bear that lived at London Zoo during World War I. It had been brought to London by a Canadian soldier who had named it Winnipeg (Winnie for short), the name of his home town. Winnie became a hugely popular attraction at the zoo and, when writer A A Milne saw it, he based his famous character on it.

## Paddington Bear

Created by Michael Bond, Paddington was an intrepid travelling bear from darkest Peru, in South America. This means he must be a spectacled bear, as they are the only type to be found there.

## Baloo

As Baloo is found in *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling, he must be an Indian bear as that is where the story (and the Disney cartoon) is set. The most widespread bear in India is the sloth bear, but sun bears, black bears and brown bears are also found in small numbers. As Baloo is rather large, it seems most likely he is a brown bear, as the other types are quite small.

## Yogi Bear

In the cartoons, the smart-talking Yogi Bear lives in an American national park, suggesting that he is either an American black bear or a brown bear.

## Goldilocks and the Three Bears

And finally, the Three Bears in the fairy tale which, as it is a European story, must be brown bears, amongst the fiercest of all bears. No wonder Goldilocks was scared!









What Goldilocks should have done, or tips on...

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU MEET A BEAR



Although strong and potentially dangerous, bears are naturally shy of people and will avoid us if they can. The best thing to do if you think bears are around is travel in groups, making lots of noise and staying out in the open. That way if a bear sees or hears you, it will have a chance to move away. Bears only tend to attack if they are cornered or taken by surprise.

If, like Goldilocks, you DO happen to meet a bear, you should:

-  Stay calm and don't run away. Running only seems to make a bear want to chase you and bears can run much faster than humans.
-  Avoid eye contact as it might think you are challenging it.
-  Back away slowly, talking in a soothing voice.
-  If the bear starts to growl with its ears laid back, it may be about to attack. The only answer is to drop down to the ground and 'act dead'. If the bear thinks you are no longer a threat, it will leave you alone.
-  Stay down even if you think the bear has gone. Give it time to move away before you get up.
-  And finally, don't do what Goldilocks did and either enter a bear's home (usually a cave, tree or hole in the ground) or eat their food!




# NOT THE THREE BEARS!

In the famous story, Goldilocks meets a family of three bears, Daddy, Mummy and Baby. In real life, however, bears mostly live alone, travelling across huge areas every day to find food. The only time when bears are found living together is when a mother bear is looking after her cubs. In other words, bears live as single parent families, with the father never meeting or having anything to do with his 'children'.



# THE AMAZING BREAKFAST WORDSEARCH!



	L B A K E D B E A N S K	
	E D A L A M R A M M M L	
	C O F F E E R B O X O I	
	I R Y E N O H O S B K M	
	U T O L A E R E C S E F	
	J O K I R H K B M E D R	
	E M A J S A T A F G K I	
	G A D U C S G C R A I E	
	N T M N A X A O U S P D	
	A O A O E G G N I U P E	
	R P T E G E A E T A E G	
	O E G D I R R O P S R G	

There are twenty-one breakfast things hiding in this wordsearch.  
Can you find all the words below?

They may be written across, up, down, diagonally and even backwards!

ORANGE JUICE  
EGG  
SAUSAGES  
TOMATO  
TOAST  
SMOKED KIPPER  
JAM

CROISSANTS  
FRIED EGG  
PORRIDGE  
COFFEE  
MILK  
BAKED BEANS  
HONEY

CEREAL  
BACON  
TEA  
MUSHROOMS  
PANCAKES  
MARMALADE  
FRUIT

# TEDDY Trouble!



Baby Bear has left his teddies piled up in a corner of the room, and they are all in a heap! Can you tell how many bears there are?

# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!

Baby Bear has just discovered what Goldilocks has done to his porridge!

However, there are eight differences between these two pictures.

Can you find them all?



# WHO HAS WHAT?

The Three Bears have lots of famous cousins!

Can you match each of these well-known bears with the objects below?

a. THE BEAR IN THE BIG BLUE HOUSE

b. WINNIE THE POOH

c. MARY PLAIN

e. BEN (from Grizzly Adams)

f. RUPERT BEAR

g. BALOO

i. PADDINGTON BEAR



1



2



3

d. GENTLE BEN



4

5



6



h. YOGI BEAR



7



8



# PUZZLING PORRIDGE

Baby Bear wasn't looking where he was going and has spilled all the porridge!

Can you find your way to the only bowl that isn't spilled?

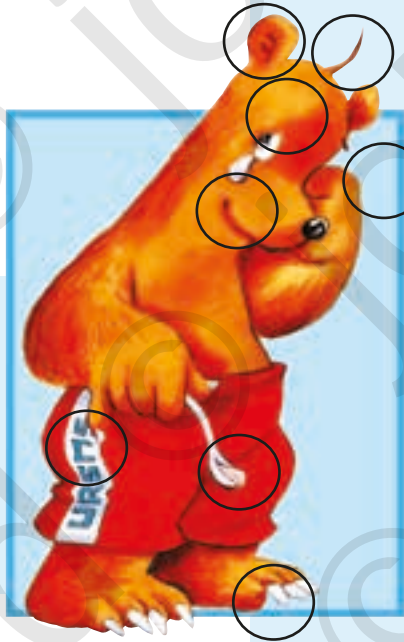


# COLOUR ME IN!



# ANSWERS

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



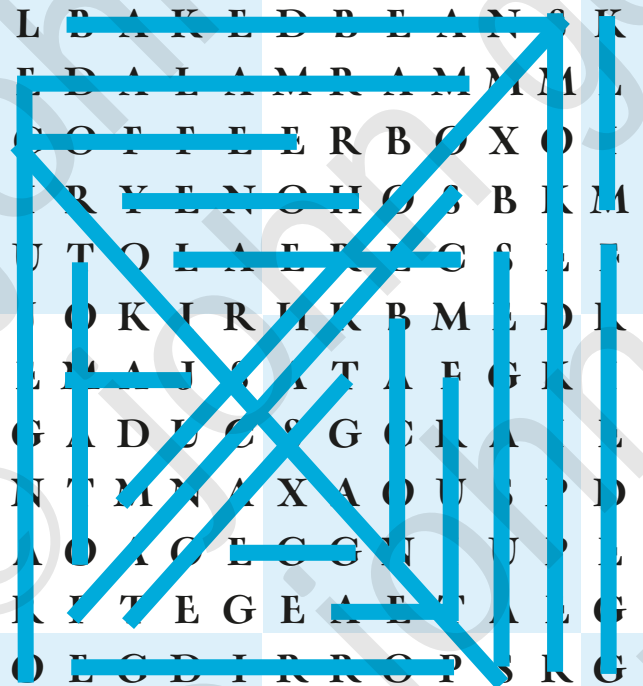
## PUZZLING PORRIDGE



## TEDDY TROUBLE

There are ten tidied-up teddies!

## BREAKFAST WORDSEARCH



## WHO HAS WHAT?

1. = i, 2. = e, 3. = g, 4. = b,  
5. = d, 6. = a, 7. = c, 8 = f.