

# THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2104/210416-rabbit.html>

One of the world's largest rabbits has been stolen from his home in England. Darius, a continental giant rabbit, is the current Guinness record holder as the longest rabbit in the world. From nose to tail, he measures 129cm in length. Police say he was abducted from his pen late Saturday evening. Local police said in a statement: "It is believed the rabbit was stolen from its enclosure in the garden of the property of its owners overnight on Saturday. We are appealing for information following the theft." Darius' distraught owner has offered a \$2,750 reward for the safe return of her beloved pet. She pleaded for his safe return and told the rabbitnappers that Darius was too old to be bred.

Darius' disappearance comes amid a spike in pet thefts in the UK during the coronavirus pandemic. Darius' owner has made an impassioned appeal to those who made off with her rabbit. She said: "Every animal is an individual that can't be replaced, and it's just so upsetting because he is such a loveable character." The police said Darius' abduction was a high-profile case as the animal was a celebrity in England and has made dozens of TV appearances. They believe the abductors have a potential "ulterior motive," and that it could be the work of organized criminals who knew his commercial value. The UK's policing Minister Kit Malthouse called animal theft a "vile crime" and promised to crack down on it.

Sources: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2021/04/13/bunny-missing-england-police-say-giant-rabbit-stolen/7208440002/>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/apr/12/worlds-biggest-rabbit-stolen-from-home-in-worcestershire>  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/worlds-biggest-rabbit-stolen-b1830420.html>

# WARM-UPS

**1. RABBITS:** Students walk around the class and talk to other students about rabbits. Change partners often and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

rabbit / home / record / nose / tail / stolen / garden / information / owner / pet /  
coronavirus / pandemic / individual / high-profile / TV / criminals / commercial

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. PUNISHMENTS:** Students A **strongly** believe pet thieves should receive very long prison sentences; Students B **strongly** believe not. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**4. GUINNESS RECORDS:** What do you think these record animals might be? Why? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

Animal	What?	Why?
Cutest		
Most dangerous		
Most useful		
Laziest		
Most fun		
Best pet		

**5. NOSE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "nose". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. PETS:** Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Rabbit
- Horse
- Dog
- Goldfish
- Cat
- Tortoise
- Parrot
- Beetle

# VOCABULARY MATCHING

## Paragraph 1

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 1. abducted   | a. The action or crime of stealing.  |
| 2. pen        | b. A building or buildings and the land belonging to it or them.                       |
| 3. property   | c. A small enclosure in which sheep, pigs, cattle, or other domestic animals are kept. |
| 4. appealing  | d. (of an animal) made to produce young for commercial or other reasons.               |
| 5. theft      | e. Taken someone away illegally by force or deception; kidnap.                         |
| 6. distraught | f. Making a serious or urgent request, typically to the public.                        |
| 7. bred       | g. Deeply upset and troubled.  |

## Paragraph 2

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 8. spike            | h. Having or showing the capacity to become or develop into something in the future. |
| 9. impassioned      | i. Extremely unpleasant.   |
| 10. made off with   | j. A hidden or secret reason for something.  |
| 11. potential       | k. Filled with or showing great emotion.   |
| 12. ulterior motive | l. Take severe measures or actions against something.                                |
| 13. vile            | m. A sharp increase in the scale or concentration of something.                      |
| 14. crack down on   | n. Stole or took away.   |



# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2104/210416-rabbit.html>

## 1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. The world's largest rabbit was stolen from the continent. **T / F**
- b. The rabbit is 1.29 metres long from its tail to its nose. **T / F**
- c. The rabbit was stolen from a high-class pet shop last week. **T / F**
- d. There is a \$2.7 million reward for the rabbit's safe return. **T / F**
- e. The article says there has been a recent spike in rabbit thefts in the UK. **T / F**
- f. The rabbit was a celebrity in the UK and had been on TV. **T / F**
- g. The police think organized criminals may have stolen the rabbit. **T / F**
- h. The UK's policing minister promised to tackle animal theft. **T / F**

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms. The words in **bold** are from the news article.

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. <b>current</b>    | a. secret        |
| 2. <b>abducted</b>   | b. upset         |
| 3. <b>appealing</b>  | c. precious      |
| 4. <b>distraught</b> | d. made off with |
| 5. <b>beloved</b>    | e. reason        |
| 6. <b>spike</b>      | f. present       |
| 7. <b>celebrity</b>  | g. nasty         |
| 8. <b>ulterior</b>   | h. increase      |
| 9. <b>motive</b>     | i. star          |
| 10. <b>vile</b>      | j. begging       |

## 3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. the current Guinness record             | a. an impassioned appeal     |
| 2. From nose to tail,                      | b. a spike in pet thefts     |
| 3. We are appealing                        | c. criminals                 |
| 4. a \$2,750 reward for the safe           | d. he measures 129cm         |
| 5. Darius' disappearance comes amid        | e. motive                    |
| 6. Darius' owner has made                  | f. down on it                |
| 7. upsetting because he is such a          | g. holder                    |
| 8. the abductors have a potential ulterior | h. loveable character        |
| 9. it could be the work of organized       | i. for information           |
| 10. promised to crack                      | j. return of her beloved pet |

# COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2104/210416-rabbit.html>

1. What kind of rabbit is the one that was stolen?
2. How long is the rabbit?
3. How much is the reward that is on offer for the return of the rabbit?
4. How does the rabbit's owner feel about the theft of her rabbit?
5. What did the rabbit's owner say he is too old to do?
6. What did the rabbit's owner call every animal?
7. What has the rabbit made dozens of?
8. What kind of motive do police think the abductors had?
9. What did the UK's policing minister call animal theft?
10. What did the UK's policing minister say he would do?

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2104/210416-rabbit.html>

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'giant' and 'rabbit'.

giant	rabbit

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• largest</li><li>• current</li><li>• pen</li><li>• garden</li><li>• information</li><li>• safe</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• during</li><li>• appeal</li><li>• such</li><li>• dozens</li><li>• knew</li><li>• vile</li></ul>
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# RABBITS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'giant'?
3. What do you think of rabbits?
4. Are there any creatures on Earth that are cuter than rabbits?
5. What kind of pets do rabbits make?
6. What part do rabbits play in your culture?
7. What do you think of a 129cm-long rabbit?
8. What do you know about rabbits?
9. Why might someone have stolen the rabbit?
10. What do you think the life of a rabbit is like?

*World's longest rabbit is 'rabbitnapped' – 16th April, 2021*  
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# RABBITS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'rabbit'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What can we do to stop people from stealing pets?
15. What are the good and bad things about being a rabbit?
16. What dangers do rabbits have to face?
17. What celebrity rabbits do you know of?
18. What do you think has happened to the rabbit?
19. What should the punishment be for rabbitnapping?
20. What questions would you like to ask the rabbit's owner?