Hands on Learning
with Reading Museum Service

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PADDINGTON BEAR H550



Paddington Bear is a popular series of books written by Michael Bond. He grew up near Reading West station, where he would set off on his holidays.

Michael began writing short stories while working for the BBC. One day he found himself creating a story about a small bear from Darkest Peru. Michael gave him a duffel coat, an old bush hat and a battered leather suitcase. This was Paddington Bear.

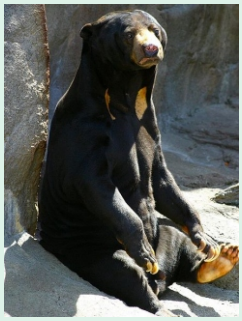
Paddington was sent to England by Aunt Lucy where he was adopted by the Brown family. Paddington is very trusting, a little naive and says what he thinks. It gets him into all kinds of trouble! He has inherited a very special, but disarming talent from his Aunt Lucy. Paddington uses his 'hard stares' to deflate over-zealous, pompous officials.

Paddington Bear hat



Paddington's Peruvian uncle gave him an old bush hat. The hat is very important and he is rarely seen without it. This is where he keeps his marmalade sandwiches for emergencies.

As he comes from Peru, Paddington is a spectacled bear, also known as an Andean bear. When the first Paddington artist, Peggy Fortnum, visited London Zoo she didn't see a spectacled bear. She chose to base him on a Malayan Sun Bear. At first Paddington was given a trilby hat but this changed to the bush hat.



A Malayan Sun Bear (left) has a sleek coat of fur. They have long canine teeth and eat many different things including fruit and berries. This might explain why Paddington likes his marmalade sandwiches!

Sadly there are not many Spectacled Bears or Malayan Sun Bears left in the world. They are considered to be vulnerable species. This is because they are illegally hunted for their fur and meat, which can then be sold for a lot of money.

Reading Borough Council

Heritage Lottery Fund

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Plastic and fabric Paddington Bear toy



A small British company, Gabrielle Designs, started making the very first Paddington Bear toys in 1972. They wore wellington boots to help them stand up and it was only after this that Michael Bond wrote about the boots in one of the stories.

The bears were enormously popular and soon many other toys and products started to be made, such as this plastic Paddington from 1977. The bears continue to sell all over the world and this plush Paddington is a recent version.



Many famous people have owned Paddington bears over the years, including members of the royal family. Princess Anne's first child, Peter Phillips was born at St. Mary's hospital, Paddington, and emerged to waiting crowds with a Paddington Bear. Prince William was born at the same hospital and he was also shown leaving with a Paddington Bear.



Right: Princess Anne with her child, Peter Phillips and the Paddington Bear toy.

Paddington snow globe



This snow globe shows Paddington at the train station where he was picked up by the Brown family. They chose to name him after the station and this is how he came to be called Paddington. Today if you visit Paddington Station there is a statue and a stall dedicated to him.



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Paddington pocket books



The first Paddington book was published in 1958. It was titled *A Bear Called Paddington*. In all the books he manages to unintentionally disrupt everything and everyone! Paddington turns ordinary family celebrations, visits to the launderette and cricket matches into extraordinary, accident-prone adventures.



Paddington has a huge following all around the world. One of these books is written in Japanese where he is extremely popular. There his character represents European sophistication. A theme park is dedicated to him and he even appeared on a Japanese credit card!



A Japanese credit card showing Paddington

Plastic marmalade sandwiches



Paddington loves marmalade. He carries a jar of it in his suitcase and usually has a marmalade sandwich tucked under his hat in case of emergencies!

Marmalade is made from citrus fruits, sugar and water. There are lots of different types but Paddington prefers his to be chunky and made with oranges. This gives the sandwiches its distinctive colour. Many people enjoy it spread on toast for breakfast and it can even be used to make marmalade cake!

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Tin suitcase with mini Paddington



Paddington Bear arrives in London carrying a suitcase and with a label around his neck. The label says 'Please look after this bear. Thank you.' It might sound strange but this is based on real events. When the Second World War broke out the government started evacuating children from Britain's major cities. This was to save them from the bombing of the city.

Reading was an important destination for the evacuees. It officially received over 25,000 young people from London although thousands of others came because of private arrangements. The children arrived at Reading station with labels round their necks and carrying small suitcases. How would you have felt having to leave home and stay with a family you didn't know?

Paddington's suitcase is very important. You can see it has been well-travelled. It is clearly marked with his initials, P. B., and has a 'Wanted on Voyage' label stuck on the side.

Inside the brown, leather case are most of Paddington's possessions. There is a secret compartment where he keeps all his important papers and there is always a jar of his favourite marmalade. His most treasured item is a scrapbook, where he keeps notes of all his adventures and travels. It is full of mementoes and all the postcards that he receives from his Aunt Lucy in Peru.



Above: Evacuees arrive at Reading Station with their small cases.

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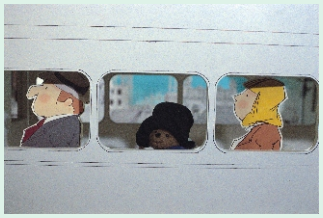
Paddington DVD



Paddington made his television debut on the popular programme *Jackanory* when Thora Hird read *A Bear Called Paddington*. He has now gone on to appear on television in 102 other countries.

The BBC commissioned thirty Paddington programmes. Michael Bond wrote the scripts for every five-minute episode, basing the stories on his books. They were first broadcast in 1975 and soon Paddington had acquired cult status.



Paddington was a distinctive and original production. He was depicted as a small puppet against flat scenery. The other characters in the stories, although coloured, were simple cardboard cut-outs.



A second Paddington series followed in 1979 and three half-hour specials were also made. One of the most famous scenes came in *Paddington Goes to the Movies*. In this episode Paddington recreates Gene Kelly's famous dance routine from *'Singin' in the Rain'*.

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