

# Hats on Top of Hats

By Neal Levin

**L**udwig van Bear was taking his daily walk downtown when he heard thunder. He looked up. The sky was dark. Lightning flashed quickly and rain began to fall. He hustled into the nearest building, but by the time he got inside, he was already drenched.

"I can't bear it when it rains," he said, shaking his fur.

"Well, you've come to the right shop." A rabbit hopped over the counter to greet him. "What you need is an umbrella."

"An umbrella," said Ludwig. "What a wonderful idea. I'll buy one."

"You can't," the rabbit said. "We don't sell them. But we do have the next best thing. Hats."

Indeed, they did! Ludwig looked around the store. There were hats everywhere. Nothing but hats.



Big hats, small hats, short hats, tall hats, yellow hats, green hats, dirty hats, clean hats, neat hats, sloppy hats, puffy hats, floppy hats, fancy hats, frilly hats, funny hats, silly hats.

So many wonderful hats!

"I'll take this one," Ludwig said, picking up a blue and purple polka-dotted hat with a wide brim. "This should keep me dry." Ludwig put it on his head. It fit perfectly.

"There's only one problem," he said.

"What's that?" asked the rabbit.

"It's such a beautiful hat. I don't

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

want it to get ruined in the rain."

"That's not a problem," the rabbit told him. "Not if you put another hat on top of it."

"Good idea," Ludwig said. He picked up a yellow cowboy hat with peacock feathers. He put the cowboy hat on top of the polka-dotted hat. "Oh, no!" Ludwig cried.

"What now?" said the rabbit.

"Now my cowboy hat will get wet."

"No, it won't," said the rabbit. "Not if you put this top hat on top."

Ludwig smiled. It was the best top hat he'd ever seen. "This top hat is tops," Ludwig said. "I'll put it in top."

Ludwig opened the door and stepped outside. "Aaahhhh!" he yelled. "My polka-dotted hat is dry and my cowboy hat is dry, but my top hat is getting wet. I need more hats!"

The rabbit hopped outside and asked, "How many hats do you want?"

"All of them," Ludwig said. "Put them all on my head, one on top of another."



"Are you sure?" the rabbit asked.

"Sure, I'm sure," Ludwig said. "I have a plan."

The rabbit brought out a ladder and all of his hats. He piled hats on Ludwig's head, one on top of another. When he got to the top of the ladder, he hopped onto the roof and kept piling more hats on top of the hats. Then he hopped onto the roofs of the taller, neighboring buildings and stacked more hats on top of hats on top of hats, all towering on Ludwig's head. Soon Ludwig was wearing the tallest pile of hats ever seen.

"Yahoo!" Ludwig yelled. "My plan worked. The highest hat is even higher than the clouds. Now no rain can fall on them. Finally, I will stay dry and my hats will, as well."

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1. Where does this story mostly take place?
  - a. inside the rabbit's store
  - b. inside the rabbit's house
  - c. outside in the rain
  - d. in the clouds
2. What is Ludwig van Bear's problem at the beginning of the story?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How does Ludwig van Bear feel about the rain?
  - a. He loves the rain.
  - b. He can't bear it when it rains.
  - c. He thinks it rains too much.
  - d. He thinks it doesn't rain enough.
4. At the end of this story, Ludwig van Bear tells the rabbit that he has a plan. What is Ludwig van Bear's plan? Does it work?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Read the sentence in the box. Then answer the question.

"I can't bear it when it rains," he said, shaking his fur.

What is the best definition for bear, as it is used in the sentence above?

- a. a big furry animal
  - b. something that is empty
  - c. to accept or endure something
  - d. to be worthy of
6. Do you think *Hats on Top of Hats* is a good title for this story? Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

# Hats on Top of Hats



Fill in the missing letters to create words from the story.  
Then write the full word on the line. Be sure to spell each word correctly.

1. \_\_\_ l o \_\_\_ p \_\_\_

**clue:** messy

\_\_\_\_\_

2. d r \_\_\_ n \_\_\_ e d

**clue:** completely wet

\_\_\_\_\_

3. p \_\_\_ a c \_\_\_ k

**clue:** a large bird with colorful feathers

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_ r \_\_\_ e \_\_\_

**clue:** to say hello

\_\_\_\_\_

5. h \_\_\_ s \_\_\_ l e \_\_\_

**clue:** hurried

\_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_ m b \_\_\_ e \_\_\_ a

**clue:** something that protects you from the rain

\_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_ r \_\_\_ m

**clue:** the edge of a hat

\_\_\_\_\_

8. f \_\_\_ i l \_\_\_

**clue:** having wavy edges

\_\_\_\_\_

9. n e \_\_\_ g \_\_\_ b \_\_\_ r i n g

**clue:** being next to

\_\_\_\_\_

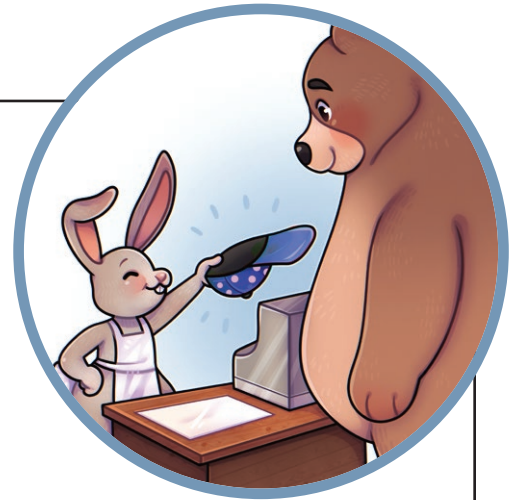
10. h \_\_\_ g \_\_\_ s t

**clue:** tallest

\_\_\_\_\_

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

# Hats on Top of Hats



In the story, “Hats on Top of Hats,” Ludwig van Bear has a problem. He comes up with a plan to solve the problem.

Write about a time when you had a problem. How did you plan to solve the problem? Did your plan work? Explain on the lines below.

[illegible]

## ANSWER KEY

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1. Where does this story mostly take place?

**a. inside the rabbit's store**

b. inside the rabbit's house

c. outside in the rain

d. in the clouds

2. What is Ludwig van Bear's problem at the beginning of the story?

**It is raining and he is drenched.**

3. How does Ludwig van Bear feel about the rain?

a. He loves the rain.

**b. He can't bear it when it rains.**

c. He thinks it rains too much.

d. He thinks it doesn't rain enough.

4. At the end of this story, Ludwig van Bear tells the rabbit that he has a plan. What is Ludwig van Bear's plan? Does it work?

**Answers will vary. An example is: His plan is to pile hats on top of**

**hats until they reach higher than the clouds so they will not get rained**

**on. His plan works.**

5. Read the sentence in the box. Then answer the question.

"I can't bear it when it rains," he said, shaking his fur.

What is the best definition for bear, as it is used in the sentence above?

a. a big furry animal

b. something that is empty

**c. to accept or endure something**

d. to be worthy of

6. Do you think *Hats on Top of Hats* is a good title for this story? Why or why not?

**Answers will vary.**

## ANSWER KEY

# Hats on Top of Hats



Fill in the missing letters to create words from the story.  
Then write the full word on the line. Be sure to spell each word correctly.

1. s l o p p y

**clue:** messy

sloppy

2. d r e n c h e d

**clue:** completely wet

drenched

3. p e a c o c k

**clue:** a large bird with colorful feathers

peacock

4. g r e e t

**clue:** to say hello

greet

5. h u s t l e d

**clue:** hurried

hustled

6. u m b r e l l a

**clue:** something that protects you from the rain

umbrella

7. b r i m

**clue:** the edge of a hat

brim

8. f r i l l y

**clue:** having wavy edges

frilly

9. n e i g h b o r i n g

**clue:** being next to

neighboring

10. h i g h e s t

**clue:** tallest

highest