



Some people call them stuffed animals. The toy industry says "plush toys." Others say Teddy Bears, Beanie Babies, Webkinz or Build-a-Bears. Whichever you prefer, everybody seems to love their stuffed animal. Let's learn more about them.

1. Why are they called Teddy Bears? Visit the Smithsonian <http://bit.ly/T5zmpa> to learn how the Teddy Bear came after Morris and Rose Michtom, New York City candy shop owners, heard about President Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt's bear hunt, and his kindness toward a wounded bear. So they sewed together a stuffed animal (like the one pictured to the right) and gave it to the President. They went on to start their own toy company to sell their 'teddy bears.'

2. T/F. Are there beans in a Beanie Baby?

False. At <http://www.madehow.com/Volume-5/Bean-Bag-Plush-Toy.html> you can learn how a Beanie Baby is made, from start to finish. (They use small plastic pellets, called poly beads).

3. What's the stuff inside a stuffed animal? At Beary Cheap <http://www.bearycheap.com> they say that the right filling helps you get that "take me home" feel." Most modern stuffed animals use polyester fill and plastic pellets (called poly beads). Older stuffed animals used cotton batting, newspaper, rice or pebbles.

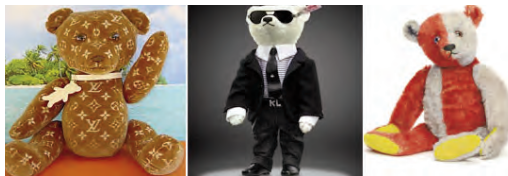
4. How big is the world's largest stuffed animal? If you go to <http://bit.ly/VDWVGN> you can see a giant stuffed animal laying on top of a mountain in Italy. It is made out of waterproof fabric, stuffed with straw, and is over 200 feet long. It was made by a group of artists called Gelitin, in 2008, and it is so big that it can be seen from Google Earth. The giant bunny took five years to build.



5. Can I put a stuffed animal in the washing machine? At the Dollar Stretcher <http://bit.ly/WM6ukZ> you can find tips on cleaning stuffed animals. For general cleaning, try a damp cloth or a baby wipe. Or, you can sprinkle a little baking soda on your animal, leave it for 20 minutes and then brush it off. Remember to brush your animal with a soft bristle brush to avoid damaging the fur. Some animals can even be washed in the washing machine, but use the gentle cycle.

6. Is my stuffed animal worth any money?

Here's how you find out. First, check the tag. The tag can tell you who made your stuffed animal, and may even have the date it was made. Next visit the company web site to try to figure more details about the toy. Third, look at the condition. Is it like new, or worn? Finally, check sites like Doll Values <http://www.dollvalues.com> or eBay, <http://www.ebay.com> where you can learn a lot about similarly-priced toys. Did you know one Steiff teddy Girl sold in a Christies auction for \$171,600 for example? <http://www.born-rich.com/entry/worlds-expensive-teddy-bears>.



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Attributes of a Quality Stuffed Animal

Not all plush toys are created the same. Here are some attributes of quality:

- Non-allergenic materials.
- Solid stitching that can survive.
- Weighted with poly-beads.



- Look at the eyes and the nose. These are very important for making the animal look real.
- Washable
- Meaningful. Might resemble a former pet or something of significance.

YouTube™ Playlist for Stuffed Animals

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwnXsg0hcre2RlfKDuH9-EN>

