

Your Library Today



Mr. Breitsprecher's Edition

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FREE!

Happy 80th Birthday Mickey Mouse!

Walt Disney was born in Chicago on December 5, 1901. One of his earliest cartoons, in 1927, featured *Oswald the Lucky Rabbit*. This cartoon character was created by the Disney studio for Charles Mintz of Universal Studios.

Mickey Mouse was created to replace Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. He made his screen debut on November 18, 1928 in *Steamboat Willie*, a short black-and-white animated musical. Since being created 80 years ago, the cartoon character Mickey Mouse has become one of the most recognized brands images in the world.

Before settling on Mickey Mouse, Mr. Disney asked artist Ub Iwerks to draw ideas for new characters. Iwerks tried sketches of frogs, dogs and cats. Mr. Disney did not like any of them.

A female cow and male horse were also rejected. Walt Disney got the idea for Mickey Mouse from an old pet mouse he used to have on his farm. In 1925, Hugh Harman drew sketches of mice around a photo of Walt Disney. These drawings inspired Ub Iwerks to create a new mouse character for Disney named Mickey Mouse.

Mr. Disney said of his mouse Mickey: "We felt that the public, and especially the children, like animals that are cute and little. I think we are rather indebted to Charlie Chaplin for the idea. We wanted something appealing, and we thought of a tiny bit of a mouse that would have something of the wistfulness of Chaplin — a little fellow trying to do the best he could. When people laugh at Mickey Mouse, it's because he's so human; and that is the secret of his popularity."

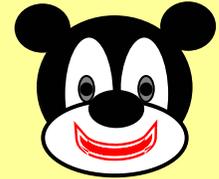
Copyright Issues: No "Mickey Mouse" Here!

Disney's Mickey Mouse is protected by more than just copyrights. Like all major Disney characters, it is also protected as a trademark, which lasts in perpetuity as long as it continues to be used commercially by its owner. Whether or not a particular Disney cartoon goes into the public domain, the characters themselves remain protected as trademarks from unauthorized use.

However, within the United States, European Union and some other jurisdictions, the *Copyright Term Extension Act* (sometimes called the '*Mickey Mouse Protection Act*') due to extensive lobbying by the Disney Corporation) and similar legislation has ensured that works such as the early Mickey Mouse cartoons will remain copyrighted until at least 2020.

The Los Angeles Times notes that ambiguity and "imprecision" in early film credits copyright claims could invalidate Disney's copyright on the earliest version of the character. Lauren Vanpelt wrote a paper agreeing with that claim in 1999 (<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dkarjala/publicdomain/Vanpelt-s99.html>) The Walt Disney Company is known for aggressively protecting its trademark on Mickey Mouse.

In 1989, Disney sued three daycare centers in Florida for having Mickey Mouse and other Disney characters painted on their walls. The characters were removed, and rival Universal Studios replaced them with Universal cartoon characters.



An artist's conception of what a mouse named "Mickey" might look like. Any resemblance to other mice is purely coincidental!

Mr. Breitsprecher's MY LMC WEB

Celebrates Mickey Mouse's Birthday!

www.mylmcweb.com

Mickey Mouse has entertained generations of children. Celebrating the symbols from our childhood is important. Sharing this with today's youth is fun. Being respectful of Disney's copyrights is important. It is also the law.

Want to celebrate Mickey's birthday and share some Mickey Mouse FUN? Please click on the *Mr. B's Happy Birthday Mickey Mouse Web* link at:

www.mylmcweb.com

We want to share resources with families, children, teachers and students while acknowledging the intellectual property rights of *Disney Corporation*.

We have put together a simple page of links and resources that are freely available on the Internet.

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