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Opening Extract from...

1,342 QI Facts

To Leave You Flabbergasted

Compiled by

John Lloyd, John Mitchinson, James Harkin
and Ann Miller

with the QI Elves

Alex Bell, Andy Fenton, Andrew Hunter Murray,
Anna Ptaszynski & Dan Schreiber

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A QUITE INTERESTING BOOK

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Read This First

This may *look* like a book, but it's actually a *portal*.


While you can read the whole thing in a couple of hours, each little nugget is just the visible tip of an information iceberg.

So, if you doubt any of the facts, or would like to know more, do this:

Go online to qi.com/1342.

In the Search Box, enter the *page number* of the fact that interests you. Here you'll find our main source for each fact laid out in a mirror image, like this:





The wake-up call on the Mir space station made the same sound as the emergency alarm.


NASA's tallest astronaut exceeded their maximum height limit because he grew taller in space.

In space, you can relieve a headache by urinating.

When the waste disposal failed on the space shuttle *Discovery*, it developed a giant urine icicle.

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<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/apr/18/blast-off-why-has-astronaut-helen-sharman-been-written-out-of-history>

<http://www.nytimes.com/1994/07/12/science/astronaut-grows-too-tall.html>

<http://www.wired.com/2014/11/marsharivins>

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/28/science/space/28nasaw.html?_r=2&hp&oref=login

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Page in source finder

Click on the link (or check out the print source) to get the full explanation and all the background details.

To our surprise, we've found this feature is of particular value to teachers, who can start each lesson with a QI fact related to what they have to say.

When asked 'Why?' the teacher (having



read the source material) can confidently say: ‘I’ll tell you exactly why . . .’

But you don’t need to be a teacher to do this – you can educate yourself.

It’s what the four of us have been doing every working day these last few years.

We hope you’ll be as flabbergasted as we were.

JOHN LLOYD, JOHN MITCHINSON,
JAMES HARKIN & ANNE MILLER

*The truth is
more important
than the facts.*

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

(1867–1959)



The most distant
object in the universe is
13.42 billion light years away.

To get to the nearest star
at a tenth of the speed of light
would take 42 years and need
fuel weighing as much
as the Sun.

The Sun gets
4 million tons lighter
every second.

Ten-trillionths of
your suntan comes
from stars in galaxies
beyond the Milky Way.



For a billion years,
the only life on Earth was a kind of slime.
Scientists call this period
‘the boring billion’.

Scientists alive today
outnumber all the scientists
who ever lived
up to 1980.

Scientists
watching paint dry
in Surrey and Lyon in 2016
said the results were
‘exciting’.

Some early bikes for women
had a ‘cherry screen’
designed to stop a rider’s ankles
from being on display.



No one knows
why bicycles
stay upright.

No one knows
how much money
is in circulation.

Economists
can't explain
boom or bust.

Scientists
can't explain
why they don't
have tails.



The first scientifically named dinosaur bone was called *Scrotum humanum* because it looked like a giant pair of human testicles.

The remains of a dinosaur named *Aachenosaurus multidens* turned out to be lumps of petrified wood.

Velociraptors were no bigger than turkeys.

Dinosaurs didn't roar; they mumbled or cooed.



Sabre-toothed tigers
never existed.

Neanderthals are
shown as slouching because
the first one to be reconstructed
happened to have arthritis.

The first Neanderthal skull
discovered was thought to belong
to a Cossack with rickets,
the pain of which had
furrowed his brow.

In 2015, Spanish workers
destroyed a 6,000-year-old Neolithic tomb,
mistaking it for a broken picnic table.

They replaced it with a 'better'
picnic table.



When spun on a table,
a US 'Lincoln Memorial' one-cent coin
will land on tails
80% of the time.

The surface area of a cat,
including each hair of its fur,
is 100 times that of its skin
and is enough to cover a
ping-pong table.

Ping-pong balls
have been made larger to
make the sport better
for television.

After *EastEnders*,
so many kettles are turned on
that Britain has to borrow
power from France.



In France,
Germany, Austria, Spain and
the Netherlands they serve
beer in McDonald's.

McNuggets come
in four official shapes:
bell, bone, boot
and ball.

Slit-faced bats are the
only mammals in the world
with a T-shaped tail.

Batman flies
through the air so fast
that landing would
probably kill him.



A 'batman' was a unit of weight
in the Ottoman Empire.
Ben Affleck weighs
about nine
batmans.

In the *X-Men* movies,
the sound of Wolverine's claws
shooting out was made by
tearing a turkey apart.

In the *Halloween* movies,
Jason the killer wears a
Captain Kirk mask,
sprayed white.

In *The Empire Strikes Back*,
the emperor had a man's voice,
a woman's face and a
chimpanzee's eyes.



In *Raiders of the Lost Ark*,
the sound of the boulder that
chased Indiana Jones was made
by rolling a car down
a gravel road.

If every car in Monaco
took to the roads at the same time,
they wouldn't all fit on.

In 2009, the mayors
of adjoining Parisian suburbs
declared the same street as one-way,
but in different directions.

The bridge known as
the 'Gateway to Bolton' is
a one-way street leading
away from Bolton.



In 1845, a bridge
collapsed in Great Yarmouth,
killing 79 people watching
a clown in a tub being
pulled by geese.

Mice
sing like birds,
but humans can't
hear them.

The Elizabethans treated warts
by cutting a mouse in half
and applying it to the
affected part.

Georgian women
worried about mice
getting into their
wigs at night.



The hair of
Twiggy's waxwork
at Madame Tussauds was
dressed by Twiggy's
hairdresser.

A hairdresser in Madrid
cuts hair using a samurai sword
and a blowtorch.

In 1942,
an Italian hairdresser called
'the Phantom Barber of Pascagoula'
broke into people's houses
and cut their hair.

The people most likely
to suffer injuries at work
are hairdressers.



The Smithsonian Museum
has a framed collection of
locks of hair from the
first 14 presidents.

Benjamin Franklin
had a pulley system so he
could lock his bedroom door
from his bed.

Thomas Jefferson
kept a flock of geese
to supply quills
for his pens.

Ronald Reagan
was a stand-up comedian
for two weeks.



The US Senate has
never formally endorsed
the title 'President'.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
and Theodore Roosevelt
pronounced their surnames
differently.

Benjamin Franklin and John Adams
once shared a room and couldn't agree
whether to open or shut the window.
Franklin won by arguing
until Adams fell asleep.

Paper towels
in the White House
are embossed with the
Presidential Seal.



Wasps
were making paper
long before humans existed.

80% of the
€500 notes in Spain are
used for criminal
purposes.

To carry
\$10 million in notes
you'd need a minimum of
seven and a half
briefcases.

For a few months
in 1993, Moldova's
official currency was
the *cupon*.



The word 'Czech'
is Polish.

The Czech phrase
strč prst skrz krk, meaning
'thrust finger through neck',
contains no vowels.

There are more than
100 words in Hawaiian
consisting entirely
of vowels.

In ancient Hawaii,
the nuts of the *kukui* tree
were threaded on a string and lit.
Each nut burned in sequence
to form an early version
of chaser lighting.



Ancient Romans
threw walnuts at
the bride.

It takes
five litres of water
to grow a single
almond.

Britain's share
of the cost of funding the
Large Hadron Collider each year
is the same amount of money
as Britons spend
on peanuts.

The cost of the extra fuel needed
to carry a bag of peanuts
on a plane for a year
is £1.