

Fascinating

FACTS

TO BLOW YOUR

curious

**AN AWESOME COLLECTION OF THE WILDEST TRIVIA
ABOUT EVERYTHING ON EARTH...**

AND BEYOND!

MIND

@officialmjcmatthew

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EBURY
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Ebury Spotlight, an imprint of Ebury Publishing
20 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 2SA

Ebury Spotlight is part of the Penguin Random House group of companies
whose addresses can be found at global.penguinrandomhouse.com



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First published by Ebury Spotlight in 2023

www.penguin.co.uk

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 9781529917147

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

The authorised representative in the EEA is Penguin Random House
Ireland, Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau Street, Dublin D02 YH68.



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This book is dedicated to my nan, who we lost to dementia.

She was not just my nan, but my best friend. Any time she would ask me about my job or talk about me to her friends she would describe me as a writer, as I would 'write' my scripts to film on TikTok and YouTube. I guess I can now finally say that my nan was right, I am now a writer.

I love and miss you so much, Nan. Thank you for everything you ever did for me! I am the man I am today thanks to your influence.

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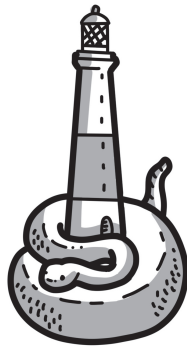
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CHAPTER 1:

**OUR
WORLD**



When we think about the craziest fact we know, it most likely leads us to another planet or into space itself. However, the small blue dot that we call home breeds some of the most fascinating and mind-boggling facts that I for one have ever heard of. Here are the craziest facts about our world.

General facts

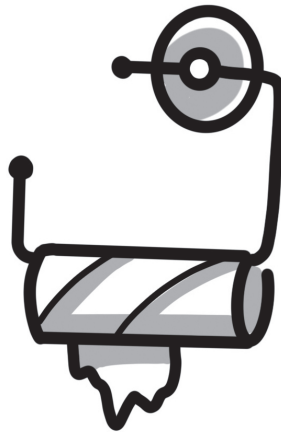
Shuffling a deck of cards is deeper than you think. If you shuffle a deck of cards, it is statistically likely that you will have shuffled them into an order no pack of cards has ever been in before, and most likely never will be again. Essentially, you are the first person in history to have shuffled the cards into that exact sequence.



The Statue of Liberty used to be a different colour. The Statue of Liberty as we know it today is green. However, this is only due to the oxidation that has occurred. The statue is made of copper, so in fact it was originally the colour of a one penny coin.

All blue-eyed people are related. All blue-eyed humans share one common ancestor born 6,000–10,000 years ago. Blue eyes in humans are actually caused by a mutation in the *HERC2* gene. Having this mutation is like having a genetic switch that turns off your body's ability to make brown pigment in your eyes – which leads to you having blue eyes. This all started with one human many thousands of years ago, so next time you see someone with blue eyes, say hello to your new family member.

Toilet paper was invented in the 1800s. You might want to take a minute to thank a kind gentleman by the name of Joseph Gayetty. That name might not mean a lot to you immediately, but it is thanks to this man that toilet paper was sold in shops for the first time in 1857. He called the product 'Medicated Paper for the Water-Closet'.



You might live in the country with the most tornadoes. If I asked you which country in the world has the most tornadoes by area, would your answer have been the UK? Because it is!

New York wasn't always 'the Big Apple'. If I were to ask you what is the most famous city in the USA, your answer would probably be New York. But what if I told you that this great city was once known as 'New Orange'? This is because the Dutch captured New York from the English in 1673 and dubbed it New Orange in honour of William III of Orange. The following year the English seized control of the city once again and changed it back to its former name.

Times Square used to have a different name too. Changing the name New Orange to New York wasn't the only change this city went through. Times Square was originally called Longacre Square. Its name only changed because, in 1904, the *New York Times* moved its headquarters to the newly built Times Building nearby.

Pepsi is more powerful than you think. Pepsi was once the sixth largest military force in the world. Granted, this was only for a short period of time, but let me explain how. In 1959 American President Richard Nixon and Soviet leader Khrushchev got into a pretty heated argument about capitalism versus communism. During this discussion, the vice president of Pepsi offered Khrushchev a cup of Pepsi. This singular drink must have made an impact, because years later the Soviet Union wanted to strike a deal that would bring Pepsi products to their country permanently. The only issue was that the Soviets' money wasn't accepted throughout the world at that time. So, after many conversations about how Pepsi could have a permanent place in Russia, they went for the next 'logical' option. The Soviet Union traded a fleet of submarines and boats – specifically, 17 submarines, a cruiser, a frigate and a destroyer – for \$3 billion dollars' worth of Pepsi.

Humans have slowed the rotation of Earth. Here's a frightening one for you: the Three Gorges Dam in China has actually changed the rotation of Earth. The world's largest hydroelectric power station, the Three Gorges Dam, has a total surface area of 1,045 square kilometres and holds back more than 39 trillion kilograms, or 42 billion tons, of water. Issues began with

small earthquakes occurring in western China owing to the massive amount of water being held back by the dam, but it didn't stop there. Due to an effect known as the 'moment of inertia', the dam actually slows Earth's rotation, although only by 0.06 microseconds, according to calculations by NASA.

Rainbows are a full circle. What if I told you that rainbows are not the simple colourful arches we see in pictures but are instead full perfect circles? Being on the ground is not the best way to see the rest of the rainbow. You have to be lucky enough to be in the right position at the right time, and that position is, well, very high up indeed. Looking out of an aircraft window should do it.

Splashing water on your face makes your body react strangely. Something very cool happens when you splash water on your face, thanks to what is known as the 'diving reflex'. The sensory receptors within your nose slow your heart rate down and pull blood into your vital organs so you can hold your breath and swim for longer. Essentially, your body automatically prepares for a free dive. Our organs work together to protect us from the immense underwater pressure of deep water, turning us humans into efficient deep-sea diving animals.

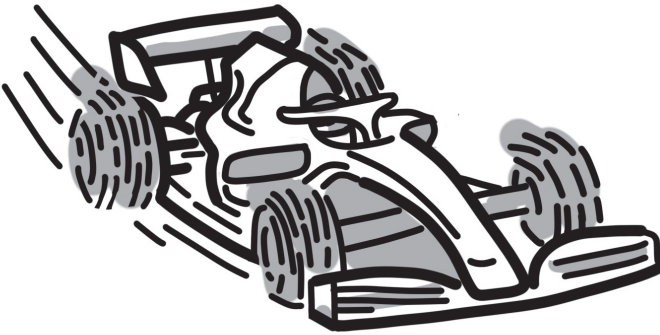
A speck of dust is larger than you might think. To this day the following fact is incomprehensible to me: a single speck of dust is halfway between the size of an atom and the size of the entire planet earth.

There are people who look just like you. If you were determined enough, and had enough time, you would be able to travel the world and find up to seven people who look just like you – your doppelgängers. They are your biologically unrelated lookalikes.

Dogs can see in colour. It is a long-running myth that dogs can only see in black and white, but research has officially squashed this rumour. Although dogs don't see colours in the same way as the majority of humans do, they do still see colour. However, they are what we consider to be colourblind. This is because they only have two colour receptors in their eyes, whereas the majority of humans have three.

Too much sweating makes your brain shrink. Your brain is a very precious organ, which is why you need to keep it safe. Sweating for 90 minutes can temporarily shrink your brain – equivalent to one year of ageing. But drinking a glass of water will soon reverse this effect.

The human brain is faster than a Formula 1 car. Even though there's been a huge amount of research into the way the human brain works, it is surprisingly still one of the great scientific mysteries. What we do know about the brain is truly fascinating, though. Signals in the brain actually travel up to 268 miles per hour (mph), which is faster than the top speed of a Formula 1 racing car at 240 mph.



There are a lot of synapses in the brain. The complexity of the brain is almost unfathomable – there are more synapses in your brain than there are stars in the Milky Way galaxy. It's true: the number of known stars in our galaxy is approximately 200 billion, but neuroscientist researchers have found nearly one quadrillion synapses within the human brain.

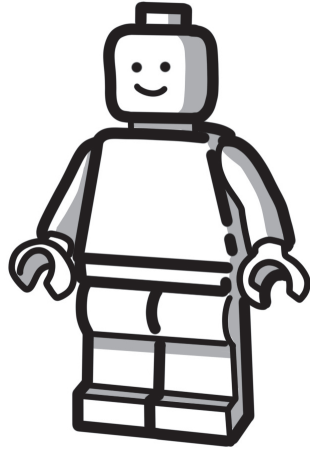
The brain eats itself. What if I told you your brain is a cannibal? Your brain contains tens of billions of neurons and they require constant energy input. If you were to deprive them of energy, they would get that energy by eating themselves. One way to tell when your neurons are going crazy is if your belly rumbles with hunger. When this happens, your neurons are hungry too and they are beginning to eat parts of themselves for energy.

You are blind for 40 minutes a day. Did you know that for approximately 40 minutes a day you are blind? This is due to a process called 'saccadic masking'. When your eyes move, your brain purposely blocks your vision, which is why if you look in a mirror, you cannot see your own eyes moving. Without saccadic masking your whole life would be like watching a never-ending movie filmed on a shaky handheld camera.

You can use your body as a conductor. Have you forgotten where you parked your car? You could try finding it by using your key fob, and if that doesn't work, you could use your body to extend the signal from your key to your lost car. Place the key under your chin and open your mouth – this turns your skull into an antenna. The fluids within your head make it a good enough conductor to increase the range of your key.

Lego Minifigures outnumber

humans. Currently the earth is populated by 8.06 billion human beings. However, what if I told you that there's another population of 'people' on earth whose numbers are considerably higher? They are Lego Minifigures, and there are estimated to be 10 billion of them.

**There was a party for time travellers in 2009.**

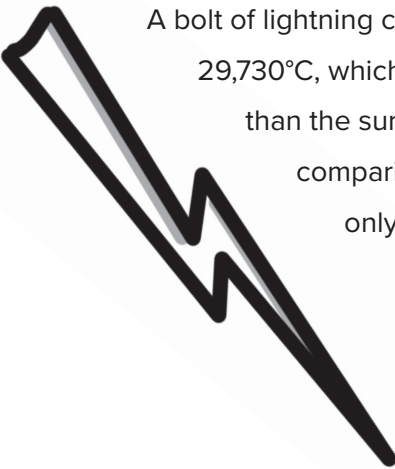
Stephen Hawking was one of the smartest man to have ever existed, and in 2009 he conducted an experiment that could have changed humanity forever. Whereas most experiments require test tubes and chemicals, this one needed champagne, balloons and a banner. He threw a time traveller party, but he didn't send out any invitations until after it was over. He explained that he sat there for a long time but no one came. This confirmed to him that backward time travel probably isn't possible.

Mirrors can mislead you. There is a company that only sells mirrors that specifically make people look five kilograms thinner. What's more concerning is that the mirrors are responsible for 54 per cent of total sales at the retailers who use them in their stores.

There's a company that lets employees call in hungover to work. It is a widely known fact that calling in sick to work is OK, but blaming that sickness on drinking too much alcohol the night before is definitely a no-go. However, there is a company in the UK that offers 'being hungover' as a valid excuse for calling off work. In fact, the company offers four hungover days per year. So if you're lucky enough to work for Dice in Shoreditch, working hungover will be a thing of the past for you.

A bolt of lightning is hotter than the sun.

A bolt of lightning can reach a staggering 29,730°C, which is five times hotter than the surface of the sun. For comparison, the sun's surface only reaches 5,730°C.



You can hear weird things in the quietest room on earth. There is a room that is so quiet it is measured in negative decibels. It is the quietest room in the world and it is in Minnesota, USA. It is so quiet you can hear your own heartbeat, and even more disturbingly, your bones moving.

There is a human toe cocktail. This drink is a *very* acquired taste. There is a bar in Yukon, the smallest and most western of Canada's three territories, that sells a 'Sourtoe Cocktail'. It consists of a shot of whiskey and a human toe floating in the glass. What's even more disturbing is that an estimated 60,000 people have tried it.

There's a country where it's legal to try to escape prison. It's widely known that if you are convicted of a crime and put in prison, until you've served your time, there's no getting out, and any attempt at escape will lead to further punishment. This is true everywhere except Mexico. Any non-violent attempts to escape a Mexican prison are not punished because 'it's human nature to want freedom'.