CONVERSATION STARTERS WORLD

300 TRIVIA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Every question with its answer for the host, and an answer sheet for each team

HOW TO HOST A TRIVIA NIGHT

1. Split everyone into teams of two to six. Each team gets an answer sheet, or just a piece of paper.
2. Pick a ready-made game, or build your own: add whole rounds or single questions to Your game.
3. Read each question twice. No phones until the round is over.
4. At the end of each round, read out the answers and the story behind them. One point for each right answer.
5. Tied at the end? Read the tiebreaker. The closest number wins.
6. For the final wager, each team bets some or all of its points before hearing the question. Right answer, they win that many. Wrong, they lose them.

The questions and answers start on page 2, numbered as on the page. The last page is the team answer sheet: print one for each team for every round. It has room for 30 answers, so a whole round fits: teams write the question's number in the No. box, then their answer.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE TRIVIA QUESTIONS

A bit of everything, and a good round to start with.

EASY

1. **In November 2025, the US Mint struck the last circulating coins of which kind?**

   Answer: The penny (one-cent coin)

   The Philadelphia Mint pressed the final circulating pennies on November 12, 2025, ending a 232-year run. By then each one cost 3.69 cents to make. Pennies are still legal tender, so the jar in your kitchen is safe.

2. **The first video ever posted on YouTube, in 2005, was filmed at what kind of place?**

   Answer: A zoo (the San Diego Zoo)

   Co-founder Jawed Karim posted 'Me at the zoo' on April 23, 2005. In under 20 seconds, he stands in front of the elephants, says the cool thing about them is their really, really, really long trunks, and adds that's pretty much all there is to say.

3. **Adidas founder Adi Dassler's brother Rudolf started which rival brand?**

   Answer: Puma

   The brothers made shoes together in Herzogenaurach, Germany, until a bitter split in 1948. Rudolf set up a rival factory in the same small town, and the feud split Herzogenaurach in two.

4. **The tiny pocket inside the front pocket of jeans was first meant to hold what?**

   Answer: A pocket watch

   Levi Strauss & Co. says the tiny pocket was created for a pocket watch. Levi's got its jeans patent in 1873. Levi's own 'fifth pocket' is something else: the second back pocket, added in 1901.

5. **The woman who created Mother's Day spent her later years trying to do what to it?**

   Answer: Get rid of it (accept abolish it or stop its commercialization)

   Anna Jarvis started the day in 1908 to honor her own mother, and it became a national holiday in 1914. She came to hate the cards, flowers and candy, and in 1925 she was arrested for disturbing the peace at a convention of the American War Mothers, who sold carnations.

6. **The Red Cross symbol is which country's flag with its colors reversed?**

   Answer: Switzerland

   The emblem was made by reversing the colors of the Swiss flag, and the first Geneva Convention recognized it in 1864. The Ottoman Empire felt a cross offended Muslim soldiers and used a red crescent, recognized in 1929. The red crystal followed in 2005.

7. **Times Square's first New Year's Eve ball drop, in 1907, replaced what banned celebration?**

   Answer: Fireworks (a fireworks show)

   The New York Times had greeted the new year with fireworks from its new tower until the city banned them. So on New Year's Eve 1907, it lowered a ball lit with 100 light bulbs instead. The idea came from time balls, which dropped so people on shore and ships in the harbor could set their watches.

8. **Why do dimes and quarters have ridges around their edges?**

   Answer: To stop people shaving or filing metal off them (accept clipping)

   When coins were made of real gold and silver, crooks filed slivers off the edges and still spent them at full value. Ridges, called reeding, made a tampered coin easy to spot. Today's dimes and quarters hold no silver, but they kept the ridges anyway.

MEDIUM

9. **The 50-star US flag began as a teenager's history project. What grade did it get?**

Answer: B-minus (later changed to an A)

Bob Heft of Lancaster, Ohio, made it in 1958 for a high school American history project. His teacher called it unoriginal but promised a better grade if Washington accepted it. Heft's design became the official flag on July 4, 1960, and the B-minus became an A.

10. **Which woman on a US dollar coin carries her baby son on her back?**

Answer: Sacagawea

Sacagawea helped guide Lewis and Clark to the Pacific and back. On the golden dollar, first issued in 2000, she carries her infant son, Jean Baptiste. Sculptor Glenna Goodacre used a modern Shoshone college student, Randy'L He-dow Teton, as her model. Susan B. Anthony, on the dollar coin before hers, appears alone.

11. **Which country's national flag shows an AK-47 rifle?**

Answer: Mozambique

The rifle is crossed with a hoe over an open book and a yellow star, standing for defense, farming and education. In 2005 Mozambique held a contest to redesign its flag and emblem, but the rifle is still there.

12. **How did jeweler Harry Winston deliver the Hope Diamond to the Smithsonian in 1958?**

Answer: By US mail (registered mail)

Winston mailed the gem, then valued at $1 million, in a plain paper package. Shipping cost $145.29, almost all of it insurance. The wrapper is now a museum piece in its own right.

13. **Amazon was first incorporated as what, until a lawyer said it sounded like 'cadaver'?**

Answer: Cadabra

In July 1994 Jeff Bezos filed papers for a business called Cadabra, a nod to abracadabra. After the cadaver comment he switched to Relentless, then settled on Amazon.

14. **What broken item was the first thing ever sold on eBay?**

Answer: A laser pointer

Pierre Omidyar listed it in 1995 on AuctionWeb, eBay's first name. It started at $1 and sold for $14.83 to a buyer named Mark Fraser, who still had it 20 years later.

15. **Why do many BIC pen caps have a hole in the top?**

Answer: So air can still get through if a child chokes on one (accept if one is swallowed or inhaled)

An international safety standard, ISO 11540, sets rules to reduce the risk of suffocation from caps on pens likely to be used by children up to 14. A vented cap won't stop one going down the wrong way, but it can let some air through.

16. **In September 1752, colonists went to bed on the 2nd. What date did they wake up to?**

Answer: September 14

Britain and its colonies switched to the Gregorian calendar and dropped 11 days to catch up. That's why George Washington, born February 11, 1731, under the old calendar, is now said to have been born on February 22, 1732.

17. **Which is the next year divisible by four that will have no February 29?**

Answer: 2100

Century years are leap years only if they divide evenly by 400. That made 2000 a leap year but not 1900, and 2100, 2200 and 2300 will all go without a February 29.

18. **In a standard deck of cards, which king has no mustache?**

Answer: The king of hearts

He's also called the suicide king, because his sword seems to be driven into his own head. On older English designs he held an axe and wore a mustache. Over years of copying, the axe became a sword and the mustache disappeared.

19. **In a 1996 April Fools' Day ad, Taco Bell claimed it had bought what?**

Answer: The Liberty Bell (renamed the 'Taco Liberty Bell')

Full-page newspaper ads on April 1, 1996, said the chain had bought the bell to help reduce the national debt. Angry callers flooded the National Park Service, newspapers and Taco Bell's headquarters. It was an April Fools' joke.

20. **The man behind the first cash machine wanted six-digit PINs. Why did he choose four?**

Answer: His wife said four digits were all she could remember

John Shepherd-Barron's first cash machine opened at a Barclays branch in Enfield, north London, on June 27, 1967. He had planned six-digit PINs, but his wife Caroline said she couldn't remember more than four, and four stuck.

21. **The Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892 for a magazine selling what to schools?**

Answer: American flags

Francis Bellamy, a former Baptist minister, wrote it for The Youth's Companion, a Boston magazine that sold American flags as part of a push for flag ceremonies in schools.

It was first recited with a stiff, straight-armed salute. In 1942, with many feeling it looked too much like the Nazi salute, Congress switched to the hand over the heart.

22. **Who split the United States into time zones in 1883?**

Answer: The railroads (accept the railroad companies, William F. Allen or the General Time Convention)

Before November 18, 1883, towns set their clocks by the sun, which left North America with more than 144 local times. Railroad officials set up standard zones on their own, from a plan by William F. Allen. Congress didn't make them law until 1918.

HARD

23. **Whose face is on the $100,000 bill, a note the public never got to spend?**

Answer: Woodrow Wilson

The $100,000 gold certificate, series of 1934, was used only for official transfers between Federal Reserve Banks and the Treasury. Wilson earned the spot by signing the Federal Reserve Act in 1913.

24. **John Adams predicted Americans would celebrate independence every year on which date?**

Answer: July 2

Congress voted for independence on July 2, 1776. Adams wrote to Abigail that the day should be marked with 'Pomp and Parade', bells, bonfires and illuminations. The Declaration's wording was approved two days later, and July 4 won.

25. **Which 1916 explosion damaged the Statue of Liberty's torch arm?**

Answer: The Black Tom explosion

On July 30, 1916, German saboteurs blew up a munitions depot on Black Tom Island in Jersey City. The blast pushed Liberty's torch arm against her crown and lodged shrapnel in the statue. In 1939 a claims commission at The Hague ruled against Germany, and the last payment came in 1979.

26. **The first known photo of a person, taken in 1838, caught a man having what done?**

Answer: His boots shined (accept shoes)

Louis Daguerre photographed a busy Paris boulevard, but the exposure lasted several minutes, so moving carts and walkers left no trace. A man standing still while his boots were cleaned stayed put long enough to register, and so did the shoe shiner.

27. **Avon's founder started out selling what door to door, with free perfume as a sweetener?**

Answer: Books

David McConnell began in 1877 selling books door to door, handing out perfume samples as part of his pitch. Perfume became the business: his company took the name California Perfume Company in 1892 and became Avon Products in 1939.

28. **Which is the only US state whose flag shows a different picture on each side?**

Answer: Oregon (a beaver on the back)

The front shows the state emblem in gold on dark blue. Turn it over and there's a gold beaver, a nod to the early trappers and hunters of the Pacific Northwest. Oregon is nicknamed the Beaver State. Every other state flag shows one design on both sides.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

29. **In 1899, cab driver Jacob German was arrested for speeding. How fast was he going?**

Answer: 12 mph

German was driving an electric taxi on Lexington Avenue in Manhattan on May 20, 1899, in what is said to be the first speeding arrest in the US. A policeman on a bicycle caught him, and German was locked up at a police station.

WORD TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Where everyday words came from, and the odd ones we use without thinking.

EASY

30. **The everyday word 'guy' comes from which would-be bomber?**

Answer: Guy Fawkes

Fawkes was caught in 1605 with the gunpowder meant to blow up Parliament. Every November 5, children paraded his effigy through the streets, and those ragged dummies were called guys. The word drifted to mean an oddly dressed man, then any man.

31. **'Quarantine' comes from the Italian for how many days?**

Answer: Forty

The word comes from quaranta giorni, Italian for forty days. That was how long Venice made ships from plague-stricken places wait off its port before anyone could come ashore.

32. **'Goodbye' is a squeezed-down version of what four-word phrase?**

Answer: God be with you (accept God be with ye)

It's a contraction of "God be with ye", first recorded around 1565 to 1575. Over the centuries the four words wore down into the single goodbye we use today.

33. **The word 'jumbo' became popular thanks to what famous animal?**

Answer: An elephant (Jumbo, P.T. Barnum's elephant)

Jumbo was a huge African elephant at the London Zoo. Barnum bought him in 1882, to loud British protest, and his fame made 'jumbo' mean anything extra large, from shrimp to jets.

34. **The distress call 'Mayday' comes from which language?**

Answer: French (from m'aidez, 'help me')

It came into English in 1923, when there was a lot of air traffic between England and France. A radio officer at London's Croydon airport usually gets the credit. In an emergency it is preferably said three times in a row.

35. **Junk email is called spam thanks to a comedy sketch by which group?**

Answer: Monty Python (Monty Python's Flying Circus)

In the 1970 sketch, a couple stops at a diner with Spam all over the menu, and a table of Vikings drowns out everyone singing about it. Early internet users borrowed the word for junk that floods everything else.

36. **The phrase 'saved by the bell' comes from which sport?**

Answer: Boxing

A fighter knocked down late in a round could be saved from the count when the bell rang. The popular story about Victorian coffins fitted with bells, so people buried alive could ring for help, makes a better campfire tale, but the phrase shows up in boxing reports by the early 1900s.

37. **The word 'trivia' comes from Latin for a spot where what meets?**

Answer: Three roads (accept a crossroads or roads)

Latin trivium meant a place where three roads meet, and so a public place. From it came trivialis, meaning public, and so common or ordinary. In medieval schools the trivium was also the three basic subjects: grammar, logic and rhetoric.

38. **In Civil War prison camps, what happened to a prisoner who crossed the 'deadline'?**

Answer: He was shot (accept killed by the guards)

At Andersonville, the Confederate prison camp in Georgia, a light railing ran about 20 feet inside the stockade fence. Guards could shoot any prisoner who crossed it. The word didn't come to mean a time limit until the early 20th century.

MEDIUM

39. **The word 'nerd' first appeared in a 1950 book by which children's author?**

Answer: Dr. Seuss (If I Ran the Zoo)

In If I Ran the Zoo, the narrator plans to collect 'a Nerkle, a Nerd, and a Seersucker, too.' Seuss's Nerd looks like a disapproving grouch. Within a year Newsweek was using the word for a dull, square person.

40. **'OK' began in 1839 as a jokey abbreviation of what misspelled phrase?**

Answer: 'Oll korrect' (all correct)

Boston papers had a fad for abbreviations of deliberate misspellings, and the Boston Morning Post printed 'o.k.' in 1839. Martin Van Buren's 1840 campaign kept it alive: his nickname was Old Kinderhook, and supporters formed OK Clubs.

41. **Alexander Graham Bell wanted people to answer the phone with what word?**

Answer: Ahoy (accept ahoy-hoy)

Thomas Edison pushed 'hello' instead, and his choice won. Bell's version survives mainly through Mr. Burns on The Simpsons, who answers the phone with 'Ahoy-hoy'.

42. **The word 'clue' comes from a ball of what?**

Answer: Thread (accept yarn or string)

A clew was a ball of thread. In the Greek myth, Theseus unrolled one to find his way out of the Minotaur's labyrinth, so a clue came to mean anything that leads you to an answer.

43. **'Muscle' comes from the Latin for what small animal?**

Answer: A mouse (Latin musculus, 'little mouse')

The Romans thought a flexing muscle, the biceps especially, looked like a little mouse moving under the skin. The Greeks had the same idea: their word mys meant both mouse and muscle.

44. **Taken apart, the word 'disaster' literally means what?**

Answer: Bad star (accept ill-starred)

It comes from the Italian disastro, literally ill-starred: dis means bad and astro means star. Calamities were blamed on a planet sitting in an unlucky spot in the sky.

45. **Pumpernickel's German name roughly translates as what?**

Answer: Farting goblin (accept devil's fart)

In German, pumpern meant to break wind and Nickel was a goblin, so the name works out to roughly 'farting goblin'. Merriam-Webster says it came from the heavy rye bread's reputation for being hard to digest.

46. **In the Middle Ages, calling someone 'nice' meant they were what?**

Answer: Foolish (accept silly or ignorant)

It comes from Latin nescius, 'not knowing'. Over the centuries it drifted through meanings like shy, fussy and precise before settling on pleasant in the 1700s.

47. **'Escalator' was a trademark of which elevator company until 1950?**

Answer: Otis

Otis itself sometimes used "escalator" in its own materials as an everyday word for moving stairs. In 1950 the US Patent Office canceled the trademark, ruling the word had become generic, so any company could use it.

48. **'Emoji' sounds like 'emotion,' but in Japanese what does it actually mean?**

Answer: Picture character (accept picture letter or picture word)

In Japanese, e means picture and moji means character or letter, so the likeness to 'emotion' is pure coincidence. Shigetaka Kurita drew one of the first sets for a Japanese phone company in 1999. New York's Museum of Modern Art added his 176 tiny icons to its collection in 2016.

49. **Bayer trademarked Aspirin in 1899. Which drug had it trademarked the year before?**

Answer: Heroin

Bayer registered Heroin as a trademark in May 1898 and sold it as a cough suppressant. It proved badly addictive. During World War I, the Aspirin trademark was seized or declared public in many countries, which is why aspirin became an ordinary word in places like the US.

50. **What's the name of the punctuation mark that blends ? and ! into one?**

Answer: The interrobang

New York ad executive Martin Speckter came up with it in 1962. The name joins 'interrogation' with 'bang,' printers' slang for an exclamation mark. By 1970, Remington and Smith-Corona offered it on some typewriters, but the fad faded.

HARD

51. **The fake word 'dord' sat in a 1934 Webster's dictionary. What was it meant to stand for?**

Answer: Density (from the abbreviation 'D or d')

A note saying that 'D or d' both abbreviate density was misread as a single word, dord, meaning density. An editor caught it in 1939, but it stayed in print until 1947.

52. **TASER is an acronym honoring which fictional boy inventor?**

Answer: Tom Swift

Inventor Jack Cover named it after a childhood favorite, Tom Swift and His Electric Rifle. After some rejiggering of the letters, he had his acronym: TASER, for Thomas A. Swift's Electric Rifle.

53. **'Zipper' started as a brand name. Which product was it?**

Answer: Rubber boots (B.F. Goodrich galoshes)

In 1923 B.F. Goodrich trademarked the name Zipper Boot for rubber galoshes that closed with the new hookless fastener. The name caught on, and people began calling the fastener itself a zipper.

54. **What do you call symbols like #$@&! that stand in for swearing in comics?**

Answer: A grawlix

Mort Walker, the cartoonist behind Beetle Bailey, is credited with the word. He collected it with his other made-up comic-strip terms in his 1980 book The Lexicon of Comicana.

55. **The name 'ampersand' comes from schoolchildren reciting what?**

Answer: The alphabet (accept 'and per se and')

The & sign was often taught as the last letter of the alphabet. Children ended with 'and per se and', meaning '& by itself is and', and the phrase blurred into ampersand.

56. **What word for joking at the wrong moment uses all five vowels, in order, once each?**

Answer: Facetious (accept facetiously)

F-a-c-e-t-i-o-u-s: a, e, i, o and u, each once and in order. Abstemious pulls the same trick, and facetiously goes one better by adding the Y.

57. **'Steal my thunder' began with a playwright whose rivals copied his what?**

Answer: His thunder sound effect (accept his thunder machine)

John Dennis invented a new kind of stage thunder for his 1709 play Appius and Virginia, which flopped at Drury Lane. A few nights later he heard his thunder used in a performance of Macbeth. Dennis is said to have shouted that they wouldn't let his play run, but they'd steal his thunder.

58. **The word 'lord' comes from an Old English word meaning guardian of what?**

Answer: The bread (the loaf; Old English hlafweard, 'loaf keeper')

Old English hlafweard joined hlaf, loaf, with weard, keeper, the same word that gives us ward and warden. The head of a household was the one who fed the people who ate his bread. 'Lady' has a loaf in it too, probably 'loaf kneader.'

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

59. **How many letters are in pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis?**

Answer: 45

Everett Smith, president of the National Puzzlers' League, is said to have coined it around 1935 as an artificially long word. It's said to mean a lung disease from breathing very fine silica dust, and it's usually the longest word you'll find in an English dictionary.

HISTORY TRIVIA QUESTIONS

The parts of history that didn't make the textbook, and a few that should have.

EASY

60. **In 1919, a wave of what sticky stuff swept through Boston, killing 21 people?**

Answer: Molasses (the Great Molasses Flood)

On January 15, 1919, a storage tank holding more than two million gallons burst on Boston's waterfront. The wave, about 25 feet high at the start, ran through the North End at around 35 miles per hour.

The molasses was meant for industrial alcohol used to make World War I explosives. Boston reportedly smelled of molasses for years afterward.

61. **On his famous 1775 ride, Paul Revere never made it to Concord. Why not?**

Answer: A British patrol captured him

After warning Lexington, Revere and William Dawes rode on toward Concord and met Samuel Prescott, a young doctor heading home there. A British patrol stopped all three on the outskirts of Lincoln. Dawes and Prescott escaped, and Prescott carried the warning to Concord.

The British let Revere go a few hours later, but kept his horse.

62. **John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on the same day in 1826. What date?**

Answer: July 4 (the 50th anniversary of the Declaration)

They died hours apart, Jefferson at Monticello shortly after noon and Adams in Quincy, Massachusetts, exactly 50 years after the Declaration. Adams's last words are reported as "Jefferson still lives." News traveled slowly, and neither knew the other had died.

James Monroe died on July 4 too, in 1831.

63. **In Henry VIII's court, the 'Groom of the Stool' helped the king with what?**

Answer: Going to the toilet

The groom looked after the close stool, the piece of furniture the king used as a toilet, and attended him on it. It sounds like the worst job at court, but the groom spent more time alone with the king than anyone else, so he could wield more influence than the king's top advisers.

64. **The rhyme says Lizzie Borden gave her mother 40 whacks. What did her 1893 jury decide?**

Answer: Not guilty (she was acquitted)

Her father and stepmother were killed with an ax in their Fall River, Massachusetts, home in 1892. The jury acquitted her after an hour and a half of deliberation. The rhyme is wrong on the details as well: Abby Borden was her stepmother and was struck about 18 times, not 40.

65. **Theodore Roosevelt was shot in the chest in 1912. What did he do next?**

Answer: He gave his speech anyway (for more than an hour)

A man shot him outside his Milwaukee hotel as he got into his car. The metal glasses case and thick, folded speech in his breast pocket slowed the bullet. He told the crowd it took more than that to kill a Bull Moose. Doctors left the bullet in, and he carried it for life.

66. **In 1962, three men escaping Alcatraz left what in their beds to fool the guards?**

Answer: Fake heads (dummy heads)

Frank Morris and brothers John and Clarence Anglin built the heads from plaster, flesh-tone paint and real human hair. They got out through holes drilled around their cell air vents and launched a raft made from more than 50 raincoats.

What became of them is still a mystery.

67. **In 1997, Chicago's city council officially cleared which animal of starting the Great Fire of 1871?**

Answer: Mrs. O'Leary's cow

The fire did start in the barn next to the O'Leary cottage, but the tale of the cow kicking over a lantern was never proven, and the council named no other culprit.

Catherine O'Leary was blamed for the rest of her life. The fire killed about 300 people and left about 100,000 homeless.

68. **In 1945, Betty Lou Oliver survived a fall of about 75 floors inside what?**

Answer: An elevator (in the Empire State Building)

That July, an Army B-25 bomber lost in thick fog hit the Empire State Building, killing 14 people. Oliver, an elevator operator, was badly burned. Rescuers put her in an elevator whose cables had been damaged, and it dropped to the basement, where she had to be cut out. She spent about four months in the hospital.

MEDIUM

69. **In 1859, the US and Britain nearly went to war after an American farmer shot what?**

Answer: A pig (a British company's pig; the Pig War)

Lyman Cutlar found a Hudson's Bay Company pig eating potatoes in his garden on San Juan Island, near today's Washington-Canada border, and shot it. Both sides sent troops and warships, and the standoff lasted 12 years.

In 1872 Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm I, asked to settle it, gave the islands to the US. The only casualty was the pig.

70. **In the summer of 1518, hundreds of people in Strasbourg couldn't stop doing what?**

Answer: Dancing (the dancing plague of 1518)

It began in July when a woman known as Frau Troffea started dancing in a Strasbourg street. Within a month about 400 people had joined, and some reportedly died. The city's cure was to hire musicians and build a stage. In September the dancers were sent to a shrine of St. Vitus instead.

71. **During World War I, what animals kept the White House lawn trimmed?**

Answer: Sheep

Woodrow Wilson's flock started with 18 sheep and grew to 48, so no men had to be spent mowing the grounds during the war.

Two pounds of their wool went to each state to be auctioned, and the sales raised about $50,000 for the Red Cross.

72. **Before he was president, Grover Cleveland personally hanged two men. What was his job?**

Answer: Sheriff (of Erie County, New York, which includes Buffalo)

Cleveland served as sheriff of Erie County, which includes Buffalo, from 1870 to 1873, and personally worked the gallows lever at two executions. About a dozen years later he was president.

73. **Vikings never wore horned helmets. Which German composer's operas made the look famous?**

Answer: Richard Wagner (his Ring cycle)

When Wagner's Ring cycle premiered at Bayreuth in 1876, costume designer Carl Emil Doepler gave its Norse characters horned helmets, and the picture stuck. The only Viking-era helmet ever found, at Gjermundbu in Norway, has no horns. Viking warriors wore simple helmets of metal or leather.

74. **Roman emperor Vespasian taxed the collection of what, giving us 'money doesn't stink'?**

Answer: Urine (from public urinals)

Vespasian taxed the urine collected from Rome's public toilets. When his son Titus complained, Vespasian held a coin from the first payment to his nose and asked if the smell bothered him. Hence "pecunia non olet." French public urinals were long called vespasiennes.

75. **Abraham Lincoln's son Robert was once saved from a train by whose brother?**

Answer: John Wilkes Booth's (his brother, the actor Edwin Booth)

On a crowded train platform in Jersey City, New Jersey, Robert Lincoln slipped into the gap beside a train car as it began to move. Edwin Booth, one of the most famous actors in America, grabbed him by the coat collar and pulled him to safety. In April 1865, Edwin's brother shot the president.

76. **After the British burned the Capitol in 1814, who sold Congress his books to restock its library?**

Answer: Thomas Jefferson

In 1815 Congress paid $23,950 for Jefferson's 6,487 books, more than twice the 3,000 the burned library had held. Some members objected that many were in foreign languages. A second fire, on Christmas Eve 1851, destroyed nearly two-thirds of them.

77. **The US Secret Service was founded in 1865 to fight what crime?**

Answer: Counterfeiting (fake money)

By the end of the Civil War, somewhere between a third and half of the paper money in circulation was fake, and the Secret Service began as part of the Treasury to stop it. Protecting the president only became its job after William McKinley was assassinated in 1901.

78. **Medieval European courts often tried which farm animal for killing children?**

Answer: The pig

Pigs caused the deaths of many unattended infants, and courts tried them like people. In Falaise, France, a convicted pig was given a new suit for its hanging.

Rats and insects were taken to court too, sometimes with a lawyer appointed to defend them.

79. **In 1837, Andrew Jackson's White House guests ate a 1,400-pound gift of what?**

Answer: Cheese

Thomas Meacham, a dairy farmer near Sandy Creek, New York, sent the giant wheel in 1836, and it sat ripening in the White House for over a year. When Jackson threw the doors open to the public, the crowd finished it in just two hours.

80. **After his PT boat sank in 1943, John F. Kennedy carved a rescue message on what?**

Answer: A coconut (its husk)

A Japanese destroyer, the Amagiri, rammed and sank PT-109, and Kennedy and his crew swam to small islands in the Solomons. A local scout showed him how to scratch a message into a green coconut husk, and the crew was rescued. As president, he kept the coconut, sealed in plastic, on his Oval Office desk.

81. **The first car trip across the US, in 1903, had a goggled passenger. What was it?**

Answer: A dog (named Bud)

Vermont doctor Horatio Nelson Jackson drove from San Francisco to New York on a $50 bet, with a mechanic, Sewall Crocker. They picked up Bud along the way, and he wore goggles against the road dust. The trip took 63 days. Bud's goggles are in the Smithsonian.

HARD

82. **Stewardess Violet Jessop survived the Titanic in 1912. Which sister ship sank under her in 1916?**

Answer: The Britannic (HMHS Britannic)

She had already been aboard the Olympic, the eldest of the three sisters, when it collided with the British cruiser HMS Hawke in 1911. In 1916 the Britannic, serving as a World War I hospital ship, hit a German mine, and she survived that too.

So she was aboard all three sister ships when each one met disaster.

83. **Delegates signed the parchment Declaration of Independence in what month of 1776?**

Answer: August (on August 2, 1776)

Congress declared independence on July 2 and approved the wording on July 4, but the handwritten parchment copy wasn't signed until August 2. Delegates signed by state, north to south, and some signed even later.

84. **Which US president grew up speaking Dutch at home in New York?**

Answer: Martin Van Buren

Van Buren grew up in a Dutch-speaking community in Kinderhook, in upstate New York, and Dutch was his first language. He's the only US president for whom English was a second language.

85. **The Pony Express is a Wild West legend. About how long did it actually run?**

Answer: About 18 months (April 1860 to October 1861; accept a year and a half)

Riders carried mail nearly 2,000 miles between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, changing horses at stations 10 to 15 miles apart. The first run took 10 days.

It shut down on October 26, 1861, two days after the transcontinental telegraph was finished, and it never covered its operating costs.

86. **Whose 1324 pilgrimage through Cairo handed out so much gold that its value there crashed?**

Answer: Mansa Musa (king of the Mali Empire)

The West African king traveled to Mecca with an enormous caravan and handed out so much gold in Cairo that its price there fell. Al-Umari, an Arab historian, wrote about 12 years later that gold was still cheap there.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

87. **Japanese soldier Hiroo Onoda kept fighting World War II in a Philippine jungle until what year?**

Answer: 1974

Onoda refused to believe the war was over, and he held out on Lubang Island for nearly 30 years. He only gave up when his former commanding officer, Yoshimi Taniguchi, flew to the island in March 1974 and ordered him to surrender in person.

GEOGRAPHY TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Maps, borders and places that aren't quite where you'd guess.

EASY

88. **The mountain kingdom of Lesotho is completely surrounded by which country?**

Answer: South Africa

Lesotho is one of only three countries sitting entirely inside another one; the other two, San Marino and Vatican City, are both in Italy. It's so high that its lowest point is about 4,500 feet above sea level, the highest low point of any country in the world.

89. **A 2003 joke study found Kansas is flatter than what breakfast food?**

Answer: A pancake

The tongue-in-cheek study, published in the Annals of Improbable Research, measured Kansas against a real IHOP pancake, and Kansas came out flatter.

Kansas isn't even the flattest state. A 2014 study gave that title to Florida and ranked Kansas only seventh.

90. **Boring, Oregon, is twinned with a Scottish village called what?**

Answer: Dull

Dull, a tiny village in Scotland, and Boring formed what they called an "unofficially official pairing" in 2012.

Boring isn't even named for being dull. It's named after an early resident, William H. Boring.

91. **In 1969, US engineers turned off the water to which famous waterfall for months?**

Answer: Niagara Falls (the American Falls)

The Army Corps of Engineers built a temporary dam that sent the river over the Horseshoe Falls instead, so geologists could survey the rock. The loose boulders piled at the base were mapped but left in place.

The water came back that November.

92. **In 1900, Chicago made its river do what?**

Answer: Flow backward (away from Lake Michigan)

Chicago drew its water from Lake Michigan and dumped its sewage into the Chicago River, which flowed into the lake. The Sanitary and Ship Canal, opened in 1900, made the river run away from the lake instead.

Neighboring states opposed it, and the fight reached the US Supreme Court.

93. **Which Great Lake holds enough water to cover North and South America a foot deep?**

Answer: Lake Superior

Superior holds about 3 quadrillion gallons, enough to cover all of North and South America in about a foot of water.

It's so big it creates its own weather, and it has claimed some 350 ships.

MEDIUM

94. **Which US state is closest to Africa?**

Answer: Maine (Quoddy Head, near Lubec)

Most people guess Florida, but Quoddy Head, the easternmost point of the US, is about 3,150 miles from El Beddouza, Morocco. Florida's closest point to Africa is hundreds of miles farther away than that.

95. **Name a Nevada city that sits farther west than Los Angeles.**

Answer: Carson City or Reno (accept Sparks, Fernley, Yerington or other towns near the California line)

California's coast slants southeast, so Los Angeles ends up east of much of western Nevada. Carson City, the state capital, sits more than a degree of longitude farther west than LA, and Reno is farther west still.

96. **Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg is in which state?**

Answer: Massachusetts (in Webster; locals call it Webster Lake)

The name is reportedly Nipmuc, an Algonquian language. A popular translation says "You fish on your side, I fish on my side, nobody fishes in the middle," but a local news correspondent made that up in the early 1900s.

It more likely means something like "fishing place at the boundaries."

97. **The highest and lowest points in the lower 48 states are both in which state?**

Answer: California

Mount Whitney is the highest point in the lower 48 states, and Badwater Basin in Death Valley is the lowest. They're only about 85 miles apart.

In summer you could, in theory, go from snowfields to the hottest valley in America in one day's drive.

98. **In 1950, Hot Springs, New Mexico, renamed itself after what radio game show?**

Answer: Truth or Consequences

Host Ralph Edwards promised to broadcast the show from the first town that renamed itself after it. Hot Springs voted to do it, and Edwards came back once a year for about 50 years to celebrate.

99. **The Haskell Opera House sits on the US-Canada border. Which country is its stage in?**

Answer: Canada (much of the audience sits in the US)

The Haskell Free Library and Opera House, between Derby Line, Vermont, and Stanstead, Quebec, was built on top of the border on purpose. A line of black tape on the floor marks the border, and much of the audience sits in the US to watch performers in Quebec.

100. **In 2011, Samoa skipped December 30 entirely. Why?**

Answer: It moved to the other side of the International Date Line

Samoa did a lot of business with Australia and New Zealand but sat a day behind them, losing working days every week. So Thursday, December 29, 2011, was followed by Saturday, December 31.

Samoa went from being one of the last places on Earth to greet the New Year to one of the first.

101. **The spot in the ocean farthest from any land is a graveyard for what?**

Answer: Spacecraft (old satellites, cargo ships and space stations)

Point Nemo, in the South Pacific, is about 1,670 miles from the nearest land, so it's where space agencies aim old spacecraft they bring down. Russia's Mir space station ended up in that part of the ocean in 2001.

When the space station passes over, the nearest people are often the astronauts.

102. **Which African country has more ancient pyramids than Egypt?**

Answer: Sudan

The rulers of Kush, in what's now Sudan, built more than 200 pyramids. They're smaller than Egypt's, with steeper sides. Kush was no backwater: its kings conquered Egypt and ruled it as pharaohs, Egypt's 25th Dynasty.

103. **Which country lost its coastline in a war in the 1880s but still keeps a navy?**

Answer: Bolivia

Bolivia lost its Pacific coast to Chile in the War of the Pacific, which began in 1879; a truce in 1884 left Chile holding the whole coast. Its navy was left on Lake Titicaca, high in the Andes, and keeps busy patrolling the country's rivers for smugglers. Bolivia still wants its coast back.

104. **Which state capital was renamed to win over German investors?**

Answer: Bismarck, North Dakota

The town was renamed after Otto von Bismarck, Germany's chancellor, in the hope of drawing German investment into the transcontinental railroad. It was first called Edwinton, after Edwin Ferry Johnson, a Northern Pacific engineer and early champion of the railroad.

105. **Lake Michigan is technically one lake with which other Great Lake?**

Answer: Lake Huron

The two are joined by the Straits of Mackinac, and NOAA scientists consider them one lake, Lake Michigan-Huron, because of the way water flows through the straits. Counted together, it would beat Lake Superior as the largest freshwater lake in the world by surface area.

HARD

106. **The northernmost point in the lower 48 states is in which state?**

Answer: Minnesota (the Northwest Angle)

The Northwest Angle juts into Lake of the Woods, farther north than any other part of the lower 48. It exists because the 1783 Treaty of Paris relied on John Mitchell's map, which wrongly suggested a line due west from the lake would hit the Mississippi.

107. **Since 2022, Canada has shared a land border with which European kingdom?**

Answer: Denmark (via Greenland, on Hans Island)

Canada and Denmark both claimed tiny Hans Island, between Canada's Ellesmere Island and Greenland. For decades, visiting troops raised their flag and left a bottle behind: Canadian whisky or Danish aquavit. People called it the Whisky War. In 2022 they split the island, with about 60 percent going to Denmark.

108. **It isn't Everest. The mountaintop farthest from Earth's center is in which country?**

Answer: Ecuador (Mount Chimborazo)

Earth bulges at the middle, so ground near the equator sits farther from the planet's center. Chimborazo, an Andes volcano just south of the equator, is only about 20,500 feet above sea level, but its summit is more than a mile farther from Earth's center than Everest's.

109. **What do Liechtenstein and Uzbekistan have in common that no other country shares?**

Answer: They're doubly landlocked (every neighbor is landlocked too)

To reach an ocean from either one, you have to cross at least two borders. Liechtenstein sits between Switzerland and Austria; Uzbekistan's neighbors, from Kazakhstan to Afghanistan, are all landlocked too. They're the only two such countries in the world.

110. **Sailing the Panama Canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific, which compass direction do you mostly travel?**

Answer: Southeast

Panama's isthmus curves in an S shape, so the canal runs from northwest to southeast. Its Pacific end, near Panama City, lies east of its Atlantic end at Colón.

You leave the Atlantic and come out on the Pacific farther east than where you started.

111. **Tennessee borders eight other states. Which is the only other state that does?**

Answer: Missouri

Missouri touches Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska. Tennessee touches Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and Missouri.

The two border each other too, so each counts the other among its eight.

112. **In 1998, the Supreme Court ruled most of Ellis Island belongs to which state?**

Answer: New Jersey

Ellis Island started at about three acres and was enlarged with landfill by roughly 24.5 acres. The court let New York keep the original island but gave New Jersey the land added later, which is most of it.

The boundary even runs through some of the island's buildings.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

113. **Russia's Big Diomede and Alaska's Little Diomede islands are about how many miles apart?**

Answer: About 2.4 miles (accept 2 to 3)

They sit in the Bering Strait on opposite sides of the International Date Line, with the maritime border between Russia and the US running through the water between them.

The invisible line inspired their nicknames: Yesterday and Tomorrow islands.

SCIENCE TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Your body, the sky and the stuff in your kitchen. No lab coat needed.

EASY

114. **The word "vaccine" comes from the Latin word for which farm animal?**

Answer: The cow (Latin vacca)

In the 1790s, Edward Jenner protected people from smallpox using cowpox, a mild disease that milkmaids caught from cows. His word for the cowpox material stuck to every vaccine that came after, so your flu shot is still named after a cow.

115. **Why must visitors sign a waiver before opening Marie Curie's notebooks?**

Answer: They're still radioactive (accept radiation)

More than 100 years later, her papers, her furniture and even her cookbooks still give off radiation. Her manuscripts are kept in lead-lined boxes at France's national library, and researchers who want to open them wear protective clothing and sign a liability waiver first.

116. **In the 1840s, Vienna doctor Ignaz Semmelweis was ridiculed for telling doctors to do what?**

Answer: Wash their hands (with a chlorine solution)

Students in his maternity clinic went straight from dissecting corpses to examining new mothers, who were dying of childbed fever. When he made them wash in chlorinated lime, deaths in that ward fell from about 18 percent to about 1 percent. Most leading doctors rejected the idea. He died in an asylum.

117. **In 1848, railroad foreman Phineas Gage survived what passing straight through his skull?**

Answer: An iron rod (a tamping iron, over 3 feet long)

A blasting accident in Vermont drove a 3-foot-7-inch iron bar weighing about 13 pounds clean through his skull, and he lived. His skull and the iron are at Harvard's Warren Anatomical Museum, and his change in personality made him one of brain science's most famous cases.

118. **Which organ can grow back to nearly full size after surgeons remove more than half?**

Answer: The liver

That is what makes living liver donation possible: a donor gives part of their liver, and both the donor's piece and the recipient's grow back to near normal size within a few months. In Greek myth, Prometheus's liver regrew every night after an eagle ate it, which looks oddly well informed.

119. **Which mouthwash is named after the British surgeon who pioneered antiseptic surgery?**

Answer: Listerine (named for Joseph Lister)

St. Louis doctor Joseph Lawrence created it in 1879 as a surgical antiseptic and named it after Lister. It was also pitched to dentists for killing germs in the mouth, but sales took off in the 1920s, when ads made the medical-sounding word "halitosis" famous.

120. **What makes the pop when you crack your knuckles?**

Answer: A gas bubble in the joint's fluid (accept gas or air bubbles)

Your joints are lubricated by synovial fluid. Pull the bones apart and a gas bubble forms in that fluid. Harvard Health says the pop is the bubble bursting, but a 2015 MRI study filmed the crack happening just as the bubble formed.

121. **In 2004, the FDA cleared which bloodsucking animal for sale as a medical device?**

Answer: Leeches (medicinal leeches)

Surgeons use them on reattached fingers and other tissue where blood flows in but can't yet drain out. A leech draws off the pooled blood, and its saliva carries hirudin, which stops clotting. Medical maggots had been cleared that January, five months earlier.

122. **Doctors once diagnosed diabetes by tasting a patient's urine. What gave it away?**

Answer: It tasted sweet (accept sugar or honey)

Sugar the body can't use spills into the urine. In 1674 Oxford doctor Thomas Willis became the first Western doctor known to tie that sweetness to the disease, whose full name, diabetes mellitus, means honey-like. Home urine testing kits eventually replaced the doctor's tongue, to everyone's relief.

MEDIUM

123. **Some people sneeze when they step into bright sunlight. The condition's nickname spells what?**

Answer: ACHOO (ACHOO syndrome)

The name is a made-up acronym: Autosomal dominant Compelling Helio-Ophthalmic Outburst. Estimates of how many people have this photic sneeze reflex run from about 1 in 10 to about 1 in 3, so odds are someone at your table is one of them.

124. **The stethoscope was invented in 1816 because a French doctor didn't want to do what?**

Answer: Put his ear to a young woman's chest (accept put his ear on a patient's chest)

René Laennec was treating a young woman with heart trouble and decided that pressing his ear to her chest would be improper. He rolled a sheet of paper into a tube instead and heard her heart better than he ever had with his bare ear.

125. **Whose hand appears in the first famous X-ray photo of a person, taken in 1895?**

Answer: Wilhelm Röntgen's wife's (Anna Bertha Röntgen; accept the inventor's wife)

Röntgen discovered X-rays and took the picture of his wife's hand on December 22, 1895. It shows her bones and her wedding ring. When she saw it, she reportedly said, "I have seen my death."

126. **Which metal can you safely hold and watch melt in your palm?**

Answer: Gallium

Gallium melts at about 86°F, only a little above room temperature, so a lump held in your palm turns to liquid. Away from party tricks, it does real work in LEDs.

127. **Which fruit gives its name to an informal unit of radiation?**

Answer: The banana (the banana equivalent dose)

Bananas are rich in potassium, and a tiny share of all potassium is naturally radioactive. Scientists use "one banana" to show how small everyday doses are. Your own body is mildly radioactive for the same reason, so nobody at the table is off the hook.

128. **Which element was spotted on the Sun 27 years before anyone found it on Earth?**

Answer: Helium

Astronomers saw an unexplained yellow line in sunlight during the 1868 solar eclipse and named the element after helios, Greek for the Sun. Chemist William Ramsay finally found it on Earth in 1895. The gas in party balloons started life as a solar mystery.

129. **In the 1820s, an Army doctor studied digestion by dangling food on a string into what?**

Answer: A hole in a man's stomach (accept a patient's stomach wound)

Alexis St. Martin, a French Canadian, was accidentally shot in the stomach at Fort Mackinac, Michigan, in 1822, and the wound healed with a permanent opening. Dr. William Beaumont tied food to a string, lowered it in and pulled it out at set times to see what had been digested.

130. **In 1844, a dentist got the idea for laughing gas anesthesia while watching what?**

Answer: A traveling laughing gas show (a public demonstration of nitrous oxide)

At Gardner Colton's laughing gas show in Hartford, Connecticut, a volunteer high on the gas ran into a bench, hurt his legs and didn't notice until the gas wore off. The next day Colton gave Wells the gas while fellow dentist John Riggs pulled one of his teeth, and Wells said he felt nothing.

131. **The tip of the Washington Monument, set in 1884, is a small pyramid of what metal?**

Answer: Aluminum

Back then aluminum was rare and priced about like silver, and the 100-ounce cap went on display at Tiffany's in New York before it went up. A cheap way to make the metal was found two years later, and the stuff of a national monument became the stuff of soda cans.

132. **In 1854, Dr. John Snow fought a London cholera outbreak by getting what removed?**

Answer: The handle of a water pump (the Broad Street pump)

Snow mapped the deaths and found they clustered around one public pump on Broad Street, at a time when most doctors blamed disease on bad air. Officials took the handle off so nobody could use the pump, and the outbreak subsided. Unlike his namesake on Game of Thrones, he knew something.

133. **On Anders Celsius's original 1742 scale, at what temperature did water boil?**

Answer: 0 degrees (the scale ran upside down; water froze at 100)

Celsius put boiling at 0 and freezing at 100, so a hot day would have been a low number. Soon after he died in 1744, other scientists flipped the scale into the version we use now.

134. **What color is liquid oxygen?**

Answer: Pale blue (light blue)

Cool oxygen to about -297°F and it turns into a pale blue liquid. It's magnetic, too: poured between the poles of a strong magnet, it hangs there instead of running off.

135. **Venus flytraps grow wild in only one small region on Earth. Where?**

Answer: The Carolinas (around Wilmington, North Carolina)

They grow only in humid, boggy spots along a small stretch of the North and South Carolina coast, within about 75 miles of Wilmington. The trap shuts only when something touches its trigger hairs twice in quick succession, so a single raindrop doesn't waste a snap.

136. **Big raindrops aren't teardrop-shaped. What food do they look more like?**

Answer: A hamburger bun

Small drops are round. As bigger drops fall, air pushes up on the bottom and flattens it, giving the bun shape. The biggest ones get pushed into a parachute shape and break apart. The teardrop exists only in cartoons and weather maps.

137. **In 1885, Vermont farmer Wilson Bentley became the first person to photograph what?**

Answer: A single snowflake (a snow crystal)

He hooked a camera to a microscope at home in Jericho, Vermont, and photographed more than 5,000 snow crystals before his death in 1931. "Snowflake" Bentley's huge collection convinced him that no two are alike.

138. **Grown sunflowers stop following the sun. Which direction do they end up facing?**

Answer: East

Young plants turn their heads to track the sun during the day. As they mature, the movement slows until the heads all face east, toward the morning sun. East-facing heads warm up faster in the morning and draw a lot more bees.

HARD

139. **Besides California, which US state has a chemical element named after it?**

Answer: Tennessee (tennessine, element 117)

Element 117 was named in 2016 for the state's part in finding it, through Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Vanderbilt and the University of Tennessee. Californium honors the University of California and the state. Americium is named for the whole Americas, so it doesn't count.

140. **Your fingertips prune in a long bath only if what in them is working?**

Answer: Their nerves (accept the nervous system)

Doctors noticed that fingers with damaged nerves stay smooth in water. Pruning is an active reaction, not soggy skin: blood vessels under the skin narrow and pull the skin into wrinkles. Hand surgeons still use a soak test to check whether nerves are working.

141. **Which part of your body has no blood vessels and takes oxygen straight from the air?**

Answer: The cornea (the clear front of the eye)

Blood is opaque, so vessels at the front of the eye would blind you. Instead, cells on the front surface of the cornea soak up oxygen straight from the air, and fluid inside the eye feeds the back of it.

142. **The gene that decides whether your earwax is wet or dry also affects what?**

Answer: Body odor (underarm smell)

One version of the ABCC11 gene is linked to dry earwax and no underarm odor. In North East Asia, most people don't need deodorant and don't use it. A 2013 University of Bristol study found that 78 percent of British people with the gene still used it most days.

143. **Pando, in Utah, looks like a forest of aspen trees. What is it really?**

Answer: One single tree (one organism with one shared root system)

Its roughly 47,000 trunks are clones growing from the same roots, spread over more than 100 acres of Fishlake National Forest. Pando is Latin for "I spread." Deer and elk eating the young shoots are now its biggest threat.

144. **Poison ivy is related to which tropical fruit, whose skin can cause the same rash?**

Answer: The mango (accept cashew)

Mangoes, cashews and poison ivy are in the same plant family, and all contain urushiol, the oil behind the poison ivy rash. In mangoes it sits on the skin. It's also the reason cashews are never sold in the shell.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

145. **In 1922, Iowa farmer Charles Osborne got the hiccups. How many years did they last?**

Answer: 68 years (1922 to 1990)

They reportedly started while he was hanging a 350-pound hog for butchering. He averaged 20 to 40 hiccups a minute. He married twice and had eight children along the way, and the hiccups stopped on their own in 1990, about a year before he died.

ANIMAL TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Real animal facts that sound made up. Kids tend to beat grown-ups on this round.

EASY

146. **Fireflies aren't flies. What kind of insect are they?**

Answer: Beetles

Each species flashes its own pattern to find a mate. Females of one group, Photuris, copy the flashes of other species, and when a hopeful male flies in, they eat him.

147. **What does a camel store in its hump?**

Answer: Fat (not water)

The fat is an energy reserve, and the hump can deflate and droop when a camel goes a long time without food. The water trick is elsewhere: a thirsty camel can drink up to 30 gallons in one sitting.

148. **Which big cat can't roar, but chirps like a bird?**

Answer: The cheetah (accept cougar or puma, which also chirps)

Cheetahs purr, hiss and growl, but instead of roaring they chirp. Mothers and cubs chirp when they find each other again, and cheetahs may even recognize each other by their chirps. It is a strange sound to come out of the fastest animal on land.

149. **A rhino's horn is made of the same stuff as what part of your body?**

Answer: Your fingernails (keratin; accept hair)

It's keratin, the same protein in your hair and nails, and unlike most animal horns it has no bony core. Poachers kill rhinos for horns used in traditional medicine, which is a lot of trouble for nail clippings.

150. **Why do sloths often look slightly green?**

Answer: Algae grows in their fur

Algae grows in sloth fur, and so do moths. Scientists propose the moths help feed the algae, which the sloth may eat.

MEDIUM

151. **What is a baby porcupine called?**

Answer: A porcupette

Porcupettes are born with soft quills that stiffen within minutes, which is good news for the mother. And no, porcupines can't shoot their quills. Barbs on the tips stick into an attacker, and the quills pull loose from the porcupine.

152. **Which of the basic tastes can a cat not detect?**

Answer: Sweet

Cats carry a broken copy, called a pseudogene, of one of the genes needed for a sweet taste receptor. As strict meat eaters, they never needed it. If your cat goes after your ice cream, it isn't for the sugar.

153. **Where does a sea otter keep its favorite rock?**

Answer: In a pouch of loose skin under its forearm (accept armpit)

Under each forearm is a baggy pocket of loose skin. The otter stores the food it gathers there, along with a favorite rock that it uses to crack open clams and other shellfish.

154. **Hippos ooze a red liquid once mistaken for blood. What does it do?**

Answer: It works as sunscreen (and fights germs)

The "blood sweat" comes out clear, turns red-orange within minutes and finally brown. Japanese chemists found in 2004 that its two pigments absorb ultraviolet light, and the red one slows the growth of bacteria. It isn't blood, and it isn't true sweat either.

155. **In a Seattle study, crows learned to recognize and scold what?**

Answer: A human face (a mask worn by researchers who trapped them)

Researchers wore a caveman mask while trapping and banding crows. Afterward, crows scolded and dive-bombed anyone in that mask, even crows that had never been caught. A neutral mask was mostly ignored. Crows can remember a face for years.

156. **Sperm whales take short naps in what unusual position?**

Answer: Hanging upright (vertical in the water)

A 2008 study described sperm whales floating motionless and straight up and down, heads at or just below the surface. Three of them barely reacted to the researchers' boat until it accidentally touched one. The whales seemed to sleep only about 7 percent of the time.

157. **In movies, a bald eagle's scream is usually dubbed with which other bird's call?**

Answer: A red-tailed hawk

A real bald eagle has what one birder calls a dopey chuckle for a call. Filmmakers swap in the red-tailed hawk's scream nearly every time, because it sounds much cooler than the national bird does.

158. **In real clownfish biology, what would Marlin have done after Nemo's mother died?**

Answer: Turned female (changed sex)

Clownfish are all born male, and each group is run by a single female. When she dies, the most dominant male changes sex and takes her place. Pixar went with a different story.

159. **Labs harvest horseshoe crab blood to test medicines for germs. What color is it?**

Answer: Blue (milky blue)

It's blue because it carries oxygen with a copper-based pigment, hemocyanin. An extract from it clots around dangerous bacterial toxins, so drugmakers use it to check products like insulin, IV devices and vaccines for contamination. The crabs are the only known natural source of it.

160. **Where does a woodpecker keep its extra-long tongue when it isn't using it?**

Answer: Wrapped around its skull (around the back of its head)

The tongue rides on a set of bones whose two arms wrap over the top and around the back of the skull. That lets a Northern Flicker dart its tongue out 2 inches past the tip of its bill to snare insects.

161. **How does a sea star eat a clam?**

Answer: It pushes its stomach out of its body and into the shell

The sea star grips the shell with its tube feet and pries it open. Then it pushes its stomach inside, digests the clam outside its own body, and pulls its stomach back in when it's done.

162. **Sea cucumbers breathe through what part of their body?**

Answer: Their rear end (the anus)

Muscles pump water in through the back end to fill branching "respiratory trees" inside. It's roomy in there: a small fish called the pearlfish makes its home inside the sea cucumber's rear end.

HARD

163. **Which African dog breed is known as the "barkless dog"?**

Answer: The Basenji

The American Kennel Club calls the Basenji "Africa's Barkless Dog," a compact, sweet-faced hunter known for its intelligence. Barkless isn't the same as silent, though, so don't expect a quiet house.

164. **Experiments with horses in striped coats showed zebra stripes help fend off what?**

Answer: Biting flies (horseflies)

In a 2019 study at a stable in Somerset, England, horseflies landed far less often on horses wearing zebra-striped coats. The flies failed to slow down as they came in, maybe dazzled by the stripes up close. Other ideas include hiding from predators and keeping cool.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

165. **The Brood X cicadas that swarmed the eastern US in 2021 spent how many years underground?**

Answer: 17

The nymphs suck sap from tree roots underground for 17 years, then come up by the billions. Other broods run on 13-year cycles. Both are prime numbers, and coming out all at once in huge numbers means predators simply can't eat them all.

FOOD AND DRINK TRIVIA QUESTIONS

How your favorite snacks got their names, their shapes and a few strange ingredients.

EASY

166. **A candy maker co-invented machine-spun cotton candy in 1897 with a man of what profession?**

Answer: A dentist (William Morrison)

Dentist William Morrison built the spinning machine with candy maker John C. Wharton. They sold the stuff as 'Fairy Floss' at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.

Good for repeat business, you'd have to say.

167. **At most American sushi restaurants, the green 'wasabi' is mostly what?**

Answer: Horseradish (usually with mustard and green coloring)

Real wasabi is a Japanese plant that grows wild along streams and is hard and expensive to farm, so the fresh stuff is rare. Most restaurants serve a paste made from horseradish, mustard and green food coloring.

168. **The red food coloring called carmine is made from what?**

Answer: Crushed insects (cochineal bugs)

Cochineal are tiny insects that feed on cactus and turn red when crushed. The dye has colored foods and makeup for centuries.

In 2012, vegetarians were upset to learn that Starbucks' Strawberry and Creme Frappuccino got its pink from crushed bugs.

169. **Gatorade was invented in 1965 for which college football team?**

Answer: The Florida Gators (University of Florida)

A coach wanted to know why his players faded in the hot Florida weather. Kidney doctor Robert Cade's team mixed water, sugar, sodium, potassium, phosphate and lemon juice into a drink to replace what they sweated out.

The Gators credited it with their first Orange Bowl win, in 1967.

170. **A 1970s rumor said Mikey from the Life cereal ads died after mixing soda with which candy?**

Answer: Pop Rocks

Mikey was fine. General Foods took out ads in 45 major publications, and the candy's inventor, chemist William Mitchell, went on a publicity tour to explain that the fizz was just bubbles of carbon dioxide.

Mitchell also created Cool Whip and Tang.

171. **The man who designed which snack's can had some of his ashes buried in one?**

Answer: Pringles

Fredric Baur patented the tube that stacks the curved chips neatly. When he died in 2008, his children honored his request and buried part of his ashes in a Pringles can. The rest went in an urn buried beside it.

MEDIUM

172. **Vanilla beans are the seed pods of what kind of flower?**

Answer: An orchid

Vanilla orchids planted outside Mexico, where local bees pollinate them, almost never made pods. In 1841, Edmond Albius, a 12-year-old enslaved boy on the island of Réunion, showed how to pollinate them by hand.

His trick opened up the vanilla industry.

173. **Ham-and-pineapple Hawaiian pizza was invented in which country?**

Answer: Canada (Chatham, Ontario)

Greek-born Sam Panopoulos first put pineapple on a pizza in 1962 at his Satellite restaurant in Chatham, Ontario. The sweet and tangy Chinese dishes he was already serving gave him the idea.

He named it after the brand of canned pineapple he used. Hawaii got the blame anyway.

174. **Which Coca-Cola brand was born in World War II Germany, when Coke syrup couldn't get in?**

Answer: Fanta

In 1940, Max Keith, who ran Coca-Cola's German business, had no way to import Coke syrup, so he made a new drink from what Germany had, including whey and apple pomace (the pulp left over from pressing apples).

The name came from Fantasie, German for imagination.

175. **The Snickers bar, launched in 1930, was named after what?**

Answer: A horse (a Mars family favorite)

The Mars Candy Factory in Chicago brought out Snickers in 1930 and named it after the Mars family's favorite horse. So one of the most famous candy bars in the world is named after a horse.

176. **What flavor was the cream filling in the first Twinkies, in 1930?**

Answer: Banana

Shipping bananas across the ocean got hard during World War II, so inventor James Dewar switched the filling to vanilla, and it stayed after the war.

The name came from a St. Louis billboard advertising Twinkle Toe Shoes.

177. **Nachos are named after whom?**

Answer: Ignacio 'Nacho' Anaya, the maître d' who first made them (accept the man who invented them)

The usual story: in 1943, a group of American military wives from across the border in Texas stopped at a restaurant in Piedras Negras, Mexico. The maître d', Ignacio 'Nacho' Anaya, fried tortilla chips and topped them with cheese and sliced jalapeños, and the dish took his nickname.

178. **The Milky Way candy bar, from 1923, was meant to taste like what?**

Answer: A malted milkshake (accept malted milk)

Frank Mars took both the name and the taste from malted milk, the chocolate malted milkshake of the day's soda fountains, and put them in a candy bar. The galaxy had nothing to do with it.

179. **When the McDonald brothers opened their first restaurant in 1940, what did it mainly sell?**

Answer: Barbecue

McDonald's Bar-B-Que in San Bernardino, California, was a carhop drive-in selling barbecue ribs and beef and pork sandwiches. In 1948 the brothers closed it, fired the carhops and reopened with a limited menu, walk-up service and a fast kitchen they called the Speedee Service System.

180. **When Heinz started advertising '57 Varieties' in the 1890s, how many products did it sell?**

Answer: More than 60 (accept about 60; the 57 was made up)

Henry Heinz saw an ad on a New York train boasting '21 styles' of shoes and wanted a number of his own. He settled on 57 because he liked the sound of it, though the company already sold more than 60 products.

181. **Why is bubble gum usually pink?**

Answer: Pink was the only food coloring the inventor had on hand

Walter Diemer, an accountant at the Fleer gum company in Philadelphia, stumbled on a gum that could blow bubbles in 1928. Pink was the dye within reach.

His Dubble Bubble was such a hit that bubble gum has been pink ever since.

HARD

182. **What is the 'mystery flavor' Dum Dums lollipop?**

Answer: A blend of two flavors (made as one flavor batch runs into the next)

Spangler Candy makes Dum Dums in a continuous run. Where one flavor batch ends and the next begins, the pops taste of both, and they go in the Mystery wrapper so the line never has to stop. So the answer changes from batch to batch.

183. **In the late 1830s, pills made from which garden plant were sold as a cure-all?**

Answer: The tomato (tomato extract pills)

A doctor named John Cook Bennett claimed tomatoes could treat diarrhea and indigestion. By 1838, rival pill makers were advertising tomato pills with medical claims, and by the 1840s stores offered many tomato pills and extracts.

184. **The curvy Coca-Cola bottle of 1915 was modeled on what?**

Answer: A cocoa pod

Coca-Cola held a contest among glassmakers in 1915. Designers at the Root Glass Company in Terre Haute, Indiana, looked to Coke's ingredients for ideas, but the winning bottle was modeled on the cacao pod instead. Cocoa has nothing to do with Coke.

185. **Which lemon-lime soda launched in 1929 with the mood drug lithium in it?**

Answer: 7 Up

It started out as Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Soda, with lithium citrate in the recipe, in the same year as the stock market crash. The lithium was dropped years later. Sprite is the wrong guess: Coca-Cola didn't launch it until 1961.

186. **The second M in M&M's honors the son of a top executive at which company?**

Answer: Hershey (Bruce Murrie, son of Hershey executive William Murrie)

Forrest Mars teamed up with Bruce Murrie, son of a Hershey executive, to secure a steady supply of chocolate while it was rationed during World War II. Murrie got a 20 percent stake, and Mars later bought him out. So a Hershey man's son lives on in every bag of M&M's.

187. **Steve Henson created ranch dressing while working what job in Alaska?**

Answer: Plumber (plumbing contractor)

Henson was a plumbing contractor around Anchorage and came up with the dressing to keep his hungry work crews happy. In 1956 he bought a ranch on San Marcos Pass near Santa Barbara, California, renamed it Hidden Valley Ranch, and guests loved the dressing.

188. **Chicken nuggets were invented by a food scientist at which Ivy League university?**

Answer: Cornell

Cornell professor Robert C. Baker worked out how to keep the breading stuck to chicken nuggets through frying. By his own account they weren't very popular when they first came out. He also helped develop turkey ham and poultry hot dogs.

189. **Huy Fong Foods, maker of rooster-bottle Sriracha, is named after what?**

Answer: The ship that carried its founder out of Vietnam (the freighter Huy Fong)

David Tran fled Vietnam with his family aboard a Taiwanese freighter called the Huy Fong, which carried them to Hong Kong. He later made chili sauce in the Los Angeles area and named his company after the ship.

190. **Ben and Jerry learned to make ice cream from a $5 correspondence course from which university?**

Answer: Penn State

The two old friends took the mail-order course before opening their first scoop shop in a converted gas station in Burlington, Vermont, in 1978.

Penn State has taught ice cream making since the 1890s.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

191. **How many days did New Coke last before Coca-Cola brought back the original in 1985?**

Answer: 79 days

New Coke launched on April 23, 1985. Angry calls and letters poured in by the thousands, and the old formula came back as Coca-Cola Classic on July 11, exactly 79 days later.

INVENTION TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Who invented what, and how many of them were accidents.

EASY

192. **When Mr. Potato Head came out in 1952, what did kids have to supply themselves?**

Answer: A real potato (or another vegetable)

The first kit was just pointed plastic face pieces, meant to be pushed into a raw potato from the kitchen. Hasbro later made a plastic potato body with ready-made holes.

He was also the first toy marketed on TV.

193. **What heated the cakes in the original 1963 Easy-Bake Oven?**

Answer: Light bulbs (accept a light bulb)

Kenner's toy oven baked its little cakes with ordinary light bulbs, the kind kids saw every day, yet it got up to 350 degrees Fahrenheit inside. Kenner had first wanted to call it the Safety-Bake Oven.

194. **The inventor of the Super Soaker had worked as an engineer for which government agency?**

Answer: NASA (at its Jet Propulsion Laboratory; accept the US Air Force)

Lonnie Johnson worked at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory on the Galileo mission to Jupiter, and also for the Air Force. The Super Soaker came out of his work on an environmentally friendly heat pump. He licensed it in 1989, and two years later it had made over $200 million in sales.

MEDIUM

195. **Lincoln Logs were invented by the son of which famous American architect?**

Answer: Frank Lloyd Wright

John Lloyd Wright got the idea from the interlocking wood joints of his father's Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, which was built to ride out earthquakes.

The name may nod to Abraham Lincoln, or to his father's birth name, Frank Lincoln Wright.

196. **Super Glue was found by accident in World War II, by chemists making clear plastic for what?**

Answer: Gun sights

Harry Coover's team at Eastman Kodak threw the stuff out because it was too sticky to work with. He came across it again in 1951 and saw that the stickiness was the point. Kodak began selling it as Eastman 910 in 1958.

197. **Silly Putty came out of a World War II search for a substitute for what?**

Answer: Rubber (synthetic rubber)

A General Electric engineer mixed boric acid with silicone oil and got a bouncy goo that was useless as rubber. Marketer Peter Hodgson packed it in plastic eggs in 1950.

Apollo 8 astronauts later carried it around the moon in sterling-silver eggs.

198. **Etch A Sketch was invented in which country?**

Answer: France

Electrician André Cassagnes came up with it in the 1950s and called it L'Écran Magique, the magic screen. Ohio Art bought the rights and had it in American stores by 1960.

The gray on the screen is aluminum powder, scraped away by a stylus as you turn the knobs.

199. **Kleenex tissues first went on sale in the 1920s to do what job?**

Answer: Remove makeup (cold cream)

Kimberly-Clark had made Cellucotton, a cotton substitute, for World War I bandages and gas mask filters. After the war it sold the material as a cold cream remover. Then women wrote in to complain that their husbands were blowing their noses in them, and the ads changed.

200. **In 1849, Walter Hunt invented what to pay off a $15 debt?**

Answer: The safety pin

Hunt's pin had a spring at one end and a clasp that kept the point covered. He patented it on April 10, 1849, and then sold the rights for just $400, which covered the debt many times over.

201. **Why was the world's first traffic light, set up in London in 1868, taken away?**

Answer: It exploded (a gas line blew up and burned the policeman running it)

The signal outside the Houses of Parliament had railway-style arms by day and red and green gas lamps at night, worked by a police officer. Less than a month after it went up in December 1868, a gas line exploded and badly burned him.

The government gave up on gaslit signals.

202. **After a snowy streetcar ride in New York, Mary Anderson patented what in 1903?**

Answer: The windshield wiper

The Alabama woman noticed the driver had to stick his head out the window to see. Her hand-operated wiper worked from inside, but companies passed on it, and her patent ran out in 1920, just as cars took off.

203. **When shoppers ignored the first shopping carts in 1937, what did inventor Sylvan Goldman do?**

Answer: Hired people to push them around his stores (accept paid models or actors)

Shoppers were used to carrying baskets and saw no need for one on wheels. So the Oklahoma City grocer hired actors and models to push carts around his stores and shop, showing customers how easy they were. It worked.

204. **The first product scanned by barcode at a checkout, in 1974, was a pack of what?**

Answer: Chewing gum (Wrigley's Juicy Fruit)

At a Marsh supermarket in Troy, Ohio, on June 26, 1974, a pack of Wrigley's Juicy Fruit became the first grocery item scanned with a Universal Product Code. The scanner could read a code small enough to fit on a pack of gum.

205. **The inventor of Liquid Paper was the mother of a member of which 1960s TV band?**

Answer: The Monkees (Michael Nesmith)

Bette Nesmith Graham, a Dallas secretary, started covering her typing mistakes with tempera paint tinted to match the company stationery, and mixed it in her kitchen. Her son Michael and his friends filled the bottles. She sold the company to Gillette in 1979 for $47.5 million.

206. **The yellow smiley face was drawn in 1963 to cheer up workers at what kind of company?**

Answer: An insurance company (State Mutual Life Assurance)

Artist Harvey Ball drew it in less than 10 minutes to raise morale at State Mutual and was paid $45. Neither he nor the company tried to trademark it, so others made fortunes from it, starting with more than 50 million buttons in 1971.

207. **Play-Doh and Bubble Wrap both started out as products for what part of a house?**

Answer: The walls (a wallpaper cleaner and a textured wallpaper)

Play-Doh began as a putty for wiping soot off wallpaper, until a schoolteacher, Kay Zufall, saw it as a toy for kids. Bubble Wrap was first tried in 1957 as a textured wallpaper, and the results disappointed its inventors. Both found their real jobs after the first idea flopped.

208. **The name Tetris blends 'tetra' with which sport, its creator's favorite?**

Answer: Tennis

Alexey Pajitnov designed and programmed Tetris in 1984 while working at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in Moscow. 'Tetra' is Greek for four: every piece is made of four squares.

HARD

209. **Crayola is craie, French for chalk, plus 'ola' from a longer English word. What does that word mean?**

Answer: Oily (from 'oleaginous')

Alice Binney, wife of the company's founder, came up with it: craie, French for chalk, plus 'ola' from oleaginous, meaning oily, for the waxy crayons. It became the company's trademark in 1903.

210. **Monopoly grew out of a 1904 board game by Lizzie Magie. What was it called?**

Answer: The Landlord's Game

Magie designed it to show the evils of piling up wealth at the expense of others. Homemade copies spread for decades. In 1935 Parker Brothers bought her patent for $500, the same year it bought Monopoly from Charles Darrow, who got the credit.

211. **Q-tips were first sold in the 1920s under what name?**

Answer: Baby Gays

Leo Gerstenzang got the idea in the 1920s watching his wife wrap cotton around toothpicks. His swabs were sold as Baby Gays, then from 1926 as Q-Tips Baby Gays, and finally just Q-tips. The Q stands for quality.

212. **Joseph Gayetty's 1857 packaged toilet paper had what printed on every sheet?**

Answer: His name

Gayetty's Medicated Paper, sold from 1857, had 'J C Gayetty N Y' watermarked on each sheet. It contained aloe and was sold as a remedy for hemorrhoids.

A man proud of his work.

213. **Scrabble's inventor decided how many tiles each letter got by counting letters in what?**

Answer: Newspapers (accept the New York Times or the Herald Tribune, or newspapers and magazines)

In the early 1930s, out-of-work architect Alfred Butts studied the front page of The New York Times, counting how often each letter of the alphabet showed up. He used those counts to decide how many of each letter went into his game.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

214. **In what year was sliced bread first sold?**

Answer: 1928

A bakery in Chillicothe, Missouri, sold the first loaves cut by Otto Rohwedder's machine on July 7, 1928. In 1943 the US government banned sliced bread as a wartime measure. The unpopular ban was lifted within two months.

MOVIE AND TV TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Behind-the-scenes stories from movies and TV shows you've probably seen.

EASY

215. Who knitted most of the cardigans Fred Rogers wore on Mister Rogers' Neighborhood?

Answer: His mother (Nancy McFeely Rogers)

Nancy McFeely Rogers knitted them in many colors and made him a new one every Christmas. In 1984 Rogers gave one of her sweaters to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, where it still is.

216. Jim Henson made the first Kermit from his mother's old coat. What became the eyes?

Answer: A ping-pong ball (cut in half)

Henson made him in 1955 for a local TV show in Washington, D.C. Back then Kermit looked more like a lizard, and he wasn't officially a frog until the 1969 special Hey, Cinderella! The original puppet is now at the Smithsonian.

217. The 'blood' in Psycho's famous shower scene was really what?

Answer: Chocolate syrup

Hitchcock shot in black and white, so only the look of it swirling down the drain mattered. The scene lasts well under a minute but took about a week to shoot. A 2017 documentary about it, 78/52, is named for its 78 camera setups and 52 cuts.

218. The Exorcist's green vomit was mostly what breakfast food?

Answer: Porridge (accept oatmeal; pea soup alone doesn't count, it was only the coloring)

Director William Friedkin said it was "really porridge with pea soup coloring." It ran through a very thin plastic tube from the side of Linda Blair's mouth to a special effects technician working a homemade pump with a hand crank.

219. On Game of Thrones, what phrase turned into the name Hodor?

Answer: Hold the door

The 2016 episode 'The Door' shows him as a boy named Wylis, who has a seizure when Bran's vision links him to his own future: holding a door shut against the dead. He shouts 'hold the door' until it slurs into the only word he says again.

MEDIUM

220. What did the Jaws crew nickname the mechanical shark?

Answer: Bruce

Steven Spielberg named it after his lawyer, Bruce Ramer. The crew built three mechanical sharks, all called Bruce and all prone to breaking down. Only in Hollywood does a man-eating shark get named after your attorney.

221. What color was Oscar the Grouch in Sesame Street's first season?

Answer: Orange

He showed up green in the first episode of season two, with a grouchy explanation: he'd been on vacation at Swamp Mushy Muddy and got so covered in slime that he turned a permanent new color.

222. Godzilla's 1954 roar came from a leather glove dragged along what instrument?

Answer: A double bass (accept upright bass or string bass)

The film's composer, Akira Ifukube, coated a leather glove in pine-tar resin and rubbed it along the loosened strings of a double bass. The recording was then processed into the roar. No animals were harmed in the making of the monster.

223. **The Cowardly Lion's costume in The Wizard of Oz was made from what?**

Answer: Real lion skin and fur

Bert Lahr's costume was made from real lion skin and fur, with a face sculpted in his likeness. It sold at auction in 2014 for about $3 million. The coward was wearing a real lion.

224. **During World War II, what were Oscar statuettes made of?**

Answer: Painted plaster

Metal was short, so winners at the 1943, 1944 and 1945 ceremonies got plaster Oscars sprayed to look like metal. After the war, the Academy let them swap the plaster figures for gold-plated metal ones.

225. **What's the name of the stock scream heard in Star Wars and countless other films?**

Answer: The Wilhelm scream

It was recorded for Distant Drums (1951), for a soldier dragged underwater by an alligator. Sound designer Ben Burtt named it after Private Wilhelm, a soldier in The Charge at Feather River, and slipped it into Star Wars and Indiana Jones.

226. **Before Fruity Pebbles, Fred and Barney did TV ads for which cigarette brand?**

Answer: Winston cigarettes

Winston sponsored The Flintstones' first two seasons on ABC. In the ads, Fred and Barney take a smoke break while the announcer calls Winston "America's best selling, best tasting filtered cigarette." It was TV's first prime-time cartoon, not a Saturday-morning show.

227. **In early drafts of Back to the Future, the time machine was what appliance?**

Answer: A refrigerator (accept fridge)

To work, the fridge had to be hauled to an atomic bomb test site. The filmmakers worried kids would climb into fridges and get trapped, so the DeLorean got the job. A fridge finally met an atomic bomb in 2008, with Indiana Jones inside.

228. **Bugs Bunny and Mickey Mouse share the screen in which 1988 movie?**

Answer: Who Framed Roger Rabbit

Warner Bros. lent Bugs only if he got exactly as much screen time as Mickey. So the two share one skydiving scene, side by side the whole way down. Daffy Duck and Donald Duck got the same deal for their dueling-pianos act.

229. **Indiana Jones is named after what member of George Lucas's household?**

Answer: His dog (an Alaskan Malamute named Indiana)

The same big, shaggy dog gave Lucas the idea for Chewbacca. Lucas said it rode in his passenger seat like a co-pilot. In Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989), Indy's father gives the game away: 'We named the dog Indiana.'

230. **Before creating SpongeBob SquarePants, what subject did Stephen Hillenburg teach?**

Answer: Marine biology (accept ocean science)

He taught marine biology at the Orange County Marine Institute in Dana Point, California, and drew comics about ocean creatures. A writer on Rocko's Modern Life noticed those drawings, and SpongeBob grew out of them.

HARD

231. **Which future Beverly Hillbillies star was the original Tin Man in The Wizard of Oz?**

Answer: Buddy Ebsen

Ebsen was first cast as the Scarecrow, then swapped parts with Ray Bolger. Less than two weeks into filming, the aluminum dust in his Tin Man makeup got into his lungs. He spent two weeks in the hospital, some of it in an oxygen tent.

232. **The falling green code in The Matrix was scanned from what?**

Answer: Japanese cookbooks (accept sushi recipes)

Designer Simon Whiteley scanned characters from his Japanese wife's cookbooks to make the "digital rain." He likes to tell people the Matrix code is made of sushi recipes. Neo was reading dinner.

233. **Gilligan's Island's S.S. Minnow was named as a jab at whom?**

Answer: Newton Minow (the head of the FCC)

In 1961 Minow, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, told TV executives their programming was 'a vast wasteland.' Creator Sherwood Schwartz reportedly got back at him by naming his doomed little boat the Minnow.

234. **Before Hawkins, Indiana, Stranger Things was set in which real beach town?**

Answer: Montauk (on Long Island, New York)

The Duffer brothers first planned to set the show in Montauk, partly because it was the model for Amity in Jaws, their favorite movie. Local legends of 1980s experiments with portals and mind control fed the story. They later moved it to a made-up town, Hawkins, Indiana.

235. **In Jurassic Park, how did the crew make the water in the cup ripple?**

Answer: Guitar strings plucked by a hidden crew member (accept a guitar)

Steven Spielberg got the idea from bass thumping in his car. Effects chief Michael Lantieri tried other tricks without luck, then hit on guitar strings. The crew ran strings through the car, and a hidden crew member plucked them. The rings became the T. rex's footsteps.

236. **Leonard Nimoy based Spock's Vulcan salute on a gesture he saw where?**

Answer: In synagogue (a Jewish priestly blessing)

As a boy, Nimoy watched a group of men at his family's Orthodox synagogue bless the congregation with split-fingered hands. His father told him not to look. He peeked, and about 25 years later he brought the gesture to Star Trek as the Vulcan salute.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

237. **How many minutes did the first Academy Awards ceremony, in 1929, last?**

Answer: 15 minutes

Douglas Fairbanks hosted, and there was no suspense to slow things down: the winners had been announced three months before the ceremony. Modern broadcasts can run past three and a half hours.

MUSIC TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Songs you know by heart and the stories behind them you probably don't.

EASY

238. Which 1963 Kingsmen hit did the FBI investigate over its mumbled lyrics?

Answer: Louie Louie

After complaints that the words were obscene, the FBI spent about two years on the case and concluded it couldn't tell whether the record was obscene. Richard Berry's original is a harmless tale of a lonely sailor talking to a bartender named Louie.

239. Both writers of 'Take Me Out to the Ball Game' had never done what?

Answer: Seen a big-league baseball game (accept been to a ballgame)

Jack Norworth said he scribbled the words on an envelope in 1908 after seeing a subway sign for that day's game at the Polo Grounds. Composer Albert Von Tilzer hadn't seen a game either. The song gave Cracker Jack a free plug that's never stopped.

240. Michael Jackson first moonwalked on TV during which of his songs?

Answer: Billie Jean

It happened near the end of 'Billie Jean' on Motown 25, a TV special taped at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium and shown on NBC about six weeks later, in May 1983. The crowd in the hall gasped as he slid backward.

241. At a 1982 Iowa concert, Ozzy Osbourne bit the head off what?

Answer: A bat (a real one)

A fan tossed it onto the stage in Des Moines. Ozzy said he thought it was a rubber toy until he bit down. It wasn't, and he spent the days after getting rabies shots.

242. Where did the Beatles play their final live show together, in January 1969?

Answer: On a rooftop (their own company's office in London)

On January 30, 1969, they played for about 42 minutes on the roof of their Savile Row office. The building belonged to Apple Corps, the Beatles' own company, which has nothing to do with the computer maker. Police came up and shut it down. John Lennon signed off: 'I hope we've passed the audition.'

243. The ABC song shares its tune with what other nursery song?

Answer: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (accept Baa, Baa, Black Sheep)

All three use a French melody, 'Ah! vous dirai-je, maman,' first printed in 1761. Mozart often gets credit for writing it, but he only wrote a set of piano variations on a tune that already existed.

MEDIUM

244. Who wrote and first recorded 'I Will Always Love You,' later Whitney Houston's huge hit?

Answer: Dolly Parton

Parton wrote it as a farewell to her mentor and partner Porter Wagoner. Elvis wanted to record it, but Colonel Tom Parker demanded half the publishing rights. She said no and, in her words, "cried all night."

245. Before it was 'Happy Birthday to You,' its tune was a classroom song called what?

Answer: Good Morning to All

Mildred Hill, a composer, wrote the melody, and her sister Patty, who ran a kindergarten training school in Louisville, Kentucky, wrote the classroom words. It was copyrighted in 1893. Copyright claims on the birthday version lasted until a 2016 court settlement put it in the public domain.

246. Which pop star wrote the 'Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there' jingle?

Answer: Barry Manilow

Manilow wrote it in 1971, before his hits, and was paid a flat $500. Jingle writers got bought out, he said, with no residuals. State Farm has used it ever since.

247. Elvis sold records worldwide but played concerts in only one foreign country. Which?

Answer: Canada

His only shows abroad were three concerts in Canada in 1957. His manager, Colonel Tom Parker, was born in the Netherlands, was in the U.S. illegally and never held a U.S. passport. Many believe that's why Elvis never toured overseas.

248. The tune of 'The Star-Spangled Banner' came from a club song from which city?

Answer: London (accept England or Britain)

The melody is "To Anacreon in Heaven," the club song of London's Anacreontic Society, a gentlemen's club devoted to "wit, harmony, and the god of wine." Francis Scott Key later put new words to the tune.

249. Which TV mogul wrote the Jeopardy! 'Think' music in under a minute?

Answer: Merv Griffin (the show's creator)

Griffin created Jeopardy! and wrote its famous countdown tune himself. His son Tony said it took less than a minute, and it earned more than $70 million in royalties, probably the best-paid minute in TV history.

250. Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' took its title from what product?

Answer: Teen Spirit deodorant

Musician Kathleen Hanna wrote 'Kurt smells like Teen Spirit' on Kurt Cobain's wall as a joke, after spotting the deodorant in a store. Months later he asked if he could use it in a song. He didn't learn Teen Spirit was a real deodorant until after the album came out.

251. Paul McCartney's 'Yesterday' had what silly working title?

Answer: Scrambled Eggs

The melody came to him in his sleep, and he woke up with it in his head. Until real words came, he sang 'scrambled eggs' as a placeholder, and when people asked what the song was called, he told them 'Scrambled Eggs.'

252. How did Phil Collins perform at Live Aid in London and Philadelphia on one day?

Answer: He flew the Concorde across the Atlantic

On July 13, 1985, he played Wembley Stadium in the afternoon, boarded the supersonic Concorde and landed in time to play JFK Stadium in Philadelphia. There he also sat in on drums for a Led Zeppelin reunion.

253. The 1969 Woodstock festival was held on what kind of farm?

Answer: A dairy farm (Max Yasgur's)

It wasn't in the town of Woodstock either. After other sites fell through, Max Yasgur, who ran a large dairy operation, let the festival use his land in Bethel, New York. Around 400,000 people showed up.

254. Coca-Cola's 1971 jingle 'I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke' became what hit?

Answer: I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing (In Perfect Harmony)

The ad showed young people singing on a hilltop in Italy. Listeners called radio stations begging to hear it, so the jingle was rewritten without the soda and released as a pop single, with the New Seekers' version a Top 10 hit.

255. Spanish athletes stand silent during their national anthem. Why?

Answer: It has no official lyrics

The Marcha Real dates to 1761, and Guinness World Records calls it the oldest national anthem with no words. Attempts to add lyrics over the years were never made official. So players hum along or just stand there.

256. **Chubby Checker's stage name was a play on which other singer's?**

Answer: Fats Domino

Born Ernest Evans, he got the name from Dick Clark's wife, who said he looked like a little Fats Domino: Chubby for Fats, Checker for Domino. His 1960 version of 'The Twist' went to No. 1, then went back to No. 1 in 1962.

HARD

257. **Deep Purple's 'Smoke on the Water' describes a fire during whose concert?**

Answer: Frank Zappa's (and the Mothers of Invention)

On December 4, 1971, a fan fired a flare gun at the wooden roof of the Montreux Casino in Switzerland, and it burned down. "Funky Claude" in the lyrics is Claude Nobs, the Montreux Jazz Festival founder, who rushed to save young concertgoers.

258. **Johnny Cash's 'A Boy Named Sue' was written by which children's book author?**

Answer: Shel Silverstein

The man behind Where the Sidewalk Ends wrote it. Cash's 1969 recording topped the country chart and reached No. 2 on the pop chart, stuck behind the Rolling Stones' "Honky Tonk Women."

259. **Elvis won three competitive Grammys. What kind of music were they all for?**

Answer: Gospel (accept sacred or inspirational)

The King of Rock and Roll never won a Grammy for rock and roll. He won Best Sacred Performance for How Great Thou Art, then two Best Inspirational Performance awards, one for He Touched Me and one for a live How Great Thou Art.

260. **Who first recorded 'Hound Dog', in 1952?**

Answer: Big Mama Thornton (Willie Mae Thornton)

Two young songwriters, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, wrote it, and her growling version spent seven weeks at No. 1 on the R&B chart. Elvis's much bigger 1956 hit copied a Las Vegas rewrite by singer Freddie Bell, which is why his version suddenly mentions rabbits.

261. **Why did David Bowie, born David Jones, change his name in the 1960s?**

Answer: To avoid confusion with Davy Jones (later of the Monkees)

In 1965 he was told too many entertainers had similar names, among them a young actor who would find worldwide fame as a singing Monkee: Davy Jones. So David Jones took 'Bowie' from Jim Bowie's famous Bowie knife.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

262. **In what year did 'The Star-Spangled Banner' officially become the U.S. national anthem?**

Answer: 1931

President Herbert Hoover signed the law on March 3, 1931. The final push came from a 1929 Ripley's Believe It or Not cartoon that told stunned readers America had no official national anthem.

SPORTS TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Fans will get more of these than everyone else, but not as many as they think.

EASY

263. The Super Bowl got its name from what children's toy?

Answer: The Super Ball

Kansas City Chiefs owner Lamar Hunt's two kids loved their bouncy Super Balls, and in 1966 he came up with the name 'Super Bowl' for the title game. He said later the toy's name must have been in his subconscious.

264. The Los Angeles Lakers got their name in what state?

Answer: Minnesota (they were the Minneapolis Lakers)

The team moved to Minneapolis in 1947 and took a name to suit Minnesota's nickname, the Land of 10,000 Lakes. It moved to Los Angeles before the 1960-61 season and kept the name, even though LA has no lakes to speak of.

265. How many seconds does an NBA team get to take a shot?

Answer: 24

Syracuse Nationals owner Danny Biasone did the math. Teams took about 120 shots in a 48-minute game, so he divided 2,880 seconds by 120. The NBA brought in his clock for the 1954 season.

Before that, teams with a lead stalled. In 1950 the Fort Wayne Pistons beat the Minneapolis Lakers 19-18.

266. A quarterback at a college for deaf students is credited with inventing the huddle. Why?

Answer: To hide his sign language from the other team (accept: so opponents couldn't read his signals)

Paul Hubbard played quarterback for Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. In 1894 he worried that rival teams were reading his hand signs across the field, so he pulled his offense into a tight circle. By the 1920s huddles were common in college football, though others have claimed the idea too.

267. An Olympic gold medal is made mostly of what metal?

Answer: Silver

Olympic gold medals must be at least 92.5 percent silver, plated with about a fifth of an ounce of gold. The last solid gold medals were handed out at the 1912 Stockholm Games. Biting one for the cameras proves nothing.

268. What does the Indianapolis 500 winner traditionally drink in Victory Lane?

Answer: Milk

Louis Meyer started it after his third win, in 1936, by drinking buttermilk, which his mother told him would refresh him on a hot day. In 1993 Emerson Fittipaldi, who owned orange groves in Brazil, drank orange juice instead, and fans booed him.

269. What sport did astronaut Alan Shepard play on the moon in 1971?

Answer: Golf

On Apollo 14 in February 1971, Shepard fixed a Wilson six-iron head to the handle of a sample-collecting tool and carried it in his spacesuit pocket. Swinging in a stiff spacesuit, he hit two golf balls and claimed the second went 'miles and miles.'

MEDIUM

270. What picnic game was an Olympic sport from 1900 to 1920?

Answer: Tug of war

It was part of track and field. In 1908 Britain entered three police teams and won all three medals. The Americans protested that the Liverpool Police team's boots were illegal. The protest was turned down, and the Americans were out of the event.

271. **What do NHL teams do to game pucks before using them?**

Answer: Freeze them

League protocol keeps game pucks in a cooler at ice level, at 14 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit. A frozen puck has less friction, so it slides farther and bounces less.

Once a puck thaws during play, it starts bouncing around.

272. **The Harlem Globetrotters were founded in what city?**

Answer: Chicago

Abe Saperstein's team was based in Chicago from 1926 and played its first road game in Hinckley, Illinois, in January 1927. Harlem, then the center of Black American culture, told crowds the players were Black. The team didn't play a game in Harlem until 1968.

273. **Red Wings fans throw octopuses on the ice. What do the eight arms stand for?**

Answer: The eight playoff wins once needed to win the Stanley Cup

Brothers Pete and Jerry Cusimano, shop owners at Detroit's Eastern Market, threw the first one at Olympia Stadium in 1952. In the six-team NHL of the day, eight playoff wins took the Cup.

Detroit won it that spring, so the octopus stayed.

274. **Before every MLB game, brand-new baseballs are rubbed with what?**

Answer: Mud (Lena Blackburne Baseball Rubbing Mud, from New Jersey)

New balls are too slick to grip, and the rules say the gloss has to come off. Since the 1930s the majors have used mud that baseball man Lena Blackburne found near a branch of the Delaware River in southern New Jersey.

The exact spot is still kept secret.

275. **The Dodgers' name is short for what longer Brooklyn nickname?**

Answer: The Trolley Dodgers

In the 1890s, electric trolley tracks were laid in front of Brooklyn's ballpark, and fans had to dodge the streetcars to get to games. They became known as Trolley Dodgers, and the team took the name.

It was later shortened, and it survived the move to Los Angeles.

276. **The first runner across the line in the 1904 Olympic marathon cheated how?**

Answer: He rode in a car (for about 10 miles)

Fred Lorz quit around mile nine, rode in a car, and jogged the rest of the way when it broke down at mile 19. He was found out.

The real winner, Thomas Hicks, was kept going by trainers who gave him egg whites, brandy and strychnine, which is rat poison.

277. **Florida Panthers fans throw what onto the ice to celebrate?**

Answer: Rubber rats (accept plastic rats)

Before a game in October 1995, a rat ran across the Panthers' locker room and Scott Mellanby one-timed it into the wall with his stick. He then scored two goals with the same stick.

Goalie John Vanbiesbrouck called it a 'rat trick'. Within weeks, fans were throwing rubber rats.

278. **In what Pennsylvania town did Wilt Chamberlain score 100 points in an NBA game?**

Answer: Hershey

On March 2, 1962, Chamberlain's Philadelphia Warriors played the New York Knicks at the Hershey Sports Arena before 4,124 fans. The game wasn't on TV, and only part of the radio call survives. The famous '100' photo shows a sign written by hand in the locker room after the game.

279. Which jewelry company makes the Super Bowl's Lombardi Trophy?

Answer: Tiffany & Co.

Tiffany has made it every year since the first Super Bowl, a new one each time, because the winner keeps it. It's sterling silver, nearly 2 feet tall and 7 pounds. The NFL named it for coach Vince Lombardi after his death in 1970.

HARD

280. Who found soccer's World Cup trophy after it was stolen in London in 1966?

Answer: A dog named Pickles (accept a dog)

The trophy was stolen from a stamp exhibition in Westminster in March 1966, four months before England hosted the tournament. A week later, a collie named Pickles sniffed out a newspaper-wrapped package beside a parked car in south London. His owner collected the reward, and Pickles got a silver medal.

281. What number was on the back of 3-foot-7 Eddie Gaedel's St. Louis Browns jersey?

Answer: 1/8

Browns owner Bill Veeck sent Gaedel up as a pinch hitter on August 19, 1951. Crouched at the plate he had a tiny strike zone, and Detroit's Bob Cain threw four straight balls.

At 65 pounds, Gaedel is the smallest man ever to play in a major league game.

282. The founder of the modern Olympics won an Olympic gold medal. In what event?

Answer: Literature (for his poem "Ode to Sport")

Pierre de Coubertin entered the 1912 Stockholm Games' literature contest under two made-up names, Georges Hohrod and Martin Eschbach, and took the gold.

From 1912 to 1948 the Olympics gave medals for literature, painting, sculpture, music and architecture. Officials dropped the arts events after the 1948 London Games.

283. Basketball's inventor, James Naismith, coached at Kansas. What is odd about his record?

Answer: It's the only losing record of any Kansas men's basketball coach (55-60)

Naismith coached the Jayhawks from 1898 to 1907 and went 55-60. Every head coach since has a winning record there, starting with Phog Allen, who took over the team in 1907 while still a student.

284. A round of golf has 18 holes because of a 1764 change at which course?

Answer: The Old Course at St Andrews (accept St Andrews)

The Old Course in Scotland once had 22 holes. On October 4, 1764, its golfers cut the round to 18, and as other courses copied St Andrews, 18 became the standard around the world.

285. The marathon's odd 26.2-mile length was set at which Olympic Games?

Answer: The 1908 London Olympics

The course ran from Windsor Castle to the stadium and finished in front of the royal box, which came to 26 miles, 385 yards. That distance became the official standard in 1921. Earlier Olympic marathons were about 25 miles.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

286. How many games did pitcher Cy Young win in his career?

Answer: 511

That is almost 100 more than any other pitcher in history. He also lost more games than anyone else. His nickname was short for 'Cyclone', and since 1956 the award for the best pitcher has carried his name.

WEIRD TRIVIA QUESTIONS

True stories that sound like they can't be. Save this round for when the room gets loud.

EASY

287. **For about 20 years, the honorary mayor of Talkeetna, Alaska, was what?**

Answer: A cat (named Stubbs)

Talkeetna isn't an incorporated town, so it has no real mayor, and the title went to a cat who hung around Nagley's Store. Legend says he won a write-in election.

Stubbs died in 2017, aged 20. Another cat took over.

288. **Around 1925, con man Victor Lustig sold which landmark to a scrap metal dealer?**

Answer: The Eiffel Tower

Posing as a high-ranking government official, Lustig held a fake auction for the tower's metal. Dealer André Poisson paid and was too embarrassed to press charges.

Since nobody reported him, Lustig went back to Paris and tried the same trick again.

289. **What did the doctor who performed Albert Einstein's autopsy in 1955 keep?**

Answer: Einstein's brain

Pathologist Thomas Harvey had no permission to take it. He had it cut into more than 200 blocks and kept much of it in jars in his basement, and later in a cider box under a beer cooler.

He donated what was left in Princeton in the 1990s.

290. **In the 1940s, a Colorado rooster named Mike lived 18 months without what?**

Answer: His head

In 1945 farmer Lloyd Olsen's ax took off most of Mike's head but left the part of the brain that ran breathing and digestion. Olsen fed him with a dropper straight into the esophagus and showed him at sideshows. Fruita, Colorado, now holds a yearly festival in his name.

291. **Thieves in Quebec stole about $18 million worth of what between 2011 and 2012?**

Answer: Maple syrup

Quebec keeps a strategic reserve of maple syrup in barrels. Over several months, thieves took nearly 6 million pounds, worth nearly 18 million Canadian dollars, and refilled the empty barrels with water. An inspector found it during a yearly check.

292. **In 1945, a Chicago tavern owner cursed the Cubs after they ejected his what?**

Answer: His goat (a billy goat named Murphy)

Billy Sianis bought two box-seat tickets for Game 4 of the 1945 World Series, one for his goat, Murphy, but ushers threw it out because it stank. He reportedly said the Cubs would never go to another World Series. They didn't win one until 2016, 71 years later.

MEDIUM

293. **In 1954, an Alabama woman napping on her couch was hit by what?**

Answer: A meteorite

The 8.5-pound rock crashed through Ann Hodges' roof in Sylacauga, bounced off her console radio and hit her hip, leaving a huge bruise. She is the first person on record known to be hurt by a meteorite.

Her landlady then claimed the rock belonged to her.

294. **Told he couldn't keep a dog at Cambridge, what did Lord Byron keep instead?**

Answer: A bear

Trinity College rules banned students from keeping dogs but said nothing about bears, so the poet kept a tame one in the early 1800s.

When people asked what should be done with it, Byron said it should sit for a fellowship.

295. **In 1970, how did Oregon road crews try to get rid of a dead whale?**

Answer: They blew it up (with half a ton of dynamite)

The 45-foot, eight-ton sperm whale washed up near Florence. Engineers expected small pieces that seagulls would clean up. Instead, chunks of blubber rained on the crowd, and one smashed the roof of a parked car.

296. **In 1986, Cleveland released nearly 1.5 million of what for charity?**

Answer: Balloons

Balloonfest '86 tried to set a world record and raise money for the United Way. Then wind and rain pushed the balloons down. They got in the way of a Coast Guard search for two missing boaters and shut a runway at Burke Lakefront Airport.

The city and organizers were hit with millions of dollars in claims.

297. **After parcel post began in 1913, what did some American parents send by mail?**

Answer: Their children

In 1913 an Ohio couple mailed their baby son to his grandmother for 15 cents in stamps. A year later an Idaho girl went by mail train to her grandparents for 53 cents. In 1914 the Postmaster General barred all human beings from the mail.

298. **The first hot air balloon passengers, in 1783, were a sheep, a duck and what?**

Answer: A rooster (accept chicken or cockerel)

Before risking people, the Montgolfier brothers sent the animals up at Versailles in front of Louis XVI. The balloon flew about 2 miles and came down roughly eight minutes later.

All three animals came down alive, though the rooster was reported to have broken a wing.

299. **What is strange about where nearly everyone in Whittier, Alaska, lives?**

Answer: Almost all of them live in one building (the 14-story Begich Towers)

Begich Towers also holds a post office, a police station, a church, a clinic and stores. The school is across the street, reached by an underground tunnel.

Apart from the sea, the only way into town is a long one-lane tunnel through the mountains, and it closes at night.

300. **In 1876, what fell from a clear sky onto a farm in Bath County, Kentucky?**

Answer: Chunks of meat

Mrs. Crouch was making soap in her yard when the pieces came down, most about 2 inches square. Two men tasted it and guessed mutton or venison. The best explanation is a flock of vultures. They throw up their meals to make themselves light enough to fly.

301. **Tsutomu Yamaguchi survived the Hiroshima atomic bomb. Where did he go next?**

Answer: Home to Nagasaki (just in time for the second bomb)

Yamaguchi was in Hiroshima on a business trip on August 6, 1945. He went back to his hometown of Nagasaki, which was bombed three days later.

In 2009, at 93, he became the first person officially certified as a survivor of both bombings.

302. **In 1980, an oil rig drilled into a Louisiana salt mine. What drained into it?**

Answer: A whole lake (Lake Peigneur)

A Texaco rig misjudged its position and pierced the salt mine under Lake Peigneur. The lake drained into the mine, pulling down the rig, 11 barges and trees. Every miner got out, and no one died. A canal flowed backward and refilled the lake over a waterfall about 150 feet tall.

303. **In 1859, San Francisco businessman Joshua Norton declared himself what?**

Answer: Emperor of the United States

After losing his fortune, Norton sent his proclamation to a city newspaper, which printed it. San Francisco played along for more than 20 years: shops took his homemade money, and he once decreed Congress abolished. When he died in 1880, about 10,000 people came to his funeral.

304. **In 2009, Stephen Hawking threw a party. When did he send the invitations?**

Answer: After the party (it was for time travelers)

He set out champagne at Cambridge University on June 28, 2009, and published the invitation only afterward, so only a time traveler could have come. Nobody did. Hawking called it experimental evidence that time travel isn't possible.

305. **What has been burning underneath Centralia, Pennsylvania, since 1962?**

Answer: A coal mine fire (accept coal)

The fire seems to have started when the town burned trash in its dump, an old mine pit, and it spread into the coal seams below. Smoke poured from sinkholes and cracked roads. Most residents were bought out, and the town even lost its ZIP code.

HARD

306. **The Henry Ford Museum displays a sealed test tube said to hold what?**

Answer: Thomas Edison's last breath (air from the room where he died)

When Edison died in 1931, his son Charles saw test tubes standing open by the bed and had the doctor seal them. He later gave one to Henry Ford, who idolized Edison.

Whether it holds his very last breath is anyone's guess.

307. **In 2002, a Minnesota boy received a U.S. patent for what?**

Answer: A method of swinging on a swing

Steven Olson's father, a patent agent, helped write it up. The method has you swing side to side by pulling first on one chain, then the other. Weeks later the patent office ordered a re-examination, and in 2003 it cancelled every claim.

308. **In 1923 jockey Frank Hayes won the only race of his career despite what problem?**

Answer: He was dead (a fatal heart attack in the saddle, most likely during the race)

Riding Sweet Kiss, a 20-1 long shot, at Belmont Park in New York on June 4, 1923, Hayes suffered a fatal heart attack in the saddle. The horse cleared the final fence and won anyway, and Hayes tumbled off after the finish line.

309. **Philosopher Jeremy Bentham's will said what should happen to his body?**

Answer: It should be preserved and put on display (accept displayed or stuffed)

After he died in 1832, his body was dissected as he asked, and his skeleton was dressed in his own clothes and seated as if deep in thought. He has been on show at University College London since 1850. His real head came out badly from the mummifying, so the body wears a wax one.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

310. How many times was park ranger Roy Sullivan struck by lightning, and survived?

Answer: 7

Sullivan worked at Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and was hit between 1942 and 1977. He lost a big toenail, his eyebrows were burned and his hair caught fire.

Guinness World Records gave him the title for most lightning strikes survived.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

For ages 6 to 9. Easy enough to answer, strange enough that the grown-ups learn something too.

EASY

311. **How many sides does a stop sign have?**

Answer: 8 (it's an octagon)

The first US stop sign went up in Detroit in 1915. For years after that, stop signs were yellow with black letters. They didn't switch to the red and white design you know until 1954.

312. **Glass is made mostly by melting what?**

Answer: Sand

Sand is mostly tiny bits of quartz, and heating it hot enough turns it into glass. Lightning can do the same thing by accident: when it hits a beach or desert, it can leave a hollow glass tube in the ground called a fulgurite.

313. **Peanuts don't grow on trees. Where do they grow?**

Answer: Underground (in the dirt)

A peanut plant flowers above the ground, then grows a stalk called a peg that pokes down into the soil. The peanut grows on the end of it, underground. Peanuts aren't really nuts either: they're beans, cousins of peas.

314. **Which nut gives Nutella its flavor?**

Answer: Hazelnuts

Nutella grew out of a hazelnut paste an Italian pastry chef, Pietro Ferrero, started making in 1946. Chocolate had become scarce and pricey during World War II, so he mixed in hazelnuts to stretch his cocoa. The name Nutella came in 1964.

315. **What kind of animal is Sonic, the fast blue video game hero?**

Answer: A hedgehog

Sonic's blue was picked to match Sega's own logo. He almost wasn't a hedgehog at all: one early idea was a rabbit that picked things up and threw them with its long ears, but the ears got in the way of the gameplay.

316. **What color is the blood inside your veins?**

Answer: Red (dark red, never blue)

Veins only look blue through your skin because of the way skin and light work together. Blood with less oxygen in it is a darker red, but it's still red. Some animals really do have blue blood, like octopuses.

317. **Scientists say one group of dinosaurs never died out. What are they today?**

Answer: Birds

Birds come from the same branch of dinosaurs as T. rex and Velociraptor, and many of those dinosaurs had feathers. So the next time a pigeon walks past you, you're looking at a living dinosaur.

318. **About once a week, a sloth climbs all the way down its tree. Why?**

Answer: To poop

A sloth's food can take up to a month to pass through its gut, so it only needs to go about once a week. Three-toed sloths even dig a little hole at the foot of the tree first, then climb slowly back up.

319. **Why are school buses painted yellow?**

Answer: Because yellow is the easiest color to see

In 1939, a professor named Frank Cyr gathered experts to set national standards for school buses, color included. School bus yellow sits right between the colors that trigger the eye's red and green sensors, so it's easy to spot, even out of the corner of your eye.

MEDIUM

320. Bamboo, the panda's favorite food, is actually a giant kind of what?

Answer: Grass

Some kinds of bamboo can grow up to 35 inches in a single day, making it the fastest-growing plant on Earth. Pandas need so much of it that they spend 12 to 14 hours a day eating.

321. What shape are a goat's pupils?

Answer: Rectangles (wide sideways bars)

Wide sideways pupils let goats spot attackers creeping up from the side while they eat. When a goat bends down to graze, its eyes roll in their sockets to keep those rectangles level with the ground.

322. An owl's eyes aren't round balls like yours. What shape are they?

Answer: Tubes (accept cylinders)

Tube-shaped eyes can't roll around in their sockets, so an owl turns its whole head instead, up to about 270 degrees. Special pools of blood near its head keep its brain and eyes supplied while it twists that far.

323. Which fuzzy Australian animal has fingerprints almost exactly like a person's?

Answer: The koala

Koala fingerprints have the same loops and swirls as ours, and even under a microscope they're hard to tell apart. Scientists think the ridges help koalas grip branches and feel which leaves are good to eat.

324. In his very first game, Donkey Kong, what was Mario's job?

Answer: A carpenter

In 1981 he was just called Jumpman, a carpenter on a construction site trying to rescue a woman from a giant ape. Shigeru Miyamoto said the building-site setting left no other choice of job. The plumber came later.

325. Minecraft's creeper came from a mistake while making which animal?

Answer: A pig

Minecraft's creator, Notch, mixed up the height and width values while making the pig, so it stood up tall instead of lying flat. That mistake became the creeper, colored green, probably as camouflage, the monster that sneaks up and blows up your builds.

326. Pencil 'lead' is made of the same stuff as which sparkly gem?

Answer: Diamond (both are carbon)

Pencils never had lead in them. The gray stuff is graphite mixed with clay. Graphite is a form of carbon, and diamonds are carbon too, just packed together in a different way. When graphite turned up in England in the 1500s, people thought it was a kind of lead, and the name stuck.

327. Pineapples don't grow on trees. What do they grow on?

Answer: A spiky, leafy plant (one pineapple per plant)

Each pineapple grows on a clump of long, sword-like leaves about 3 to 6 feet tall, and each plant makes just one fruit. That takes 18 months to almost three years. You can even grow your own by planting the leafy top of a store-bought pineapple.

328. At what time of day are you the tallest?

Answer: In the morning (right after you wake up)

The soft pads between the bones in your back squish down a little while you stand and walk around all day. At night, lying down, they puff back up. Most people are a bit taller when they wake up.

329. **A garden snail's tongue is covered in thousands of tiny what?**

Answer: Teeth

It's really a flexible band called a radula, and its thousands of teeth are so small you'd need a microscope to see them. It works like a rasp, scraping up tiny bits of food as the snail eats.

HARD

330. **On hot days, turkey vultures cool off by doing what on their own legs?**

Answer: Pooping on them (accept peeing)

Birds pee and poop through the same opening, so it comes out as one runny mix. As it dries on their legs, it cools them down, the way sweat cools you. Storks do the same thing.

331. **Frogs use what body part to help push food down their throats?**

Answer: Their eyeballs (their eyes)

When a frog swallows, its eyes sink down into its head and help push the food toward its throat. In one study, leopard frogs whose eyes couldn't help needed far more gulps to get a cricket down. So a frog that blinks as it eats is doing more than blinking.

332. **What color is the Sun, seen from space?**

Answer: White

The Sun gives off all the colors of light at once, and together they make white. Our air scatters some of the blue light away, so from the ground the Sun looks a little yellow. Please don't stare at it to check.

333. **Before rubber erasers, what food did people use to rub out pencil marks?**

Answer: Bread (balled-up bread)

Bread crumbs were the usual way to rub out pencil until 1770, when chemist Joseph Priestley pointed out that a lump of rubber did the job. The bits were called rubbers because they rubbed marks away, and erasers are still called rubbers in Britain.

334. **From high up in an airplane, what shape can a rainbow be?**

Answer: A full circle

A rainbow is really part of a circle, centered on the point directly opposite the Sun. From the ground we usually see less than half of it. From a plane or a tall building, with water droplets below you too, you can sometimes see the whole ring.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

335. **How many bones are in one human hand, counting the wrist?**

Answer: 27

There are 8 in the wrist, 5 in the palm and 14 in the fingers and thumb.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS FOR TWEENS

For ages 10 to 12: games, apps, science and the stuff they're learning at school right now.

EASY

336. In Minecraft, what block do you need to build a Nether portal?

Answer: Obsidian

Real obsidian is volcanic glass, and it can make cutting edges many times finer than even the best steel scalpels. Some doctors have used obsidian blades for delicate skin surgery, because the cuts do less damage to the tissue than steel.

337. Skateboarding began in 1950s California with athletes from which other sport?

Answer: Surfing (surfers)

When the waves were flat, California surfers fixed roller-skate wheels to wooden boards and rode the streets instead. Early skateboarding was even called sidewalk surfing. It became an Olympic sport at the Tokyo Games, held in 2021.

338. What makes up about three-quarters of your poop?

Answer: Water

About a third of the solid part is dead bacteria from your gut, and about a third is food your body couldn't digest, like fiber. The brown color comes from gut bacteria working on a pigment left over from old red blood cells.

339. Which Mexican salamander can regrow a lost leg, and even parts of its brain?

Answer: The axolotl

Axolotls can regrow legs and parts of their hearts and spinal cords without permanent scars, which is why scientists study them. In the wild, though, they live only in a few canals near Mexico City, and they're critically endangered.

340. Which game was still running on the Game Boy that survived a Gulf War bombing?

Answer: Tetris

The Game Boy was in a US Army barracks when it was bombed during the 1991 Gulf War. It came out heavily scorched, its buttons melted, but it still ran its Tetris cartridge. Nintendo displayed it in its New York store for years, then retired it to Nintendo of America's headquarters in 2023.

341. Bats find bugs in the dark by listening to the echoes of what?

Answer: Their own calls (accept squeaks, shouts, echolocation)

A bat shouts in sounds too high-pitched for people to hear, then listens for the echoes bouncing off its prey. Some bat calls are louder than a rock concert. Lucky for us, we can't hear any of it.

342. Only female mosquitoes bite. What do they need your blood for?

Answer: To make eggs

Male mosquitoes live on flower nectar and fruit juices, and their mouthparts aren't strong enough to pierce skin. A female needs a blood meal to make her eggs, so she seeks out people and animals to bite, and that's how mosquitoes can spread diseases.

343. Pokemon's creator, Satoshi Tajiri, got the idea from which childhood hobby?

Answer: Collecting bugs (insects)

Growing up in Tokyo, Tajiri collected insects so often that other kids called him Dr. Bug. He watched the woods near his home get paved over, and when he saw the Game Boy's link cable, he pictured bugs crawling from one Game Boy to the next.

MEDIUM

344. Why was the official ball at the 1970 World Cup black and white?

Answer: So it would show up on black-and-white TV

In 1970 many fans still watched on black-and-white TVs, and the ball's black and white pattern was designed to stand out on them. Adidas stitched it from 32 leather panels and called it the Telstar, for 'star of television.' That look became the classic soccer ball.

345. Basketball backboards were first added to stop whom from messing with shots?

Answer: Fans (spectators in the balcony)

In early gyms, baskets were often hung from balcony railings, so fans behind them could lean over and get in the way of shots. Teams were first told to put up a screen, and wooden backboards soon proved to work better.

346. The Zamboni was invented by a skating rink owner in which warm state?

Answer: California (near Los Angeles)

Frank Zamboni opened his Iceland Skating Rink south of Los Angeles in 1940. Smoothing the ice by hand took five workers about an hour and a half, so he spent years tinkering, and in 1949 he drove his Model A machine onto the ice.

347. For sea turtles, what decides whether an egg hatches a boy or a girl?

Answer: The temperature of the sand (the nest)

Warmer sand makes more females and cooler sand more males. That's why scientists worry about hotter beaches: one study found about 99 percent of young green turtles from the northern Great Barrier Reef were female.

348. When a shark bites a hagfish, what does the hagfish fill its mouth with?

Answer: Slime

In less than half a second, a hagfish can fill a predator's mouth and gills with slime. Underwater cameras caught sharks gagging and swimming away. Scientists think tying its body in a knot may help a hagfish wipe off its own slime.

349. Which smelly element gives farts and rotten eggs their stink?

Answer: Sulfur (in gases like hydrogen sulfide)

More than 99 percent of a fart is gas with no smell at all, like nitrogen, hydrogen and carbon dioxide. The stink comes from tiny traces of sulfur gases such as hydrogen sulfide. Eggs, meat and onions give gut bacteria more sulfur to work with.

350. Why can't you tickle yourself?

Answer: Your brain predicts the touch (it knows it's coming)

When you move your own hand, your brain, mainly a part called the cerebellum, predicts exactly what you'll feel and turns the feeling down. In experiments, adding a tiny delay between people's own movements and the touch made it feel tickly again.

351. Scientists found bottlenose dolphins use a special whistle as their what?

Answer: Their name (a signature whistle)

Each dolphin has its own signature whistle. In one study, wild dolphins answered when researchers played back copies of their own whistles, the way you'd turn around if someone called your name.

352. Louis Braille invented his reading system for blind people at what age?

Answer: 15

An accident with a leatherworking awl left Braille blind as a small child. At a school for blind children in Paris, he reworked 'night writing,' a dot code a French army officer had devised, and had the first version of his own system by 15.

353. **The six colors of the Olympic flag, counting white, were chosen to show what?**

Answer: That every country's flag had at least one of those colors

Pierre de Coubertin, who started the modern Olympics, designed it in 1913. He said blue, yellow, black, green and red on white could together show the colors of every nation's flag. The five linked rings stand for the continents united by the Games.

354. **Which ocean animal punches so fast it can crack aquarium glass?**

Answer: The mantis shrimp

The peacock mantis shrimp swings its club-shaped arms at about 50 mph, with the force of a rifle bullet. One called Tyson smashed through the quarter-inch-thick glass wall of his tank, and the big ones buckle crab armor as easily as aquarium glass.

HARD

355. **Nintendo's Kirby is named after a real man. What was his job?**

Answer: Lawyer (Nintendo's lawyer, John Kirby)

In the early 1980s, Universal Studios said Donkey Kong copied King Kong. Lawyer John Kirby defended Nintendo, and Nintendo won. Years later, Shigeru Miyamoto said the round pink hero's name was partly chosen because of the lawyer.

356. **The very first basketball game, in 1891, ended with what score?**

Answer: 1-0

James Naismith's students in Springfield, Massachusetts, played with a soccer ball and two peach baskets. Only one shot went in, from about 25 feet. The baskets still had bottoms, so someone had to fetch the ball out after every score.

357. **What turns your snot green when you have a cold?**

Answer: White blood cells (a green enzyme inside them)

When your body fights germs, it sends white blood cells called neutrophils into your nose. They make an enzyme with a green, iron-containing pigment, and that tints the snot. Snot can turn green with a virus too, and antibiotics don't work on viruses.

358. **Before they were Sour Patch Kids, the gummy candies were sold as what?**

Answer: Mars Men (little aliens)

The gummies started out in the 1970s as Mars Men, possibly a nod to that decade's space craze. By 1985 they had a new name, widely said to be borrowed from another craze of the time: Cabbage Patch Kids dolls.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

359. **How many double stitches hold together the cover of an official MLB baseball?**

Answer: 108

Every official ball is still sewn by hand, not by machine. The two figure-eight pieces of leather were horsehide until 1974 and have been cowhide since. Underneath sits a cork-and-rubber core wrapped in hundreds of yards of wool yarn.

ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A 5TH GRADER? QUESTIONS

These are the kinds of facts kids learn in elementary school. Kids against grown-ups works great, and the kids usually win.

EASY

360. **No calculator, no fingers: what is 7 times 8?**

Answer: 56

If that took you a second, there's an old trick: count 5, 6, 7, 8, as in 56 = 7 x 8. Common Core expects kids to know every one-digit times fact from memory by the end of third grade, so the third graders are judging you.

361. **In a fraction, what is the number on the bottom called?**

Answer: The denominator

The top number is the numerator. Denominator comes from the Latin for 'to name': it names what kind of pieces you have, like thirds or fifths, and the numerator counts how many of them you've got. Kids meet both words in third grade.

362. **What is the plural of moose?**

Answer: Moose (not meese)

One moose, two moose. Goose became geese because it's an Old English word, but moose only arrived in the early 1600s from an Algonquian language of New England (Massachusett moos), so it never picked up the trick. Second graders learn irregular plurals like this.

363. **How many justices sit on the US Supreme Court?**

Answer: Nine

The Constitution never sets the number. Congress does, by ordinary law. It started at six in 1789, went as high as ten in 1863, and has been nine since 1869. Fifth graders learn it when they study the three branches of government.

364. **Which founding document begins with the words 'We the People'?**

Answer: The US Constitution (its Preamble)

Plenty of grown-ups say the Declaration of Independence, which opens with 'When in the Course of human events.' The Constitution's Preamble is one sentence of 52 words. If you can still sing it, thank the 1970s Schoolhouse Rock song 'Preamble.'

365. **Which river forms the border between Texas and Mexico?**

Answer: The Rio Grande

In Mexico the same river is called the Río Bravo, or Río Bravo del Norte. Rio Grande already means 'big river' in Spanish, so 'the Rio Grande River' says river twice. It starts as a snow-fed stream more than 12,000 feet up in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

366. **What do you call a short poem with lines of five, seven and five syllables?**

Answer: A haiku

It's a Japanese form: 17 syllables in three lines of 5, 7 and 5. Traditional haiku describe a scene from nature and slip in a hint of the season, a habit handed down from the opening verse of longer Japanese poems.

367. **What do you call a comparison that uses the word 'like' or 'as'?**

Answer: A simile

'Slept like a log' is a simile. Drop the 'like' and you've got a metaphor: 'my boss is a bulldozer.' The word comes from the Latin similis, meaning 'like,' so a simile is named after the word it uses. Fifth graders are expected to tell the two apart.

368. **The US bought the Louisiana Territory in 1803 from which country?**

Answer: France

Napoleon sold about 828,000 square miles, some 530 million acres, for $15 million, under 3 cents an acre. The deal roughly doubled the size of the country. Spain had held the land until it handed it back to France just three years earlier, in 1800.

MEDIUM

369. **How many years does a US senator serve in one term?**

Answer: Six

Representatives get two years and the president four. Senate terms are staggered, so only about a third of the seats come up in any one election. The idea was a part of Congress that voters couldn't sweep out all at once.

370. **How many feet are in a mile?**

Answer: 5,280

Blame a mix of Roman and English measures. The Roman mile was 1,000 paces. The English mile was already eight furlongs, and a 1593 law under Queen Elizabeth I fixed the furlong, a farm measure, at 660 feet. Eight times 660 gives you 5,280. Fourth graders convert miles to feet.

371. **What five-letter word helps kids remember the names of the Great Lakes?**

Answer: HOMES (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior)

Each letter starts one lake. Of the five, Lake Michigan is the only one entirely inside the United States; the other four share a border with Canada. Bonus points if anyone at the table names all five without counting on their fingers.

372. **What do you call an angle bigger than 90 degrees but smaller than 180?**

Answer: Obtuse (an obtuse angle)

Smaller than 90 is acute, and exactly 90 is a right angle. Obtuse comes from the Latin for 'blunted' or 'dulled,' which is why calling a person obtuse means they're slow to catch on. Fourth graders sort angles into all three.

373. **What number does the Roman numeral L stand for?**

Answer: 50

It's the numeral the NFL wouldn't use. The 2016 game was billed as Super Bowl 50, not Super Bowl L, because designers couldn't make a lone L look good on a logo. The Roman numerals came back the next year for Super Bowl LI.

374. **In math, what is the answer to a division problem called?**

Answer: The quotient

The number being divided is the dividend, and the one doing the dividing is the divisor. Quotient comes from the Latin quotiens, 'how many times,' which is exactly the question division asks. Most kids know all three words by fourth grade.

375. **What is the capital of Kentucky?**

Answer: Frankfort

Not Louisville or Lexington, the two big cities people blurt out. The name is traced to Frank's Ford, a river crossing where a pioneer named Stephen Frank was killed in a 1780 skirmish. Frankfort has been the capital since 1792, the year Kentucky became a state.

376. **A monarch caterpillar turns into a butterfly inside what?**

Answer: A chrysalis (accept pupa; not a cocoon)

Cocoon is the usual blurt, but cocoons are silk wrappings spun by moths. A butterfly's chrysalis is no wrapping at all: it's the insect itself inside a hard outer shell. A monarch's is dotted with tiny specks of gold. Third graders study this life cycle.

377. **In Charlotte's Web, what are the first words Charlotte spins into her web?**

Answer: Some Pig

Later webs say Terrific, Radiant and Humble, all to keep Wilbur from becoming bacon. The book came out in 1952. Its author, E.B. White, is the White in 'Strunk and White,' the grammar guide The Elements of Style, so he took his word choices seriously.

378. **In the sentence 'Wow, that was fast,' what part of speech is 'wow'?**

Answer: An interjection

Interjections are the little bursts of feeling: wow, ouch, hey, oops. If a tune just started in your head, that's 'Interjections!', the Schoolhouse Rock cartoon song sung by Essra Mohawk that stuck with a whole generation of kids.

379. **Earth has seasons mainly because of what?**

Answer: The tilt of its axis (about 23.5 degrees)

Not its distance from the sun. Earth is actually closest to the sun in early January, the middle of winter in the Northern Hemisphere. The tilt decides how directly sunlight hits you and how long your days are. This one is on the fifth-grade science list.

380. **Dry ice turns straight from a solid into a gas. What is that change called?**

Answer: Sublimation

It's why dry ice never leaves a puddle. Dry ice is frozen carbon dioxide, and it sublimates at about 109 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. Snow and ice can do it too, turning straight into water vapor, which is how snowbanks can shrink without melting.

HARD

381. **Name the four states that meet at the Four Corners.**

Answer: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah (all four needed)

It's the only spot in the country where four states touch. The monument is run by the Navajo Nation, and three of its four corners sit on Navajo land. Expect a line of people sprawled across all four states for a photo. Kids learn it with the regions of the US in fourth or fifth grade.

382. **What is the capital of South Dakota?**

Answer: Pierre

Not Sioux Falls, the biggest city. Bonus points for saying it right: locals say 'peer,' not the French 'pee-AIR.' It's named after fur trader Pierre Chouteau Jr., and it sits on the Missouri River across from the older town of Fort Pierre.

383. **What is the longest river in the United States?**

Answer: The Missouri River

Almost everyone says the Mississippi. The US Geological Survey puts the Missouri at about 2,540 miles and the Mississippi at about 2,340. The Missouri starts in the Rocky Mountains of Montana and joins the Mississippi just north of St. Louis.

384. **Which mineral is the softest on the Mohs hardness scale?**

Answer: Talc

Talc is a 1 and diamond is a 10. Talc is so soft you can scratch it with a fingernail, and it feels greasy. Ground into powder, it's the talc in talcum powder. Fourth graders test rocks and minerals for hardness, often with a penny and a nail.

385. **Who was president during the War of 1812?**

Answer: James Madison

When British troops marched on Washington in August 1814, Dolley Madison wouldn't leave the White House until a big portrait of George Washington was taken down and carried off. The British arrived, ate the dinner left on the table and set the house on fire.

386. **Where does most of the material in a tree's wood come from?**

Answer: The air (carbon dioxide)

Not the soil. In the 1600s, Jan van Helmont grew a 5-pound willow in a pot for five years. The tree gained about 164 pounds; the soil lost about 2 ounces. Plants build themselves mostly from carbon they pull out of the air, using sunlight and water. It's on the fifth-grade science standards.

TIEBREAKER: CLOSEST NUMBER WINS

387. **How many amendments does the US Constitution have?**

Answer: 27

The first ten, the Bill of Rights, were ratified in 1791. The newest, the 27th, delays any pay raise Congress votes itself until after the next election. It was proposed in 1789 and not ratified until 1992, 202 years later.

FINAL WAGER QUESTIONS

Save one of these for the end. Teams bet before they hear the question, so a team in last place can still win.

MEDIUM

388. **The Hundred Years' War between England and France lasted how many years?**

Answer: 116 (1337 to 1453)

Not 100. It ran from 1337 to 1453, and it wasn't one long fight but an on-and-off struggle over a string of disputes, with long pauses in between. Joan of Arc fought in it, near the end of its first century.

389. **When the Eiffel Tower opened in 1889, how many years was it supposed to stand?**

Answer: 20 years

Gustave Eiffel had only a 20-year permit for the land, after which Paris could take the tower down. Eiffel saved it by finding it a scientific job: an antenna for the new wireless telegraph, which the French military found too useful to lose.

390. **Which US president was the first to throw out a ceremonial first pitch on baseball's Opening Day?**

Answer: William Howard Taft (in 1910)

On April 14, 1910, in Washington, Taft threw the ball from his front-row seat to Senators pitcher Walter Johnson, who went on to throw a one-hitter that afternoon. It was the first time a president had thrown out a ceremonial first pitch.

HARD

391. **Spelled out in English, which counting number has all its letters in alphabetical order?**

Answer: Forty

F, O, R, T, Y: each letter comes later in the alphabet than the one before. Four would work if not for the U. For a bonus, 'one' does the opposite: its letters run in reverse alphabetical order.

392. **More than half the bones in an adult's body are in which two places?**

Answer: The hands and feet

An adult has 206 bones, and 106 of them are in the hands and feet: 27 in each hand and wrist, 26 in each foot and ankle. All those small bones are what let you thread a needle and keep your balance on uneven ground.

TEAM ANSWER SHEET

One sheet for each team, every round. Write the question's number, then the answer. A final wager round: write the points you bet before the question is read.

Team name: _____

Round: _____

No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____
No. _____	No. _____

ROUND SCORE ☐ **TOTAL SO FAR** ☐