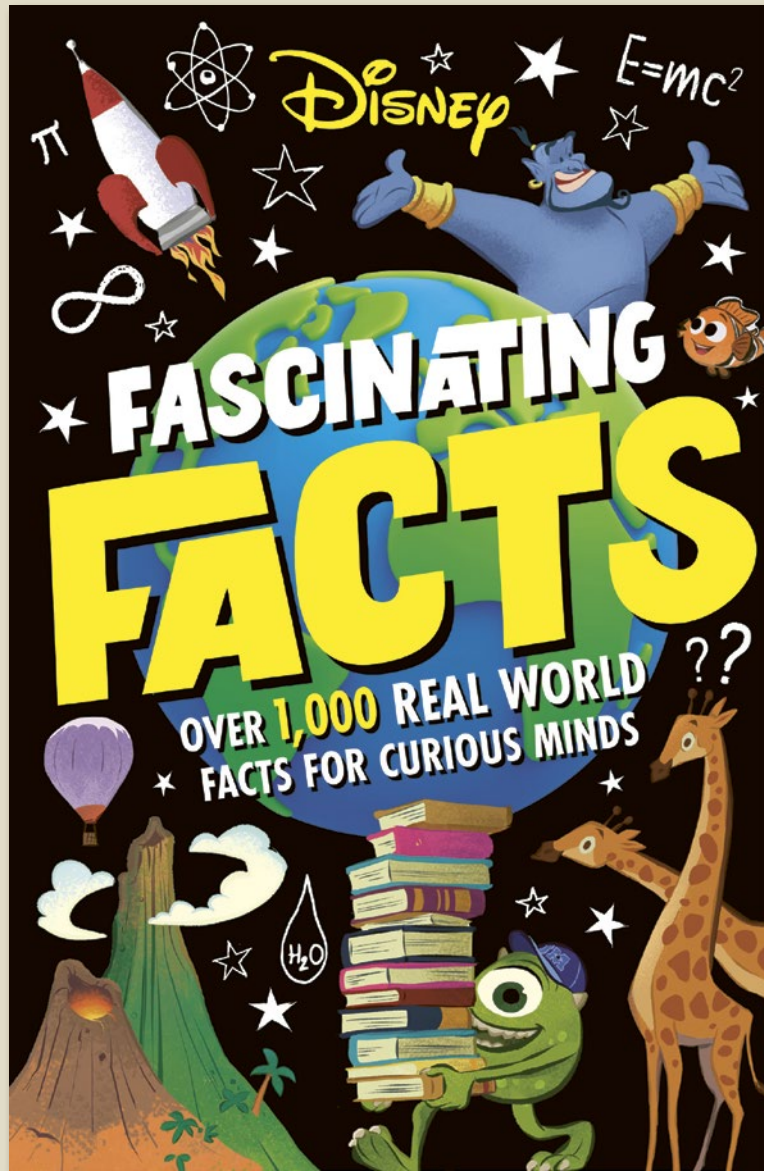


# Disney Fascinating Facts



**Over 1,000 real-world facts to entertain all ages!**

- Cover: gloss lam.
- Features facts about plants, the oceans, animals, the environment, the night sky, insects, literature, art, theatre, music, fashion, general history, Greek myths and legends, Mayan and Aztec history, Arthurian legend, space, robotics, chemistry, biology, physics, inventions, things that go, toys and games, sport, adventure and exploration, the continents and much more.

# Disney Fascinating Facts

## THE ARTS: LITERATURE

The first book that combined words and pictures, and was read to children, was *Picture Book*, from as far back as the 15th century.

Samuel Pepys was an inhabitant of London in the 17th century who has a famous diary. He was the first to use the word 'diary' and he recorded the French air force when he was in Paris in 1665. His personal accounts of the Great Fire of London and the Plague helped historians understand the events of the period.

Beatrix Potter first wrote an illustrated story about her little rabbit to cheer up a friend's child while he was recovering from a bout of scarlet fever. She went from writing letters to him for many years until she published *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*.

The fastest-selling book in history is *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, which was the last book in the series. It sold over 8.1 million copies on its first day and went on to sell more than 50 million copies that spread across the world in over 60 languages.



Queen Elizabeth became famous for being the illustrator on the books of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. She has been the artist on over 100 books. More recently her illustrated books for Disney characters, such as *George and the Magic Beans*.

The album of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* isn't meant to be Peter Pan himself! It was meant to be Peter Pan himself! It started as a play before it was turned into a novel. But the stage crew needed more to change sets, so a pirate scene was added in between scenes and that became the hit song.

Aladdin's One Thousand and One Nights wasn't actually from the Middle East. The story begins with the words 'Middle was a little Chinese boy, although the collection of stories does have lots of influences from the Middle East.

Ms. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* came from a game of office equipment! Creator Eric Carter was playing around with a hole-punch and a stack of paper when he had the idea for the story about the insect with a big appetite.

A.A. Milne, the author of *Winnie the Pooh*, was taught by another famous author named E.B. White, who wrote *The Wind in the Willows*. However, at that time White wasn't a published author and was teaching a middle class.

The *Walt Disney* magazine was a big hit. It was on top of its head filled with tales. Scientists think that it was these tales that really had a hand in convincing us with other members of its group.

The spiky plates on the back of a Stegosaurus are still a mystery to scientists today. They could measure up to 50 centimetres, but nobody is sure what they did - some think they were used to cool the Stegosaurus down, while others think they were used to scare away predators.

The biggest difference between the size of a dinosaur and the size of its brain is found in the Stegosaurus. These herbivores were the size of a cow, but their brain was comparatively tiny - about the size of a loaf!

If you thought swimming in the sea was scary, you give thanks to the shark called the Megalodon! The biggest fish on the sea was a relative of a shark called the Megalodon which measured more than three times the size of today's sharks.



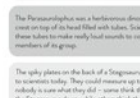
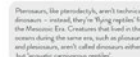
## HISTORY: THE PREHISTORIC AGE

Paleontologists - the scientists who study dinosaurs - often make mistakes when putting dinosaur fossils together. In the 19th century, one of them put the skull of an iguanodon on the tail of a stegosaurus, while another connected the head of an Elasmobranch to the end of its tail.

We're now really sceptical that dinosaurs weren't just the giant lumpy things that we commonly think of - they were more likely covered in feathers! Some could even fly for short bursts, but others could flap for months, or even to fly!

We're finding more dinosaur fossils now than ever before, at an average of one new species per week. Sometimes the fossils found by paleontologists change what we think we already knew about dinosaurs like the T-Rex.

By the time 'paleontologist' was named the planet, the Stegosaurus was already a fossil. Though we often see the most famous dinosaurs together in fiction, the Stegosaurus had been extinct for millions of years!



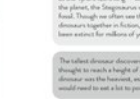
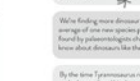
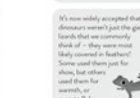
## HISTORY: THE PREHISTORIC AGE

The rain on Venus is the most acidic in the solar system. It's made of sulphuric acid. The temperature on Venus is so hot that it can melt metals, turning them into gases, which then cool as they get higher up in the atmosphere and fall as scorching hot liquids.

The first person to space was a Russian called Yuri Gagarin. He reached space on 27 April 1961, leaving the American Alan Shepard, who arrived on 5 May in the same year, by two weeks!

The estimated size of the Milky Way galaxy is 100,000 light years across. It would take light over 100,000 years to reach one end from another. With our current technology, it would take us 27,000 million years to travel across that distance.

The same side of the Moon is always facing Earth. We've never seen the 'back' of the Moon because the moon spins at precisely the same speed as it orbits the planet, which is a phenomenon called tidal locking, or synchronous rotation.



## SCIENCE: SPACE

The lower gravity on the Moon has a surprising effect on astronauts. When they're on the satellite, the dots of their space suits under the mission pressure, which can make them up to 5 centimetres taller.

The fingerprints of the first man on the Moon are still there today. There's no atmosphere on the Moon, so there's no wind to blow them away, which means they're still there today and will be for millions of years, unless someone sweeps over them!

A mechanical phenomenon known as 'tidal locking' occurs in space when two metals touch. Because there's no air or atmosphere around the pieces of metal, the molecules don't know that they're separate pieces and join together, without realising to be melted like they would on Earth.

You might be able to see a giant red spot on images of Jupiter - it's a giant storm that's been raging for years, but it's shrinking. When it was first observed in the 17th century, it was the size of three Earths, but now it's only the size of one.



## SCIENCE: SPACE

Scientists have observed that our galaxy, the Milky Way, is spiral-shaped, but it isn't the first one we observed. That honour belongs to the Whirlpool Galaxy, sometimes called M51. The M stands for Messier, as the first person to spot it was Charles Messier, way back in 1773.

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## NATURE: ANIMALS



Most fish have some sort of skeleton, but a shark doesn't have any bones at all. Its whole skeleton is made of cartilage. This means sharks are very flexible and can twist themselves quickly to catch speedy prey.

Flying squirrels have flaps of skin that stretch from their front to rear paws. A flying squirrel can jump from a tall tree, then spread its legs wide to create air resistance as it falls. This force slows the squirrel down so that it glides instead of falling.

Earth's fastest land animal is the cheetah. It can run at bursts of 114 km/h, while the speediest creature in the sea is the sailfish. This super swimmer can reach speeds of 110 km/h.

Some animals can walk on water! Lizards called basilisks can run for about 4.6 metres before sinking under water. Birds called western grebes also run on water during take-off. A combination of speed, webbed feet, and surface tension makes this feat possible.

An animal called the pistol shrimp has a built-in blaster. This little critter has one huge claw that it can snap with incredible force. The snap makes a blast of sound and heat strong enough to stun other animals. Syndrome from *The Incredibles* would be proud!



There are very few native land mammals in the Pacific Islands. In Fiji, the only native land mammals are bats. But what about Pue and Heihei from *Moana*? Pigs and chickens were brought to the Pacific Islands thousands of years ago.

## NATURE: ANIMALS

Some types of flea can jump up to 200 times the length of their body! They have a powerful springy protein that they squeeze when their legs fold, ready to jump. When they stop squeezing it, the protein creates explosive energy that makes the legs spring forward powerfully.



As well as reaching speeds of up to 96 km/h, the hummingbird is known for another fast feat. The tiniest species can flap their wings at a rate of 80 beats a second, or 4,800 times in one minute. And that's not all - their hearts can beat 1,200 times per minute too.

You might think that flamingos are pink, but those feathers are actually dyed. They eat a diet of blue-green algae and brine shrimp that contains a dye called carotenanthin, which gives their feathers their pink colour.

Many animals have natural armour. The pangolin, for instance, is covered with hard, overlapping scales, while crocodiles are covered with bony knobs. Crabs and many other creatures have exoskeletons - where they wear their skeletons on the outside to protect the soft organs inside.



Lots of animals live in the harsh tundras of Earth. These include owls, foxes, wolves and reindeer. Foxes and reindeer have thick fur that protects them from the cold. Arctic wolves have fur on their paws that give them a better grip on the icy ground. Some animals, like huskies, even help people get around! These dogs are very strong and can pull sleds for a long time.



What do you think the world's deadliest animal is? The surprising answer is the mosquito. This annoying insect kills over 700,000 people a year by spreading diseases, such as malaria and yellow fever, when they bite.