

J. R. R. Tolkien was rejected for a Nobel Prize in Literature on the grounds of his 'poor storytelling'.

In America, anyone can become president. That's the problem. GEORGE CARLIN (1937-2008)

Without bats there would be no tequila. It's made from the agave plant, which is pollinated by bats.

Corn, avocados, cucumbers, peas, beans and peppers are fruits, not vegetables.

Society is like a stew. If you don't keep it stirred up you get a lot of scum on the top. EDWARD ABBEY (1927-89)

Falling in love costs you, on average, two close friends.

Japan has twice as many bank holidays as the UK, including 'Greenery Day' and 'Respect for the Aged Day'.

Our little toes were much stronger before shoes became widespread

A 'singlewoman' was medieval slang for a prostitute.

Grapples are apples that taste like grapes.

Rhino horn is worth more than its weight in gold or heroin.

Rosa whitfield is a rose named after actress June Whitfield. As she pointed out, 'The catalogue describes it as "superb for bedding, best up against a wall".'

Hateful to me as the gates of Hades is that man who hides one thing in his heart and speaks another. HOMER (THE ILIAD)

Brian Eno composed the Windows 95 startup music on a Mac. "I've never used a PC in my life; I don't like them."

When Menelik II, emperor of Ethiopia, felt unwell, he would eat a few pages of the Bible.

Fish in polluted lakes lose their sense of smell.

NASA has its own radio station called Third Rock Radio, bringing you the latest in 'new rock discoveries' interspersed with NASA news updates.

It is impossible to hum while holding your nose.

Sob Lake in Canada began life as 'Son of a Bitch Lake'. It was named after a trapper who had a log cabin on its shore.

Chinese Checkers was invented in Germany.

Female sharks can store sperm in their bodies for four years before using it.

If the San Francisco Bay Area was a country, it would have the 16th largest GDP in the world.

'If a man has no tea in him, he is incapable of understanding truth and beauty.' JAPANESE PROVERB

Pearls need the warmth and moisture of human contact to remain in top condition – put in a bank vault they will turn yellow and dry.

The diamond ring as engagement gift only dates back to the mid-1930s when diamond merchant De Beers launched targeted ad campaigns.

The redder the ruby the more it costs: the most valuable are called 'pigeon blood'.

Sapphires can be green, orange and pink as well as blue.

Rubies and sapphires are both made from the same chemical compound (aluminium oxide).

One in four Americans do not know what country the US declared independence from.

In 1972, the CBC held a contest to complete the sentence "as Canadian as _____". The winning entry was "as Canadian as possible under the circumstances".

If you need another reason to avoid decaf: the Hitler Youth recommended that its members only drink decaf.