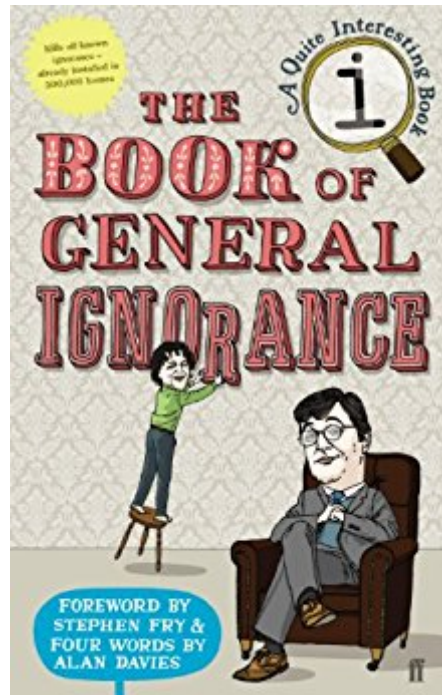


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QI: The Pocket Book Of General Ignorance



Synopsis

QI: The Pocket Book of General Ignorance is an illuminating collection of fun facts, perfect for general knowledge, trivia and pub quiz enthusiasts. This number-one bestseller is a comprehensive catalogue of all the interesting misconceptions, mistakes and misunderstandings in 'common knowledge' that will make you wonder why anyone bothers going to school. Now available in this handy pocket-sized edition, carry it everywhere to impress your friends, frustrate your enemies and win every argument. Henry VIII had six wives. WRONG! Everest is the highest mountain in the world. WRONG! Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. WRONG! QI: The Pocket Book of General Ignorance is the essential set text for everyone who's proud to admit that they don't know everything, and an ideal sack of interesting facts with which to beat people who think they do. Perfect for trivia, pub quiz and general knowledge enthusiasts, this is a number-one bestseller from the authors of The Book of General Ignorance and 1,277 Facts To Blow Your Socks Off, packed with weird, wonderful and really quite interesting facts.

Book Information

File Size: 1603 KB

Print Length: 320 pages

Publisher: Faber & Faber; Main edition (September 4, 2008)

Publication Date: September 4, 2008

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0571241395

ISBN-13: 978-0571241392

ASIN: B002RI91OY

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #363,152 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #23

inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Humor & Entertainment > Television > Reference #58

inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Humor & Entertainment > Puzzles & Games > Trivia #59

inÂ Books > Reference > Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Humor

Customer Reviews

The Book of General Ignorance by John Lloyd and John Mitchinson is a remarkably fun book to read, essentially a collection of questions followed by an essay answer for each one, not organized really into any significant way (though questions dealing with the same subject might follow one another). This book would be fun for any lovers of trivia and deal often with questions that people think they might know the answer to but really don't. What's the tallest mountain in the world? Think you know right, Mount Everest, at 29,029 feet? Nope, it is Mauna Kea. Though it is a modest 13,799 above sea level, measured from its seabed base to its summit, it is a whopping 33,465 feet in height, almost three-quarters of a mile higher than Mount Everest. What's the driest place in the world? The Sahara right? It is dry alright, getting just one inch of rain a year but it is the third driest place on Earth. The driest in fact is Antarctica, as some areas of the continent have not seen rain for two million years. The second driest is the Atacama Desert in Chile, which averages 0.004 inch of rain a year, and some areas have not seen rain for four hundred years. You have been told that Eskimo is a rude term right, that the preferred term now is Inuit? True, Inuit is the preferred term in Canada, but Alaskan Eskimos are perfectly happy with the name as they "are emphatically not Inuit, a people who live mainly in northern Canada and parts of Greenland." In fact there are many types of Eskimo, of which the Inuit are just one type (the others include the Kalaallit of Greenland and the Yupiget and the Alutiit of Alaska). Think the first turkeys eaten by English-speaking peoples were the Pilgrims?

I was given a copy of this for my birthday two months ago, and have had it by my bedside ever since. It is by turns excellent, flawed, insightful, ignorant, pedantic, sanctimoniously smug and fascinating! Once you get past Stephen Fry's cringeworthy introduction; not his best piece of work although admittedly Fry's less-than-best is still better than most, you are left with a series of questions to which the authors anticipate you will guess an answer that they gleefully reveal as "wrong". This has been a staple of pub quizzes and history teachers' trick questions through the ages of course, and consequently all the usual suspects are here; Mauna Kea gets a mention, so does Nelson's "Kismet", the Irishness of the Duke of Wellington, Richard ap Meryk (here as Richard Ameryk) and Antarctica (as the driest place on earth - which depends entirely on whether you regard frozen water as still water or not) Occasionally, the pedantry rebounds on the authors. They observe there are more tigers in the USA than any other country, which is true because they are commonly seen in zoos and private menageries. But elsewhere they tell us that there are no buffalo in North America, which isn't true at all (I saw one earlier this month in a local safari park). Either

zoos count or they don't. Pedantry, to be effective, has to be uniformly applied, And people who claim that coffee beans are not really beans do not understand how language works. A computer mouse isn't a real mouse either. Occasionally, the book gets caught out by the changing times. At time of writing a chihuahua is back again as the world's smallest dog, and the authors admit that the number of states of matter is an evolving number.

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