



Do Fish Drink Water?: Puzzling and Improbable Questions and Answers

Bill McLain

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Is it true that elephants are afraid of mice?

How much gold does the United States store in Fort Knox?

Why do I get a headache when I eat ice cream too fast?

How did the "seventh inning stretch" originate?

As the official webmaster for Xerox, Bill McLain was surprised by the kinds of questions he was receiving, like whether people born blind can see in their dreams and why rabbits are associated with Easter. McLain began to answer each and every question--attracting national attention from MSNBC, CNN, and *People*--and the result, collected in *Do Fish Drink Water?*, is a surprising, funny, and informative collection of facts. McLain's answers can often be as wild as the questions and prompt entertaining anecdotes about where he found them. McLain explains how magnets are made, what caused the Great Depression of 1922, and even explains why cats purr. Also included is an extensive list of websites where he conducts research, offering an informative guide to making the most of the Internet.

Do Fish Drink Water?: Puzzling and Improbable Questions and Answers Details

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Author : Bill McLain

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From Reader Review Do Fish Drink Water?: Puzzling and Improbable Questions and Answers for online ebook

Joel the goat says

11/4/11

60

I learned while reading that fish dont drink water at all. They gain water through osmosis the water will seep into them. Basiclly the water goes through little holes in there body to recive water. I just wonder if they will do like a question about shoes, but thats just me being me and what i want to see. So i think the author just wrote this book to answer hard questions.

11/7/11

100

so while reading I came across some good questions and questions I already knew. One that I already knew was, "Is it true that at one time the entire world consisted of a single continent? (If that was true today, you could drive all the way around the world in your car.) It stated that millions of years ago scientist say that it was and called pangea. (Greek for all earth.) Which means yes that you can drive around the world but it would still take very long.

Christopher says

Don't let the quirky title of this trivia book fool you. This is not a very interesting read. Typically, I find that the most interesting trivia books are the ones that either ask really off the wall questions or those that have some kind of game component to it. This book tries to be the former and fails quite miserably at it. Practically none of the questions are all that quirky or funny, nor does Mr. McLain's writing make the answers interesting or funny. This is a book of straight up useless information. Not only that, but having been written 10 years ago, this book also has many inaccuracies (ex. the Titanic was sunk by a 200 foot gash in the hull rather than the currently accepted "morse code" hull punctures). Still, there are some interesting nuggets of information that you can throw around at your local cocktail party. However, there are probably more interesting, and more up-to-date, trivia books on the market.

Tony says

DO FISH DRINK WATER? (1999). Bill McLain. ***1/2.

At the time he wrote this book, the author was the Webmaster for Xerox. He got the occasional question from their customers who were looking for information. Soon, word got out: he became the go-to person for answers to weird questions. This book is a collection of many of the questions and the answers he subsequently gave back to his customers. There are lots of stumpers here, but McLain comes through with flying colors on most of them. For example: "How did each of the continents get its name?," "What makes the sound when you snap your fingers?," and – also the title question, "Do fish drink water." Many of the answers will astound you, some are available to those who choose to use the internet as their online encyclopedia. They are all fun and well explained. This would certainly be a great book as a gift for young adults, too. It ought to satisfy their curiosity on a number of things – plus, of course, young adults are more

curious than us older folks.

Allison says

Lighthearted fun, good to read out-loud to someone for a laugh. The facts are educational but told in a entertaining way. The book also contains internet resources for further information. I would rather those pages have been used for a couple more "improbable questions". I mean, if someone is reading a book, they probably want the answers delivered in that format instead of doing more research through another medium. But, overall, a fun book. Would make a cute gift :)

Jenna says

A great book for lovers of random trivia! Although this book was written in 1999, the factoids are almost all still accurate even if the Web links are outdated. A must for team trivia lovers!

Paul says

This is a bizarre piece of history--a trivia book based on Internet Searches before Google became popular and before Wikipedia existed.

As such, the author gets certain pieces wrong, sometimes providing incorrect answers & perpetuating urban legends.

Had some fun nuggets for sure, but there are much better examples out there.

Nathan says

The author claims that this book contains the answers to a variety of trivia questions that he has been asked over the course of his career.

However, he hasn't made the effort of actually providing correct answers. Sometimes he repeats urban legends as facts, other times he makes claims that are both ludicrously untrue and easily checkable. (E.g. the German word "Gesundheit" is not "German for 'God bless you,'" which he claims on p. 109. Any first-year student of the language would have told him it means "Good health.") His discussion of Valentine's Day also reads like an email forwarded on by an elderly relative.

I have no confidence in any of the claims that this book makes. Bill McLain has managed the impressive feat of writing a book inferior in every way to any random "Uncle John's Bathroom Reader."

There are a thousand good trivia books out there. This one is a worthless waste of time.

Mackenzie H says

"Do Fish Drink Water?" was a very interesting book. I needed another nonfiction book so Mrs. Morgan recommended this one to me. When she first handed me this book, I was very skeptical. She told me I would probably appreciate it in a odd kind of way. So I tried it. I am going to be honest, I actually liked the book. It was very informative in the way that if you ever needed to drop your trivia knowledge on somebody, you could. Or if it was a life or death situation where you needed to know what animal is commonly known to have a body the color of grape juice, you would be able to live. (In case you were wondering, it is the South African blesbok, a type of antelope.) There was a ton more facts that were surprisingly fascinating. There were some facts that I didn't have much interest in but all in all it was pretty engaging.

I would recommend this book to anyone who wants an easy read in the nonfiction genre.

Hana Anderson says

The book Do Fish Drink Water was wrote by Bill McLain. The genre of this non-fiction book is informational. The book has various different kinds of interesting facts on where pizza came from, on government, even to how dolphins sleep. You can learn many things from reading this book.

I believe the main point of this book is to teach people things they would not know, and to interest them with learning about the strange facts as well. The author put in very strange and weird facts, such as, that dolphins sleep by shutting down half of their brain to regenerate itself in order for it to look out for danger and breathe at the same time. He also put facts on clothing and other different subjects so people can possibly learn about a topic that appeals to them.

This book did not have a theme to it. It just had multiple facts on different topics.

I personally did not like this book, because its not my kind of reading style. Although it taught you a lot of things, it seems to me it was a bit ridiculous because the book taught you about things you will never need in every day life. It kind of bored a little, and it was slow through out the entire book with the exception of the ridiculously funny facts here and there. I would recomend this book to people who like to learn things just for knowing the facts.

Leonca says

In some ways hasn't aged well (theories on dog behavior for example). Some decently interesting information, especially on random customs we've kept alive somehow after forgetting their meaning.

Jen says

This book was very disappointing. Several of the answers (such as where the phrase "mind your p's and q's"

comes from) propagate legends and myths rather than admitting that we don't know the answer. Even the answers that were legitimate seemed incomplete.

Carmen says

This was a very informative book. I learned some (not a lot, because I am already pretty well-versed in trivia). The book is out of date, it would be interesting to read a more modern version (this was published in 1999). The book covers many topics: Animal Kingdom (e.g. Do fish drink water?), Clothing and Apparel (e.g. Where did the idea for underwear come from?), Finance (e.g. Does the government still print two-dollar bills?), Food (e.g. What is the difference between jelly, jam, preserves, and marmalade?), Geography (e.g. How did each of the seven continents get its name?), History (e.g. Who were the Knights Templar?), Holidays (e.g. What is the origin of the Christmas tree?), Language (e.g. Where did the term 'dark horse' come from?), Literature (e.g. Who wrote the first 'detective' novel?), the Human Body (e.g. Why don't Eskimos die from scurvy?), Music (e.g. In the Australian song, what does 'waltzing Matilda' mean?), Odds and Ends (e.g. Why don't beeswax candles drip?), Off the Wall (e.g. How many licks does it take to reach the center of a Tootsie Pop?), Religion (e.g. What is the history and significance of the Infant of Prague?), Science (e.g. Why are the oceans salty but not lakes?), Sports (e.g. How did the 'seventh-inning stretch' originate?), Transportation and Travel (e.g. Why don't they make dirigibles anymore?), United States (e.g. What is the book that the Statue of Liberty is holding?), Weather e.g. (What is the difference between partly cloudy and partly sunny?), and The World (e.g. Why is the Tower of Pisa leaning and will anyone ever straighten it?). Recommended for anyone wanting to learn some new facts.

Yaaresse says

Because of my rule about always stopping at the end of a chapter, this is the kind of book I like to have going for when I have only a few minutes to read. The sections are very short, so you can put it down and not lose track of what's going on. So it takes me forever to read something like this even though it's really a light, fast book.

It's entertaining, but I found some things in it that are more perpetrating old urban legends than factual information. This, of course, led to more reading as I ended up going on-line to verify some of the more questionable entries. Still, the spouse and I had fun doing the "did you know?" and "do you think that's accurate?" game with it.

Jason Tyne-zimmerman says

A truly fascinating book...some of his answers are incorrect and others don't answer the question at all, but all-in-all an entertaining book which does answer many...if not all...the enduring questions of our time:

Are denim and jeans the same thing?
Does the government still print two-dollar bills?
Who were the Knights Templar?
What does the word mistletoe mean?
Where did the term "dark horse" come from?

Was there a real Count Dracula?

What does "Waltzing Matilda" mean?

In my grandmother's day, where did the iceman get his ice from?

How many licks does it take to get to the center of a Tootsie-Roll Pop?

Why are there 60 seconds in a minute and 60 minutes in an hour?

In football, how did a "down" get its name?

What's the difference between partly sunny and partly cloudy?

All the minutia you always wondered about and so much more minutia that never even crossed your mind.

You'll never wonder again.

Matthew says

I think that this book is very interesting and educational, with super cool facts I find extremely interesting!

Let's not give away what this book is about but dolphins MUST stay conscious to breath, so how do they sleep...??? Also "a group of dolphins is called a pod. Being social, they tend to congregate (Socialise and communicate) and spend their entire lives with their Podmates!" That's all i'm telling you.
