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## The Owl

Joan Harrison was walking along the street. She was shy and always felt lonely and upset. Joan worked as a secretary in an office in the city centre. It was lunch time and she went out to get some air. She was looking absently at the shop-windows when she saw a brown wooden owl in one of them. Suddenly Joan stopped. Joan was totally indifferent to birds and she had never understood people who collected useless statues. But for some reason she could not take her eyes off the owl. The wooden owl drew Joan to itself.

Joan decided to buy the owl. She earned a little, just to pay for her room and food. She couldn't afford new clothes. Even a ticket to the cinema was a heavy expense for her. But this time Joan was sure that she had to buy the wooden owl.

Joan opened the door of the shop. She asked the shop assistant about the price of the wooden owl. It was fifty pounds. Joan understood that it was sheer madness to buy such an expensive wooden bird. But she did it without any hesitation.

The next morning she left her house in a very good mood. Now, having the owl at home, Joan made it a habit to say good-bye and touch the owl's head before leaving. Amazingly, after this simple gesture she was cheerful and energetic the whole day. One morning, when patting the owl on the head, Joan remembered her wish to join the evening pottery class at college. She had often thought about it but always changed her mind at the last moment. Now she decided to fulfill her wish.

At the pottery class Joan achieved considerable results. Her teacher said she had a unique style. Nobody knew that she worked hard at home. Under the owl's observation Joan experimented with forms and colours. Once she took part in the students' show at the college, and the Museum of Arts asked her to sell her works for two thousand pounds. The sum covered all her debts and she could afford to buy a new dress and shoes and even more.

The next step was the annual National Art Festival, at which a secretary, Joan Harrison, presented her personal exhibition. Her fame and income were growing. Joan left her office and became a potter. A year later she and the art director of the museum were happily married. They moved to a large country house and now Joan had her own pottery.

Joan took the lucky owl with her. It took its honorary place in the large living room. In her last years she often remembered the shop where she had bought the owl, her evening classes and her first steps in pottery. Joan was so proud of the owl that each piece of her pottery had a picture of the owl on it. Lots of famous artists and important people visited Joan and her husband, but Joan never gave her owl to anybody until her dying day.

13 Joan collected small statues of birds.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 Joan had a well-paid job.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 The wooden owl improved Joan's mood.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 Joan joined the pottery class because of her friends' advice.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 Joan successfully participated in art exhibitions.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 There was an image of the owl on Joan's every work.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

19 After Joan's death the wooden owl disappeared from her house.

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## Cambridge University

Cambridge University is the second-oldest university in the English-speaking world (after the University of Oxford) and the seventh-oldest in the world.

The story of Cambridge University begins in 1209 when several hundred students arrived in the little town of Cambridge after having walked 60 miles from Oxford. These students were all churchmen and had been studying in Oxford at that city's well-known schools. It was a hard life at Oxford for there was constant trouble, even fighting, between the citizens of the town and the students. Then one day a student accidentally killed a man of the town. The Mayor arrested three other students who were innocent and they were put to death. In protest, many students left Oxford, some of them went to Cambridge. And so the new University began.

It was Cambridge University. Of course, there were no Colleges in those early days and student life was very different from what it is now. The students were of all ages and came from anywhere and everywhere. Life in College was strict. The students were forbidden to play games, to sing (except sacred music), to hunt or fish or even to dance. Books were very rare and all the lessons were in the Latin language which students were supposed to speak even among themselves.

In 1440 King Henry VI founded King's College, and other colleges followed. Nowadays there are more than 30 different colleges, including five for women students and several mixed colleges, in the University. The number of students in colleges is different: from 30 to 400 or 500.

The training course lasts 4 years. The academic year is divided into 3 terms. The students study natural and technical sciences, law, history, languages, geography, medicine, economics, agriculture, music and many other subjects. After 3 years of study a student may proceed to a Bachelor's degree, and later to the degrees of Master and Doctor.

There are many ancient traditions that are still observed at Cambridge. For example, the students are required to wear gowns at lectures, in the University library, in the street in the evening, for dinners in the colleges and for official visits.

All the students must pay for their education - classes, examinations, books, laboratories, university hostel, the use of libraries. The cost is high. It depends on college and university speciality. Very few students get grants.

Many great men studied at Cambridge, for example, Bacon (the philosopher), Milton and Byron (the poets), Cromwell (the soldier), Newton (the outstanding physicist), Darwin (who is famous for his theory of evolution) and Kapitsa (the famous Russian physicist).

13 **Cambridge University was founded earlier than the University of Oxford.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 **The citizens of Cambridge were happy to get the university in their town.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 **Nowadays there are several female colleges in Cambridge University.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 **At present, the students of Cambridge University have to study Latin.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 **The students of Cambridge University have their own dress code.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 **The education at Cambridge University is free.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

19 **There are famous scientists among the graduates of Cambridge University.**

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## Eton

Within a ten minute walk of Windsor Castle, across a bridge over the River Thames, there's an old Gothic building. It is the legendary Eton College. It is one of England's largest independent schools and one of the highest in prestige. Members of the British royal family are traditionally educated here. It was one of the best schools when first founded and remains so now; it is still commonly known as one of the greatest schools among all the schools in the world.

Following the old tradition, Eton is a full boarding school, which means all students live and study at the school with their fellow students throughout the school year. Eton is also one of the four remaining boys' schools, so there's no opportunity for a girl to study there. Eton students traditionally come from England's wealthiest and most prestigious families, many of them aristocratic. Boys enter Eton at about 13 and continue to study there until they are ready to enter university.

The school was founded by Henry VI in the fifteenth century to provide free education for poor pupils who would then go on to get a higher education at King's College in Cambridge. That connection no longer exists today.

All students have a uniform of a black tailcoat and a waistcoat, a white collar and dark trousers. All students wear a white tie. This uniform is not for special occasions, it is worn at all times for all classes. If you visit Eton during term time, you will see students walking along the streets with books under their arms dressed in their uniforms.

At Eton, there are dozens of organisations known as 'societies', in many of which students come together to discuss a particular topic. The societies are traditionally governed by the boys themselves. Societies range from astronomy to Scottish dancing and stamp-collecting. Some of them are dedicated to music, some to arts, some to languages, and so on. Meetings are usually held after supper and often include a guest speaker. Among past guest speakers were composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, writer J. K. Rowling, designer Vivienne Westwood, and actor Ralph Fiennes.

One of the oldest and most influential Eton societies is called the Pop. Its members are like school head-boys or prefects who are given limited authority over other students. They are called Poppers and take an active part in many official events of the school year, including parents' evenings. While all students wear black waistcoats, members of the Pop are allowed to wear any waistcoat they please. Prince William, when he was a Popper, wore a waistcoat designed like the British national flag. The style immediately became popular.

Irrespective of this, the official colour of the college is the so-called 'Eton blue'. It's a light blue-green colour which has been used since the early 19th century. The main purpose was to identify Eton sportsmen in rowing races and on the cricket field.

13 Eton is the oldest boarding school in Great Britain.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 In our time, girls are allowed to enter Eton College.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 Eton College was established to educate the children from the wealthiest British families.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 The Eton uniform is sold only in one shop on the territory of the college.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 Many famous people have taken part in the work of the student societies.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 It is easy to identify Poppers in a crowd of students due to their clothes.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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## Potatoes

The potato comes from the high and cool areas of the Andes of Peru. It began to be grown as food more than 7,000 years ago. When Europeans came to South America, they took the potato back to Europe.

In 1589, Sir Walter Raleigh, an English explorer and historian known for his expeditions to the Americas, first brought the potato to Ireland and planted the new vegetable there. In spite of the fact that the potatoes grew very well in the poor soil of Ireland, it took nearly 200 years for them to become a widely grown crop in Ireland and Great Britain. People didn't like its unusual appearance and originally bitter taste. Besides, the potato was not mentioned in the Bible and it was often associated with the devil.

According to legend, Sir Walter Raleigh presented potato plants to Queen Elizabeth I. A special royal potato dinner was made and the noble men were invited to taste the new American vegetable. But the royal cooks didn't know how to cook potatoes: they cut off and threw away the ugly-looking tubers and brought to the royal table a dish of boiled leaves (which are very poisonous). Most of the guests died after that royal dinner and potatoes were forbidden for many years.

Only two hundred years later farmers in Great Britain and Ireland began growing potatoes. Soon the rest of Europe started to follow Britain. The only country which did not accept potatoes was France. To overcome the negative attitude of the French people towards the new vegetable, King Louis XVI started to wear a potato flower as a decoration. He tried to make the people understand the benefit of potatoes as food. Even after the French king had given an order to his citizens to grow potatoes, they still were against the unfamiliar vegetable. The farmers refused to eat potatoes because of its unusual smell and taste. Then King Louis XVI decided to trick his people. In order to show the value of the potato, the king ordered to have it planted in a royal field and put guards to watch over the field. When the local farmers saw the guards at the royal field, they decided that the thing so carefully guarded must be valuable. One day, the guards were allowed to go off duty. The local farmers went into the field, dug out some potatoes and planted them in their fields. The king's plan was a success. From this small start, the habit of growing and eating potatoes spread all over the country.

As Europeans began to grow potatoes, they realized the advantages of the new vegetable. The potato harvest was enough to feed their own families and to sell some to the citizens of towns and cities. The new food stimulated the development of cities and industries. Besides, the health of the people improved as they included potatoes in their diets. Now the potato is grown and enjoyed everywhere.

- 13 **Potatoes were the basic food for the people of Peru.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 14 **The British people liked potatoes at once.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 15 **The potato dish for the royal dinner was prepared in a wrong way.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 16 **King Louis XVI was against the idea of growing potatoes for food.**  
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- 17 **French farmers stole some potatoes from the King's field.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 18 **The potato helped the development of the European countries.**  
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## The Crown Jewels

Every year, millions of visitors come to the Tower of London to see the Crown Jewels. The Crown Jewels have been kept in the Tower since 1303 after they were stolen from Westminster Abbey. Luckily, that time most of the Crown Jewels were found shortly afterwards and put in the Tower.

Although there have been a few attempts to steal the Crown Jewels from the Tower, none of them have succeeded. But the name of one of the thieves has remained in the British history. He was Thomas Blood. On the 9th May, 1660, Thomas Blood, dressed as a priest, came to the Tower. He came with three well-dressed young men.

Thomas Blood had already been to the Tower a few days earlier. He was with a woman whom he introduced as his 'wife'. When they were walking round the Tower, the 'wife' pretended to feel unwell and fainted. Talbert Edwards, who was Master of the Jewel House and lived in the Jewel House with his family, took the woman upstairs to his family's rooms. He also asked his wife to help the fainted lady. In an hour or so the lady felt better and left the Tower with her 'husband'.

On the second visit, Thomas Blood, again dressed as a priest, brought a present for Edwards' wife for her help and attention to his 'wife'. He gained the confidence of the Master of the Jewel House, Talbot Edwards, and asked him to show the Crown Jewels to his friends. Talbot Edwards agreed and took them to the room where the Crown Jewels were kept. Suddenly Blood took out a hammer from under his priest's dress and struck the Master on the head. Talbot Edwards fell down and fainted. Thomas Blood took the king's crown and made it flat with the hammer in order to put the crown into a large pocket of his priest dress. The other three men took other royal jewels and hid them in their pockets.

By chance, Talbert Edwards' son, Wythe, arrived at the Tower earlier than expected. He found his father lying unconscious and bleeding. Wythe raised the alarm. Though Thomas Blood and his gang had left the jewel room, they were caught when they were getting out of the Tower. The broken crown and the jewels were found with them.

A report was immediately sent to the king, and Charles II sent for Thomas Blood. The king wanted to talk to the thief who had committed such a wicked crime. The end of the story is unbelievable. Thomas Blood was not punished. Moreover, Blood was awarded a pension of £500 a year. At the same time the Master of the Jewel House Talbot Edwards was dismissed for his carelessness. Later, he died in misery.

Since Thomas Blood's attempt in 1600 up to the present date, there have been no attempts to steal the jewels. Nowadays the priceless collection is open for the public to view and the Crown Jewels are considered to be the most well-guarded treasures in the world. They are kept in the Tower and are guarded by the Yeomen Warders, commonly known as the Beefeaters.

13 **Nowadays British kings and queens use the Crown Jewels for ceremonial events.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 **Thomas Blood's crime was well-planned.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 **Thomas Blood damaged the crown to take it out.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 **The criminals were found the next day after the robbery.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 **King Charles II punished Thomas Blood severely.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 **Thomas Blood promised King Charles II to stop stealing forever.**

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## The Crown Jewels

Every year, millions of visitors come to the Tower of London to see the Crown Jewels<sup>1</sup>. The Crown Jewels have been kept in the Tower since 1303 after they were stolen from Westminster Abbey. Luckily, that time most of the Crown Jewels were found shortly afterwards and put in the Tower.

Although there have been a few attempts to steal the Crown Jewels from the Tower, none of them have succeeded. But the name of one of the thieves has remained in the British history. He was Thomas Blood. On the 9th May, 1660, Thomas Blood, dressed as a priest, came to the Tower. He came with three well-dressed young men.

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## David Beckham

David Beckham – is there a more famous and lovable celebrity? The footballer who played for such famous teams as Manchester United and Real Madrid is also a fashion model and a successful businessman.

David Beckham was born on May 2, 1975, in London, England. His father Ted Beckham was a kitchen fitter and his mother Sandra, a hair stylist. David Beckham was the family's only son. A middle child between two sisters, David grew up with parents and relatives who were great fans of Manchester United, England's legendary football club. From childhood, David was a promising footballer. At 11 he won the prestigious Bobby Charlton Soccer Schools National Skills Competition. David was noticed by Manchester United team officials, who asked him to try out for the club's youth league. By the age of 16, Beckham had to drop out of school. He left home to play for his favourite team. Two years later he became a full-time player for Manchester United and one of its leading figures.

From 1992 to 2003, playing for Manchester United, David Beckham scored 85 goals. Every time he had a game, he wore different football boots – it was a sort of ritual for good luck. In 2003, David unexpectedly left his beloved team for Real Madrid. The reason was the growing conflict between David Beckham and Manchester's manager, Sir Alex Ferguson. Once Sir Alex Ferguson fined David for babysitting with his sick child, while his wife Victoria, a designer, was at a London Fashion Week Event. The fine was really large. The incident caused a serious personal tension between the two men and ended in Beckham moving to the other club.

In Real Madrid, David Beckham was not allowed to wear his favourite number seven, because the right to wear it was written into the contract of another player. Instead, David decided to wear a shirt with number 23, which was the number of his favourite basketball player Michael Jordan. Though David Beckham immediately became very popular with the Real Madrid fans and his shirt sales made a lot of money for the football club, the team didn't win any serious tournaments. Perhaps, it was one of the reasons why in 2007 Beckham signed a five-year contract to play for the Los Angeles Galaxy and moved to America. However, his career in America was a rocky one – numerous injuries affected him. In May 2013, David Beckham announced his plans to retire.

It's important to say that David Beckham has always been a devoted husband and a loving father. David and his wife Victoria have three sons and a daughter. They say the boys are being trained as 'bodyguards' for their little sister Harper. The youngest, Cruz, has been practicing Taekwondo, Brooklyn is interested in boxing, and the oldest, Romeo, does karate. They are preparing early so that when Harper is older, "they will all be ready to protect her from noisy fans," David says.

- 13 **David Beckham's parents were professional sportsmen.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 14 **David Beckham's school teachers supported his interest in football.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 15 **When he was with Manchester United, David Beckham played all the games in the same lucky boots.**  
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- 16 **David Beckham left Manchester United because he had problems with the team manager.**  
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## Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale was a celebrated English nurse and writer. According to a survey, British people consider her to be one of the most famous British persons along with outstanding scientists, writers and politicians.

She was born into a rich, upper-class family in 1820, in Italy. She got her name Florence after the city of her birth, as there was a tradition in her family to name the children in honour of the city they were born in. She got an all-round education and according to the family's status Florence was expected to become a faithful wife and attentive mother. However, in 1844 Florence decided to become a nurse, despite the intense anger and distress of her mother and sister. At that time nursing was seen as a job that needed neither education nor special medical skills.

In 1854 the Crimean War broke out and Florence Nightingale offered her services to the War Office and soon left for the Crimea with thirty-eight volunteer nurses. They began their work in the main British camp, in the hospital. Very soon Florence found out that hygiene was neglected, and fatal infections were common. There was no equipment to cook proper food for the patients. Florence decided to change the situation.

Nightingale managed to found a vast kitchen and a laundry. In addition to her nursing work, she tried to organize reading and recreation rooms for the wounded soldiers. She was on her feet for twenty hours a day and so were the other nurses. Florence was called 'The Lady with the Lamp' for her habit of making rounds round the hospital at night. She checked on her helpless patients.

Florence remained in the Crimea until 1856, then she returned to England. In London Florence Nightingale visited Queen Victoria and persuaded the Queen of the need to create a military hospital system. Soon Florence Nightingale set up a training school for nurses, the first nursing school in the world. It is now called The Florence Nightingale School of Nursing and Midwifery and is part of King's College in London. The annual International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world on Florence's birthday, the 12th of May.

In the Crimea camp, Nightingale got 'Crimean fever' and never fully recovered. By the time she was 38 years old, she was seriously ill. She left her house very rarely and had to stay in bed most of the time. Nevertheless, Florence continued her work from her bed. She wrote many books, some of them became the base of the curriculum at the Nightingale School and other British nursing schools.

Florence Nightingale died in London in 1910, at the age of ninety. The government offered to bury Florence in Westminster Abbey, but her relatives did not agree. However, the memorial service took place in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Florence Nightingale received a lot of honorable awards. Several books were written about the life of 'The Lady with the Lamp' and a few films were shot about her.

13 Florence Nightingale was named in honour of her birthplace.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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## The Moneyless Man

For most of us it seems that money makes the world go round. However, not for Mark Boyle who has turned his life into a radical experiment.

Mark Boyle was born in 1979 in Ireland and moved to Great Britain after getting a degree in Business. He set up his own business in Bristol. For six years Mark Boyle managed two organic food companies which made him a good profit.

However, in 2008, he decided to give up earning money. He vowed to live without cash, credit cards, or any other form of finance. Mark Boyle began to realise that many of the world's problems are just symptoms of a deeper problem. He thought that money gave people the illusion of independence.

Mark sold his house and started preparing himself for his new life. He posted an advert on a website asking for a tent, a caravan (a vehicle for living or travelling) or any other type of a house. Soon an old lady gave him a caravan for free. At least he then had a roof over his head!

After that, with his pockets empty, Mark was ready to go. He didn't even carry keys as he decided to trust the world a bit more and not lock his caravan. On November 28th (International Buy Nothing Day 2008), he became the Moneyless Man for one whole year.

Everything was different from then on. Mark lived in his caravan on an organic farm where he worked as a volunteer three days a week. In return he got a piece of land to live on and grow his own vegetables. His food was cooked on a stove, and he washed in a shower made from a plastic bag hanging from a tree, and warmed by the sun.

Even breakfast was different. With no morning coffee to brew, Mark had to find an alternative drink to start the day with. So he drank herbal teas, sometimes with some fresh lemon verbena that he could find near the caravan. "It's all very good for you: iron, calcium, anti-oxidants," Mark said.

Food was the first thing to consider. Mark discovered that there were four ways to find it: looking for wild food, growing his own food, bartering (exchanging his grown food for something else), and using loads of waste food from shops.

Public interest in his project was divided. While a huge number of people supported him, there was criticism of him, particularly on Internet forums. "People are either very positive about what I'm doing or very negative; I think it's about 70 per cent/30 per cent. It's funny, if you don't have a massive plasma TV these days, people think you are an extremist," Mark said.

People tend to ask Mark what he learnt from a year of a moneyless life. "What have I learned? That friendship, not money, is real security," he answers. Mark's remarkable journey is described in his new book "The Moneyless Man", which shows in a detailed way the challenges he faced on the road to his new world.

13 Before giving up money, Mark Boyle ran a successful business.

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## Jeans

The history of jeans goes as far back as the 16th century when sailors in Genoa (Italy) wore a material that eventually became the material used in jeans. The word 'jean' derives from the name of the Italian port city Genoa, as it was a custom to name a material after its place of origin. By the late 16th century, jean material was already produced in Lancashire, England.

It was the California Gold Rush of 1849 that started the evolution of American trousers that would one day become blue jeans. The gold miners wanted clothes that were strong and did not tear easily. The person who suggested an appropriate type of clothing was a German businessman Levi Strauss, who had moved to America. Levi Strauss sold many different things, but his main product was a tough canvas material used for tents and wagon covers.

Understanding the urgent need of the gold miners Levi Strauss decided to make trousers out of the tough canvas he was selling. The miners liked the new 'working' trousers, though they were uncomfortable to wear as the material was too rough.

To improve the trousers for miners, Levi Strauss began looking for a different material and soon he found a suitable one in France. The material was called 'serge de Nimes'. Americans just called it 'de Nimes', and this name soon became its short form 'denim'. Denim was a bit lighter and softer than the material Levi Strauss used for his working trousers. It was very strong and did not wear out quickly, even after many washes. The trousers made of denim became quite popular among the miners.

The only problem was that original denim was almost white and the trousers got dirty as soon as the miners started working! For that reason Levi Strauss decided to use coloured denim, and he chose dark blue. This was a radical new idea and 'Blue jeans' had arrived!

Levi's jeans were so popular, that his company got bigger and bigger. Other firms were making blue jeans too. Miners liked them, but so did cowboys and other working men.

Levi's jeans were work trousers. Male workers wore them all the time but a gentleman would not even think of wearing jeans. Things changed when western movies became popular. All the cowboys wore jeans and people thought they looked heroic, attractive and cool. Also jeans were greatly popularized in Europe by American off-duty soldiers who wore them during World War II. They made jeans seem like casual American trousers, a symbol of the American lifestyle.

In the 2000s, the sale of classic blue jeans stopped growing. Young people were not particularly interested in traditional jeans styles, mainly because of their parents, who adored jeans. Since no teenager would wear the clothes their parents were wearing, the latest generation of youth turned to other fabrics and styles. They still wear denim, but it had to be in new cuts, shapes and styles.

13 **Jeans cloth was named after a city.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 **Levi Strauss had a few friends among gold miners.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 **Levi Strauss began to make trousers for miners from the material which was used for tents.**

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16 **Levi Strauss found denim in a local American shop.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 **The original colour of denim was blue.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 **After World War II jeans became popular with Europeans.**

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19 **Nowadays more jeans are produced in Europe than in the USA.**

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## Mark Twain

Mark Twain wrote 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' in 1884. Since then, the book has been published in at least sixty languages, and some people say it is the best book ever created by an American writer. American students have 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' on their school reading list and parents, teachers and literary experts still debate the problems touched in the book.

The writer's real name was Samuel Clemens. Samuel was born in 1835. He grew up in the state of Missouri on the Mississippi River. After his father died, young Samuel went to work as an assistant to a publisher. Ten years later, he became a pilot on a steamboat that sailed on the Mississippi. He heard the riverboat workers call out the words "mark twain!" That was a measure for the depth of water. Later he used this word combination as a pen-name.

In 1861 Clemens travelled west and became a reporter for newspapers in Nevada and California. He wrote news stories, editorials and sketches under his pen-name Mark Twain. He became one of the best known storytellers in the West. He developed his own narrative style – friendly, funny, and often satirical, which won him a wide audience. The first success came with the story 'The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County'.

Mark Twain travelled a lot during his lifetime not only round the USA but also to Europe and the Holy Land. He naturally began writing books about his travels. 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer' was published in 1876, and soon after he began writing a sequel, 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn'.

It took Mark Twain longer to write 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' than any of his other books. He started writing in 1876, but put the story away after about two years of work. He returned to it in 1883, and the following year it was published.

From the beginning, the book was strongly debated. Some critics praised its realism and honesty, but the others strongly disliked it. They protested against the personality of Huck – a rough, dirty and disobedient boy. They could not agree that such a person should be the main character of a book. What's more, critics disliked the way Mark Twain used the language of a common, uneducated person to tell the story; no writer had ever done that before.

Today there is no longer any debate about the importance of 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' in American literature. In 1935 Ernest Hemingway wrote: "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called 'Huckleberry Finn.' There was nothing before. And there has been nothing as good since."

No wonder then that the novel 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' was a great inspiration for film producers – more than 20 screen versions of the book have been shot not only in America, but also in Europe, Russia and Japan. There are feature films, musicals, cartoons and even Japanese anime.

13 **'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' has been translated into many languages.**

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## Tea

Everybody knows that Britain is a tea-drinking nation. Tea is more than just a drink to the British – it is a way of life. Many people drink it first with breakfast, then mid-morning, with lunch, at tea-time (around 5 o'clock), with dinner and finally just before bed. As a nation, they go through 185 million cups per day! No less than 77% of British people are regular tea drinkers; they drink more than twice as much tea as coffee.

A legend says that tea was discovered in China in the third millennium BC. When a Chinese Emperor was having breakfast in his garden, a tea leaf fell into his cup with hot water. The water became coloured and the Emperor was delighted with the taste of the new drink. To Britain, tea came much later. It happened in the 17th century, when the British ships landed on the shore of China and came back with a load of tea.

Tea drinking became fashionable in England after Charles II married the Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza. She adored tea and introduced it to the royal court. Just as people today will copy celebrities, people in the 17th and 18th centuries copied the royal family. Tea drinking spread like wildfire, starting first among the nobles and then spreading to wealthy businessmen who liked to sit down for a nice 'cuppa' in coffee houses. Tea was an expensive product. It was only for the rich and often kept under lock and key.

In the 17th century the British really had two daily meals – breakfast and dinner. Dinner was the heaviest meal of the day, and was usually served in the afternoon. The custom of eating a regular 'afternoon tea' began during the 1700's, as people began serving dinner later and later in the evening. For the aristocracy, or at least for the Duchess Anna Maria of Bedford, 6 hours between meals was simply too long. She began to ask for a cup of tea and light snacks to be served around 5 pm, and then began to invite guests to join her. The custom of 'afternoon tea' was born, and it spread among the upper classes and then among the workers, for whom this late afternoon meal became the main of the day.

The first tea shop for ladies was opened by Thomas Twining in 1717 and slowly tea shops began to appear throughout England making the drinking of tea available to everyone. The British appreciated the new drink for its taste. It was also believed that tea cured lots of diseases. However, the most important thing was that drinking tea prevented lots of diseases – to make the drink people used boiled water and drank less raw water.

For centuries now, tea has been the national drink of Great Britain. Tea has so thoroughly integrated itself into British culture that during World War II the government was seriously afraid that the country's morale could suffer from the lack of tea and made a special decision to ration it.

Tea has worked its way into language too. Nowadays people have tea breaks at work, even if they drink coffee or cola. Many people call the main evening meal tea, even if they drink beer with it. When there is a lot of trouble about something very unimportant, it is called a storm in a tea cup. When someone is upset or depressed, people say they need tea and sympathy. In fact, tea is the best treatment for all sorts of problems and troubles.

- 13 In general British people prefer coffee to tea.  
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- 16 The 'afternoon tea' tradition was started by a woman.  
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## The Will

One day young William was called to a lawyer's office. The lawyer announced that William's uncle had left him a thousand dollars. He also added that William was required to give the lawyer a report of how he used the money as soon as he spent it. That was his uncle's last wish.

William promised to follow his uncle's wish and went straight to his club. He looked for Bryson, a calm wise man of about forty, who was sitting in a corner reading a book. When William told him about the contents of the will, Bryson did not seem at all surprised. He only remarked that the uncle was worth about half a million.

William told Bryson that his uncle had left a lot of money to charity while his servants had received only ten dollars each. There was one more person mentioned in the will, Miss Hayden, a distant relative who lived in the uncle's house. She was a quiet, musical girl and the dearest woman in the world to William. William had been in love with her for two years but he had never told her about his feelings.

William had no idea how to spend a thousand dollars and he hated making the report. He had a feeling that his uncle was making fun of him.

In the street William saw a blind man selling pencils. William went up to him and asked him what he would do with the money. The blind man shrugged his shoulders and said that he had never seen such a huge amount of money and therefore had never had the problem of spending such a sum. William bought all his pencils and gave him ten dollars above the price.

William was walking down the empty street when he had an idea. He got into a cab and went to his uncle's house where Miss Hayden lived. He found her, sad and beautiful, writing letters in the library. William knew that like the servants she had received nothing from his uncle but ten dollars. So he said that there was an addition to his uncle's will that allowed her to have a thousand dollars and he gave her the money there and then. Miss Hayden turned white, took the banknotes and put them in the drawer of the writing desk. Then she quietly thanked William and gave him a shy smile.

In excitement William went back to the lawyer's office, ready to hand over the report. Suddenly the lawyer took out another document which had been given to him by William's uncle and started reading. It said that in the case that William spent the money wisely, he was to receive another fifty thousand dollars. On the contrary, if he had spent it in a foolish way, the fifty thousand would go to Miss Hayden.

Smiling brightly, William destroyed the report and said he had lost a thousand dollars on the races. William realised that he was going to lose much more than that, but he felt happy about it.

13 **Bryson was a friend of William's uncle.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 **William's uncle left all his money to his servants.**

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15 **Miss Hayden arrived at the uncle's house two years ago.**

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## Hershey's chocolate

People from all over the world like the taste of chocolate. It's the most popular dessert and snack. You may like dark or light chocolate, you may prefer it plain or with nuts, but whatever your tastes are, you will certainly enjoy the chocolate produced by the Hershey Company.

Hershey chocolate became famous all over the world thanks to a quiet but very hard-working and generous person – Milton Hershey, the founder of the company.

Milton Hershey grew up in Pennsylvania, USA. His mother wanted him to learn practical skills. She believed practice is more important than college education. So when Milton finished the fourth grade, she arranged for him to become a printer's assistant. But Milton didn't like the job and left it soon after. In a while he became an assistant in a candy factory. He helped to make candy and became very successful at it.

After a few years of training, Milton understood that he wanted to start his own business. He bought the equipment and started the Lancaster Caramel Company. Success soon followed. Within a few years, Milton Hershey had a growing business and was selling his caramels all over the country. At that time he became focused on milk chocolate, which in those days was an expensive dessert imported from Switzerland. Milton Hershey was determined to find a new formula for the product that could allow him to manufacture milk chocolate in large amounts and sell it countrywide. He succeeded in making a new recipe.

So, in 1900 Milton Hershey sold his caramel company and started up a chocolate factory. In fact it was more than a factory. Milton Hershey built a whole town around the factory – with houses, schools, churches, and stores. He wanted the people who worked in his factory to live nearby and feel comfortable. The factory was focused on producing the Nickel Bar, a relatively cheap chocolate bar that everyone could afford. Later, Hershey Kisses were added. These delicious, bite-sized pieces of chocolate were named after Milton Hershey himself.

As success and profits rose, Milton Hershey invested more money in the infrastructure of his town and added a sports arena, a stadium, and a school for orphaned children.

Milton Hershey died in Hershey, Pennsylvania, in 1945, one year after his retirement as chairman of the board. He was 88 years old. By the end of his life Hershey had donated most of his money to his town and the school for orphans.

His chocolate factory remains the largest in the world. The town of Hershey is still home to about 12,000 people and draws more than 30 million visitors each year. They come to see the famous Hershey Park, which boasts a roller coaster, Ferris wheel and other rides. The factory tours draw more visitors annually than the White House. Guests can take a tour through a mock chocolate factory that includes a ride through a simulated roasting oven, and eating samples of Hershey chocolate.

13 **The Hershey company was named after the man who had started it.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 **Milton Hershey tried some other jobs before he started making chocolate.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 **Milton Hershey's mother ran a small business of her own.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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## The Open Window

Mr. Nuttel, a young gentleman, came to live in the country. The doctors said a quiet place like that and complete rest could help cure his nerves. He didn't know anyone round there. That's why his sister gave him letters of introduction to some nice people she knew.

One of the letters was to Mrs. Sappleton. When Mr. Nuttel visited her, Mrs Sappleton was busy and he was asked to wait for several minutes. The servant invited Mr. Nuttel into a room. There Mr. Nuttel met Mrs. Sappleton's niece, a very self-confident young lady of fifteen. The young lady asked him what he knew about her aunt. Mr. Nuttel knew nothing except Mrs. Sappleton's name and address.

Mr. Nuttel looked around. There was something about the room that told him there were other people living in the house. So he was wondering if Mrs. Sappleton was married. Suddenly the girl got sad and told a story of Mrs. Sappleton's tragedy. Mr. Nuttel was greatly surprised because his sister hadn't told him anything about it. The tragedy was very unusual for that peaceful place.

The girl pointed at the French window, which opened on to the lawn and said that Mrs. Sappleton always kept it open. Mr. Nuttel stated that it was natural to keep the window open because the weather was quite warm. But the girl sighed and explained that her poor aunt always kept the window open in the evenings because she was waiting for her husband and sons to return. Three years ago they had gone hunting and never came back. The story caught Mr. Nuttel's imagination deeply. He felt very upset.

He felt a little better only when Mrs. Sappleton finally appeared in the room. She apologized for being late and asked if he minded the open window. She said her husband and sons would soon be home from hunting. They always came in that way. Then, she continued talking cheerfully about hunting ducks. But Mr. Nuttel felt terrible.

He made an attempt to change the topic and told her about the reasons why he had come to the country. But Mrs. Sappleton didn't seem to notice. She was constantly looking at the open window. Mr. Nuttel felt uncomfortable. He understood that he had chosen the wrong moment to visit her. Suddenly Mrs. Sappleton cried happily pointing at the window, "Here they are at last, just in time for tea!" Three male figures were walking across the lawn towards the window. They carried guns and a dog followed them.

Shocked and afraid, Mr. Nuttel grabbed his stick and hat and rushed out of the house. Mrs. Sappleton was extremely surprised at the extraordinary man who had left the house so quickly without a word. Her niece suggested that it was because of the dog. She said that Mr. Nuttel had been afraid of them since childhood – once, a dog had seriously bitten him. This was enough to make the young man lose his nerve. The young lady was so good at making up stories!

13 Mr. Nuttel came to the village to improve his health.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 Mr. Nuttel was an old friend of Mrs. Sappleton.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 According to Mrs. Sappleton's niece, a great tragedy had happened in her aunt's family three years before.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 That afternoon Mrs. Sappleton was waiting for her husband and sons to return from hunting.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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## Glastonbury Festival

Glastonbury Festival is one of the largest open air music and art festivals in the world. It became an example which other festivals followed. Of course, Glastonbury is best known for modern music, but its programme also includes dance, comedy, theatre, circus and other arts.

The festival organiser, Michael Eavis, was a common farmer. In 1970 he visited an open air concert which greatly impressed him. So he decided to organise a big festival outdoors in the same year. He knew, it wouldn't bring any money, but it didn't matter. At the first festival there were more than one thousand people. Each of them paid £1 for the ticket. The price also included free milk from the farm. Later on, the festival took place almost every year and grew in size and audience.

The festival takes place in southwest England on a farm. It's a beautiful and mystical place called the Valley of Avalon. It is surrounded with a lot of legends, symbols, myths, and religious traditions dating back many hundreds of years. Legends say that here King Arthur's sword was made and the king himself was buried there. No wonder that the main stage of the festival, Pyramid Stage, has the form of a pyramid. Many believe that this is a very powerful structure, which gets energy from the stars and gives it to people.

In many ways, Glastonbury is like a mix of different festivals, which take place in the countryside and last for a weekend. Each area of the festival has its own character, its own fans and its own special attractions. For example, dance lovers go to the Dance Village. There is also a big cinema area, Theatre and Circus. Children can have fun in the Kids' Field. Some people spend the whole weekend in their favourite area. However, most of them prefer walking about and trying lots of different things.

Most people who stay at Glastonbury Festival live in tents. There are lots of different camping areas, each one with its own atmosphere. You can choose where to stay: in a quiet place or a lively one. There are also places for families and disabled people. Anyway, you should remember to bring a tent with you. Of course, it's possible to rent one, but it's quite expensive.

Glastonbury Festival supports Greenpeace and has a number of programmes. There are hundreds of rubbish bins on the territory. All cans, glass, paper, electrical and electronic equipment, wood and waste are separated and recycled. Visitors are asked to clean after themselves and not to leave rubbish. The festival supports those who come by public transport or by bicycle, not by car.

If you're thinking about visiting Glastonbury, you should book tickets in advance. Today an average ticket is about £200 for three days which is quite expensive. Nevertheless the tickets are sold out in two or three hours. So be quick to catch them. There are usually more people wishing to get to the festival than tickets.

- 13 **Michael Eavis was fond of country music.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 14 **Michael Eavis started the festival to earn money.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 15 **Nowadays Glastonbury festival is held in King Arthur's museum.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 16 **Famous musicians and singers take part in Glastonbury Festival.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 17 **During the festival all the visitors stay in the nearby country inns.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 18 **Glastonbury Festival is an environmentally-friendly event.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 19 **It's recommended to reserve tickets to Glastonbury Festival beforehand.**  
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### 'The 1900 House'

'The 1900 House' was a reality television programme in Britain. It took people back a hundred years to the time of Queen Victoria, when there were no computers, mobile phones or the Internet. The idea of the show was to give people an experience of living in the past.

A modern family, the Bowler family, spent three months living like people at the beginning of the 20th century. There were the parents (Paul and Joyce) and their four children (three daughters and a son). The cameras recorded them every day. The house didn't have a telephone, a fridge, a TV set or even central heating. The Bowlers wore clothes from 1900 and ate the food that existed in England at that time. There wasn't much to choose from. The main dishes on the table were meat and fish, and the day usually started with a cup of tea and porridge.

The father of the family, Paul Bowler, still went to work but in an old-fashioned uniform. He couldn't read newspapers or use a computer. The mother, Joyce, became a housewife and stayed home. She did all the cleaning, washing and cooking. The children still went to school, but they changed their clothes on the way to and from school so their classmates wouldn't know anything about this unusual project.

The Bowlers noticed that life at the beginning of the century was much slower. It was rather hard for them to get used to the new speed. For example, it took 28 minutes to boil water and make a cup of tea. And can you imagine cleaning the house without a vacuum cleaner or washing clothes without a washing machine? There wasn't any toothpaste or modern shampoo. Without central heating nobody thought about a warm bath or a shower in the morning. Toothbrushes were made of pig and horse hair. Toothpaste was expensive so most people cleaned their teeth using salt or soda. The children thought it was horrible.

11-year-old Hilary said: "The most difficult thing was finding entertainment. We couldn't go to the cinema or to a café. It was a new experience to be with the family for half a day or more. It was new and hard to be nice to each other all the time. But I really think we all became closer."

17-year-old Kathryn remembered that she couldn't wear any make-up. She had to wear a corset every day and had only three sets of clothes: one to wear every day, the second – to wear while cleaning, and the third was for special events, like celebrations.

When the show was over the Bowlers were asked: what did you miss most from the modern world? The father said it was a hot shower. The mother had longed to have a quick cup of tea. The daughters said it was the music, the hot water, shampoo and "normal sounds like the washing machine" which they missed. For the son it was pizza and the computer.

It's interesting that the family was allowed to keep anything they wanted after the project. Joyce took her corset and each of the children took something from the house to remind them of their experience.

- 13 'The 1900 House' is a TV programme about Queen Victoria's life.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 14 There were only two rooms and a kitchen in the house.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 15 During the project Mr. Bowler learnt the news from the newspapers.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 16 The children had to miss their school classes because of the project.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 17 Because of the project Hilary had to spend more time with her family.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 18 During the project it was difficult for the Bowler's boy to live without his computer.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 19 After the project the family bought a new house.  
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- 16 The children had to miss their school classes because of the project.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 17 Because of the project Hilary had to spend more time with her family.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 18 During the project it was difficult for the Bowler's boy to live without his computer.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 19 After the project the family bought a new house.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

2322113

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## Hermitage cats

Hermitage cats have been officially kept in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, Russia, since its foundation. The cats prevented intensive breeding of rats and mice in the State Hermitage Museum. The director of the Hermitage, Mikhail Piotrovsky, said, "cats have become a very important part of our Hermitage lives and a significant part of Hermitage Legends."

It is believed that the history of the Hermitage cats started with a cat that was brought from Holland by Peter the Great. In the XVIII century there were lots of rats in the Old Winter Palace. The history of cats continued due to Empress Elizaveta Petrovna. Visiting Kazan she noticed that there were no rats and mice in the city because of the large number of cats. The Empress ordered to bring some Kazan cats to St Petersburg, to the old Winter Palace. The cats had done their job, and almost all the rats disappeared from the palace. After the construction of the Winter Palace, the cats settled down in the new building too. The founder of the Hermitage, Empress Catherine II gave the cats the status of 'gallery guards'.

Cats in the Hermitage existed for a long time, during the war with Napoleon, and after the revolution, under the Soviet regime. In 1941, when the Great Patriotic War began, the works of art were evacuated to the Urals, in Sverdlovsk.

After the war, two cars brought new cats to the Hermitage. The rats, that had invaded the building during the war, stepped back. However, in the 1960s it was decided that the cats were not needed any more. Employees of the museum caught the cats and took them away. But, soon after, rats invaded the building. Since then, the museum has never got rid of its cats.

Today, about seventy cats live in the Hermitage to protect it from mice and rats. Each cat has its own passport and a veterinary card. They live comfortably in the basement. The place where they live is always warm and dry, and all the rooms of the basement are equipped with small holes, to let the cats move freely inside and outside the building.

The Hermitage employees regularly buy food for the cats. They try to make their meals healthy and diverse. Each cat has its own bowl, tray and basket to sleep. In summer, the cats are more often outside on the lawns and courtyards than in their basement.

To control the number of cats in the Hermitage, employees sometimes give away their cats to residents of the city. The new owner has to present their passport and leave their contact details. The adopted animals are accompanied by a certificate from the Hermitage.

13 According to its director, the Hermitage is the only museum in Russia where cats are kept officially.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 During the reign of Empress Catherine II the cats received official status.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 During the Great Patriotic War the Hermitage cats were taken to Sverdlovsk to guard the works of art.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 Nowadays all the cats are settled in the attic of the Hermitage.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 The Hermitage cats are taken good care of.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 The cats are not allowed to leave the building of the museum.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

19 The new owner of a Hermitage cat can visit the museum free of charge.

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## Sir Christopher Wren

Sir Christopher Wren was a designer, astronomer, geometer, and one of the greatest English architects of his time.

Christopher Wren was born into a rich family in 1632. He was a weak and sickly child and was taught at home by private tutors and his father. Wren's schooling is a mystery: there are no documents about whether he attended school or not. However, there is a written evidence that he entered Oxford University in 1650 to study science and mathematics. On graduating from university, Wren was appointed Professor of Astronomy at Gresham College, London. He was required to give weekly lectures in both Latin and English to all who wished to attend; admission was free. His lectures and the following discussions led to establishing the Royal Society, England's first scientific organization.

Later, Christopher Wren taught at Oxford University. His scientific work included astronomy, optics, mechanics, medicine and meteorology. He invented and improved lots of things. He experimented with submarine design, road paving, and design of telescopes. It was also around these times that his attention turned to architecture.

In Wren's time, the profession of an architect did not exist. In the past, buildings had been constructed to the requirements of the patron and the suggestions of building professionals, such as master carpenters or master bricklayers. Since the early years of the 17th century, it was not unusual for the well-educated gentleman to take up architecture as a hobby. Wren designed 51 London churches, including St Paul's Cathedral, and several buildings after the Great Fire in 1666. Each church was different, though all were classical in style. He insisted on the finest materials, and only skillful workers were hired for the job.

Actually, St Paul's Cathedral is still Wren's masterpiece. The architectural style of St Paul's Cathedral is a beautiful mix of the Medieval, Classical, and Baroque. The inside of St Paul's Cathedral is gorgeous. The foundation stone of the Cathedral was laid in 1675 when Wren was 43 years old, and the last stone was put in place by his son, 35 years later.

Nowadays, St Paul's Cathedral is the largest working Protestant church in England. Services are held regularly. Important events at the Cathedral have included the funerals of Lord Nelson and Sir Winston Churchill, Jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria, peace services marking the end of the First and the Second World Wars and, most recently, the thanksgiving services for both the Golden Jubilee and 80th birthday of Her Majesty the Queen.

Wren died on 25th February 1723. His gravestone in St Paul's Cathedral features a Latin inscription which translates as: 'If you seek his memorial, look about you.'

- 13 **Christopher Wren was named after his father.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 14 **There is no proof that Christopher Wren studied at Oxford University.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 15 **Christopher Wren's scientific interests were in different spheres.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 16 **The profession of an architect was very popular in the 17th century.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 17 **Christopher Wren was demanding when choosing materials and builders.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 18 **Christopher Wren's son completed the construction of St Paul's Cathedral.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 19 **St Paul's Cathedral was Sir Christopher Wren's favourite project.**  
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3212113

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## A trip of her life

The story happened in New York. Max, a taxi driver, was doing his last trip that day. He arrived at the place exactly on time and beeped the horn. Nobody came out of the house. Max waited a couple of minutes and beeped again. He was never late himself and he didn't like the clients who kept him waiting. He was thinking of driving home, but something made him park the car and check the door.

He came up to the front door and knocked. "Just a minute", an old weak voice answered. After a long pause a small lady of about ninety opened the door. She was wearing an expensive but old-fashioned dress and a veiled hat. Indeed, she looked like a film star of the forties. She asked Max to help her with the heavy suitcase that was inside. He agreed without hesitation.

He came in and noticed that the room looked like people had never lived there. All the furniture was covered with cloth. There were no statuettes and tea sets on the shelves or an old clock on the wall. In the corner of the room he noticed a large box filled with old photos and books. "A deserted room", he thought.

They moved slowly to the car and the lady kept thanking Max for his help and being so patient. He said it was his job to treat every passenger like he would treat his mother. "Oh, you are such a good boy!" she said. She took the back seat and named the address. Max understood that she was going to hospital.

She asked Max to drive through the city centre though it involved extra time. She did not mind the distance and the time. She said she was not in a hurry. She told Max her family had left long before and the doctor said that her chances were not good. Her eyes filled with tears.

Max switched off the counter and asked the lady which route she preferred. The next two hours they were driving through the city. She showed Max the building she had worked in and the dance hall she had visited as a little girl. They went to the district she had lived in with her husband after their marriage.

Finally she said she was tired and they drove in silence, directly to the hospital. It was a low building that looked more like a small holiday centre. Two nurses came up quickly to them as if they were waiting. They carefully helped her out of the taxi into the wheelchair. "How much do I owe you?" she said looking at Max. "Nothing", he answered.

"You need to earn your living", she added, opening her bag. "There are other passengers", answered Max. He bent down and embraced the old lady. She hugged in return. "Thank you for the little happiness you gave me", she whispered. On his way home Max did not switch on the radio. He drove in silence. He had an impression that it was the most important trip of his life.

13 Max was late to pick up his client.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 The old lady was a former actress.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 The old lady was grateful to Max for his help.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 The lady chose the shortest way to the hospital.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 Max drove the old lady to the places which were very special to her.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 The hospital was in the countryside.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

19 Max refused to take money for the trip from the old lady.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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## Running the Thames

Three friends Alan, Tom and Martin decided to run 184 miles along the most famous British river – from the beginning of the Thames down to its mouth, where the river runs into the sea.

Their preparations for the marathon didn't take long and they set out. It was not easy to find the place marked on the map as the official source of the river Thames. In reality, it was an old stone under a big tree. Surprisingly, there was practically no water at the source, just a small pit. However, at the end of the first day they came to a narrow stream running under a wooden bridge.

The runners were lucky with the weather; it was cool and bright for the whole week. Soft winds blew and the sun shone. In spite of the weather, the start of the marathon was not very promising. On the first day, Martin accidentally fell over a tree root and hurt his foot. In addition to that, Alan said he had damaged his rucksack during their preparation. However, the friends went on running.

They passed lovely houses and some wonderful nature. The Thames had grown from a small river into a strong stream. Hypnotised by the view of the river, Tom missed the path and fell into the mud. Cold and angry, he was a real trouble the first day. In the evening, the runners reached the point where the river became possible to navigate. The friends were so tired that they stopped at a cheap hotel for food, drink and sleep.

The second day they ran along arched stone bridges and through forty-five river locks<sup>1</sup>, each one having its own history. The runners stopped at the first lock to take a photo by the 19th century statue of Old Father Thames. The other locks and the bridges, dating from the 13th century, could have told much about British royal families, writers and inventors, battles and victories. So the runners spent the second day exploring the locks and the old bridges and taking photos.

The next few days Alan, Tom and Martin ran through quiet and peaceful places in Oxfordshire. The calm river occupied all their thoughts and they left their troubles behind them. They spent nights at small Bed-and-Breakfasts with unusual foreign guests who were discovering the old British towns, castles and churches.

Closer to London the Thames changed its character. It became wide and busy with numerous boats and ships. The banks were full of grand houses with green lawns, street markets and modern walkways.

On the seventh day the runners followed the river as it cut the capital in two. The friends made their way past famous London sights such as The Tower, The London Eye and Greenwich. Finally the friends got to The Thames Barrier, where the river ran into the sea. The marathon was over.

13 There was a natural mark which indicated the start of the river Thames.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 During the marathon the friends spent all their nights in the tent.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 There were a lot of tourists near the statue of Old Father Thames.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 Near London the Thames was closed to navigation.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

19 The marathon route went through London.

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## Jamie Oliver

Jamie Oliver is a genius in the world of food and one of Britain's most famous cooks. He has encouraged people to spend more time in the kitchen and enjoy it. His programmes are shown in over 100 countries including the USA, Australia, South Africa, Brazil, Japan and Iceland. They were translated into over 30 languages, Jamie Oliver's cookery books are bestsellers not only in the UK but across the world.

Jamie Oliver was born in 1975 in England. From an early age he got interested in food. His parents had a pub where he often helped them in the kitchen. He actually began working there at the age of eight. Jamie cut vegetables like any other ordinary worker in the pub.

Jamie Oliver left school at 16 without any official certificate. He went to Westminster College to study economics and after that travelled to France. Jamie knew that in France cooking was a kind of art. And he wanted to master that art. It was no doubt the best place to study if he wished to become a professional chef.

After returning from France, Jamie worked in a number of British restaurants. At that time there was a programme on the telly about the café where Jamie worked. TV producers were impressed by the young chef. The next day Jamie received calls from five different TV companies wishing to work with him. He soon became the best-liked celebrity chef on television and his programme was a real revolution in cooking shows. Thanks to an informal and friendly manner Jamie Oliver won crowds of fans around the world.

However, Jamie devotes his time not only to cooking. He's a family man, with a wife and four children. He also works on a number of projects. For example, Jamie Oliver created the 'Fifteen Foundation'. Each year, fifteen young people are trained and taught to work in the restaurant business. Some of them are from unhappy families and are unemployed. Some of them were in prison or took drugs. In this way Jamie Oliver tries to help them start a new life.

Another project by Jamie Oliver is connected with school dinners and lunches. He wants school children to eat healthy food instead of junk food. The British government supported the project. It spent extra 280 million pounds to improve school meals. Part of the money was spent on training cooks and buying modern cooking equipment for schools.

It's really hard to name all the TV programmes, shows, projects that Jamie Oliver had and is still having. He's so creative and imaginative, that there's no end to new ideas and projects. Except television, Jamie Oliver is a writer. His every book immediately becomes a bestseller. It's interesting that he became the best-selling author in the country after J.K. Rowling, the 'Harry Potter' writer.

13 **Jamie's parents wanted their son to be a professional cook.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 **Jamie Oliver went to France to continue studying economics.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 **Jamie Oliver has become a well-known personality due to his TV show.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 **Jamie's wife was against his project "Fifteen Foundation".**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 **Jamie's project the 'Fifteen Foundation' gives people a chance to improve their lives.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 **The British government ignored Jamie's school meals project.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

19 **Jamie Oliver is a successful writer.**

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## The Isle of Man

In the Irish Sea about 20 miles away from the UK you will find a beautiful island. This is the Isle of Man. The people of the island are called Manx and they speak the Manx language. The island occupies a mid-point in the Irish Sea and the British Isles – right between England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The scenery of the Isle is varied. There are ranges of hills with green valleys between them, there are sandy beaches in the north which contrast with the rocky cliffs along the coasts. The island's only mountain is slightly over 600 metres high. An old legend says that from its top on clear days you can see six kingdoms: the island itself, Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales and Heaven.

The Isle of Man has the oldest parliament in the world. It is called Tynwald and it has met regularly since 979. Tynwald usually meets in the capital of the country. However, for one day every summer the Manx parliament gathers in a small village to celebrate Tynwald Day. It is the only day of the year when parliament is held in the open air. On this day government officials read a summary of all the laws that have been passed during the year in both the English and the Manx languages. There is entertainment before and after the ceremony and it is a real community event. In addition to that, an open air market is organised and different concerts are held in the evening. At the conclusion, the Manx national anthem is played and there is a firework display.

Another thing that attracts tourists to the Isle of Man is its rich and unique culture. Any visitor to the island will be particularly fascinated by the legends, folklore and the ancient traditions that are still kept alive today. Most tourists are happy to participate in the folk programmes.

In Manx mythology, the island's name comes from the name of a Celtic sea god. He ruled the kingdom and protected the land from invaders by covering the island with mist and thick fog.

The island is also reputedly home to fairies who are very special. The Manx fairies are described as small and human-like. They wear red caps and green jackets and are naughty and wicked. There's even a bridge called Fairy Bridge. Those who cross it are advised to say 'hello fairies' in order to get good fortune. If the person doesn't greet the fairies, the fairies will become angry with him and may play a nasty trick on him.

If you love reading about King Arthur and his knights, then a must-see place is Peel Castle. It was constructed in the 11th century by the Vikings and has a fascinating history. It is believed that Peel Castle was the location of Avalon – the legendary island where King Arthur's sword was made and where King Arthur was taken after being wounded.

13 **The Isle of Man is located in the Irish Sea.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 **The island's landscape looks all the same everywhere.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 **On Tynwald Day the Manx parliament has a day off.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 **The first Manx King ruled for a hundred years.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 **According to Manx beliefs, ignoring the fairies can cause trouble.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 **Peel Castle was built by the Vikings.**

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

19 **There are a few statues of King Arthur on the Isle of Man.**

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## Scouts

On January 24, 1908, the Boy Scout movement started in England with the publication of Robert Baden-Powell's handbook Scouting for Boys. The name Baden-Powell, a brave officer, was already well-known to many English boys, and thousands of them eagerly bought the handbook. By the end of April, numerous Boy Scout troops had appeared across Britain.

In 1900, General Baden-Powell became a national hero in Britain for his 217-day defense of Mafeking in the Second Boer War in South Africa. Soon after, his military field manual, Aids to Scouting, written for British soldiers in 1899, became popular with a younger audience. Boys loved the lessons on tracking and observation and organized outdoor games using the book. Hearing this, Baden-Powell decided to write a non-military field manual for teenagers that would also emphasize the importance of morality and good deeds.

First, however, he decided to try out some of his ideas on an actual group of boys. On July 25, 1907, he took a diverse group of 21 boys to Brownsea Island in Dorset, where they set up camp for two weeks. With the aid of other instructors, he taught the boys about camping, observation, deduction, woodcraft, boating, life saving, and good manners. Many of these lessons were learned through original games that were very popular with the boys. The first Boy Scout meeting was a great success. Soon the handbook Scouting for Boys appeared.

With the success of Scouting for Boys, Baden-Powell set up a central Boy Scouts' office, which registered new Scouts and designed a uniform. By the end of 1908, there were 60,000 Boy Scouts, and troops began to appear in British Commonwealth countries across the globe. The Scout movement supported the boys in their physical, mental and spiritual development. The boys learned to work together to achieve goals, they also gave a promise to live by certain rules, and to help others when they could.

In September 1909, the first national Boy Scout meeting was held at the Crystal Palace in London. Ten thousand Scouts showed up, including a group of uniformed girls who called themselves the Girl Scouts. A year later, Baden-Powell organized the Girl Guides as a separate organization.

The American version of the Boy Scouts has its origins in an event that occurred in London in 1909. Chicago publisher William Boyce lost his way in the fog. So he stopped under a street light to read his map when he was approached by a young British boy. The boy asked the man if he could help and William Boyce explained that he had got lost. After guiding Boyce to his destination, the boy refused a tip, explaining that as a Boy Scout he would not accept payment for doing a good deed. This anonymous gesture inspired Boyce to organize several regional U.S. youth organizations. The Scouts movement soon spread throughout the country. In 1912, Juliette Gordon Low founded the Girl Scouts of America in Savannah, Georgia.

In 1920 the first international Boy Scout Jamboree was held in London, and Robert Baden-Powell got the title Chief Scout of the World. The founder of the Scout organization died in 1941.

Nowadays, the Scouts Movement exists in 216 different countries all over the world, there are more than 28 million boy scouts and over 10 million girl scouts.

- 13 Robert Baden-Powell was a secondary school teacher.  
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- 14 The success of Aids to Scouting made Robert Baden-Powell write a similar book for young people.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 15 The word scout was invented by Robert Baden-Powell.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 16 The first camp organised by Robert Baden-Powell on an island was a failure.  
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- 17 The Boy Scouts' rules and the Girl Scouts' rules were different.  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 18 William Boyce founded the Boy Scouts organization in the USA because he was impressed by the behaviour of a British Scout.  
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## Honesty lesson

Josh Ferrin worked as an artist for the Deseret News in Salt Lake City, Utah. The newspaper has the longest history in the state and the biggest Sunday circulation. Josh had a lot of work and hoped that in several years he could save up for a house of his own.

Josh adored his wife and two children. They spent holidays together travelling in their old car that broke down regularly. At weekends in winter, they watched their favourite movies in a rented flat that seemed smaller and smaller as the children were growing.

Once Josh and his wife were watching a TV program about children who lived in an orphanage and needed parents. They were so deeply moved by the children's sad life stories that they decided to adopt a child. The only thing that could stop them was the small flat. That was the moment Josh started looking for a new house.

Finding a proper house was not an easy thing to do. They wanted it to be not very expensive, big enough and have some history. Finally, Josh brought his wife to look at an outdated two-storey house with a large attic. Though the house needed repair, there was something about it that made Josh and his wife like it. The real estate agent told them the story of the previous owner. He had six children but lived a lonely life in that house and died several years ago. His children decided to sell the old house and share the money.

When they moved in, they went on exploring the house. The massive staircases, cosy bedrooms, a large kitchen and an airy living-room were all they could dream of. The only door that was closed led to the attic below the roof. The next day when his wife and children were away, Josh managed to unlock the door and decided to inspect the attic.

The dark space was empty, with spiders' webs hanging in the corners. Josh turned on the light and noticed a pile of boxes and tins in one of the corners. A small, broken bike lay nearby. Josh thought the room would be ideal for his art studio and started cleaning it up. He threw away several empty boxes when he suddenly found out that all the rest were stuffed with old books.

Josh drew out several books from one of the boxes and found a thick pile of banknotes at the bottom. When the family returned, Josh called his wife and told her about the treasure he had found. He also showed her a short notice he had found in the same box. The message, 'to my children', was written on a piece of yellowish paper.

The sum was enough to buy a new car and repair the house for their own growing family and the child the Ferrins wanted to adopt. The temptation to keep the money was great, but Josh and his wife understood it was not their money.

The next week Josh found the previous owner's family and handed them the money and the note.

13 Josh Ferrin started his career at the newspaper after his marriage.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

14 The members of Josh's family often spent free time together.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

15 Josh's children approved of their parents' idea to adopt a child.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

16 The previous owner of the house had moved to live with his children.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

17 Josh wanted to arrange a place to work in the attic.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

18 In the message, the previous owner asked to give the money to the local hospital.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

19 Josh Ferrin fulfilled the will of the previous owner of the house.

- 1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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## Fish and chips

Long before the Big Mac was invented, Britain had its own national form of fast food – fish and chips (or fish'n'chips for short). Fish'n'chips was a relatively balanced and healthy meal that people could eat in the street on the way home from work, or during their lunch-break. Wrapped in newspaper, it would keep warm even on the coldest days of the year. Besides, serving fish'n'chips in newspaper helped to keep prices low.

No British town is more than 150 km from a sea port, and most are much closer. So when railways were built in the 19th century, fresh sea fish could easily be bought in all British towns. Cheaper than meat, sea fish became a popular source of protein. By 1870, fish and chip shops were opening all over the country and soon every town in Britain had its fish'n'chip shops. For a hundred years, they were a popular British style restaurant.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, things changed. "Fish and chips are not so popular with young people these days," says Lizzie, a teenager. "Most of the time, if young people want to eat out, they'll go to a Burger King or a Chinese take-away. Fish 'n' chips is a bit old-fashioned. But there are still cheap chip shops around. We sometimes have it at home, and we go and get it from the chip shop. It saves cooking!"

Thousands of chip shops have closed in the last twenty-five years. Some have been turned into Chinese or Indian take-aways, others have just closed. They have survived best in seaside towns, where the fish is really fresh, and people visit them more as a tradition than for any other reason.

Yet nothing, perhaps, can save the classic fish'n'chip shop from disappearance. Fish'n'chips wrapped in newspaper is already just a memory. European hygiene rules don't allow food to be wrapped in old newspapers, so today's chip shops use cardboard boxes. Of course, you can still eat fish and chips with your fingers if you want, but there are now plastic throw-away forks for people who do not want to get greasy fingers!

In spite of these changes, the classic fish'n'chip shop could disappear in a few years' time for another reason – lack of fish. For over ten years European agriculture ministers have been trying to solve the fish problem but with little success. As a result of industrial fishing, some types of fish are disappearing. Limits on the number of fish that can be caught have been introduced, but fishermen in Britain and other countries protest against them because jobs are lost. At some point, thousands of European fishermen could lose their jobs anyway, as there will be few fish left to catch. Soon sea fish will become rarer and, as a result, more expensive.

The traditional fish'n'chip shops will certainly continue to reduce in number. Soon cheap fish'n'chip shops will be gone completely. Fish and chips, however, will survive as a high-priced specialty in some expensive restaurants. In the years to come, they may become the only place where you can try this traditional English dish.

- 13 **Fish'n'chips became popular much earlier than Big Macs.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 14 **Traditionally only fish with white meat were used to make fish'n'chips.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 15 **In the 19th century, in Britain, fish was more expensive than meat.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 16 **According to Lizzie, today's young people prefer burgers to fish'n'chips.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 17 **The number of fish'n'chip shops in Britain is rising steadily.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 18 **New packaging has made fish'n'chips more popular.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated
- 19 **In the near future there will be fewer places where people can try fish'n'chips.**  
1) True                      2) False                      3) Not stated

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