



national science week



PUB TRIVIA



ROUND 1- SCIENCE DOWN UNDER

1. Which Australian animal does cube-shaped poos, which it stacks into 'poo castles' to mark its territory?

ANSWER: Wombat (Common wombat to be precise, but 'wombat' is an acceptable answer!)

(Source- <https://www.science.org/content/article/how-do-wombats-poop-cubes-scientists-get-bottom-mystery>)

2. How recently was the last volcanic eruption on mainland Australia?

- A. 5,000 years ago
- B. 50,000 years ago
- C. 500,000 years ago
- D. 5 million years ago

ANSWER: A. 5,000 years ago

(Source- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-11/volcanoes-on-tablelands-queensland-when-could-they-erupt/101952536>)

3. Did Charles Darwin visit Darwin?

ANSWER: No

(Source- <https://www.darwin.nt.gov.au/community/about-darwin/history>)

4. A pliosaur skeleton, discovered in Coober Pedy, had bones replaced by what gemstone in the process of being fossilised?

ANSWER: Opal

Bonus info: He is nicknamed "Eric" and is on display at the Australian Museum in Sydney. Eric was a very small pliosaur, only about the size of a living seal.

(Source- <https://australian.museum/learn/australia-over-time/extinct-animals/omoonasaurus-demoscylus/>)

5. 30 years ago (in 1996), what percentage of Australian households had access to the internet?

- A. 1%
- B. 4%
- C. 14%
- D. 24%

ANSWER: B. Just 4%

Bonus info: This jumped to 19% by 1998, just 2 years later.

(Source- <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/37615266badb1dceca2570ec0011493c!OpenDocument>)

6. Dr. Shannon Kilmartin-Lynch, a proud First Nations man and civil engineer from Victoria has used what quintessentially 'Melbourne' product to make extra-strong concrete?

- A. Recycled Myki cards
- B. Coffee waste
- C. Old electrical wires from trams
- D. Worn out AFL footballs

ANSWER: B. Coffee waste

Bonus info: He is now researching how Indigenous plant resins traditionally used to build canoes could be used to strengthen concrete.

(Source- <https://www.monash.edu/engineering/shannonkilmartinlynch>)

7. In which direction is the continent of Australia slowly moving?

- A. South-East
- B. West
- C. North-East
- D. East

ANSWER: C. North-East

(Source: <https://www.ga.gov.au/news/news-archive/australia-officially-moves-1.8-metres-northeast>)

Bonus info: It moves at around the same rate as your fingernails grow (7cm per year).

8. Wi-Fi is an Australian invention that allows computers to connect to the internet without using wires. What does Wi-Fi stand for?

- A. Without Fibres
- B. Without Fixtures
- C. Wireless Fidelity
- D. It doesn't stand for anything - a marketing agency made it up

ANSWER: D- It doesn't stand for anything

Bonus info: Wi-Fi was originally called the 'IEEE 802.11b Direct Sequence', which isn't very catchy!

(Source: <https://www.newscientist.com/question/what-does-wi-fi-stand-for/>)

9. The Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station received and relayed the first televised footage of astronaut Neil Armstrong setting foot on the Moon in July 1969. Which Australian capital city is it closest to?

ANSWER: Canberra

Bonus info: Another radio telescope in California at Goldstone was also receiving images, but human error led to the picture being upside down, so NASA turned to Honeysuckle Creek instead.

(Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-18/the-dish-is-a-great-comedy-but-certainly-not-a-documentary/11318862>)

10. What is the Australian invention 'Gardasil'?

- A. A vaccine that prevents cervical cancer
- B. A chemical that permanently sets pleats in fabric
- C. The main ingredient in spray-on-skin, used to treat burns victims
- D. A plastic polymer that creates extra strong and flexible shin guards for sports

ANSWER: A. It's a vaccine that prevents cervical cancer

Bonus info: It protects women against 4 strains of a virus called human papillomavirus (HPV), known to cause three-quarters of all cervical cancers.

(Source: <https://www.cancer.nsw.gov.au/prevention-and-screening/screening-and-early-detection/cervical-screening/hpv-and-cervical-cancer/what-is-the-hpv-vaccine>)

ROUND 2- QUIRKY SCIENCE

1. What sort of non-human animal was listed as a co-author on a physics paper?

ANSWER: A cat

Bonus info: A Siamese cat named Chester to be precise. His owner (the author of the paper) added Chester as a co-author when he realized that although he was the sole author, he used the plural "we" and "our" while writing the paper... although he gave the cat a pseudonym so he wouldn't be recognised. For many years you could write to the university and ask for a signed copy of the paper, and you would get an inked paw print as well as the human author's signature.

(Source: <https://www.science.org/content/article/cat-co-authored-influential-physics-paper>)

2. What flying craft was first tested using a sheep, a duck and a rooster as passengers in 1783?

ANSWER: A hot air balloon

(Source- <https://time.com/3583782/hot-air-balloon-history/>)

3. What type of oil can be processed into dynamite?

- A. Peanut
- B. Sesame
- C. Sunflower
- D. Olive

ANSWER: Peanut

(Source: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/peanuts-can-be-explosive-and-other-amazing-food-facts-1.2426990>)

4. In 1969, Neil Armstrong carried a tiny piece of fabric on his journey to the Moon. In 2020, a piece of the same fabric travelled all the way to Mars. Where did this fabric come from originally?

ANSWER: The Wright brothers' first successful airplane

(Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/science/space/part-wright-brothers-1st-airplane-nasas-mars-chopper-rcna483>, <https://www.flyingmag.com/the-wright-flyer-makes-it-to-space-in-pieces/>)

5. What do humans, koalas and gorillas have in common that could be of interest to forensic scientists?

ANSWER: They all have unique fingerprints

(Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-01/biometrics-koalas-and-wood-glue-fascinating-fingerprint-facts/9920802>)

6. Up until around 50,000 years ago, Australia was home to flightless birds that could grow up to 2.5 metres tall and weighed up to 300kg (8 times as much as an emu). What were they nicknamed by scientists?

- A. The demon duck of doom
- B. The extreme emu
- C. The killer cassowary
- D. The gigantic, ghastly goose

ANSWER: A. The demon duck of doom

(Source: <https://australian.museum/learn/australia-over-time/extinct-animals/dromornis-planei-bullockornis-planei/>)

7. According to the 'Birthday Problem' in mathematics, how many people do you need to gather in a room to have a greater than 50% chance that at least two of them will share a birthday?

- A. 23
- B. 73
- C. 153
- D. 223

ANSWER: A. Just 23

(Source: <https://www.chiefscientist.gov.au/2011/05/the-birthday-problem>, <https://betterexplained.com/articles/understanding-the-birthday-paradox/>)

8. Which of the following songs does NOT have the right number of beats-per-minute to keep an appropriate rhythm while doing chest compressions for CPR?

- A. Stayin Alive by the Bee Gees
- B. Achey Breaky Heart by Billy Ray Cyrus
- C. Highway to Hell by ACDC
- D. Hallelujah by Jeff Buckley

ANSWER: D. Hallelujah. It's generally sung too slowly to keep an appropriate rhythm

(Source: <https://www.firstresponse-ed.com/blog/the-great-cpr-song-list/>)

9. A species of horse fly with a golden bottom was named after what singer in 2012?
Hint- it was first collected in 1981, the same year the singer was born.

ANSWER: Beyonce! Its full name is *Scaptia beyonceae*

(Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-01-13/horse-fly-named-after-beyonce/3771224>)

10. How much is a score plus a baker's dozen?

ANSWER: 33

(Source: <https://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2021/10/in-a-word-4-scores-and-700-years-ago/>, <https://www.britannica.com/story/why-is-a-bakers-dozen-13>)

ROUND 3- ADULTS-ONLY SCIENCE

1. In 2022, scientists determined that an animal species has a well-developed clitoris that is better positioned for pleasure during penetrative sex than the clitoris of humans. Which animal were they studying?

- A. Duck
- B. Dolphin
- C. Barnacle
- D. Owl

ANSWER: B. Dolphins

(Source: <https://www.sciencealert.com/ behold-the-dolphin-clitoris-in-all-its-engorged-glory>)

Bonus info: In the wild, for instance, bottlenose dolphins have been observed partaking in group orgies, where male and females alike use their snouts, flippers, and flukes to rub the protruding clitorises and penises of their peers. Direct stimulation of the clitoris has also been observed in sexual interactions between only females.

2. TRUE OR FALSE: Hangover symptoms peak when the blood alcohol concentration in the body returns to close to zero.

ANSWER: True

(Source: <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/hangovers>)

3. Research on which domesticated animal led to the development of IVF and artificial insemination?

ANSWER: Sheep

(Source- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2024-03-30/sheep-behaviour-cognition-history-medical-research-flocks/103634104>, <https://www.nowtolove.com.au/lifestyle/sex-relationships/sex-in-socks-17265/>)

4. Southern right whales are incredibly well-endowed... roughly how much is the combined weight of their 2 testicles?

- A. 50kg
- B. 500kg
- C. 1,000kg
- D. 2,000kg

ANSWER: C.1,000kg

Bonus info: That's about the same weight as a VW Beetle.

(Source: <https://www.iflscience.com/right-whales-testicles-weigh-a-ton-literally-68079>)

5. Which grass, covering nearly a third of Australia, has long been prized by First Nations Australians to make glue and is now being used to create super-thin, super-strong condoms and medical gels that could help treat arthritis?

ANSWER: Spinifex

(Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-10/spinifex-grass-used-to-make-super-thin-condoms/7158046>)

6. A 2012 study found that beer was consumed more slowly when drunk from what type of glass- a fluted/curved glass, or a straight glass?

ANSWER: Straight

(Source: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3422221/>, <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0202793>)

Bonus info: Those drinking beer from the curved glass finished their drinks nearly **twice as fast** as the participants drinking the alcohol from the straight-sided glass, because they struggled to estimate what proportion of their drink was left.

7. Layered cocktails use more dense liquids at the bottom and less dense ones on top to keep the layers separate. What would be layered highest/on top of the following cocktail ingredients list? Grenadine, Blue Curacao, Vodka?

ANSWER: Vodka

(Source: <https://bartenderly.com/tips-tricks/alcohol-density-chart>)

8. Commonly referred to as the 'little blue pill', Viagra is used to treat erectile dysfunction. What condition was it originally designed to treat?

ANSWER: Angina

(Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2023/dec/02/viagra-fginventor-welsh-miners-began-rise-dr-david-brown>)

9. TRUE OR FALSE: Research consistently shows that people are more likely to tilt their head to the right while kissing.

ANSWER: True

(Source: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/case-studies/humans-hardwired-to-lean-to-the-right-while-kissing-the-world-over/>)

10. What is the most common STI (sexually transmitted infection) in Australia amongst people, as of 2025?

ANSWER: Chlamydia

(Source: <https://www1.racgp.org.au/newsgp/clinical/surge-in-most-stis-over-the-past-10-years>)

ROUND 4- SCIENCE VS ART

1. What is the main element that gives fireworks a blue colour?

ANSWER: Copper

(Source: <https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/what-minerals-produce-colors-fireworks>)

2. Which UK band released the song 'The Scientist' in 2002?

ANSWER: Coldplay

3. What was the name of the 2016 film about the lives of African American mathematicians who worked at NASA?

ANSWER: Hidden Figures

4. Which Shakespeare play features the lines "I do present you with a man of mine, Cunning in music and the mathematics, To instruct her fully in those sciences"?

Hint: It was also the inspiration for a 1999 teen rom com featuring Heath Ledger.

ANSWER: The Taming of the Shrew

(Source: <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/the-taming-of-the-shrew/read/2/1/>)

5. Sarah Bareilles, John Mayer and Sarah McLachlan all sing a song with the same name, which also describes a force. What is it called?

ANSWER: Gravity

6. The song 'Blue Sky Mine' by Australian band Midnight Oil is about a mine that digs up what mineral?

ANSWER: Asbestos

(Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/doublej-classic-albums/midnight-oil-blue-sky-mining/12049578>)

7. Tyrian purple, first invented around the 16th century BCE, was a reddish-purple pigment worth three times as much as gold. What was it made from?

- A. Sea slug mucus
- B. Human urine
- C. Sea urchin spines

D. Bile from civet gallbladders

ANSWER: A. Sea slug mucus

(Source: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20231122-tyrian-purple-the-lost-ancient-pigment-that-was-more-valuable-than-gold>)

8. Which 1997 film starred a young Ethan Hawke and is named using letters used for the nucleobases of DNA?

ANSWER: GATTACA

9. Which comedic science fiction novel, released in 1979, describes space this way: "Space is big. You just won't believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the road to the chemist's, but that's just peanuts to space."?

ANSWER: The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

10. The Voyager Golden Records were sent into space in 1977. Which of the following pieces of music was NOT included?

- A. Johnny B. Goode by Chuck Berry
- B. The Magic Flute by Mozart
- C. Fifth Symphony, First Movement by Beethoven
- D. Here Comes the Sun by The Beatles

ANSWER: D. Here Comes the Sun by The Beatles

Bonus info: They wanted to include it, but there was a copyright dispute.

(Source: <https://science.nasa.gov/mission/voyager/golden-record-contents/sounds/>)