



TEXT 1

Browse the shelves of any reasonably sized bookshop and you will find an

15 secs

ever-growing collection of books and magazines devoted to popular science.

30 secs

Within these volumes the important questions of life are addressed and

undressed. How do birds fly? Was my great great grandfather really a

45 secs

monkey? Why does it take three minutes to boil an egg? These are surely

60 secs

questions that demand an unreserved answer.



TEXT 2

'You really are a naughty boy!' exclaimed Miss. And she pulled Kishy to his

15 secs

feet by the scruff of his neck. And then, she did the most absurd thing. She

30 secs

patted him softly about three or four times on the seat of his pants with her

hand. She explained, 'That wasn't meant to hurt you, it was meant to hurt

45 secs

your pride.' Well, we all fell about laughing. It was the funniest thing since

60 secs

we had tied Colin Edgerton to a lamppost.



3. The unthinkable happened when the unsinkable sank. The luxury liner, S.S. Titanic, struck an iceberg ninety-five miles south of Newfoundland. As a consequence, five of its sixteen watertight compartments were wholly ruptured. It took less than three hours for the ship to go down. One thousand five hundred and thirteen people lost their lives in what became one of the worst disasters in history.

4. Titan had a knack of employing strange people. At the time when I was in their employ, I thought this phenomenon to be just peculiar to them. However, since then, my experience of other employers and the world - while evidently not exhaustive - has increased and led me to the staunch conclusion that this is quite a generalized phenomenon. Just how do people in top jobs get them?

5. At the age of twenty-two Charles Darwin took up a position as naturalist aboard a survey ship – the H.M.S. Beagle. Through his observations of rock formations, fossils and living organisms he developed the concept of natural selection. His complete theory of evolution was published twenty-eight years later in the now famous book, *On the Origin of Species*.



6. Galileo favored the view put forward by Copernicus that the earth revolved around the sun. Following his development of the telescope, he was able to make careful observations that supported this account. After publishing his findings, he was later summoned to Rome by the Catholic Inquisition for grave heresy. He was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.

7. For most people, such an act would result in acute concussion. Kev, however, was endowed with the cranium of a woodpecker and can withstand such impacts with ease. It really is an admirable trick. Mind you, it's not the sort of trick to encourage in these new modern houses with plasterboard walls, Kev's head would smash through them as if they were wet tissue paper. A substantial brick wall is needed.

8. There is often a tendency to overreact when things don't go the way we expect. We have a predetermined plan of what should and shouldn't happen, and when this fails it can make us feel extremely prickly. In intense situations, tempers are often frayed, and things are frequently said that should have been left unsaid. Feelings are often hurt and, in extreme circumstances, long friendships may be shattered.



100 spm

9. It is no coincidence that the greatest footballers are also the ones who put in the most effort in practicing their skills. When many of the other players have left the training ground, the greats remain and practice: shooting, heading, turning, crossing but never, ever diving! Why, that would be cheating wouldn't it? And surely the greatest of the greats wouldn't stoop to such mean and dreadful tactics...would they?
10. I believe that if I ever had the opportunity of going back in my life to a time I loved the most then it would be to those unforgettable days with Rob. The days were long and carefree, full of activity; unceasing ideas for enjoyment; the birth of projects; fantasies lived, and a growing up with a friend with whom there was a mutual feeling for adventure and great fun.
11. Electronic book shops are all the rage nowadays. More and more of us are turning a cold shoulder to the established high street shop in favor of grabbing more than a few bargains over the internet. And, with the emergence of new, so-called e-books, that can be instantaneously delivered via an e-mail, this seems to serve the needs of modern shoppers who know what they want and want it now!



100 spm

12. A large number of clubs now exist throughout the country. And fencing is not as expensive to take up as you might imagine. Most clubs will charge a realistic membership fee which, more often than not, includes the loan of equipment as well as tuition. If you make enquiries at, for example, your local sports center they should be able to put you in contact with a reputable club.

13. Perhaps the best-known teenybopper idols of the 1970s are the Osmonds. Formerly a four-member group of brothers, including Alan, Wayne, Merrill and Jay, they were later joined by younger siblings Donny and Jimmy. Their only sister, Marie, also frequently performed alongside the eventual superstars. The pop heartthrobs of the 70s continue to perform today.

14. The North Yorkshire Moors is one of England's finest national parks and is genuinely a northern treasure. While it does not have the mountainous landscape of the English Lake District, you can similarly wander around besieged castles, historic churches, abbeys and ancient ruins of all descriptions, in the midst of stunning scenery. Likewise, the wildlife is exceptionally rich and wide-ranging.



100 spm

15. Nestled on the coast, snug against the North Yorkshire Moors, is the delightful seaside town of Whitby. The picturesque harbor is best known for its most famous seaman, Captain James Cook and a monument to his memory and achievements is situated on the West Cliff, overlooking the harbor. Another famous son is Frank Sutcliffe, photographer. There remains a Sutcliffe Gallery to this day.

16. Is it really the Venice of the north? Bruges in Belgium has often been described this way. It's certainly romantic, with its petite streets, agreeable squares and miniature canals. But does it actually have the grandeur of San Marco, the character of San Polo, or its legendary Lagoon and the gondoliers? Lovely though it is, I still don't think this is a worthy comparison.

17. The Himalayas should really be referred to as the Himalaya. It's not a plural – there aren't several of them! In point of fact, the word means 'abode of snow'. Quite fitting really for this highest and youngest of mountain ranges on planet Earth. Trekking through this wonderland provides an amazing opportunity to encounter religious and cultural traditions among a friendly people.



100 spm

18. Charlotte Church is one of the world's most successful classical female artists. At the age of 13 she became an international sensation when she released her first album, Voice of an Angel. Her repertoire now covers everything from the classics and Broadway musicals to opera and pop. She is both charming and captivating. She has, though, kept her feet firmly on the ground at home in Cardiff.

19. Bonsai is the art of growing miniature trees. It is, of course, a Japanese word. Literally translated it means "tree in a tray". It is an ancient art that, in fact, originated in China and not in Japan at all. It is still popular in China today. However, the greatest influences on bonsai in the West have come from Japan, where the miniature trees are much more stylized.

20. The Christmas cracker was invented in 1847 by a man called Tom Smith. In its simplest form the Christmas cracker is just a small cardboard tube which is typically covered in a brightly covered twist of paper. The tube contains a narrow strip of cardboard that has been soaked in appropriate chemicals. When the cracker is pulled, friction heats up the chemicals and creates the well-known 'pop'.