
BECOME A
GENIUS
IN A YEAR*
*NO REFUNDS

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MIKE RAMPTON

BECOME A GENIUS IN A YEAR*

*NO REFUNDS

A FACT A DAY TO BECOME A SUPERBRAIN!



ILLUSTRATED by GARETH WILLIAMS

HC CB
HARPERCOLLINS CHILDREN'S BOOKS


To Phoenix,
the funniest, loveliest,
most magnificent genius
in the world – M.R.

YOUR BRAINY YEAR AHEAD

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HELLO. I AM THE WORLD'S MOST INCREDIBLE GENIUS.

I go by many names. **Professor Intellect. Doctor Know-it-all. Captain Cleverbottom** (I only used that one for a while – it's silly). I don't like to boast, but being **the world's MOST intelligent clever-clogs** comes with huge responsibility. My brain is filled with so much knowledge that it would be unfair not to share it, plus I'm slightly worried that there are so many facts inside my skull that if I don't share any of them it might **EXPLODE**. And I don't want to have to clean that up.

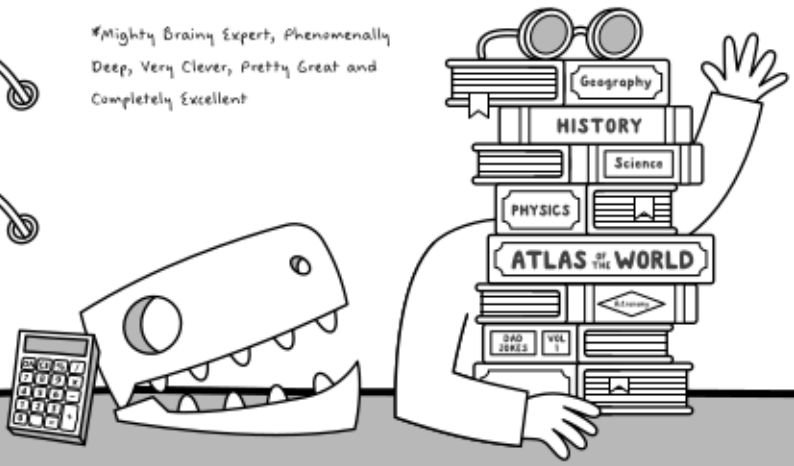
Therefore, I'm offering you this year-long course – read one fact from this book every day, and in just **365 days** you'll go from a regular person to a full-on intellectual powerhouse, and take your Genius-O-Meter from **LOW** to **WOAH!** There is a year of completely true, fascinating facts within these pages – mindblowing truths from the worlds of science, medicine, history, geography and whatever it's called when you look at sharks. (I **DEFINITELY** know it, I just can't think of the word right now.)

Obviously as the world's foremost turbo-genius I'm **extremely** busy doing things like having ideas for new types of helicopter, making up interesting dances, solving all the world's problems really easily and saying, "**Well, actually**" whenever someone says anything wrong. I therefore gave the making of this book to some less spectacular minions – a **hard-working** illustrator who drew all the pictures and a **lazy** writer who probably won't even read this bit! Any errors are **COMPLETELY** their fault, because I am an incredible genius and never make misteaks.

Go forth and become as clever as **ME (almost)**.

THE PROFESSOR
MBE, PhD, VC, PGCE*

*Mighty Brainy Expert, Phenomenally Deep, Very Clever, Pretty Great and Completely Excellent



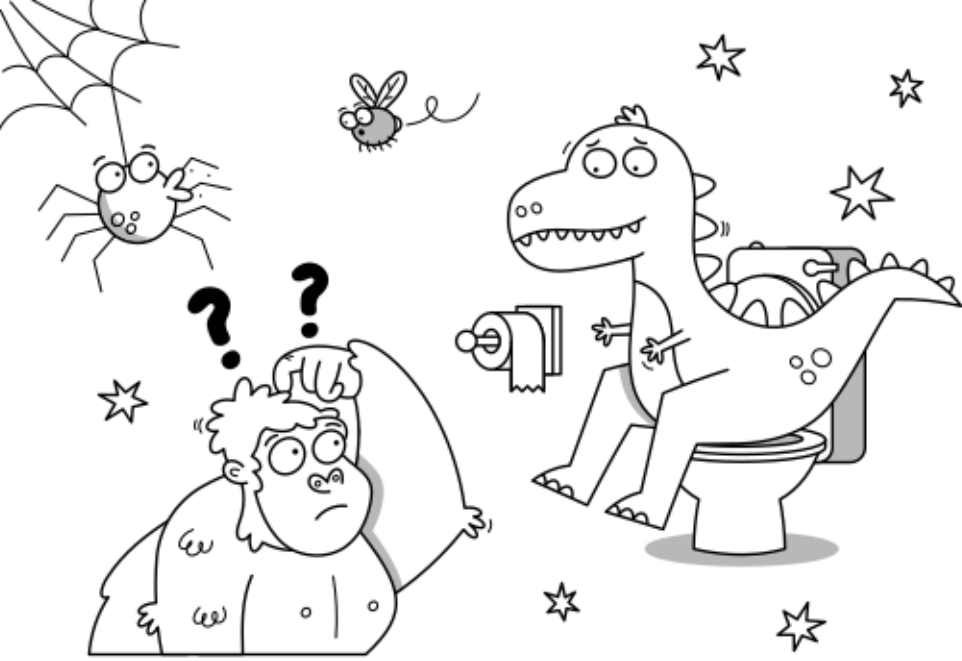
JANUARY

1st: On this day in 1818, the novel *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley was published, originally without her name on it. It is the story of a scientist who creates a monster in his laboratory.

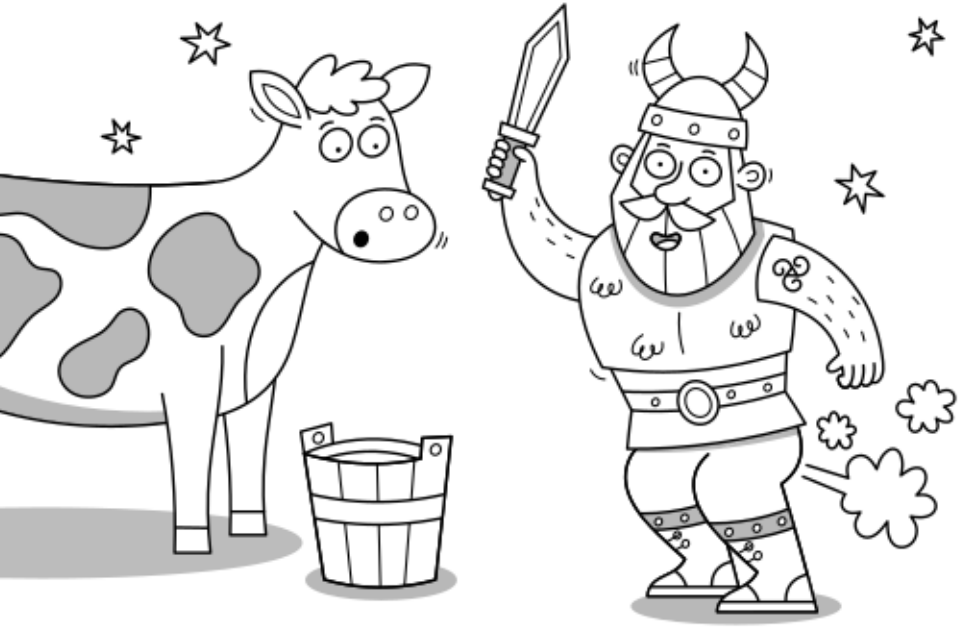
7th: In 2007, the first iPhone was unveiled. It seems big and clunky now, but absolutely blew people's minds.

22nd: Queen Victoria died on this day in 1901. She reigned for 64 years.





JANUARY



There are 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour and 24 hours in a day – that's 86,400 seconds every day. In a 365-day year, that's 31,536,000 seconds. If it's a leap year, with 366 days (and OF COURSE this book has 366 days in it), it's 31,622,400 seconds.



EITHER WAY, IT'S AGES AND YOU HAVE NO EXCUSE NOT TO FINISH THIS BOOK AND BECOME A MAGNIFICENT GENIUS.

2nd

Silly NICKNAMES

Here are 3 American sportspeople with household appliance nicknames . . .



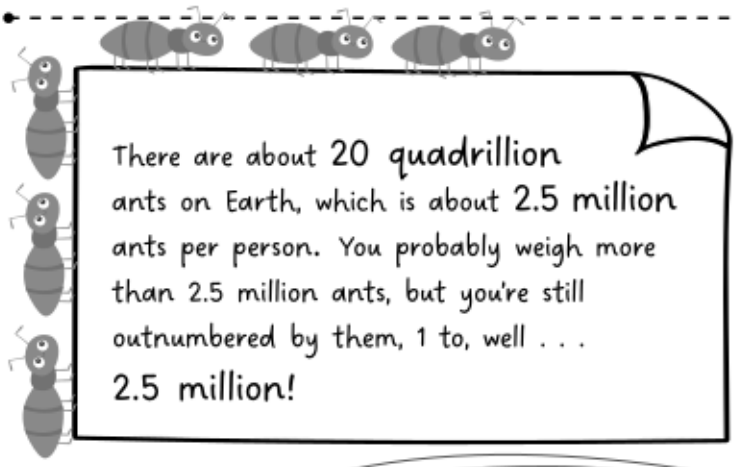
Vinnie **"The Microwave"** Johnson (basketball)

William **"The Refrigerator"** Perry (American football)



Brooks **"The Human Vacuum Cleaner"** Robinson (baseball)

3rd



There are about 20 quadrillion ants on Earth, which is about 2.5 million ants per person. You probably weigh more than 2.5 million ants, but you're still outnumbered by them, 1 to, well . . .

2.5 million!

DIFFERENT ANTS ALL HAVE DIFFERENT TASTES! SOME TASTE LIKE BACON, LEMON, VINEGAR OR NUTS, SOME ARE SWEET AND SOME TASTE LIKE SOAP!

4th

SPACE TOILET ACCIDENTS: One small wee for man

Buzz Aldrin, the second person to walk on the moon, was also the first person to **wet themselves** on it. Astronauts generally wear nappy-like garments under their spacesuits, because it's not like they can nip behind a crater for a poo or anything. Aldrin had a special bag that the wee was meant to go into, but it became detached on his climb to the lunar surface, so he spent his time on the moon with **wee sloshing around** in his boots.

ODD-SHAPED FLAGS

There are **195** national (and state) flags recognised by the United Nations, and 192 of them are rectangles. The flags of Switzerland and Vatican City are perfect **squares**, but a square is a type of rectangle, so that hardly counts!



Switzerland



Vatican City

The most unusual-shaped national flag in the world is the flag of Nepal. It's the only flag which is taller than it is wide, and consists of 2 differently-shaped **triangles** stacked one on top of the other. One has a sun on it and the other has a sun and a moon – and until 1962, the sun and the moon had **faces!**



Nepal

ACE!

6th

Human beings are less complex than tomatoes. Human DNA (the information inside cells that instructs the body what to do) has about 20,000 genes in it. Tomato DNA has about 32,000 genes. We're cleverer though!



THIS BOOK IS BETTER THAN ANYTHING A TOMATO'S EVER WRITTEN! (PROBABLY!)

7th

Words that sound DISGUSTING but mean NICE THINGS . . .



- **Bucolic (byoo-ko-lick):**
  This sounds like you have some sort of vomiting disease, but actually describes anything peaceful and pleasant in the countryside.
- **Pulchritudinous (puhl-kruh-choo-duh-nuhs):**
  This sounds evil at best, but actually means beautiful.
- **Stalwart (stawl-wuht):**
  This word sounds like, well, a kind of wart, but actually means loyal and hard-working. Not warty at all.

8th



According to a **law** that was introduced in the year 1313, it is **illegal** to wear a suit of armour in the Houses of Parliament in the United Kingdom. This law is still in place today.

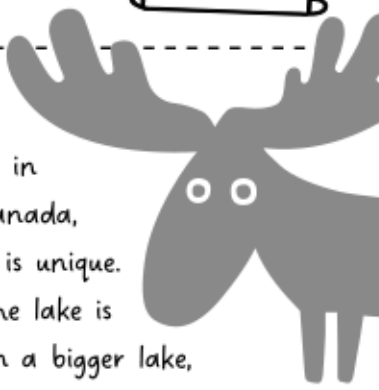
9th

AUSTRALIA is slightly wider than THE MOON.

Australia is about **4,000km** wide, while the diameter of the moon is around **3,400km**. The moon is a spherical shape, though, so it has a lot more surface area (38 million square km rather than Australia's 7.7 million square km).



10th



There is a tiny unnamed **island** in **Lake Yathkyed** in Nunavut, Canada, which, as far as anyone can tell, is unique. It's an **island** in a **lake**, but the lake is on an island, and the island is in a bigger lake, which is on a **bigger** island, which is in an even **bigger** lake.

CONFUSING, HUH?!



11th

In 2000, the **longest** train ever was put together, measuring **7.4km** (about a 2-hour walk) and had **682 carriages** pushed by **8 locomotives**. In 2001, it made a **275km** journey so the train covered almost **3%** of its journey's distance before even starting its engines.



JANUARY **12th**

40 SECONDS

after 1:46 p.m. today you are **1 million seconds** into the year. It's too soon to call yourself a **super-genius** just yet, but you're warming up. Your brain's stretching itself to expand into full-on intellectual **mega-being** territory.

KEEP IT UP!

13th

3 monarchs that ruled for LESS THAN A WEEKEND . . .

Louis XIX of France (1775–1844) was king for about 20 minutes on 2 August 1830. His father, Charles X, signed a document abdicating the throne following the French Revolution. Louis immediately abdicated on the same document, so was only king between the 2 signatures.

Luis II of Portugal (1887–1908) was briefly king. His father, Carlos I, was assassinated on 1 February 1908, and Luis was also injured in the attack. He outlived his father, and was technically king for less than half an hour.

Louis Phillippe II (1838–1894) was King of the French – almost, but not quite the same as King of France – from 24 to 26 February 1848.

How to Milk a Cow

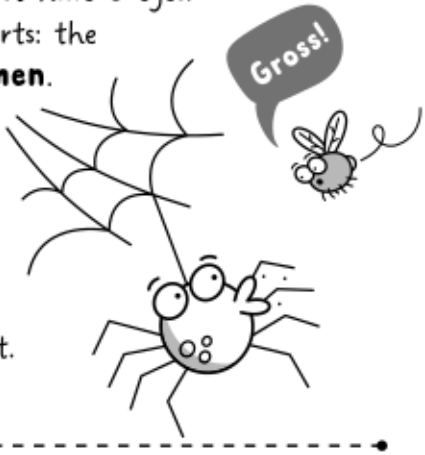
1. Clean the cow's udder. You want your cow friend to have a clean udder and teats. Wash your hands too. And your bucket.
2. Grip the top of one teat between your thumb and index finger, trapping milk in it.
3. Now tighten your other fingers around the teat, pushing the milk out.
4. Once you get the hang of it, alternate your hands doing 2 teats at once.
5. Enjoy a delicious (yet unsettlingly) warm drink!



MAKE SURE YOU ASK PERMISSION – MILKING THE WRONG COW CAN BE UDDERLY DISASTROUS!

Instant Genius: SPIDERS

- There are about 43,000 different spider species on Earth. Most are venomous, but less than 30 species' venom is deadly to humans.
- All spiders have 8 legs, and most have 8 eyes. Their bodies are split into 2 parts: the **cephalothorax** and **abdomen**.
- Instead of chewing, which they can't do, spiders grip food in their **chelicerae** (gripper-type structures near their mouths) and spit chemicals on it to make it soft.



16th

Rude-sounding airport codes

Every airport in the world has a 3-letter name known as an International Air Transport Association (IATA) code. London Heathrow's code is LHR; Los Angeles' is LAX. Some, though, look **rude.**

BUM: Butler Memorial Airport, Missouri, USA
PEE: Perm International Airport, Perm Krai, Russia
POO: Poços de Caldas Airport, Minas Gerais, Brazil

17th

8 minutes 20 seconds



This is how long it takes light from the sun to travel the **149 million km** to Earth.

18th

Identify countries by **OUTLINE**



Italy . . .
looks like a boot!



Finland . . .
looks like a rabbit!



South Africa . . .
looks like a rhino!

JANUARY 19th



6 Real VIKINGS with Insanely Cool Names

- Gunnstein Berserks'-Killer
- Eric Bloodaxe
- Harald Wartooth
- Sigurd Snake-In-The-Eye
- Ljot The Unwashed
- Eystein Foul-Fart

20th

Science's smelliest-sounding CHEMICALS

FARTOX: Also known as Earthcide and pentachloronitrobenzene, Fartox is a poison made to kill fungi, used mainly on golf courses.

BARF: The chemical Tetrakis[3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl]borate is an example of a non-co-ordinating ion known as BArF for short.

POO: Polonium monoxide, or PoO, is a rare, highly radioactive compound. It's only really of any interest to anyone because its chemical formula spells "poo".

I DEFINITELY UNDERSTAND WHAT ALL THESE CHEMICALS ARE AND WHAT THEY DO, AND THEY'RE NOT JUST HERE BECAUSE THEY HAVE FUNNY NAMES, SO DON'T EVEN THINK THAT.