

# These Are A Few Of My Favorite Things...

animals. Animals are my favorite things. If I'm bored – yeah, right, with 4 kids, when does that happen? Ok, if I were ever bored, my activity of choice would be to visit a zoo, wildlife park, pet store, or anyplace I could see animals. Without leaving the house, I can also research animals on the internet. One of my favorite animal sites is the [University of Michigan's Animal Diversity Web](#). It's amazing how much they've changed the taxonomy (classification of animals) from when I first started doing research on the subject not more than 10 years ago, but it's true – this field is one that's ever-changing.

Every now and then, I think I'll choose an animal to share on my blog. Today's animal is the pangolin. What is a pangolin, you ask? Well, it's a mammal, and it's not a marsupial, a group which contains some of the lesser known species. See, in the classification of mammals, you begin by separating them into placental mammals (live birth) and marsupials (young live in the mother's pouch – all but one type live in Australia). Of course, there is also a third category – egg-laying mammals, but we won't go there because I don't want to lose people's interest by getting too complicated.

So anyway, the pangolin is a placental mammal, yet it's scaly. The scales are actually made of a hair-like material, thereby preserving its status as mammal. Check this out – does this thing look prehistoric or what?



But they're not prehistoric; they still exist today – I wonder how come I've never seen one at a zoo? I guess it's because some animals do better in captivity than others, and I applaud the zoo community for recognizing this.

Interesting tidbits about pangolins, as stated on the Animal Diversity Web:

*Pangolins are a small group (seven living species placed in one genus and one family, Manidae) of mammals that feed mostly on ants. They are found in the tropical regions of Africa and Asia. Pangolins are conspicuous and remarkable because their backs are covered with large, overlapping scales made up of agglutinated hairs. But they are strange in other ways as well. Their tongue is extraordinarily long and muscular, arising from the pelvis and the last pair of ribs deep in the animal's chest. As a result, the tongue and associated muscles are longer than the animal's head and body, allowing the tongue to be extruded to an astonishing degree. Pangolins lack teeth. Instead, the the pyloric part of their stomach is thickened and muscular, with odd keratinous spines projecting into its interior. It usually contains pebbles and seems to be used for "chewing" in much the same way as a bird's gizzard. Pangolins have the ability to close their ears and nostrils as well as eyes, presumably to keep ants out.*

In short, pangolins are fascinating animals that are closer to you and me on the taxonomy tree than most people would guess – they are mammals, after all. Yet they are a mammal that most

people have not heard of, and surprisingly, there are more than a few mammalian species that have this in common – I will try to share little known facts about little known mammals in my blog.

And oh yeah, since there was a complaint in the comments of another tangents.org blog about this – the song I quoted in my title is “My Favorite Things” from The Sound of Music.

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## School humor

Today was kind of a blah day. I subbed for a primary ELL teacher and really only taught twice- the rest of the time I helped in classrooms. The lessons I taught weren't even that interesting really- one was on mammals and the other was brainstorming facts about frogs and toads. Sooo.... I think I will start something new. I will periodically post some school humor (jokes, etc.). I claim none of them for myself but they will be pulled off of other sites. Well, here we go...

### **Terrible world history**

*The following is a “history” collected by teachers throughout the United States, from eighth grade through college level.*

*Read carefully, and you will learn a lot of incorrect information.*

The inhabitants of ancient Egypt were called mummies. They lived in the Sarah Dessert and traveled by Camelot. The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere, so areas of the dessert are cultivated by irritation. The Egyptians built the Pyramids in the shape of a huge triangular cube. The Pyramids are a range of mountains between France and Spain.

The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book of the Bible, Guinnesses, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, once asked, "Am I my brother's son?" God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Montezuma. Jacob, son of Isaac, stole his brother's birth mark. Jacob was a patriarch who brought up his twelve sons to be patriarchs, but they did not take it. One of Jacob's sons, Joseph, gave refuse to the Israelites.

Pharaoh forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw. Moses led them to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients.

Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Philatelists, a race of people who lived in the Biblical times. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 500 wives and 500 porcupines.

Without the Greeks we wouldn't have history. The Greeks invented three kinds of columns – Corinthian, Doric, and Ionic. They also had myths. A myth is a female moth. One myth says that the mother of Achilles dipped him in the River Styx until he became intollerable. Achilles appears in The Iliad, by Homer. Homer also wrote The Oddity, in which Penelope was the last hardship that Ulysses endured on his journey. Actually, Homer was not written by Homer but by another man of that name.

Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock.

In the Olympic games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits, they threw the javelin. The reward to the victor was a coral wreath. The government of Athens was democratic because people took the law into their own hands. There were no wars in Greece, as the mountains were so high that they couldn't climb over to see what their neighbors were doing. When they

fought with the Persians, the Greeks were outnumbered because the Persians had more men.

Eventually, the Romans conquered the Greeks. History calls people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long. At Roman banquets, the guests wore garlic in their hair. Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king. Nero was a cruel tyranny who would torture his poor subjects by playing the fiddle to them.

Then came the Middle Ages. King Alfred conquered the Domes. King Arthur lived in the Age of Shiver, King Harold mustered his troops before the Battle of Hastings, Joan of Arc was canonized by Bernard Shaw, and victims of the Black Death grew boils on their necks. Finally, Magna Carta provided that no free man should be hanged twice for the same offense.

In medieval time most of the people were illiterate. The greatest writer of the time was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and verses and also wrote literature. Another tale tells of William Tell, who shot an arrow through an apple while standing on his son's head.

The Renaissance was an age in which more individuals felt the value of their human being. Martin Luther was nailed to the church door at Wittenberg for selling papal indulgences. He died a horrible death, being excommunicated by a bull. It was the painter Donatello's interest in the female nude that made him the father of the Renaissance. It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented the Bible. Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the world with a 100 foot clipper.

The government of England was a limited mockery. Henry VIII found walking difficult because he had an abscess on his knee.

Queen Elizabeth was the "Virgin Queen." As a queen she was a success. When Elizabeth exposed herself before her troops, they all shouted, "hurrah." Then her navy went out and defeated the Spanish Armadillo.

The greatest write of the Renaissance was William Shakespear. Shakespear never made much money and is only famous because of his plays. He lived at Windsor with his merry wives, writing tragedies, comedies and errors. In one of Shakespear's famous plays, Hamlet rations out his situation by relieving himself in a long soliloquy. In another, Lady Macbeth tried to convince Macbeth to kill the Kind by attack his manhood. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet. Writing at the same time as Shakespear was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote Donkey Hote. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote Paradise Lost. Then his wife died and he wrote Paradise Regained.

During the Renaissance America began. Christopher Columbus was a great navigator who discovered America while cursing about the Atlantic. His ships were called the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Fe. Later, the Pilgrims crossed the Ocean, and this was known as Pilgrims Progress. When they landed at Plymouth Rock, they were greeted by the Indians, who came down the hill rolling their war hoops before them. The Indian squabs carried porpoises on their back. Many of the Indian heroes were killed, along with their cabooses, which proved very fatal for them. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for the settlers. Many people died and many babies were born. Captain John Smith was responsible for all this.

One of the causes of the Revolutionary Wars was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. During the War, the Red Coats and Paul Revere was throwing balls over stone walls. The dogs were barking and the peacocks crowing. Finally, the colonists won the War and no longer had to pay for taxis.

Delegates from the original thirteen states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin had gone to Boston carrying all his clothes in his pocket and a loaf of bread under each arm. He invented electricity by rubbing two cats backwards and declared, "A horse devided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

George Washington married Martha Curtis and in due time became the Father of Our Country. Then the Constitution of the United States was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the Constitution the people enjoyed the right to keep bare arms.

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest president. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln was President, he wore only a tall silk hat. He said, "In onion there is strength." Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg address while traveling from Washington to Gettysburg on the back of an envelope. He also freed the slaves by signing the Emasculation Proclamation, and the Fourteenth Amendment gave the ex-Negroes citizenship. But the Clue Clux Clan would torcher and lynch the ex-Negroes and other innocent victims. It claimed it represented law and odor. On the night of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assinator was John Wilkes Booth, a supposingly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

Meanwhile in Europe, the enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltare invented electricity and also wrote a book called Candy. Graity was invented by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the Autumn, when the apples are falling off trees.

Bach was the most famous composer in the world, and so was Handel. Handel was half German, half Italian, and half

English. He was very large. Bach died from 1750 to the present. Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

France was in a very serious state. The French Revolution was accomplished before it happened. The Marseillaise was the theme song of the French Revolution, and it catapulted into Napoleon. During the Napoleonic Wars, the crowned heads of Europe were trembling in their shoes. The the Spanish gorillas came down from the hills and nipped at Napoleon's flanks. Napoleon became ill with bladder problems and was very tense and unrestrained. He wanted an heir to inherit his power, but since Josephine was a baroness, she couldn't bear children.

The sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire is in the East and the sun sets in the West. Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She sat on a thorn for 63 years. Her reclining years and finally the end of her life were exemplary of a great personality. Her death was the final event which ended her reign.

The nineteenth century was a time of many great inventions and thoughts. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Cyrus McCormick invented the McCormick reaper, which did the work of hundred men. Samuel Morse invented a code of telepathy. Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabbiis. Charles Darwin was a naturalist who wrote the Organ of the Species.