

So, how did you do? Did you get a good haul¹ of chocolates? I got a few. I got some nice ones, and I got a couple of “pity² chocolates”. Ha ha. You all did so well making all of those delicious treats. It must have taken some of you ages. I will try and make you something nice for White Day. Although, I wouldn’t get your hopes up too much. I don’t remember what I made last year, but I do remember that it wasn’t anything to write home about. My wife usually comes up with an idea and I try to make it. Some years I have more success than other years.

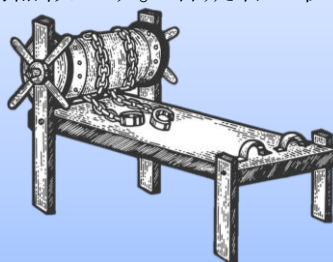
Something You Didn’t Know (Tom and Jerry)

1. There are 164 TV cartoons and 18 movies in all.
2. In the first few episodes, Tom walked on all four legs like a cat, but later, he started to walk on two legs. His appearance has also changed over the years.
3. The Tom and Jerry cartoons have been nominated³ for 13 Oscars and they have won 7.
4. In 1975, Tom and Jerry became friends because there were very strict rules about violence on TV. They became friends and went on adventures together. It didn’t last.
5. In the original cartoons, Tom and Jerry’s owner was an African American maid. At the time, that seemed normal, but now people see that it is a racist stereotype⁴. When the cartoons were re-released, this was changed. Also, scenes of people smoking were cut.



Idiom: Rack your brain.

は知恵を絞る、頭を働かせるのときに使います。"Rack"は昔の拷問器械です。容疑者が秘密を言うまでに体を伸ばします。関節がすぐ破れるからとても痛いです。Rack your brainは脳が秘密を出すまで拷問をするという意味です。

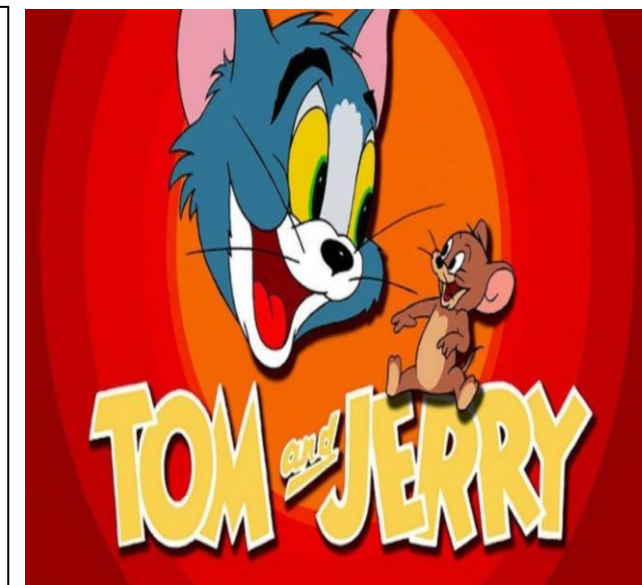


I'm racking my brain to remember where I left my keys.

I had to rack my brain to think of a present for my wife's last birthday.

Tom and Jerry are 80 years old

Last week, Tom and Jerry, the cartoon characters, turned 80 years old. The very first Tom and Jerry episode was broadcast on February 10th, 1940. Two animators, Joseph Barbera and William Hanna, came up with the idea in 1937. Their animation company was struggling⁵ to keep up with other animation studios. Disney had Mickey Mouse and Warner Brothers had Bugs Bunny and all of the Looney Toons characters. Hanna and Barbera **racked their brains** for a character that would be popular.



The two animators wanted two characters that were always in conflict⁶ because that would let them do many stories. They thought about a dog and a fox, but they settled on a cat and mouse. The cat was originally called Jasper and the mouse Jinx but they were renamed after a competition for new name ideas was held. The first cartoon, “Puss Gets the Boot”, was going to be a one-off⁷, but it was very popular.

Hanna and Barbera went on to make 114 cartoons before they were fired⁸ in 1958. They formed Hanna-Barbera Productions and created “The Flintstones”, “The Jetsons”, “The Smurfs”, and “Scooby Doo”. Hanna and Barbera came made Tom and Jerry cartoons again in 1975, but they had to stick to very strong rules about violence on TV shows for children. This made the cartoons much tamer⁹ than they had been.



- 1.Haul of 漁獲高 2.Pity 義理 3.Nomiate ~を推薦する 4.Racist stereotype 人種差別者
5.Struggle ~しようと努力する 6.Conflict 衝突 7.One-off 一回限りの 8.Fired 首された
9.Tame 大人しく

World records



I always say that I want to try and break the records that I write about, and this one is no exception¹. I love to skid² my car on the ice. (Obviously I never do because that would be dangerous – and I don't have a car.) I have always wanted to try this stunt. This is the record for the tightest reverse parallel park. A parallel park is when you reverse your car into a gap between two other cars. Stunt driver Alistair Moffat managed to park his car between two other cars with a clearance³ of 17cm at each end of his car. To do this, he drove up fast and performed a “J-turn” and a “handbrake-turn”. If you want to know what those are then look on YouTube.

Something Big and Small

I like fruit. I started eating a lot of fruit last April. Hopefully, it is good for me. The largest fruit I eat is a pineapple. Do you know what the biggest and smallest fruits in the world are? Well, the smallest fruit is watermeal. It floats on ponds and is eaten by ducks. It is also called duckweed. The fruit is about 0.3mm big. You would have to eat a lot of those to have a decent sized lunch. So, what is the biggest fruit? The Atlantic Giant Pumpkin. It is basically just a giant variety of the regular pumpkin. The biggest one so far was 1,190kg. That is one ginormous⁴ fruit. It is about the same size and weight as a car. I wonder what they did with it. I think, at least, they should have tried to make a jack-o-lantern. That would have been incredible. Can you imagine a jack-o-lantern the size of a car? I wouldn't want to be the one to make it.



Why do we...

... have tonsils⁵. There are many parts of our bodies that don't seem to serve a purpose⁶, but they all do. Tonsils, for example, don't seem to do anything, and people who have them removed don't suffer any ill-effects⁷. However, they are very useful. They have two main purposes. The first purpose of the tonsils is to stop things going down your throat and into your lungs⁸. The second, and probably more important function, is to catch viruses and bacteria that enter your body through your nose and mouth. They have special cells on them which are an early warning system for your body's immune response⁹. You will be fine without them, but they are always better to have.



Spot the difference – 13 differences

- 1.No exception 例外ではない 2.Skid 横滑り 3.Clearance 空間距離 4.Ginormous 強大な
5.Tonsils へんとう腺 6.Serve a purpose のような目的果たす 7.Ill-effects 悪影響 8.Lungs 肺
9.Immune response 免疫反応