

There is a holiday tomorrow. Are you excited? I am. I mean, any day that is a holiday is a good day. In the UK, where I am from, we don't get holidays on Tuesdays. Every public holiday is always a Monday. That way you always get a three-day weekend. I have to say, I like both systems. It is nice to have a three-day weekend, but it is also nice to have a holiday that breaks up¹ the week. What do you think? What are you going to do? It is "culture day", so I guess you will have to do something cultural. Stay safe.

Something Interesting (Fossils¹)

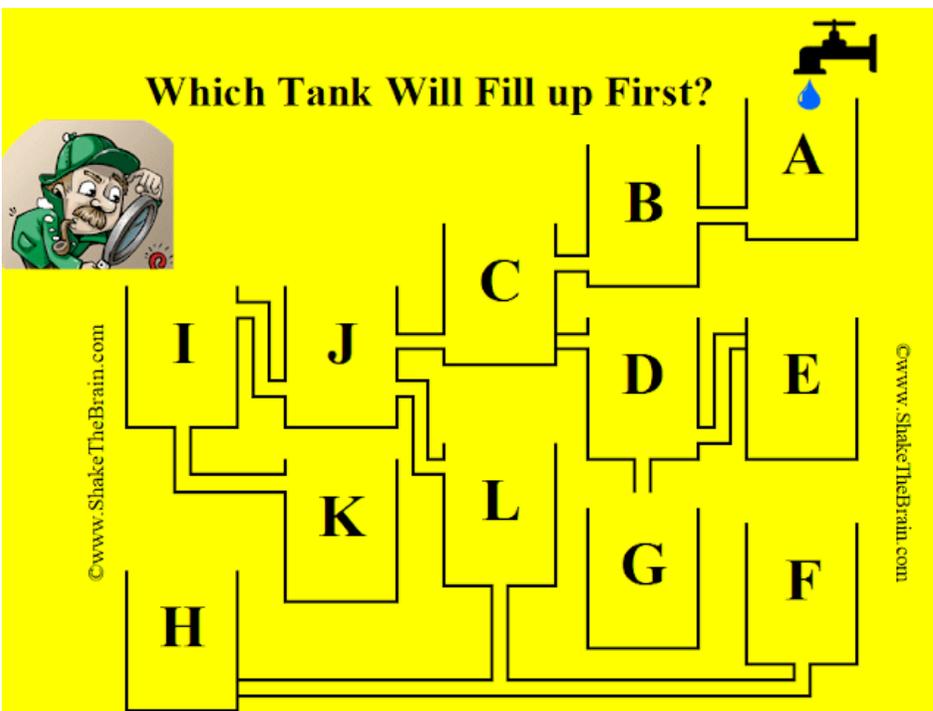
1. Fossils are not actually bone. When an animal dies, sometimes, mud and silt² flows over the body. Over time, the body decomposes³ and minerals⁴ flow into the spaces left around the bones and teeth. Over a very long time (10,000 years or more), minerals in the water slowly replace the minerals in the bone and form rock in the exact shape of the bones they have replaced. Sometimes, fossils can be extremely detailed⁵.
2. The oldest fossils are 3.5 billion years old and they are stromatolites. They are microorganisms⁶ that use sand and minerals to make columns.
3. Between 1870 and 1890, Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh, two paleontologists⁷, competed in the "bone wars". They tried to outdo⁸ each other in the number of dinosaurs discovered. Between the two of them, they discovered 136 new species.

Japanese Spider Crab to be Auctioned

An auction house in the UK is about to auction a giant Japanese spider crab display. It is a huge crab that is part of a series of crab and fish that represent the evolution⁹ in the sea. This crab was caught about 100 years ago and was turned into a display. Crab are usually eaten, but, for some reason, they decided not to eat this one. It is big, but it is not the biggest spider crab that has ever been caught. That was also caught in Japan and was 3.9m across and weighed 19kg! I am glad that



I never saw that. It would scare the socks off me¹⁰. This display is expected to sell for about £ 10,000. That is approximately 1.4 million yen! Some of the other artifacts¹¹ are also expected to raise a lot of money. One of them is a fossil of the Coelacanth fish. Scientists believed that this fish had become extinct about 70 million years ago. However, they were rediscovered¹² off the coast of South Africa in 1938. Still, this fossil is rare and is expected to sell for about £ 50,000!



Can you solve this puzzle? Water is running into the tanks. Which one will fill first?

Last week's answer



Have you ever found a fossil? Some kinds of fossils are ten a penny, but some are extremely rare. Keep your eyes out. Whether the fossil you have is incredibly cheap or incredibly expensive, it is still an amazing feeling to hold something in your hands that was alive millions of years ago. The rarity¹³ of a fossil depends very much on the area the animal lived in. Many fossils have turned up in areas that used to be sea.



1. Break up 間をあける 2. Silt 沈泥 3. Decompose 腐敗させる 4. Mineral 鉱物 5. Detailed きめ細かい
6. Microorganism 微生物 7. Paleontologist 古生物学者 8. Outdo ~を競い合う 9. Evolution 進化
10. Scare the socks off 怖がる 11. Artifact 遺物 12. Rediscovered 再認識される 13. Rarity 珍しさ



World Records

I have no idea how they managed to make this week's world record, but somehow they did. Chefs in Kerala, India have managed to make a cake that is 6.5km long. 6.5km! That is the distance from here at Hokusei to Sapporo train station. AND BACK AGAIN! The entire cake weighed 27,000kg. I wonder what they did when they finished it. I'm guessing they ate it, but I wonder how many people it would take to eat 27,000kg of cake. I don't think I could eat a kg. If everybody can eat 500g, then they need 54,000 people just to eat the cake! That must be a world record in itself as well. Do you think we can break this one? I would be very surprised if we could.

Your problem isn't the problem. Your reaction to the problem is.

The ~est in the world

I can open one of the hundred yen shop three-digit combination locks¹ you have on your lockers. It is not difficult to do. You should get the Sargent & Greenleaf 951C. It costs about 150,000 yen. It is used by the American army² and is said to be the safest lock in the world. It has a skin that rotates³ if you try to drill into it, so that the drill bit cannot grip⁴. If you can drill into it, the lock is surrounded⁵ by steel bars that you cannot cut. It has plates inside that are supposed to protect the lock mechanism⁶ so you cannot pick⁷ it. It is not undefeatable⁸. But it would take a long time and no one would be able to open it quietly. And that is what the US military are counting on⁹.



Something You Probably Didn't Know



There is no such thing as a "lock that cannot be opened". Given enough time and resources¹⁰, any lock or password can be broken. However, that wasn't always true. From 1770 until 1851, there was a time when people had "perfect security¹¹". Before 1770, there were many types of locks, but they were all easy to open. People couldn't trust them. In 1770, Joseph Bramah invented a lock that could not be picked. He was so confident that he offered 200 guineas (about 5 million yen today) to any person that could open it. And, for 70 years, everybody tried. Anybody who made locks, or picked locks, or just liked locks, tried. And nobody could open it. So, society had "perfect security" because there was a lock that was 100% safe. Until 1851. In 1851, A. C. Hobbs managed to open the lock. It took him 14 days, but he opened it. And since then, no lock has ever been 100% safe. And we have never had "perfect security" again.

- 1. Combination lock** 文字合わせ錠 **2. Army** 陸軍 **3. Rotate** 回る **4. Grip** 握力 **5. Surround** 取り囲む **6. Lock mechanism** ロック機構 **7. Pick** こじ開ける **8. Undefeatable** 難攻不落の **9. Count on** ~を頼りにする **10. Resource** 供給源 **11. Perfect security** 完全な保護