

1. THE ORIGINS OF CHOCOLATE

We might think of chocolate as a modern snack, but it has actually been around for thousands of years.

It was enjoyed in the Americas long before it reached Europe and the rest of the world.

Words highlighted in this colour are in the glossary on page 30

People who lived in Mexico and Central America hundreds of years ago, such as the Maya and the Aztecs, made a cold, frothy drink by crushing the beans of the cacao (ka-kay-oh) tree and mixing them with water. They sometimes added chilli or vanilla for flavour.

They called it 'xocolatl' (choc-o-la-tull) which is probably where the word 'chocolate' comes from. But this drink had a bitter taste and was very different from the sweet chocolate we know today.



Cacao pod with beans inside

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Chocolate was very important to both the Maya and the Aztecs. They drank it for energy but also used it as medicine for lots of different illnesses.

The Maya used it in religious ceremonies. Many carvings, drinking cups and **manuscripts** have been found that show their gods next to cacao trees. One vase even shows the head of a god growing out of a cacao tree.

The Aztecs believed chocolate was only meant for the gods. One of their gods, Quetzalcoatl (ket-zal-ko-a-tull), made the other gods angry by stealing the cacao tree and showing humans how to make the special drink.



Quetzalcoatl, the 'chocolate god'

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1. WHAT ARE CAVES?

Caves are spaces that have been made naturally in rock or ice. These spaces are sometimes called chambers, or **caverns**. Cave chambers can be huge or tiny.

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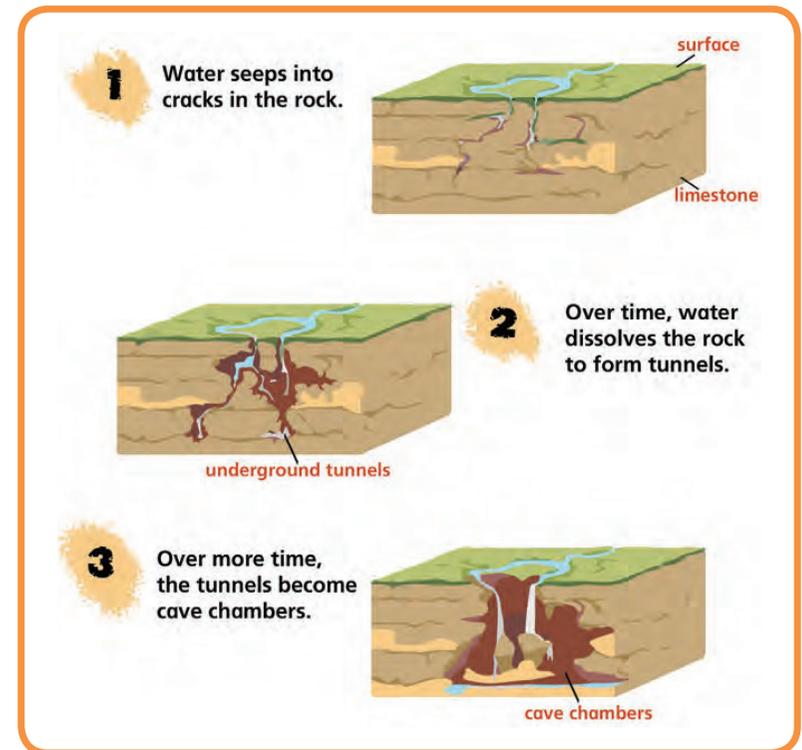
Caves can be deep underground, in the sides of hills, in cliffs along the coast, and even inside icy **glaciers**. They are some of the least explored places on the planet because they can be very hard to find.

The caves we do know about are amazing. Read this book and see for yourself!

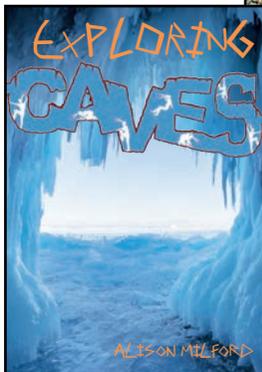


Limestone caves

Most caves are found in limestone rock. Limestone is mainly made from mud and sea fossils, such as coral and shells, pressed together very hard. This kind of rock has lots of cracks where rainwater can **seep** in and dissolve, or wash away, the stone. Over thousands of years, the flowing rainwater makes the cracks bigger and bigger until they form the spaces that we call cave chambers.



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1. Super-fast

Record breakers

Humans can be amazing. Athletes with super-fit bodies keep breaking records. Some can run at nearly 28 miles per hour. That's super-fast!

Even super-fit athletes can't catch up with the animal world. Many animals run faster, jump higher or leap further than any human.

They can out-perform us in many ways. In fact, some animal records might surprise you. But not all the animals in this book are super-fit. Some break other records – scary ones.

Get ready for a few shocks!



Runners on land

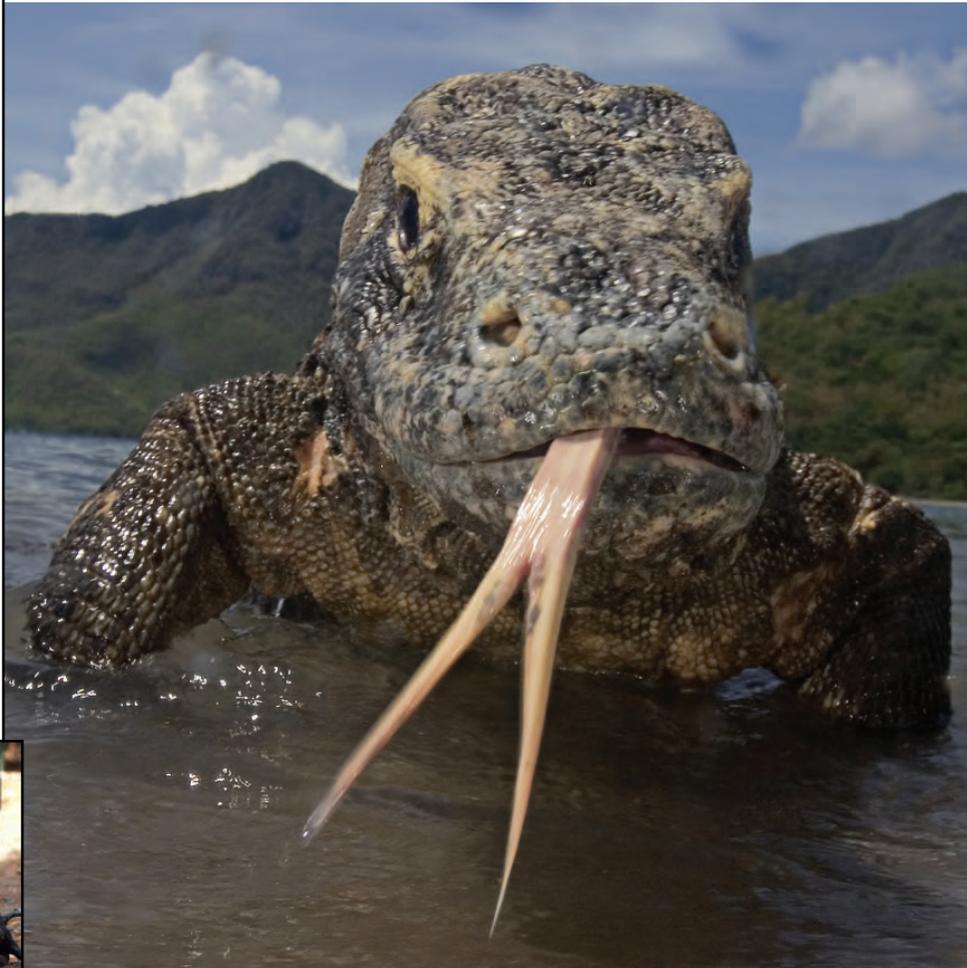
The cheetah is the fastest land animal in the world.

This super-beast zooms off faster than a sports car – 0 to almost 60mph (96km/h) in under three seconds. Cheetahs can sprint at 70mph (112km/h) in short bursts.

Usain Bolt wouldn't stand a chance!



Komodo dragon bites contain venom that weakens their prey. They also have bacteria in their mouths that makes the wounds they inflict go rotten. Komodo dragons have an excellent sense of smell. They 'scent' out their prey and wait while it weakens. Finally, they take it down when it is too sick to fight back.

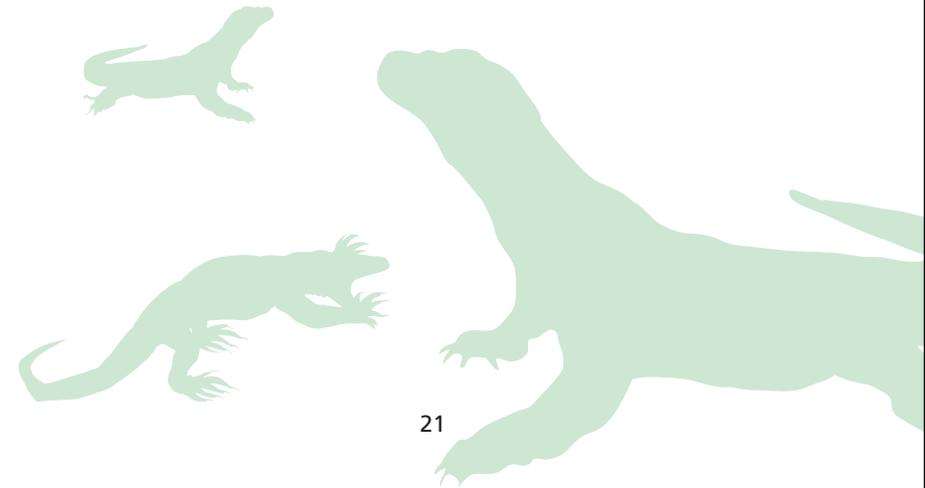


5. ACID VOMIT

A new plan for catching the dragons was needed. Leaving dead animals out for bait was attracting lizards from all over the island. But how could they trap a big one? Douglas worked out that the trap would have to be set off by a person hiding close-by.

He made a hide of bamboo and woven palm leaves and waited. In the heat of the day he felt like he was in an oven.

The jungle's scorpions and poisonous giant centipedes loved the hot shade. More than once, Douglas had to turn them out of his clothes. Luckily, the noise he made did not scare off the Komodo dragons.



**CATCHING
DRAGONS**



1. Anaconda

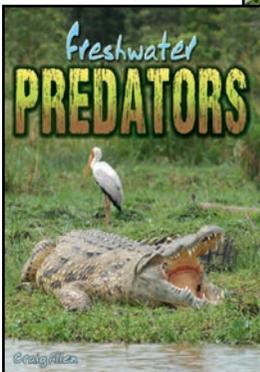
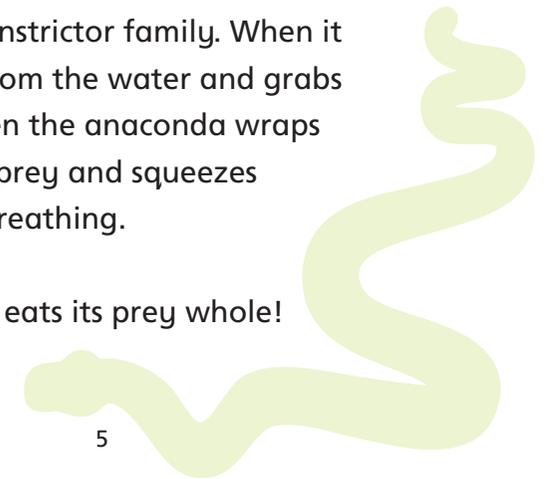
The anaconda is one of the largest snakes on the planet. It can grow to an incredible 9 metres long and can weigh up to 250 kilograms.

Anacondas are found in many countries in South America. They live in rivers and swamps and can stay under water for up to ten minutes at a time before coming up to breathe.



Some snakes kill their prey by injecting venom through a bite – but not the anaconda. The anaconda is a member of the constrictor family. When it attacks, it springs from the water and grabs hold of its prey. Then the anaconda wraps its body around its prey and squeezes hard until it stops breathing.

The anaconda then eats its prey whole!



2. TREASURE HUNTERS

For a few people, treasure hunting is their job. It is how they make their living.

Full time treasure hunters, like Mel Fisher and Captain Michael Hatcher, are usually qualified divers, too, who search for lost and stolen treasure in shipwrecks.



Dr E Lee Spence

Underwater archaeologist and treasure hunter, Dr E Lee Spence, has been interested in shipwrecks and treasure hunting since he was a child. He qualified as a diver when he was just 15 and has discovered hundreds of shipwrecks in his career.



By the age of 12, Dr Spence had already discovered five shipwrecks!



Being a treasure hunter can be dangerous work. Dr Spence has been attacked by sharks, become lost inside a wreck – *and* run out of air!



2. ANTONY GORMLEY

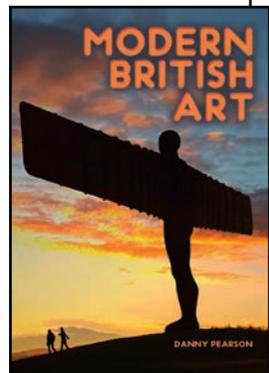
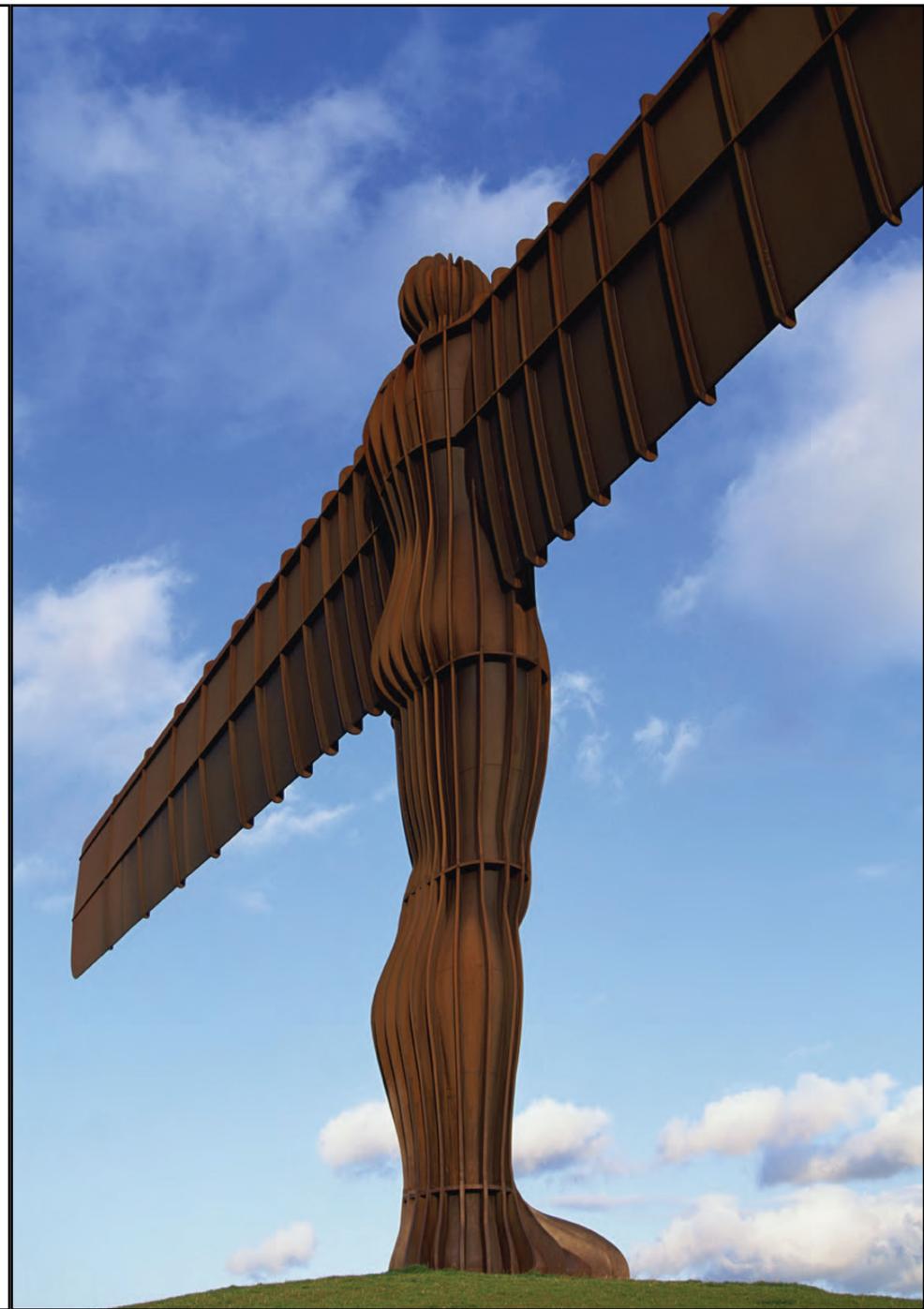
Many people may not be able to spot the artist Antony Gormley from a crowd but his work is world famous and often on a very large scale.

He is probably best known in Britain for his large sculpture in Gateshead, Newcastle Upon Tyne, called *The Angel of the North*.

At first, many local people were against it and thought it spoilt the landscape. That all changed when a stunt was unveiled – one of Newcastle’s most famous footballer’s shirts had been made specially to fit the sculpture! The people of Newcastle loved it and, although the shirt didn’t stay on for long, the people’s love of the sculpture still remains.

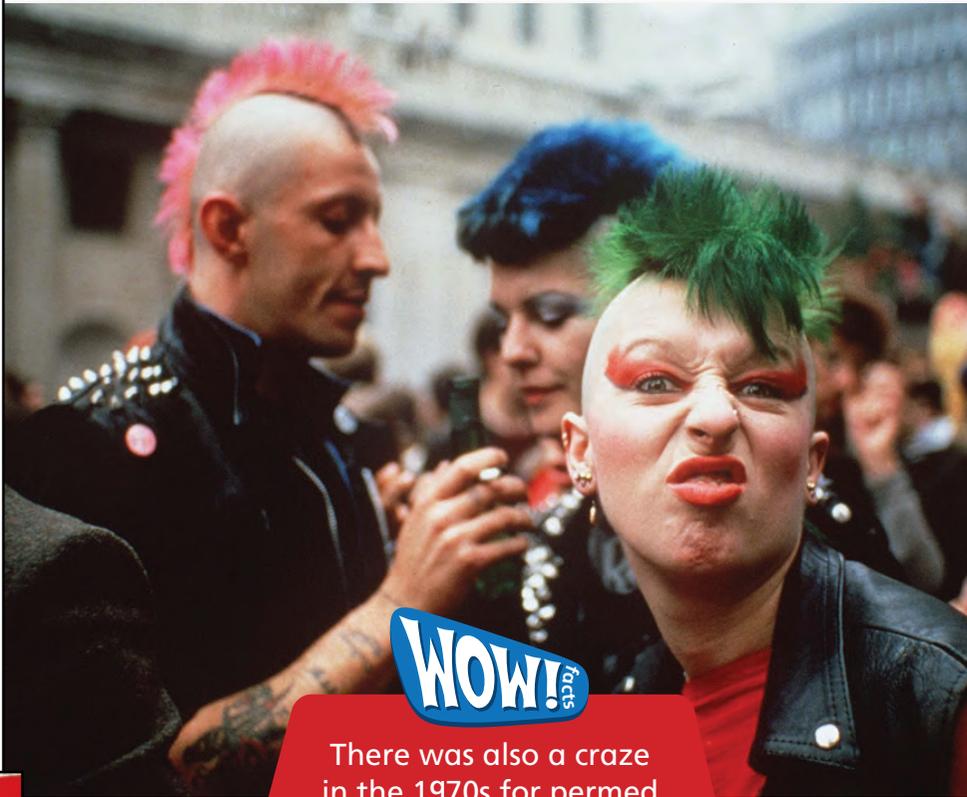


The Angel of the North is 20 metres tall and is over 50 metres wide.



Punk

In the late seventies, punk music and fashion were popular in Europe, America and Australia. Many punks dressed to shock. They wore dark clothing, decorated with chains, studs and pins. Their hairstyles were extreme, too!



WOW!
facts

There was also a craze in the 1970s for permed hair – for men!

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SEVENTIES SOUNDS

Glam rock

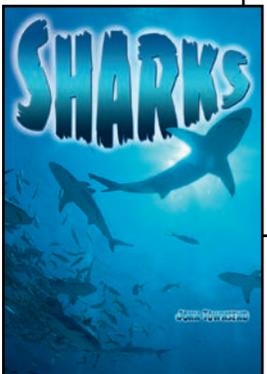
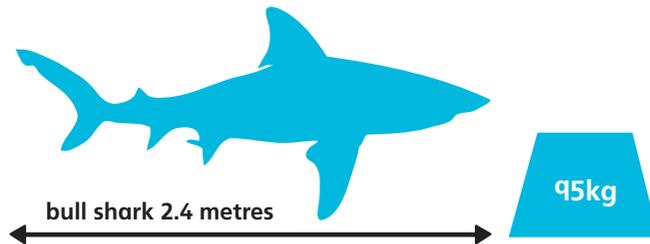
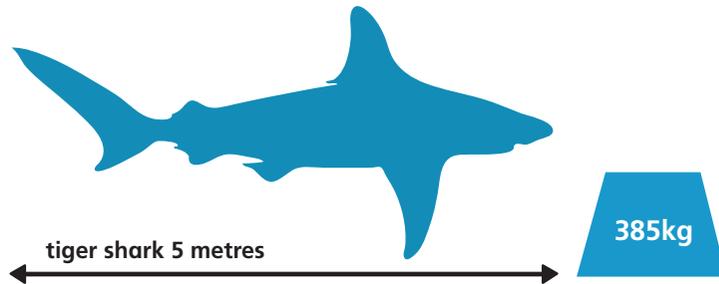
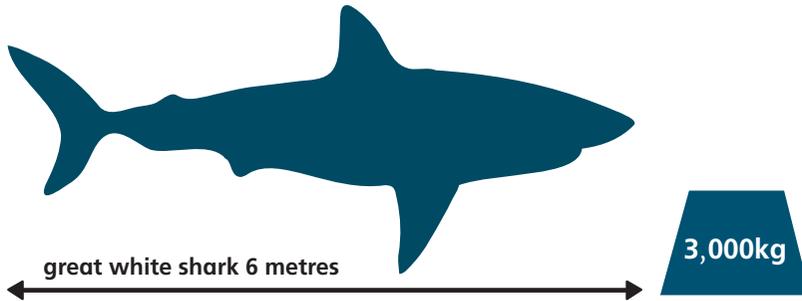
Glam rock music began in the UK. David Bowie was one of the most well-known musicians of the glam rock era. He was as famous for his music as he was for his make-up and over-the-top clothes.

David Bowie



3. GREAT WHITE SHARKS

The great white shark is the most feared of all sharks. It is the largest of the man-eating sharks, with females being larger than the males. Some are as long as six metres and may weigh over 3,000kg.



2. WHAT IS A ZEPPELIN?



FAST FACTS

1916 M Class Zeppelin L31

Length: 200m

Construction: Aluminium framework filled with hydrogen bags; cloth outer skin; 3 propeller engines

Speed: 50mph

Operating altitude: 4,000m

Armament: Up to 9 machine guns mounted on top and in the cupolas underneath; 4,000kg of bombs

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These giant airships were filled with hydrogen gas, which is explosive, so getting rid of them should have been easy. All the pilots of the Royal Naval Air Service needed was a way of setting fire to that gas.

At 3,600 metres altitude.

At night.

But in 1915, when the Zeppelins started coming, hardly anyone had tried flying at night and very few planes were equipped with guns.

