

16 myths busted!

Prepare to be shocked, amazed and intrigued as we reveal the surprising truths behind 16 commonly held beliefs that are, in fact, completely wrong...



1 Duck quacks don't echo.

Wrong! A duck's quack is usually quite quiet, and so its echo can be hard to hear. But in 2003 a team of researchers at the University of Manchester in the UK settled the question when they placed a duck named Daisy in a special chamber and recorded both her quacks and their echoes!



2 A goldfish only has a three-second memory.

Wrong! Goldfish are much smarter than people think. Scientists have trained them to recognize their owners and even remember how to get through underwater mazes.

3 Wolves howl at the Moon.

Wrong! Wolves do howl at night, but that's simply because wolves are most active then. It may look like they're howling at the Moon, but really, they're just lifting their heads to help the sound carry farther.

4 Hair and nails continue to grow after death.

Wrong! After someone dies, their skin begins to dry out and shrink. This exposes more of the hair and nails underneath, which makes them appear longer. But this is an illusion — hair and nail growth stops completely after death.

5 Roosters only crow at dawn.

Wrong! Roosters do like to start the day with a cock-a-doodle-do but they also crow throughout the day to warn off predators and challenge rival roosters.

6 Elephants are afraid of mice.

Wrong! Long ago, people believed mice might crawl into an elephant's trunk and make it sneeze. But they don't do this. In reality, elephants



have poor eyesight and might not even notice a tiny mouse. Elephants might be startled by scampering mice, but they are not actually scared of them.

7 If you sneeze with your eyes open, your eyeballs might pop out.

Wrong! Keeping your eyes open while sneezing is hard because your body has an automatic reflex to shut them. The pressure released by a sneeze builds up in the blood vessels, not the eyes or the muscles surrounding them.

8 Earwigs lay their eggs inside people's ears.

Wrong! Despite their name, earwigs lay their eggs in damp soil or under the bark of trees.

9 Bulls charge when they see the color red.

Wrong! This idea comes from Spanish bullfighting, where matadors wave a bright red cape in front of the bull. But bulls can't actually see red — they are color-blind to it. What makes the bull

charge is the movement of the cape, not its color. It's the fast, flicking motion that grabs the bull's attention and gets it to react.

10 There's no gravity in space.

Wrong! Gravity is the invisible force that pulls all objects with mass toward each other — so it exists everywhere, even in space. Astronauts float not because there is no gravity, but because they are far from Earth, where the pull of gravity is weaker. This is often called "zero gravity," but the correct term is microgravity, because a small amount of gravity is still present.

11 All bees die after giving a single sting.

Wrong! That's only true for honey bees — other types, such as bumblebees, can sting more than once and still survive.

12 Lightning never strikes twice in the same place.

Wrong! Lightning can and often does strike in the same place more than once. Lightning is attracted to tall, pointy or metal objects. That's why skyscrapers, towers, and



even trees are often targets during storms. The Empire State Building in New York, for example, gets struck by lightning lots of times each year. But don't worry — buildings like these are fitted with lightning rods, which safely guide the electricity into the ground.

13 Airplanes get rid of toilet waste by dumping it in mid-air.

Airplane toilets don't flush into the sky! All the poop and pee goes into a special

tank on board, which can only be emptied after the plane has landed — using a lever that is on the outside of the aircraft. That said, in the past, some older trains really did flush their toilets straight onto the train tracks while the train was still moving!



14 Owls can spin their heads around a full 360 degrees.

Wrong! It's easy to see from the photo above how this myth began. Owls can turn their heads a long way — but not all the way around. At most, they can turn them about 270 degrees.

15 People thought Earth was flat until Columbus sailed across the Atlantic in 1492.

Wrong! While some people in the 15th century did believe the Earth was flat, many scientists and mathematicians already knew it was round. In fact, ancient Greek thinkers were writing about a round Earth nearly 2,000 years before Columbus set sail.

16 When threatened by predators, ostriches hide by burying their heads in the sand.

Wrong! Ostriches dig holes in the ground for their eggs. They do stick their heads into the holes to move their eggs around, which is probably where the myth started.



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