



1

The covering at the end of a shoelace is called an **AGLET**.

5

A file cabinet labeled 0–Z is rumored to have inspired L. Frank Baum to name his famous kingdom and wizard “Oz.”

8

ANGRY AND HUNGRY are the only English words that end in **-GRY**.

12

The Pacific Ocean’s name comes from the Latin **MARE PACIFICUM**, which means **“PEACEFUL SEA.”**

15

A palindrome is a word that’s spelled the same backward as forward, such as noon, kayak, and race car.

2

The word **“SYZYGy”** is used by astronomers to describe three objects in space that are positioned in a line.

6

The 267-page novel *Gadsby* by Ernest Vincent Wright has about 50,000 words, none of which contain the letter e.



9

A goat’s beard is called a **goatee**.

13

TRISKAIDEKAPHOBIA is the fear of the number **13**.

16

The 2,000-year-old Rosetta Stone, which helped scientists decode Egyptian hieroglyphs, is carved with Greek and two kinds of ancient Egyptian.

3

To **“86,”** or get rid of, something stems from a number code said to be used by restaurant workers to indicate they were out of a dish or wouldn’t serve a customer.

7

It’s impossible to know for certain, but English likely has more words—at least 250,000—than any other language.

10

Twenty-three of the world’s languages have more than 50 million speakers each.

14

Cats communicate using at least 16 known **CAT WORDS.**

17

In addition to hieroglyphs, ancient Egyptians had a more practical form of writing they called *shesh*, which means “writing for documents.”

4

Describing a farewell as a **“SWAN SONG”** originated from the (false) belief that a swan was silent all its life but sang aloud right before it died.

11

India has 23 official languages.

18

The ancient Celtic culture existed for about 1,300 years but never had its own writing system. Instead, it borrowed from other cultures, such as Latin from the Romans.



50

WORD **FACTS**
THAT WILL

KNOW **YOU**



19

Sign language is not a universal language—each country has its own sign language, and vocabulary and grammar vary by region.

26

ONOMATOPOEIA is the formation of a word based on the sound associated with it, such as cuckoo, hiccup, sizzle, and Ping-Pong.

32

Koko the gorilla understands 2,000 words of spoken English and can sign 1,000 words. Her statements usually contain three to six words.

39

A 2007 study found that women and men speak about the same number of words per day—16,000.

45

In 2011, the *Oxford English Dictionary* added the word **LOL**, which stands for Laughing Out Loud, in use since the 1980s.

20

The word **“QUIZ”** also means an **“ODD PERSON.”**

27

Every **14 DAYS** a language dies out.

33

The ancient Romans called the Mediterranean Sea *Mare nostrum*, “Our sea.”

40

The Hawaiian word **“ALOHA”** means both hello and goodbye.

46

The Swedish equivalent of LOL is **ASG**, short for *asgarv*, or intense laughter.

21

A sentence that uses all 26 letters of the English alphabet is called a **PANGRAM**. A famous pangram example is: The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

28

An **OOLOGIST** is a collector of bird eggs.



34

Pig latin is a play language formed by placing the first consonants of each word and “ay” at the end of the word; so shut becomes “utshay,” door becomes “oorday.”

41

A **SNICKERSNEE** is a large knife.

47

A **HAIKU** is an unrhymed three-lined verse, with five syllables in the first and third lines, and seven in the second.

22

The letter *e* is the most frequently used letter in the English alphabet.

29

There is a word that rhymes with orange: **SPORANGE**, a very rare, alternative form of the word “sporangium,” a part of a fern.

35

Esperanto is a universal language—not tied to any one country or culture—invented in the late 1800s and spoken by an estimated two million people worldwide.

42

In Australian slang, **“BINGLE”** is a car accident, a **“CAPTAIN COOK”** is a look around, and a **“WHINGER”** is a complainer.

48

Sukanya Roy won the U.S. National Spelling Bee in 2011 by correctly spelling the word **CYBOTRICHOUS**, which means “having wavy hair.”

23

A group of cats is called a **CLOWDER**.

30

In Wales, there’s a community named **LLANFAIR-PWLLSWYNGYLLGGERY-CHWYRNDROBWLLLAN-TYSILIOGOGOGCH**, commonly shortened to Llanfair PG.

36

The six official languages of the United Nations are Arabic, Chinese, English, Russian, French, and Spanish. Nearly three billion people worldwide speak these languages.

43

Nearly 80 percent of the world’s population speaks only 1 percent of the planet’s languages.

49

As of January 2011, no more than a dozen people speak fluent Huillichesungun, the language of Chile’s Wequetrumao community.

24

A group of prisoners is called a **PITY**.

31

SCHADENFREUDE is a German word that means joy derived from the troubles of others.

37

The word **MUGGLE**—a nonwizard in the Harry Potter series—was included in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 2003.

44

COULROPHOBIA is the fear of clowns.



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The last two fluent speakers of Mexico’s Ayapanec language live less than a third of a mile (500 m) apart but won’t speak to each other for reasons that remain unclear.

25

In Russian, the word for

38

The language of the Pirahã, a remote Amazonian tribe, has no