Fast Facts Art and Literature



IN 1961, Matisse's Le Bateau (The Boat) hung upside-down for 2 months in the Museum of Modern Art, New York - none of the 116,000 visitors had noticed.

Picasso could draw before he could walk and his first word was the Spanish word for pencil.

Sumerians invented writing in the 4th century BC.

The first book published is thought to be the Epic of Gilgamesh, written at about 3000 BC in cuneiform, an alphabet based on symbols.

The first history book, the Great Universal History, was published by Rashid-Eddin of Persia in 1311.

The first novel, called The story of Genji, was written in 1007 by Japanese noble woman, Murasaki Shikibu.

In 1097, Trotula, a midwife of Salerno, wrote The Diseases of Women - it was used in medical schools for 600 years.

The world's longest nonfiction work is The Yongle Dadian, a 10,000-volume encyclopaedia produced by 5,000 scholars during the Ming Dynasty in China 500 years ago.

Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote Meteorologica in 350 BC - it remained the standard textbook on weather for 2,000 years.

The word "novel" originally derived from the Latin novus, meaning "new."

Ian Fleming's James Bond debuted in the novel "Casino Royale" in 1952.

Johannes Gutenberg is often credited as the inventor of the printing press in 1454. However, the Chinese actually printed from movable type in 1040 but later discarding the method.

If a statue of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle; if the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died as a result of wounds received in battle; if the horse has all four legs on the ground, like the Zizkov Monument, the person died of natural causes.

To save costs, the body of Shakespeare's friend and fellow dramatist, Ben Jonson, was buried standing up in Westminister Abbey, London in 1637.

The first novel sold through a vending machine - at the Paris Metro - was Murder on the Orient Express.

Jean-Dominique Bauby, a French journalist suffering from "locked-in" syndrome, wrote the book "The Driving Bell and the Butterfly" by blinking his left eyelid - the only part of his body that could move.

When Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa was stolen from the Louvre in 1912, 6 replicas were sold as the original, each at a huge price, in the 3 years before the original was recovered.

When Auguste Rodin exhibited his first important work, The Bronze Period, in 1878 it was so realistic that people thought he had sacrificed a live model inside the cast.

Rodin died of frostbite in 1917 when the French government refused him financial aid for a flat, yet they kept his statues warmly housed in museums.

Vincent van Gogh, the world's most valued painter, sold only one painting in his entire life - to his brother who owned an art gallery. The painting is titled "Red Vineyard at Arles."

Ernest Vincent Wright's 1939 novel Gadsby has 50,110 words, none of which contains the letter "e." See below

In 1816, Frenchman J.R. Ronden tried to stage a play that did not contain the letter "a." The Paris audience was offended, rioted and did not allow the play to finish.

The shortest stage play is Samuel Beckett's "Breath" - 35 seconds of screams and heavy breathing.

There are about 150 million sites on the web, with more than two billion web pages.

The world's libraries store more than a 100 million original volumes.

The largest web bookshop, Amazon.com, stores 2,5 million books.

2 billion people still cannot read.

The first colour photograph was made in 1861 by James Maxwell. He photographed a tartan ribbon.

The first English dictionary was written by Samuel Johnson in 1755.

Noah Webster, who wrote the Webster Dictionary, was known as a short, pale, smug, boastful, humourless, yet religious man.

When Jonathan Swift published 'Gulliver's Travels' in 1726, he intended it as a satire on the ferociousness of human nature. Today it is enjoyed as a children's story.

Source: *www.didyouknow.cd*