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The Ig Nobel Prize for Unusual Achievements

Science has a funny side that might surprise you

The Nobel Prize is given to people who do or create something that helps other people and makes the world a better place. The majority of Nobel Prize winners are researchers and scientists whose discoveries and work have changed the world.

Yet, shouldn't something be said about the researchers and specialists whose accomplishments make us snicker or scratch our heads? Take, for instance, a group of scientists, from the College School of London, who found that the memory of London taxi drivers is much better than Londoners who don't drive taxis. Although researchers found the research fascinating, and even published it, many people will probably ask what the point of the research is. Who cares how big the brains of London taxi drivers are?!

The scientific community comes across a lot of studies that are just funny or weird every year and since 1991, a prize has been awarded for the funniest research project of the year. In the first year of the competition, the prize went to a group of scientists from China, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and the United States for calculating the way ducklings swim in formation after their mother duck. The prize in literature was awarded to researchers who used analysis to discover what makes legal documents unnecessarily difficult to understand.

Only one researcher has ever received both the Ig Nobel Prize and the Nobel Prize. In 2000, he received the Ig Nobel Prize for his work on using magnets to lift a live frog. In 2010, he received the Nobel Prize for his work in electromagnetics. He can

serve as a role model for researchers who find that the scientific community is more amused than amazed by their work.

Reading Comprehension

Answer the following questions about the text:

Mark “True” or “False” next to each sentence:

A. Nobel Prize winners are researchers whose discoveries help to make the world a better place - _____

B. The energy of London taxi drivers is much higher than Londoners who don't drive taxis - _____

C. There were many weird and funny studies in 1991 - _____

D. Only one researcher has ever received both the Ig Nobel Prize and the Nobel Prize - _____

Answers:

A. True

B. False

C. False

D. True

Vocabulary

1. An “award” is a _____.

- a. research
- b. prize
- c. discovery

2. What is the opposite of “majority”?

- a. **Minority**
- b. Security
- c. Authority

3. An “accomplishment” means:

- a. An important research.
- b. **Something that has been successfully done.**
- c. The money that scientists get for their work.

4. Something that is “fascinating” is not _____.

- a. interesting
- b. new
- c. **boring**

5. “To come across” means:

- a. **To find**
- b. To go
- c. To visit

Grammar

1. Write the PRESENT TENSE forms of the following verbs:

Changed -

Said -

Found -

Published -

Awarded -

Went -

Used -

Received -

Answers:

change, say, find, publish, award, go, use, receive

2. Write the PAST TENSE forms of the following verbs:

Do -

Create -

Help -

Make -

Have -

Scratch -

Take -

Drive -

Ask -

Care -

Come -

Swim -

Understand -

Answers:

did, created, helped, made, had, scratched, took, drove, asked, cared, asked,
came, swam, understood

3. Rewrite the phrases using the POSSESSIVE FORM:

Example: The discovery of the scientist - The scientist's discovery

The brains of taxi drivers -

A group of scientists -

The accomplishment of the researcher -

The prize of the scientific community -

The first year of the competition -

The mother of the ducklings -

Answers:

Taxi drivers' brain

A scientists' group

The researcher's accomplishment

The scientific community's prize

The competition's first year

The ducklings' mother