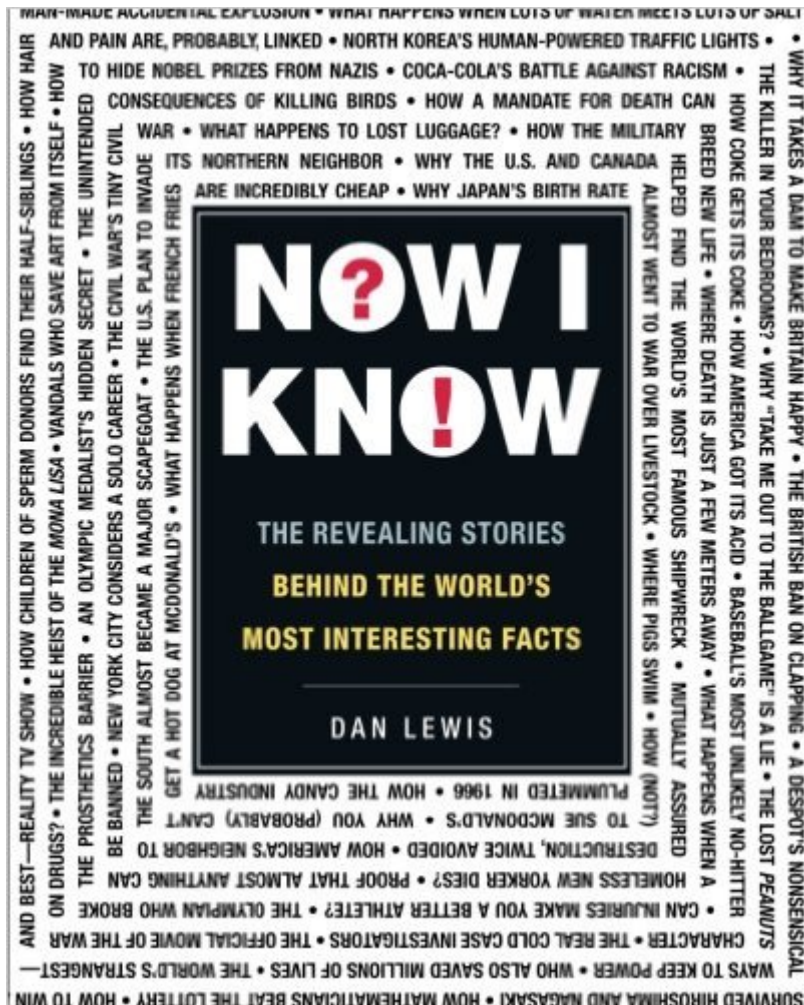


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# Now I Know: The Revealing Stories Behind The World's Most Interesting Facts



## Synopsis

Did you know that there are actually 27 letters in the alphabet, or that the U.S. had a plan to invade Canada? And what actually happened to the flags left on the moon? Even if you think you have a handle on all things trivia, you're guaranteed a big surprise with Now I Know. From uncovering what happens to lost luggage to New York City's plan to crack down on crime by banning pinball, this book will challenge your knowledge of the fascinating stories behind the world's greatest facts. Covering 100 outrageous topics, Now I Know is the ultimate challenge for any know-it-all who thinks they have nothing left to learn.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As the owner of an extremely popular "interesting fact" website (TodayIFoundOut) and someone who runs a similar newsletter to Now I Know, I've read or at least skimmed pretty much every major interesting fact/story website and book out there, so I can tell you from vast experience that Dan Lewis is one of the best in this genre. His articles are always extremely well researched and quite interesting, even sometimes when he's writing on a topic I initially thought would be boring- then he goes and finds an interesting twist to it. In some respects, his newsletter sometimes reminds me of the old Paul Harvey, "The Rest of the Story" show at times. As for this book itself, I just got it in the mail the other day and have now read about half of it and I haven't been disappointed at all. It's well formatted, has great topics and articles, and despite the fact that what I do for a living is research and write about interesting facts, I'm still learning quite a few interesting new things. So bottom line, if you're a fan of trivia / interesting facts or stories, you'll love this book. And, unlike so many other

such books out there, you can be confident that what you're reading is actually true and not embellished, which is a rare thing in this genre I can tell you. :-)

As people reading these reviews are probably already aware, "Now I Know" started out, and still is, a popular daily email newsletter. The premise is that you sign up for the email newsletter and in return Dan sends you a daily email with true, well-researched, amazing and entertaining-as-hell anecdotes. For free. Every day. The book is a collection of these same types of stories. Though the book isn't free, it won't disappoint. I keep my copy of this book out on my coffee table and its an awesome conversation starter. (Would also be great to have on-hand for a little, ahem, distraction, in the loo). Great book; Highly recommend.

This is one of the best sources of fascinating and obscure trivia I have ever seen! If you think you know it all, think again and read this book! Extremely interesting, and even though I consider myself somewhat of an expert in the area of fun facts, I was learning new things constantly.

Now I Know is basically a trivia book, but unlike many books of that genre, author Dan Lewis goes into a little more background behind the story, also adding another related "Bonus Fact." It's a very enjoyable, informative read, with each chapter being only about two pages, so you can read the book straight through, or you can just read a little at a time. Some of the stories are familiar enough that they weren't new to me, but most of the stories were unknown to me before reading the book. A few examples of the stories and what I learned: \* One Japanese man is recognized by the Japanese government as having survived atomic bombs in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. \* The real story behind Coca-Cola's use of coca leaves as a flavoring. \* At one time in the 1950s and 1960s, a single small town in Florida accounted for two-thirds of all accidental loss-of-limb-related insurance claims in the US. \* Why some people get brain freeze when they eat ice cream. \* The country that purposely imports garbage. It's very interesting reading for trivia fans.

Length: Print, 288 pages; Audible, 6 hours 6 minutes. Target Audience/Genre: This nonfiction book is written for people who love trivia, and who want to know more than just the facts. I feel it is especially great trivia for the Jeopardy fan. What was the Kindle Rank on the date this review was published? 5,436. Is this a book that I can read without having to read others first? Yes, but if you're at all like me you will read the follow-up companion title Now I Know More. Are there a lot of typos/misspellings, grammatical errors or other editing failures? No, this is professionally

edited. Is this a fast, easy read or is it more of a leisure read? This is great reading anytime and, if you do as I have, you will purchase the Audible Whispersync so you can listen as you drive or while in the shower. Warning, this is an addictive book. The first I've found more enjoyable than Uncle John's Bathroom Reader series. What sort of language does this writer use to amplify the points made? Plain English. My biggest pleasure? The story on the Bats considered for use in spreading fires in Japan during World War II hooked me, line and sinker. Until that point, the price had convinced me to only read it through my Kindle Unlimited library. I now have purchased the Kindle and the Audible versions. Maybe Kindle Unlimited is costing me money that I'd have not spent otherwise? I've included a small excerpt below, so readers can peruse the style of presentation utilized by the author. Both actually are in reference to the same article, the Bats.

#### EXCERPT: BAT BOMBING BATS IN UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

During the final days of World War II, the United States, apparently believing that Japan was unlikely to surrender otherwise, dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The death toll from these two bombs numbered as high as 250,000 when one factors in those people who died up to four months later due to burns and radiation sickness. Research into the creation of an atomic bomb began in 1939, and the Manhattan Project, which developed the science behind the weapons in earnest, began in June 1942. But in March 1943, the United States was developing another weapon that would have spared many thousands of lives. Unless, that is, you count the lives of the millions of bats that would have died in the process. In the mid-1940s, many Japanese buildings were still constructed out of wood and paper, which, of course, were flammable. If the United States Army could figure out a way to start fires in a large number of buildings spread out over a wide area, the Japanese infrastructure and economy would suffer but the direct loss of life would be relatively small. But that seemed impossible. Napalm strikes could start fires everywhere, but they wouldn't spread. Carpet-bombing with many small warheads would increase the area of the strike but most likely wouldn't cause many fires. And of course, the death toll from either of those routes could still be large. But a few months before the Manhattan Project got underway, a dental surgeon named Lytle Adams came up with the idea to use bats—those nocturnal flying mammals—as part of the strategy. As he would later tell *Air Force Magazine*, after seeing millions of bats flying around caves in Carlsbad Canyon in New Mexico, he immediately thought that they could be used as a way to spread firebombs throughout Japan. He collected a few of them himself, did a little research, and found that even tiny bats weighing well under a pound could carry three times their weight in explosives. He pitched his plan to the military (a procedure that was apparently not uncommon at the time) and the brass agreed that this was something to look into. Adams's

theory was straightforward. Collect a million bats and strap timed incendiary devices to their backs while they hibernate. Stick a thousand of them each into a thousand bombs designed to open at high altitudes. Fly over Japan at night, drop the bombs, and then let the bats fly around. When daybreak comes, the theory went, the bats will hide in dark places and given where they are, the most common hiding place will be attics. The timer ticks down and shortly after, without obvious explanations, hundreds of thousands of Japanese buildings start to burn to the ground. The idea soon became more than a theory. By March 1943, the U.S. military had identified a suitable population of bats, having located a series of caves in Texas that were home to millions of the flying critters. For the next year or so, at the expense of \$ 2 million (\$ 25 million in today's dollars), they tested Adams's theory. Except for one major problem at one point, some bats got loose resulting in a major fire at the base the military believed that the bat bombs could actually work. One report placed their effectiveness at ten to thirty times more effective (measured by the number of fires they would start) than conventional incendiary devices. But the final report on the bat bombs issued in mid-1944, though positive, noted that they would not be ready for combat for another year. Due to the slow timetable, the military canceled the project before it could be fully developed.

Lewis, Dan (2013-09-18). *Now I Know: The Revealing Stories Behind the World's Most Interesting Facts* (pp. 18-20). F+W Media. Kindle Edition. **BONUS FACT** Bats eat insects (among other things), including malaria-carrying mosquitoes. In the 1920s, a researcher named Charles Campbell proposed building bat towers that would provide a roost for bats during the day so they could feast on the mosquitoes at night. An active one exists at the University of Florida, but the most famous one is probably the Sugarloaf Key Bat Tower in the Florida Keys. A fish lodge owner named Richard Perky built the Sugarloaf tower in 1928 with much fanfare and one big problem. According to Atlas Obscura, when Perky put the bats into the tower, they flew off to find some bugs to eat and never came back.

Lewis, Dan (2013-09-18). *Now I Know: The Revealing Stories Behind the World's Most Interesting Facts* (p. 20). F+W Media. Kindle Edition. **Bottom Line:** This book is a fantastic, addictive read. It also is great research for the writer looking for unusual stories to use in their tales. **Comments?**

This is a great little book to have on your Kindle. Anytime you need a short read (waiting at the dentist's office, waiting to pick up kids at school), this book will fill the bill. Quick reads, no plots to remember, and some amazing information.

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