

## World's oldest land animal celebrates 190th birthday

15th December, 2022



Everybody likes a birthday. Some people live long enough to have 120 of them. The world's oldest land animal has just celebrated his 190th birthday. The animal is a Seychelles giant turtle called Jonathan. Zoologists believe

he was born in 1832, but there are no official records of his birth. Some scientists think Jonathan might actually be ten years older. He could be as old as 200. Jonathan was born in the Seychelles. He was taken to the British overseas territory of St Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean in 1882 as a gift for the St Helena governor. Jonathan was born before Britain's Queen Victoria became queen, and before the invention of the postage stamp, Morse code, refrigeration, and the gun\*.

Jonathan's vets say he had a good birthday. There was a three-day party for him. Chefs made him a special tortoise birthday cake that was full of his favourite vegetables. St Helena also launched a set of special postage stamps to celebrate his birthday. Unfortunately, Jonathan did not get to see any of the celebrations because he is blind. He also has no sense of smell. However, he has an excellent sense of hearing, so he could hear "Happy Birthday" being sung. Jonathan's vet, Joe Hollins, said the giant tortoise still has plenty of energy. He also likes to relax in the sun. Mr Hollins said: "On mild days, he will sunbathe - his long neck and legs stretched fully out of his shell to absorb heat and transfer it to his core."

\* revolver

Sources: [cnn.com](http://cnn.com) / [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com) / [natureworldnews.com](http://natureworldnews.com)

### Writing

It would be great to live to be 190. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

everybody / birthday / animal / turtle / zoologists / scientists / overseas / invention / vets / party / vegetables / stamps / blind / hearing / energy / relax / sunbathe / heat

### True / False

- 1) The article says many people live to be 120 years old. T / F
- 2) Official records say the tortoise was born in 1832. T / F
- 3) Jonathan was born in the Seychelles. T / F
- 4) The giant turtle was born before refrigeration was invented. T / F
- 5) Jonathan had a strawberry cake for his birthday. T / F
- 6) Jonathan is deaf, but he can see. T / F
- 7) Jonathan likes to sunbathe and relax in the sun. T / F
- 8) Jonathan likes to collect shells. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1. <b>celebrate</b>     | a. most-liked |
| 2. <b>official</b>      | b. cooling    |
| 3. <b>gift</b>          | c. a lot of   |
| 4. <b>invention</b>     | d. present    |
| 5. <b>refrigeration</b> | e. superb     |
| 6. <b>favourite</b>     | f. honoured   |
| 7. <b>launched</b>      | g. creation   |
| 8. <b>excellent</b>     | h. soak up    |
| 9. <b>plenty</b>        | i. recognized |
| 10. <b>absorb</b>       | j. created    |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Have you ever had a birthday party?
- c) What do you think of vegetable birthday cakes?
- d) What do you think of the song 'Happy Birthday'?
- e) Do you always have plenty of energy?
- f) Do you like to relax in the sun?
- g) What do you know about tortoises?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Jonathan?

## Phrase Match

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Some people live long                  | a. heat                   |
| 2. there are no official                  | b. the postage stamp      |
| 3. Jonathan might actually                | c. out of his shell       |
| 4. taken to the British overseas          | d. in the sun             |
| 5. before the invention of                | e. records of his birth   |
| 6. There was a three-                     | f. of smell               |
| 7. He also has no sense                   | g. enough to have 120     |
| 8. He also likes to relax                 | h. be ten years older     |
| 9. his long neck and legs stretched fully | i. day party for him      |
| 10. absorb                                | j. territory of St Helena |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of birthdays?
- What was your best birthday?
- How long would you like to live?
- What is the best present to buy a tortoise?
- What would you like as a birthday present?
- What would it be like to live to 190?
- What important things were invented after you were born?
- What advice do you have for Jonathan?

## Spelling

- there are no faciloi records of his birth
- ntsestscii think Jonathan might
- taken to the British overseas yirroett
- a gift for the St Helena envororg
- before the ietnivnno of the postage stamp
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- leuhcand a set of special postage stamps
- he has an xleeneclt sense of hearing
- the giant tortoise still has entlyp of energy
- On mild days, he will uanesthb
- rsobba heat and transfer it to his core

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. d	4. g	5. b
6. a	7. j	8. e	9. c	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – The 1990s

You think the 1990s is the best time to go back to visit. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their times. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): the 1960s, the 1500s or 10,000 years ago.

### Role B – The 1960s

You think the 1960s is the best time to go back to visit. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their times. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): the 1990s, the 1500s or 10,000 years ago.

### Role C – The 1500s

You think the 1500s is the best time to go back to visit. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their times. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): the 1960s, the 1990s or 10,000 years ago.

### Role D – 10,000 Years Ago

You think 10,000 years ago is the best time to go back to visit. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their times. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): the 1960s, the 1500s or the 1990s.

## Speaking – History

Rank these with your partner. Put the period of history you would go back to at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |         |                    |
|---------|--------------------|
| • 1990s | • 1500s            |
| • 1960s | • 900s             |
| • 1920s | • 0                |
| • 1830s | • 10,000 years ago |

### Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 T	5 F	6 F	7 T	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.