**Popularity**

**Hank Aaron is still the home-run king when it comes to television ratings. ESPN2’s broadcast of Barry Bonds’ record 756th homer received a 1.1 cable rating on ESPN2 Tuesday night, which translates to 995,000 households. When Aaron hit his 715th home run on April 8, 1974, to break Babe Ruth’s record, NBC’s broadcast received a 22.3 rating on NBC, the equivalent of 14.9 million homes. *(Rocky Mountain News, August 9, 2007)***

**More than 63 million times each day, AOL users sign on and hear voice-over actor Elwood Edwards say the words, “You’ve got mail!” *(Harry Bright &
Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 121)***

**James Cameron’s Avatar 2: The Way of Water, opened to $134 million in North America this past weekend and $441.6 million worldwide. Cameron indicated it would need to gross in the $2 billion range to be considered a success. The first Avatar tallied $2.9 billion in 2009. *(The Hollywood Reporter, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 30, 2022/January 6, 2023)***

**Lucille Ball has been on more TV Guide covers than anyone, and the magazine reports that her face has been seen by more people than anyone else’s in history. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 4)**

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**Could be you, too, have a few Barbie dolls around your home. Report is 19 out of 20 little girls own Barbie dolls. And the average among them owns seven. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**If you have a young daughter, the following factoid might not come as a surprise to you: American girls between the ages of 3 and 11 each own an average of eight Barbie dolls. *(Samantha Weaver, in Tidbits, 2007)***

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**Throughout their career, the Beatles spent more than four hundred weeks on the music charts. *(Noel Botham, in The Best Book of Useless Information Ever, p. 88)***

**How popular are the Beatles? By many measures more popular than ever. The band sells, on average, 280,000 albums a month worldwide, and according to trade publications, Beatles songs still receive more radio airplay than any other group. Last year, the Beatles topped the Billboard album chart with Love, an album of remixed versions of some of their most famous songs. In 2000, the Beatles released 1, a compilation of all 27 of the group’s No. 1 singles. That album sold 12 million copies in the first three weeks of its release – making it the fastest-selling album of all time – and reached No. 1 in 35 countries. Except for the 1980s, the Beatles have scored at least one No. 1 album in every decade since the 1960s. Beatlemania just won’t die. *(The Week magazine, May 25, 2007)***

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**Joe Biden's town hall on ABC last Thursday drew more viewers than Donald Trump 's competing town hall on NBC, even though the latter was broadcast on three networks. The Biden event averaged 15.1 million viewers, while the combined ratings for Trump's event across NBC and sister channels MSNBC and CNBC totaled 13.5 million. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 30, 2020)***

**McDonald’s Big Mac burger is turning 40. To celebrate, McDonald’s franchisee Jim Delligatti, who invented the 540-calorie sandwich, opened a Big Mac museum in North Huntington, Pa. McDonald’s sells about 17 Big Macs a second in the U.S. *(The Week magazine, September 7, 2007)***

**On February 15, 1932, George Burns and Gracie Allen debuted as regulars on The Guy Lombardo Show on CBS radio. The couple was so popular that they would soon have their own show, The Burns & Allen Show. George and Gracie continued on radio for 18 years before making the switch to TV. All in all, they were a big hit for three decades*. (The Daily Chronicles)***

**In the 1920s and 1930s, Charlie Chaplin was probably the most celebrated man in the world. On a visit to his native London, the motion-picture comedian received 73,000 letters in just two days. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts)***

**Christmas carols had another burst of popularity in the 1800s. Some of the best-loved carols sung today were written during that time. These include “Silent Night,” “Away in a Manger” and “O Little Town of Bethlehem.” *(Betty Debnam, in Rocky Mountain News)***

**The Bangor, Maine, Daily News said the paper saw a 3,000 percent increase in political ad revenue this cycle compared with 2014, the last time Sen. Susan Collins ran for re-election. Collins' opponent, Sara Gideon, raised more than $68 million in a losing bid to displace Collins. *(BuzzFeedNews.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 20, 2020)***

**Columbus statues around the world: U.S. – 28 statues; Caribbean – 10 statues; Spain – 9 statues (Statue in Barcelona has Columbus pointing to Libya, not U.S.); South America – 5 statues; France – 3 statues; Mexico – 2 statues. *(Robert Hughes, Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1992, Barcelona)***

**The number of Costco memberships reached 105.5 million in 2020, exceeding the number of U.S. households that pay for cable TV. *(Bloomberg.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 2, 2021)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Walt Disney this year surpassed $5 billion at the global box office faster than any other studio in history, thanks to blockbusters like Captain America: Civil War, Zootopia, and Finding Dory. *(Deadline.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 22, 2016)***

**The Walt Disney Company tops the list of Fortune 500 companies Americans say they most want to work for, according to a Fortune poll. Tech giants Alphabet, Amazon, and Apple took second, third, and fourth place, respectively. *(Fortune.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 17, 2016)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The most reproduced face in history is that of Queen Elizabeth II, right? No, she’s the most photographed. The most-reproduced still is King C. Gillette. His face for decades appeared on razor blades. His signature thereon was the most reproduced, too. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**What's the most popular single food item nationwide? Cow's milk. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Viewership on Fox News during Tucker Carlson’s former 8 p.m. slot dropped last week by more than 50 percent, to 1.3 million. Viewership at the far-right network Newsmax tripled during that time slot, to 510,000 viewers. *(CNN.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 12, 2023)***

**A record 17.4 million people tuned in HBO’s final season premiere of Game of Thrones. It was the most-watched scripted entertainment program of the year, topping the 14.1 million viewers for CBS’s Big Bang Theory in February. *(Entertainment Weekly, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 26, 2019)***

**The Girl Scouts have 15 million boxes of unsold cookies after Covid-19 nixed troops' traditional cookie booths. The Girl Scouts normally sell around 200 million boxes of cookies per year, or about $800 million worth. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 25, 2021)***

**Forty years after Elvis Presley’s death, his Graceland home in Memphis remains the second-most-visited house in the U.S., after the White House. *(The Week magazine, September 1, 2017)***

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**Before J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince hit the bookstores this week, Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble had already sold nearly 2 million pre-ordered copies. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 22, 2005)***

**Three out of four American children between 11 and 13 have read at least one of author J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter books. So have one in five adults. (U.S. News & World Report, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 29, 2005)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Trying to bed popular in high school is like trying to be mayor of a city thatr won't exist in four years. *(Jenny Holzer, artist)***

**The Hope Diamond is one of the biggest attractions of any museum in the world. More than 6 million people view it each year. (Betty Debnam, in Rocky Mountain News)**

**With the success of his new movie, Space Jam, basketball superstar LeBron James has now earned over $700 million in his off-the-court endeavors in addition to $346 million in contracts from the NBA. He is the first U. S. athlete in the four major sports to accumulate $1 billion in earnings while still active in the game. (MarketWatch.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 13, 2021)**

**Michael Jordan has been on the Wheaties box more than any other athlete – 18 times, including three appearances with the NBA champion Chicago Bulls. (David Hoffman, in Little-Known Facts about Well-Known Stuff, p. 47)**

**Dozens of new books on John F. Kennedy are being published to coincide with the 50th anniversary of JFK’s assassination on November 22. Since 1963, there have been more than 40,000 books published on JFK. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 8, 2013)***

**Fox News viewership took a dive during the network’s broadcast of the funeral for civil rights icon Rep. John Lewis. While the network had its customary ratings lead during the 9 a.m. hour, with 1.7 million viewers, viewership “fell off a cliff” by more than 50 percent once the funeral coverage commenced, even as it rose at CNN and MSNBC, according to analysis by CNN’s Brian Stelter. *(TheDailyBeast.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 14, 2020)***

**Abraham Lincoln has been the subject of over 8,600 books, a distinction ranking second only to Jesus. (Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 24)**

**In 1947, after Jack Lawrence's song "Linda" hit number one, 5.5% of the girls born in the U.S. were named Linda. Since then, no baby name has become so popular so quickly. Oddly enough, the Linda who inspired the song (the daughter of Lawrence's lawyer) became even more famous in 1969 when she married a guy named Paul McCartney. (Reader's Digest)**

**Lions Club International has grown to include 1.4 million members in 44,600 clubs in 190 countries and geographic areas. *(Lions Club International, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News, July 1, 2003)***

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**In spite of the cost of living, it's still popular. (Kathleen Norris)**

**Despite the cost of living, have you noticed how popular it remains? (The American Legion magazine)**

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**A mystery rider on a fiery horse cleared a man wrongfully accused of murder in the January 30, 1933, premiere of The Lone Ranger, on Detroit’s WXYZ radio. Written by Fran Striker and played live by several actors over some 3,000 episodes (Brace Beemer wore the mask from 1941 to 1954), the Ranger – with his Indian friend Tonto – aired on some 400 radio stations, and spurred movie serials, a TV show (starring Clayton Moore), books, comics and a romantic notion of the American West. *(Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**The M&M’s characters are America’s most likeable brand icon, according to a survey of 1,800 consumers by Marketing Evaluations. Also rating highly were the Pillsbury Doughboy, the Aflac duck, and Kellogg’s Tony the Tiger. The least liked character: Stouffer’s Max-A-Roni. (Forbes, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 20, 2006)**

**Ronald McDonald is considered the second most recognizable character in the world, after Santa Claus, and ahead of Mickey Mouse. (David Hoffman, in Little-Known Facts about Well-Known Stuff, p. 146)**

**On November 5, 1935, Monopoly went on sale. The Parker Brothers' novelty has become the most popular board game in history, selling more than 275 million sets. (The Daily Chronicles)**

**The person most often featured on the cover of Time magazine: Richard Nixon, with 55 appearances. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 257)***

**The Phantom of the Opera grossed $3.65 million in its final week on Broadway, with some tickets going for $4,000 each on third-party seller sites. The show grossed over $1.3 billion since debuting in 1988. *(CNBC.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 28, 2023)***

**The picture of the meeting between Richard Nixon and Elvis Presley in 1970 is among the most requested photographs (from the millions) in the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C., ranking up there with images of Pearl Harbor, D-day, and Hiroshima. (David Hoffman, in Little-Known Facts about Well-Known Stuff, p. 143)**

**One in four American males ages 6 to 19 years old consumes pizza on any given day. (WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 21, 2014)**

**Sales of print political books through mid-September were up 85 percent from a year earlier, making 2020 the best year for political titles since national tracking began in 2004. Three million copies of President Obama's memoirs will hit bookshelves next month. (The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 23, 2020)**

**Worldwide consumption of pork exceeds that of any other type of meat. *(Noel Botham, in The Amazing Book of Useless Information, p. 172)***

**Potato chips are American’s favorite snack food. They are devoured at a rate of 1.2 billion pounds a year. *(Noel Botham, in The Amazing Book of Useless Information, p. 169)***

**Despite his party's historic midterm losses, President Obama's approval rating actually went up after the election. Three days before the election, 43% of Americans approved of the job he's doing. Now that figure is 47%. *(Gallup Poll, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 19, 2010)***

**Most quoted authors in the Oxford English Dictionary:**

**\* Shakespeare -- 33,303 references**

**\* Sir Walter Scott -- 16,628 references**

**\* John Milton -- 22,464 references**

**\* John Wyclif -- 11,962 references**

**\* Chaucer -- 11,901 references**

**\* William Caxton -- 10,324 references**

**\* John Dryden -- 9,123 references**

**\* Dickens -- 8,536 references. *(Russell Ash, in The Top 10 of Everything 1998)***

**Good week for: Rescue dogs, which have become so popular during the pandemic, because of the human need for companionship, that animal shelters are running out of them. "They're going like hotcakes," said Cindy Sharpley of Last Chance Animal Rescue in Maryland. *(The Week magazine, January 22, 2021)***

**In a letter to the editor in Capper’s Weekly, a man wrote: “When I asked a friend of mine the secret of his popularity, he attributed it to one particular word. “Years ago,” he said, “upon hearing a statement with which I disagreed, I used o say baloney, and people began to avoid me like a plague. Now I substitute the word amazing for baloney, and my phone keeps ringing and my list of friends continues to grow.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Since Billboard magazine first published its "Hot 100" chart in 1958, 16 different songs titled "Hold On" have made the list (most recently in 2013, courtesy of the Alabama Shakes). In that sense, "Hold On" is the most popular song in American music history. *(Billboard.com)***

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**In 1993, some 517 million Elvis Presley stamps were sold; many popular single stamps bring the United States Postal Service revenues that over time rival the earnings of a Hollywood blockbuster. (John Ross, in Smithsonian magazine)**

**As America’s first federal stamps, the pair became Scott 1 and Scott 2 in the universally accepted Scott stamp identification system. Today the Scott system lists more than 3,000 American stamps, of which Franklin (with at least 113) and Washington (with at least 276) are still the most frequently used subjects. (John Ross, in Smithsonian magazine)**

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**In 1996, 37 percent of the toys sold in the United States were Star Wars products. *(Noel Botham, in The Best Book of Useless Information Ever, p. 82)***

**A free society is a society where it is safe to be unpopular. *(Adlai Stevenson)***

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**More than 93 million people watched the Indianapolis Colts beat the Chicago Bears in this year’s Super Bowl. It was the third most-watched TV program ever, behind the 1996 Super Bowl and the 1983 series finale of M\*A\*S\*H. *(New York Daily News, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 16, 2007)***

**Good week for: The New Orleans Saints, whose Super Bowl victory last week was witnessed by 106.5 million viewers – the most-watched television event in U.S. history. *(The Week magazine, February 19, 2010)***

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**The Nintendo video game adaptation Super Mario Bros. Movie scored the top opening of all time for an animated film, with $375.6 million in worldwide ticket sales. *(Hollywood Reporter, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 21, 2023)***

**The Thanksgiving Day game between the Dallas Cowboys and New York Giants had just over 42 million viewers, making it the most-watched regular- season NFL game on record, according to Nielsen. Roughly 22 million people watched NBC’s broadcast of the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade. *(The Hollywood Reporter, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 9, 2022)***

**Henry David Thoreau, currently so popular with college men and women, was not universally known during his lifetime. All his life he kept a journal and, after he died, it was this work that provided the material for about thirty volumes of his writings, now in big demand. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 208)***

**Colgate Total toothpaste became the best-selling toothpaste in its first month on the market, knocking Crest from its vaunted position after thirty-five years. *(Gary S. Lynn & Richard R. Reilly, in Blockbusters, p. 2)***

**Trying to be popular in high school is like trying to be mayor of a city that won’t exist in four years. *(Jenny Holzer, artist)***

**More than 80 percent of the population of Italy saw the eight-hour TV film Jesus of Nazareth by Franco Zeffirelli. It was later shown around the world to 600 million. *(Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 23)***

**Who was the only president to have been elected by unanimous electoral votes? George Washington. No one can top Washington’s record. In his first election, he got all sixty-nine electoral votes from the ten states that cast them. Then the Father of Our Country, who still enjoyed preeminent status as a hero of the Revolutionary War, did it again in 1792, winning all 132 electoral votes and all fifteen states. Washington had an advantage over his successors in that there was not yet a two-party system in America, so he faced little opposition. *(Amy Pastan, in The Smithsonian Book of Presidential Trivia, p. 69)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The White House is the most visited residence in the United States. The second most visited is Graceland Mansion. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Tiger Woods has signed a new endorsement deal with Nike, the world’s largest athletic shoe-maker. Woods, 30, the winner of 12 major titles, signed a five-year, $40 million agreement with Nike when he turned professional in 1996, then a five-year, $100 million agreement in 2001. The new deal may be worth “substantially more,” said Marc Ganis, president of Sportscorp Ltd., a Chicago-based sports marketing company. *(Rocky Mountain News, December 12, 2006)***

**The World Cup was the most discussed topic in the world on Facebook this year, followed by the Ebola virus and the Brazilian elections. In the U.S., Ebola came out on top, followed by the Ice Bucket Challenge and Robin William's death. *(WSJ.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 26, 2014)***

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