

## Laugh First, Think Later

**What is similar about the following? Scientists that tested what shouting does to your driving; learning that cannibalism is not very healthy for the human body; and that human spit is a good cleaning product. These are all results of scientific research that won prizes at the latest Ig Nobel Prize ceremony.**

### 5 Parody prize

The Ig Nobel Prize is a parody of the famous Nobel Prize. In 1991, Marc Abrahams, editor of a humoristic science magazine, created these awards for discoveries 'that cannot, or should not, be repeated'. Each year, 10 prizes are awarded for 'absurd' research in science, such as biology and medicine. The 28<sup>th</sup> annual Ig Nobel Prize ceremony was held this September at Harvard University in the USA. This year's theme was 'the heart'. Abrahams was the master of ceremonies and gave the winners a heart as their prize.

### Funny traditions

The ceremony is filled with funny traditions. When someone receives a prize, they have to watch out for Miss Sweetie Poo. If the prize winner speaks for more than a minute, this 8-year-old girl will yell out loudly: 'Please stop: I'm bored'. The people in the audience fold paper airplanes from their programmes and fly them at the stage. The prize money is a \$10 trillion dollar bill – but in Zimbabwe dollars. That is the same as a few US cents. The ceremony ends traditionally with: 'If you didn't win this year – and especially if you did – better luck next year'. The show can be followed live on internet.



### Prize winners

The Ig Nobel prize for medicine went to a researcher who found out that riding on a roller coaster can help remove kidney stones. Disney's Big Thunder Mountain shakes you around so much that the stones just pop out! The biology prize went to scientists that showed that wine experts know, just by smell, that there is a fly in a glass of wine. Although some of this research may seem silly at first, it can help give solutions. That is why these awards make you laugh first and think later.



**Sources:** [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org); [www.sciencemag.org](http://www.sciencemag.org); [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

### Words to help you

the parody = to make fun of something

the kidney stones = a stone in the kidney that blocks urine and makes it painful to pee