



## FACT or FICTION? It's up to YOU to decide!



Below, you'll see a series of statements about parrots. Read each one, decide whether or not it is true, and then circle either the word FACT or FICTION. If you're not sure about a statement, do some research (using the library or the Internet) to see if you can find the right answer.

- |   |      |         |
|---|------|---------|
| 1. Parrots, like other birds, have feathers covering their bodies because they are cold-blooded.      | FACT | FICTION |
| 2. In captivity, some species of parrots can live to be 60 years old or more.                         | FACT | FICTION |
| 3. There are over 360 different species of parrots, and more than 90 of these species are endangered. | FACT | FICTION |
| 4. Some parrots understand the meaning of at least some of the words they're saying.                  | FACT | FICTION |
| 5. In some species of parrots, the colour of the eye changes as the bird becomes an adult.            | FACT | FICTION |
| 6. Different species of parrots lay different coloured eggs.  | FACT | FICTION |
| 7. Some species of parrots like to eat clay.  | FACT | FICTION |
| 8. Chocolate is poisonous to parrots.   | FACT | FICTION |
| 9. When kept as pets, all species of parrots should be fed a diet consisting mainly of bird seed.     | FACT | FICTION |
| 10. All wild adult parrots can fly - this is how they avoid predators.                                | FACT | FICTION |
| 11. Some parrots sleep hanging upside down, like a bat.   | FACT | FICTION |
| 12. Only one of the species of parrots alive today is native to North America.                        | FACT | FICTION |
| 13. All species of parrots live in warm climates.   | FACT | FICTION |
| 14. In some ways, parrots are as smart as 3-5 year old human children.                                | FACT | FICTION |
| 15. Parrots are very easy to care for as pets.  | FACT | FICTION |

## FACT or FICTION - ANSWERS

1. FICTION - Parrots are warm-blooded.
2. FACT - Large, well-cared for pet parrots (such as macaws) can live more than 60 years.
3. FACT
4. FACT - Researcher Dr. Irene Pepperberg worked with Alex (an African Grey parrot) for about 30 years. Alex learned how to count, how to identify different objects, shapes and colours, and was starting to learn how to read. He certainly knew what he was saying! Many people who own parrots as pets have experienced their birds using speech in context.
5. FACT - For example, baby African Grey parrots have a dark grey to black iris when they are less than 6 months old. By the time they are 3-4 years old, the iris will have gradually turned yellow in colour.
6. FICTION - All parrots lay white eggs.
7. FACT - In South America, many species of parrots eat the clay found on the riverbanks and cliffs along the Amazon River. Scientists believe the clay detoxifies poisons that the parrots ingest when eating certain unripe fruits and seeds.
8. FACT - NEVER feed a parrot chocolate!
9. FICTION - Bird seed is high in fat. Most pet parrots should be fed pellets, along with fresh vegetables, fruits and nuts. In most cases, seed should only be fed occasionally as a special treat.
10. FICTION - The flightless Kakapo lives in New Zealand, making its nest either on or under the ground. It avoids predators by being very well-camouflaged.
11. FACT - The Hanging Parrot got its name from its habit of sleeping hanging upside down, just like a bat.
12. FICTION - The Carolina Parakeet was once common in parts of North America. However, the last small flock was seen in Florida in 1920, and by 1939, the species had become extinct.
13. FICTION - The Kea parrot lives in the snowy mountains of New Zealand.
14. FACT - Studies have shown that at least some species of parrots (most notably, African Greys) have intelligence levels similar to 3-5 year old human children. Dr. Pepperberg (mentioned in the answer to question 4, above) is a leading researcher in this field.
15. FICTION - Parrots are very challenging to care for. They are extremely messy and many are extraordinarily noisy. They need a great deal of attention, special foods, lots of toys (which they love to destroy) and large cages. And, their lifespan can be as long - or longer - than that of humans. So, getting a pet parrot is a very big commitment!