

Interesting Facts about Home Windows

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Windows are such an important part of our lives, yet we rarely pay them any attention. How often do we look through them without even seeing them? But there is so much more to windows than meets the eye. Here are some of the most interesting facts about windows.

Humble Beginnings

The first windows were simple openings in the walls or roof, occasionally covered with cloth or wood. The Romans were the first to utilize glass in their windows. Glass beads were considered a luxury item and were subsequently used for windows. Around the 3rd century CE, the Romans perfected the art of laying glass pebbles in wooden frames. The purpose of creating transparent glass was for them to see and admire their wine. It would be some time before the use of glass in windows became the norm, but as is the case with most cool things, the Romans did it first.

Window Tax

In 1696 England, there was a tax imposed on windows. It was introduced during the reign of William III, and it was based on the number of windows in a building. Houses with fewer than ten windows were initially exempt, with owners of houses with more windows forced to pay additional taxes for each additional window. Naturally, it was easy to collect this tax, as the

number of windows could be seen clearly even from the street. However, after people started boarding up their windows, and after increasing reports of illnesses from poor ventilation and insufficient light, the Window Tax was repealed in 1851.

Famous Windows

There are several 'famous' windows, each with a story. The windows of the Winchester House, owned by the Winchester Rifle heiress, Sarah Winchester is a strange, peculiar story. The house has 10,000 windows, including one which cost \$1,500. It is said multiple rooms in the house contain 13 windows, her favorite number.

Other famous windows include the Pope's window in the Apostolic Palace, where he recites Sunday mass; the glass dome of the Chicago Cultural Center, which is cut in the shape of fish scales and features Zodiac signs; the stained glass windows of cathedrals like the Notre Dame and the Chartres Cathedral in France and, of course, the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository from which President John F. Kennedy was shot.

Double Glazing

Double glazing, the concept of trapping air between two sheets of glass to act as insulation, was invented in 1930, but it wasn't until 1941 that the idea was put into practice. This was primarily due to the high cost of production. However, there is significant evidence that there was double glazing in use in Scotland in the 19th Century.

A Few More Fun Facts:

The word 'window' comes from Old Norse and is a combination of vindr "wind" and auga "eye"/"to see." It literally translates to 'eye-hole.'

- Glass is infinitely recyclable; it can be re-used repeatedly.
- It takes more than 1 million years for glass to decompose.
- The White House has 147 windows, while Buckingham Palace has 760 windows.
- The Empire State Building in Manhattan has 6,500 windows. The tallest building in the world, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, contains 34,348 windows.
- Blinds today work on the principle of tilt mechanism, which was patented by American inventor John Hampson in 1841.
- Windows are essential for heat insulation in the home. Approximately 25% of the heat loss in your home is through the windows.

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