



Giant stories

So what makes a real giant?



Everyone knows that to be a giant you have to be tall. But can human beings ever be called giants?

The tallest person that ever lived was the American Robert Wadlow who was a staggering 8 foot 11 inches (2.72m) tall when he died aged only 22. Some believe that he would have topped 9 foot if he had lived longer.

In September 2009 the *Guinness Book of World Records* officially named Sultan Kösen, from Turkey, as the "World's Tallest Man", he measured in at a towering 8 foot 1 inch tall. When asked of his hopes for the future, Kösen replied that he would love to be able to drive a car (they are all too small for him!) and find a girlfriend.

Such people are huge, but are not really giants as we think of them in fairy-tale terms. A real giant would have to be much taller than that, and much bigger in every way: bigger hands, bigger heads, and bigger eyes, not to mention mouths big enough to munch a person whole!

And not only big, giants have to be pretty nasty as well. Apart from some very rare exceptions, giants in myth, folklore and stories are always nasty, with a very big, very tall capital **N**. It seems as if the bigger they are, the more 'orrible they are! But then, as we know from *Jack and the Beanstalk*, the bigger they are the harder they fall!

Some big names in myth and folklore

Giants can be found in folklore all around the world. Here are some of the most famous:

Finn macCumhail (macCool)

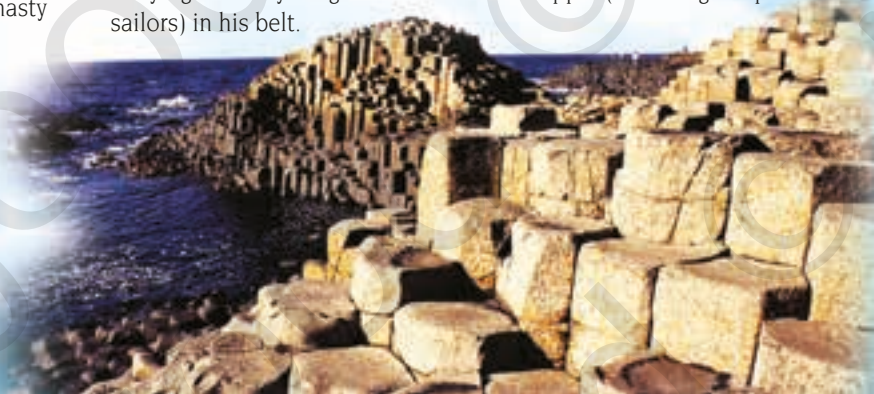
A legendary Irish giant who is said to have built the extraordinary Giant's Causeway, a series of "steps" of hexagonal basalt columns to be seen off the northern coast of Northern Ireland. According to legend, Finn MacCumhail built the causeway to help him cross the sea to the Scottish island of Staffa (which has similar rock formations).

giants in Cornwall

According to legend, the Penwith area of Cornwall in particular was once plagued with giants, of which the most famous were Gog and Magog, two massive giants that were held captive by Brutus, the legendary founder of Britain. Also well known is Cormoran, the wicked Giant of St Michael's Mount, who was finally beaten by Jack the Giant Killer.

wrath

Perhaps the most wicked giant in Cornwall was Wrath of Portreath, who would lie in wait on the coast for ships which he would attack, carrying back anything he fancied for his supper (including the poor sailors) in his belt.



bolster

Another famous Cornish giant was Bolster, who according to legend must have been absolutely huge. It is claimed that he could plant one foot on Carn Brea (the high hill just outside Camborne) and the other six miles away, on the cliffs outside St Agnes, which would make him around 12 miles high!

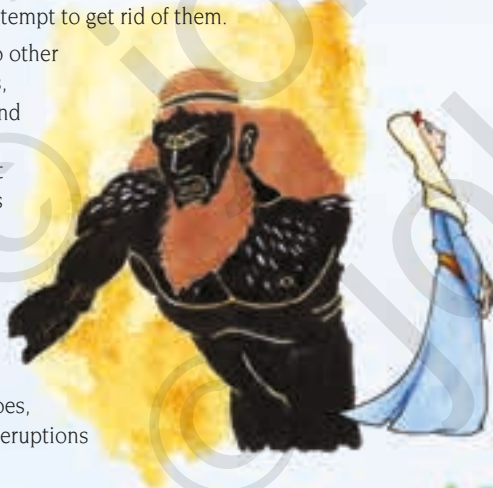
The evil Bolster met his downfall after falling in love with the pious and chaste St Agnes. Sick of his constant attentions, St Agnes told him to prove his love for her by filling up a hole in the cliff at Chapel Porth with his own blood. To Bolster that was an easy task — after all, he'd never miss a few gallons — but St Agnes knew that the hole was bottomless and led into the sea below! Having cut his arm, Bolster waited for the hole to fill up. It never did, of course, and eventually he lost so much blood that he died. To this day the cliffs at Chapel Porth bear a red stain, said to be from where his blood ran down into the sea.



greek giants

The Cyclopes were giants from Greek mythology known for having just one eye in the middle of their foreheads. They were said to be the deformed offspring of the god Uranus and Gaea, the earth mother, and were imprisoned by their father, in an attempt to get rid of them.

Uranus and Gaea also gave birth to other races of giants including the Titans, and a race that had one hundred and fifty heads! The strongest giant in Greek myth was Antaeus, who built a temple out of skulls and who was unbeatable as long as he touched the earth. He was finally defeated by the hero Hercules, who lifted him off the ground and strangled him. Some ancient Greeks also believed that giants lay buried alive under mountains and volcanoes, and that they were responsible for eruptions and earthquakes.



giants alive today?

Few people believe that giants still exist today, unless you count huge animals such as elephants, giraffes and whales. However, there are occasional stories of giant hairy creatures living in isolated areas.



In America they are known as Bigfoot, whilst in Tibet, the term Yeti or Abominable Snowman is commonly used. Nobody has proved whether Bigfoots or Yetis really exist or not, despite many sightings and evidence such as footprints.

jack the giant killer

After all this talk of evil giants, it's nice to know that there are also plenty of heroes to fight them. The most famous of these is Jack the Giant Killer.

According to legend, Jack was a farmer's son who lived near Land's End in the days of King Arthur. The evil giant Cormoran terrorised the area and stole cattle, carrying them away either on his back or dangling from his belt. Jack defeated Cormoran by digging a huge pit near Morvah and covering it with sticks and straw, and then luring the Giant towards it by blowing his horn.

After his brave deed, Jack the Giant Killer became a travelling hero, fighting wolves and pirates as well as other troublesome giants, both in Cornwall and later in Wales.

© John Good



Beans!



Beans were one of the first crops to be cultivated by man—the ancient Egyptians grew broad beans and Greek and Roman children used beans to draw lots to decide who would be the king of the feast of Saturnalia. Later on, in Christian times, a dried bean was hidden in the Christmas cake, and the person who got the piece with the bean would be king of the revels for the twelve days of Christmas!

In the Middle Ages beans became associated with spells and magic potions—some people even believed that beans would cure baldness!

In view of all this history, it's not surprising that there are many sayings involving beans.

About a hundred and fifty years ago beans started to be used as a slang word for money, as in "I haven't got a bean".

An 'old bean' is a good friend and the expression 'to spill the beans' meaning to give away a secret, came into use in England from America in the 1920s. But 'full of beans' has been spotted in a book published as early as 1843.

The word 'carat', used by jewellers as a measure for gold and precious stones, was named after the carat bean. Grown on the east coast of Africa, the beans always grew to just about the same size, so the natives used it as a standard for weighing gold, and when the practice eventually spread to Europe the measure became a carat (not a carrot!).



Then there's a beanpole, which people sometimes use to describe a very tall, thin person, and a beanbag, which was originally a small cloth bag containing beans, which was used in playing games, but now we know it as a rather larger cloth bag full of polystyrene chips or balls that we used to sit on!

And if someone tells you that you 'know how many beans make five', take it as a compliment because they think you're pretty clever!

The dictionary says that a 'beano' is 'a rowdy jollification', and that probably describes the famous comic *The Beano*, which first came out in 1938 and is still going strong...

Well, who can resist the antics of *The Bash Street Kids*, *Billy Whizz* and the immortal *Dennis the Menace*?



Jumping Beans!

The movements of a jumping bean are actually caused by a caterpillar that lives inside the bean seed. The butterflies lay their eggs in the flower then, after the eggs hatch, the caterpillars burrow into the bean. They eat away the inside, but leave the bean wall undamaged. The caterpillar then builds a web inside the bean.

The bean jumps when the caterpillar grabs the web and jerks its body—it helps to scare away birds and other animals that might try to eat the bean seeds.

When the time comes to become a butterfly, the caterpillar makes a circular lid in the bean wall and pushes its way out...



three famous mr beans

Everybody knows the strange Mr Bean with his frog-like voice, his minis and his teddy bear. His weird and wonderful adventures on television and on film keep us laughing our socks off...

What about actor Sean Bean? If you've seen the *Lord of the Rings* films, you'll recognise him as Boromir, one of Frodo's companions, as he makes his perilous journey to the land of Mordor...

Finally, a Mr Bean you may not have heard of—but a man who has actually been to the moon! Al Bean was one of the astronauts on the Apollo 12 mission, which was the second to land on the moon. Bean and his commander Pete Conrad not only had to land on the moon, but on a very particular spot in the Ocean of Storms nicknamed the 'Snowman'. They made it down safely onto the moon's surface on 19 November 1969.

Elaine Peake
© John Good



Shooting Beans!

If you plant a bean in a see-through container, you can watch it grow, from the first root to the sprouting of the leaves on the new stem.

here's how:

You'll need a see-through plastic container, some blotting paper, some large dried beans, a pair of scissors and a jug of water.

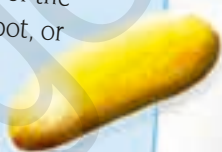
1. Cut out a piece of blotting paper and make it into a cylinder to line your container.
2. Push some beans down between the paper and the container.
3. Pour a little water into the container.
4. Put the container on a window-sill.

remember to:

Water the beans regularly.

Turn the container around to help the bean grow straight.

When the bean is too big for the container, transfer it to a pot, or plant it in the garden, using a stick to support it.





GOOBY

CAAPERS!

Jack's cow has run away from the market and joined this herd. Can you find out which is Jack's cow from the six clues below?

Jack's cow has horns.

Jack's cow is black-and-white.

Jack's cow is female.

Jack's cow has a round bell around its neck.

Jack's cow has four white feet.

Jack's cow has two big circles and one small one.



Branching out!

See if you can help Jack find
which branch will lead him to
the hen and not the Giant!

the liar and the truth teller

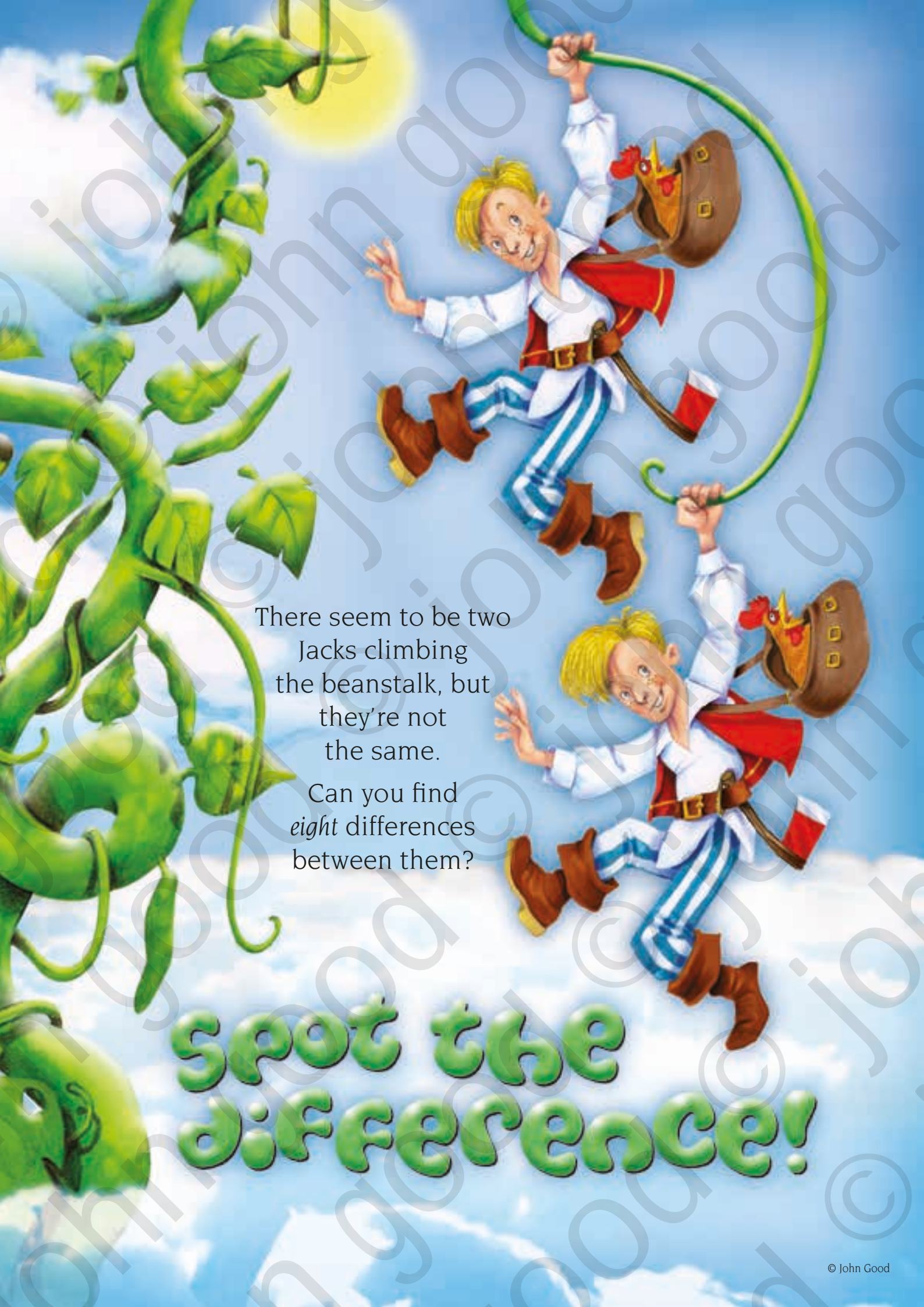
On his way to the market, Jack came to a fork in the road. He was sure that one of the two ways must lead him to the market, but he didn't know which.

Standing by the side of the road were two men whom Jack knew. They were twins, whom no-one could tell apart. It was always extremely awkward to talk to them because, while one of them was extremely truthful—and, in fact, couldn't tell a lie—the other was a compulsive liar—and had never told the truth in his life! Jack wanted to ask them which road led to the market, but he knew that if he just came out with a straightforward question, they would each tell him to take a different road.

After thinking about the problem for some time, Jack eventually decided what to do. He asked one of the men a single question. When he heard the reply, he smiled, thanked the man, and set off on one of the roads, which led him directly to the market.

Can you work out what question Jack asked?





There seem to be two Jacks climbing the beanstalk, but they're not the same.

Can you find *eight* differences between them?

Spot the difference!



colour
me in!

The big beanstalk crawl!

Can you help Jack climb up (and down) the beanstalk without becoming a giant grub? You will need a die and some counters, buttons or even beans! Each player rolls the die, and whoever rolls highest, goes first.



23
It's so high up, you feel giddy and sick. Miss a go to recover!

24
You grab the hen and bap and make a run for it!

25
The giant's seen you! Run for your life! Extra turn!

26
Slip and fall! Roll a die, quick!

27
You land on the wrong part of the beanstalk! Go back 5!

28
You're so hungry, you eat a whole giant beanstalk bean for tea! Roll again!

29
You slide down a handy tendrill to bean

30
Now you've really lost your way... and the hen's no help!

15
Attacked by beanstalk bees! Go back 3!

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109
An over-friendly scark plucks you off the beanstalk! You try to let it put you down!

Roll a die to see what happens...

Roll 1-3...
It gives you a ride to higher on the beanstalk!
Go on!

Roll 4-6...
It drops you! Luckily a bean pod breaks your fall!
Go back 2!

10
You became tangled up in tendrils!
Throw a 6 to **Go down!**

Stop for a quick nap...
Roll a 6!

You drop the harp! Stop to pick it up!
Miss a turn!

You decide to see what's at the top of the beanstalk, and start to climb...
Go on up!

That's a pretty big beanstalk...!
Roll again!

Sell Daisy the cow for some 'magic' beans!
Back to Start!

The clouds are too thick — you lose your way!

miss a turn!

Where to now? Roll a die again to see where you end up...

Roll 1-3...
You grab a falling leaf and float downwards.
Roll again!

No way down! You'll have to climb all the way back to bean **GO!**

Home at last!

How many beans make five?

Jack has got some more magic beans, and wants to grow *another* beanstalk! He knows he must use five beans, which must all add up to the magic formula of five. Can you find out which set of beans he needs?

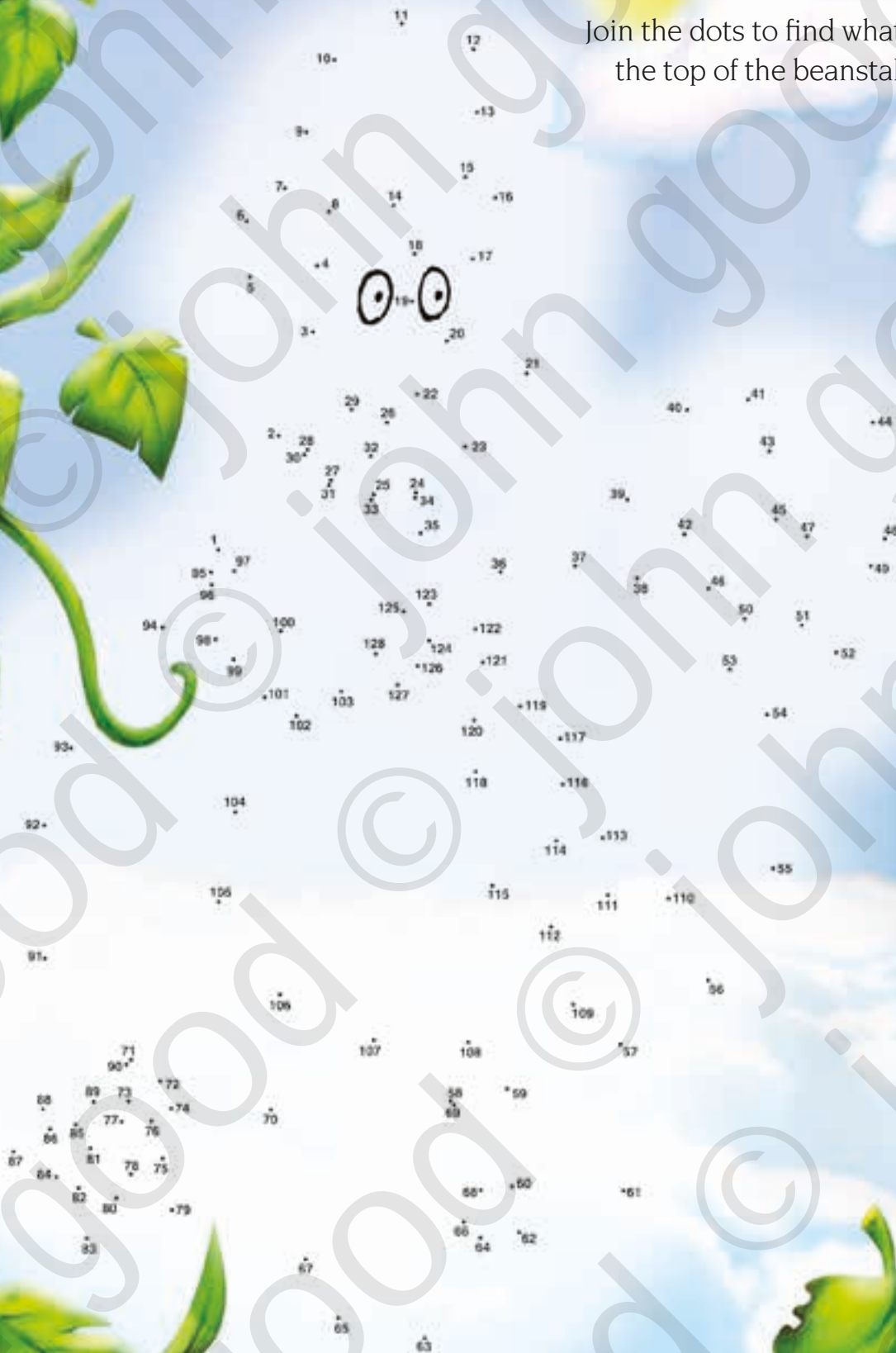
 = 1  = 2  = 3  = -1  = -2

Five sets of beans are shown on yellow backgrounds, labeled A through E:

- A:** 1 green bean, 2 red beans, 1 dark red bean, 1 white bean.
- B:** 1 green bean, 1 yellow bean, 1 dark red bean, 2 white beans.
- C:** 1 white bean, 1 dark red bean, 2 red beans, 1 yellow bean, 1 red bean.
- D:** 2 red beans, 1 green bean, 1 yellow bean, 2 red beans, 1 dark red bean.
- E:** 2 red beans, 1 green bean, 1 yellow bean, 1 red bean, 1 white bean.

dot to dot!

Join the dots to find what's at the top of the beanstalk!



beansearch!



Can you find all the words in this wordsearch? They can go forwards, backwards and even diagonally! When you have found all the words, there will be a secret message left over—can you tell what it is?

(Here's a clue—it's what a hungry giant might say!)

JACK
DAISY
CHICKEN
HARP
SKY
HUNGRY
BIG

BEANSTALK
MAGIC BEANS
MARKET DAY
FALLING
CHOP
FAIR

COW
GIANT
MUM
AXE
TRICKS
BOY
ROOT



There are *twelve* differences between these two scenes.
Can you find them all?

Spot the difference!

Silly Sudoku!

While Jack was hiding in his beanstalk from the giant, he passed the time by making up sudoku puzzles, using things he could see around him instead of numbers!

The first one he made had 16 squares, divided into four smaller boxes of four squares each. The idea is to fill it so that every row and column of the large grid and every smaller 2 x 2 box contains each of the four different shapes—a bean, a leaf, a boot and a hen.



The next puzzle he made was even harder—spotting another two items, a cloud and a harp, he made the grid bigger, so that each row, column and box has six squares. See if you can do this one!



Answers!

COW CAPERS!



Spot the difference!



dot to dot!



branching out!



jumbled jacks!

From the top (left to right):

Jack and the Beanstalk, Steeplejack, Jackdaw, Jackass, Jack Frost, Jack-o'Lantern, Jack (and Jill), Lumberjack, Jack Tar, Jack (who built the house) Jack the Giant-Killer, Jack-in-the-Box, Jackpot, Jack-be-Nimble, Jack-knife, Jack Straws, Jack-boot, Jack-rabbit, Jumping Jack, Jack Sprat, Jack-of-all-trades, Crackerjack, Jack of Hearts, Jackal, Car-jack, Jack Russell, Jack Horner.

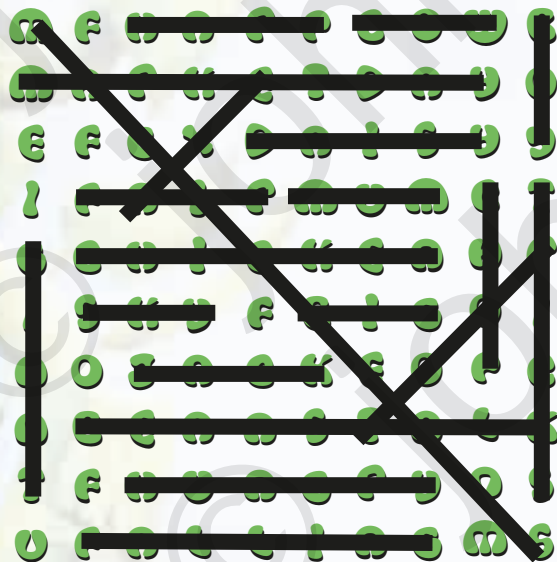
how many beans make five?

5



Answers!

beansearch!



The message reads: **FUM FO FO FUM!**

Spot the difference!



the liar and the truth teller



Jack asked one of the men (it didn't matter which) which way the other one would tell him to take. The truth teller would truthfully tell him that the liar would tell him to take the wrong path; and the liar, who would know that his brother would tell Jack the right path to take, would therefore point to the wrong path, also. It was clear to Jack, then, that whichever path he was told to take, he should take the other one!

Sudoku Answer!

