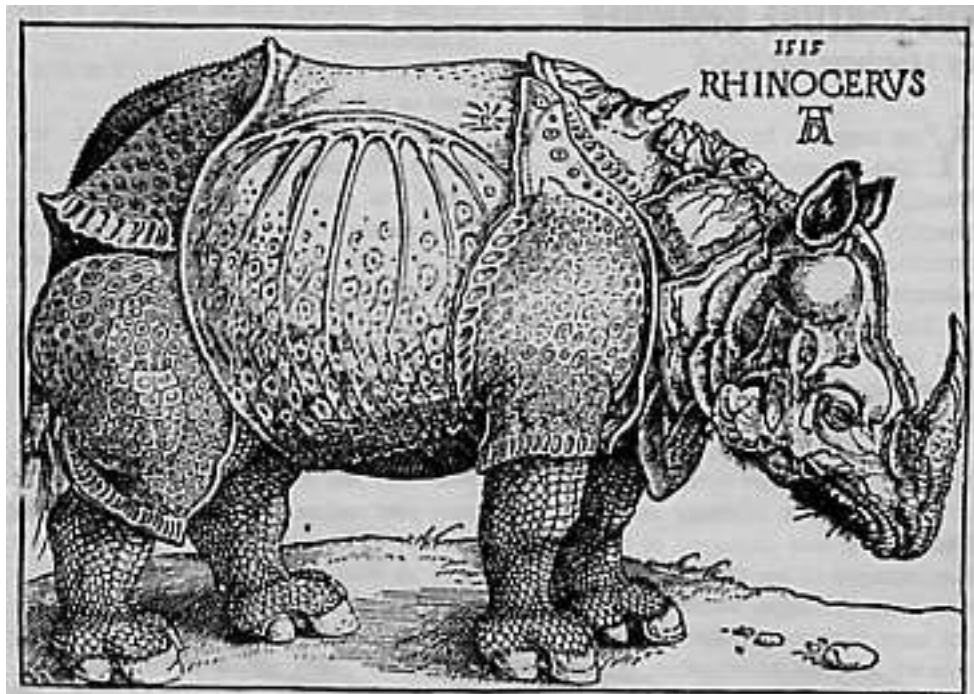


THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO LIFE SKILLS FOR DUMMIES

By Flora Crump

(December 2018 ed.)



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Table of Contents

The Reason for This Book	1
What We Need to Know and Do	2
Slowly and Painfully Working out the Painfully Obvious.....	3
Making a Living.....	4
Self-Employment	6
Material Knowledge and Skills	6
Learning/Cognitive Skills You Will Need Most	6
A List of Basic Skills and Things to Know	9
Social Knowledge and Skills	19
A List of Social Skills and Things to Know	19
Random Observations about Humans.....	20
Variety and Inconsistency	22
Social Difficulties	22
Humans You May Meet	26
Things to Know about Organizations.....	41
Things to Know about Politics and Economics	43
Self-Actualization	45
Religious Goals	45
Misconceptions and Misinformation	47
Reference Materials and/or Links	49
Basic English	49
Calendar.....	51
Bibliography and Sources	53

The Reason for This Book



There are lots of things you have to know and do in order to live a life, which my family didn't tell me and my school didn't teach me, and nobody else thought to mention. After a long time, it became clear that a lot of the people around me also had to learn the most basic and important things on their own, without help, just like me. Maybe my notes on what to know and do can save other people a lot of time to learn. Maybe my notes can also save you a lot of embarrassment. I wish my parents and my school had done so.

I am a Complete Idiot and a Dummy. I know this because people keep telling me so. Someone like me will notice what other people take for granted, and embarrass themselves by asking questions. When you do that, people talk about "common sense", which means things they don't want to bother to explain.

This is just a first edition. This book has some of the things in it you need to know and do, in order to live. This book does not have everything in it that you need to know and do. If you know something more that should be in this book, let Garth Spencer know at garth.van.spencer@gmail.com. Then I can add it to the next edition, and say that you told me about it.

What you learn, and when you learn it, is completely random. Grade schools and even post-secondary schools do not actually make much difference to how well prepared you are.

There are a lot of people who don't know, or don't do, what they need in order to live a life. Some of them become famous news stories for a while, like the man who sued a stapler manufacturer because he got a stapler wedged halfway down his throat; or the man who thought "cruise control" on a vehicle was the same thing as "autopilot" on a plane, and left the driver's seat of his van while he was driving on a highway, in order to fix himself a coffee. Most of us are not famous, like the men who put everything in the same wash and wonder why their coloured clothes get faded.

There are many reasons for people to act like Complete Idiots and Dummies, even when they should be too smart to act that way.

If older people just forget to pass on a lot of the things we know and do, that would explain why younger people end up being Complete Idiots and Dummies. A Complete Idiot is someone who doesn't know simple things. So is a Dummy. I know this because people get so fed up before they

even try to explain things. But you cannot expect everybody to get all the core life skills down by the time they graduate from high school.

There are also people who will confuse you about how to live a life, and you have to judge what you really have to know and do. A few of them do it deliberately, but I think that most of them don't realize they misinform you. There are a lot of lunatic subcultures out there, after all.

What We Need to Know and Do

A man named Abraham Maslow worked out the fact that people try to meet different kinds of needs in a predictable way. First, they will look after their physical needs. Then, some people may look after social needs. Finally, a few people look after "self-actualization" needs.

Other people think about life in other ways. A man named Miyamoto Musashi wrote about the things a samurai should know and do. He was most concerned about the duties a samurai should carry out. In fact, he talked about death first of all, and all the duties a samurai should take care of before he risks his life again. He had a good point. If you have any property or responsibilities at all, it is good to make out a will.

You may have other concerns, such as ambitions, or looks, or reputation, or influence, or profits, or accomplishing some things in the arts, in the sciences, or in community service. You may have a good point, whatever your concerns. It takes a lot of people, doing a lot of practical jobs, to make a place where people can live, so practical things can be important to know. A lot of these people are also concerned with appearances or status or influence, so knowing about their concerns can be important for getting along with them. It is actually surprising how many human natures we have to learn about, and don't recognize or understand right away.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT:

- Why bats are dying by the millions
- Why bees are dying by the billions
- Why bird populations are plunging
- Ocean acidification
- The melting ice caps
- Deforestation
- Dangers of natural gas fracking
- GMO, Monsanto, and the problems caused by toxic farming practices
- Potential food shortages because of drought, soil depletion, and the plunge in wildlife populations
- Polluted and depleted aquifers
- How to grow food
- Hazards of industrial pollution
- How your rights are being violated
- The realities of war
- Growth of the prison industry
- Lies about the War on Drugs
- Lies about immigration
- How to disconnect from fossil fuels
- Permaculture and sustainable living

WHAT THE NEWS TELLS YOU ABOUT:

- Who got murdered
- Who said what that doesn't matter
- Kanye West and Kim Kardashian
- The First Lady's workout routine
- Justin Beiber
- Who is getting divorced
- Drama in D.C.
- Corporate products to buy
- Courtroom scandals
- Misinformation about everything
- Who is gay
- Sports drama
- 'Reality' show drama
- What various people are wearing
- Who got arrested
- How many cars are selling
- Sex scandals
- Who got an award
- Car chases
- Socialites
- Whatever subtly perpetuates fear
- Whatever will keep you tuned in

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SCIENCEGASM

Slowly and Painfully Working out the Painfully Obvious

So many people don't know, or don't pay attention to eating a healthy diet, exercise, simple hygiene, traffic rules or keeping an ordinary speaking distance, you begin to wonder where they come from or how they got this way. The answer is simple. A culture consists in things you learn from other people, such as customs, and courtesies, and commonly-repeated phrases, and slang, and memes, and how you have to dress and talk to be taken seriously.

These things have to be passed on from person to person, and from generation to generation, but the way we pass things on is pretty iffy. This is why many people ... in fact, most people ... lack some common knowledge, such as taking off hats indoors, or not mentioning some subjects at the table, or speaking in accents, or languages that listeners don't understand.

Well, what do we need most, in order to live a life?

Even if you live in normal times and haven't survived a disaster, you have to provide yourself with food, clothing, shelter, and other physical needs. This is called "making a living".



Making a Living

It is easiest and normal to do this by making money. For the past century, people have earned money by working at jobs for someone.

Someone told me that as a matter of strategy, you cannot set out in life without a plan, but many of us don't have one. On the other hand, no plan survives contact with reality (or with the enemy, if you're doing battle). Many of us plan our lives according to life expectations that were current 40 years ago, such as the expectation of having a lifelong job, making enough to save money, make investments, afford a home and a marriage and a family, let alone retirement.

Maybe your family had your life all planned out. Sometimes I think my family had a plan for my life but, somehow, never spelled it out. I know a guy who keeps saying he would have done that, if he only had it spelled out for him, but he was terminally confused by his family and never figured out what they meant by common sense. Here is what I worked out.

In the 20th century it was normal for men to get a job, or better yet a career, and make enough money to have a good home, and raise a family, and put something by for retirement. But that wasn't the same as common sense in the 19th century, or in previous centuries. For one thing, up to then it was normal for men to do the same work their fathers and grandfathers did. In the 20th century, at least, it was expected for men to find their own paths in life.

Until the late 19th century it was normal for women to get married, keep house and raise children. My great-grandparents tell me this changed when suddenly there were a lot more women than men in Britain; then career women started to appear.

Looking for work was never very well organized. Most schools, and departments like WorkBC, will advise you to produce a résumé or curriculum vitae. That is a document that gives your contact information, a list of your employable skills, a record of your employment history, and a record of your educational history. Some types of résumé feature your employment objective, and a record of your volunteer or amateur activities. Usually your jobs and your employment credits are listed in point-paragraph form, in reverse chronological order (from the most recent to the

oldest), with reasons for leaving, or dates when courses and degrees were completed. For job interviews, schools and departments will advise you to produce a list of references – not just family and friends who know you, but mainly, people you have worked for. “References” also refers to letters of reference, from employers.

However, if you read books like *What Colour Is Your Parachute?*, you will read that “networking” accounts for most hiring and employment. This means that meeting people, and knowing who needs your skills and experience, will get you employment more likely than submitting résumés and going for job interviews. You can get the idea that very few people take résumés and references and job interviews seriously. You can get the idea that most jobs are not advertised, they are only advertised for legal reasons, and many are filled by friends of friends even before they are advertised. You can get very discouraged.

You have to make at least \$30,000 per year in order to save money. Pension plans are iffy. Making investments is right out.

Also, times have changed since people held jobs almost all their lives. Apparently more and more people are being required to work as freelancers, part-time contractors, or consultants. That means moving from project to project, if you are a professional person with degrees. Otherwise it means picking up temporary and part-time jobs, if you are an office assistant or a journeyman plumber.

TEN SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE



1 SENSE-MAKING

DEFINITION: ability to determine the deeper meaning or significance of what is being expressed



3 NOVEL & ADAPTIVE THINKING

DEFINITION: proficiency at thinking and coming up with solutions and responses beyond that which is rote or rule-based



5 COMPUTATIONAL THINKING

DEFINITION: ability to translate vast amounts of data into abstract concepts and to understand data-based reasoning



7 TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

DEFINITION: literacy in and ability to understand concepts across multiple disciplines



9 COGNITIVE LOAD MANAGEMENT

DEFINITION: ability to discriminate and filter information for importance, and to understand how to maximize cognitive functioning using a variety of tools and techniques



2 SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

DEFINITION: ability to connect to others in a deep and direct way, to sense and stimulate reactions and desired interactions



4 CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCY

DEFINITION: ability to operate in different cultural settings



6 NEW-MEDIA LITERACY

DEFINITION: ability to critically assess and develop content that uses new media forms, and to leverage these media for persuasive communication



8 DESIGN MINDSET

DEFINITION: ability to represent and develop tasks and work processes for desired outcomes



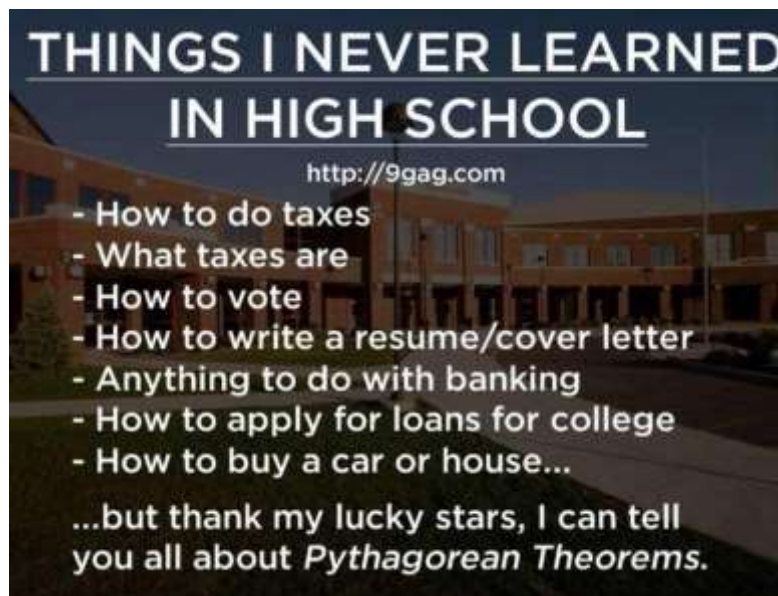
10 VIRTUAL COLLABORATION

DEFINITION: ability to work productively, drive engagement, and demonstrate presence as a member of a virtual team.

Self-Employment

Since the end of the 20th century it has gotten harder to find a stable lifelong job. Many people now earn a living as consultants, or offer freelance services, on a project-to-project basis. Some sources say that people who work for themselves report the highest levels of happiness.¹

If you decide to be a consultant or a freelancer or otherwise start your own business, there are resources out there. One place to start is Small Business BC (<https://smallbusinessbc.ca/>), which has a lot of how-to information.



Material Knowledge and Skills

Some people enjoy going camping and hiking. Some people enjoy orienteering, or survival training. Some people join Search and Rescue teams. They save people who get lost in the woods, or survive a plane crash in the wilderness, or go off-trail from ski resorts in winter and get lost. They all have to provide food, clothing, shelter, first aid, some means of communication, and of transportation back home.

Learning/Cognitive Skills You Will Need Most

Attention – for example, how to read a text and recall the most important details. Some people have surprising problems just noticing things. Attention can be trained, but I don't remember any such training in my school.

¹ "Remedial Life Lessons Need To Be Taught In Schools" (Tim McAleenan Jr., <http://theconservativeincomeinvestor.com>, May 30, 2014)

In the bush, you need to look for tracks on the ground, broken branches and tufts of hair on undergrowth, listen for animal calls (or sudden silence), and keep your nose open for the scents of game, or urine, or spoor.

In a city, there is so much meaningless machine noise and advertising and traffic signals to distract you that you have to ignore most of it. There is a theory that catatonics could not block out excess sensory input, so they just shut down entirely.

In an office, you know going in that there are only two things to pay attention to – printed information, and other people in the office – and your job is to ignore most of that, and concentrate on specific documents and calculations and tasks at hand. This is a problem because selective inattention can go too far. When it does, office people are often surprised by complaints that their goods or services didn't work for consumers, or even caused fatalities. Unfortunately, organizations generally work by blocking out or changing raw information at every stage. Sometimes the first clue that office people get is when angry strangers burst in to shoot them or throw them out of the windows.

Men are rumoured to be obtuse and insensitive, because many of them are trained not to pay attention to vague, slight, undetectable body language or expressions or gestures. Many women live up to the stereotype of interpreting the world through their feelings, rather than through physical reality. Then again, many men don't realize they do the same thing. Maybe if civilization falls, it will be due to failure of communication.

Listening – some people have a tendency not to hear things they're not interested in. In fact, some people have a tendency to mishear anything as what they want to hear. Listening can also be trained, but again I don't remember any such training in my school.

Memory – many of us have pretty bad memories. Probably that is why there is a market for calendars, and chequebooks, and daytimers, and PDAs, and mobile apps for all that. On the other hand, a few people have perfect "photographic" memories, and there are courses in memory skills. Memory can also be trained, but again I don't remember any such training in my school.

We use reminders and memory training tricks all the time. The technical term is called "mnemonics". Some people learn to remember things by sheer repetition, like their addresses and phone numbers. Some people have always used rhymes and verses to remember things, like the number of days in the months of the year. Really advanced rememberers use systems like "memory castles", either familiar or imaginary structures that they visualize, where different objects or sights in different places recall different kinds of information.

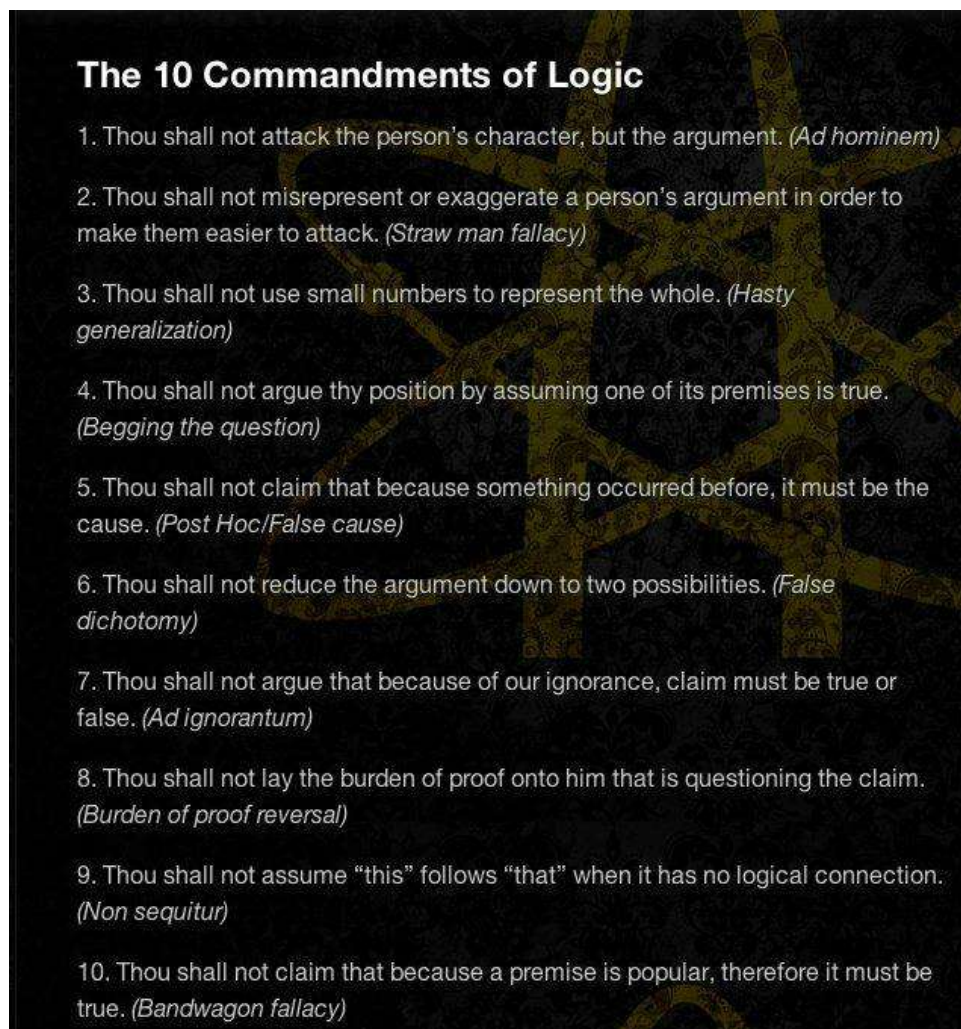
Learning - Ask questions. You may look stupid, but you aren't making assumptions, which is even more stupid. Keep learning something. Not only are computer program skills, first-aid training and additional languages in demand; so are clear handwriting, speedreading, and trained memory skills. Push your boundaries sometimes. Try to build up your skills, in the areas that aren't your strengths.

Clear Thinking – There are a lot of mistakes in reasoning. They are very popular. There are courses in clear thinking, or even formal logic. They are not so popular. Clear thinking can also be trained, but again I don't remember any such training in my school.

Reasoning comes down to connecting causes and effects. A few people never get as far as thinking ahead, or understanding that what they do has predictable results. Most of understand most of the results and effects we cause, but there are always things we didn't foresee, like contaminated water supplies or radioactive fallout.

A friend of mine discovered something called Applied Logic when he was in his third year at university. He was appalled that it took so long for him to get the word. When he took the course he eventually realized it was all about consistency – that is, what things can be true at the same time – and it wasn't about all-or-nothing categories, like his friends thought, so it actually applied to the real world. In fact, that was just a basic step in logic, and before they got to that, there was a whole term spent on mistakes in reasoning, called “fallacies”.

There are a lot of fallacies going around. The following poster sums up the most common mistakes to avoid.



(plain-language logic)

Plain Speaking – It is one thing to talk about poor speech habits, or poor spelling or vocabulary or grammar. Some people complain about that in every generation. It is a much more serious thing when anyone you meet – or family members, or people you work with – normally say or write things you don't understand; or when you try to express yourself, and only get puzzled looks.

A List of Basic Skills and Things to Know

Bathing and showering: not everybody knows this, but it's a good idea to shower or bathe every day. It helps if you have running water, and it helps even more if you have soap. The cleaner you are, the less often you get sick. The trick seems to be turning the soap into lather and rubbing it all over you, then rinsing it off. I know some people who don't really get the idea.

Cleaning clothes: for some reason we use soap to clean people, but laundry detergent to clean clothes and towels and sheets. Also we have to separate delicates and coloured clothes and white things, or the colours get mixed up, and pay attention to which temperatures we use for which kinds of clothes. I can't keep them straight. Lessons: Ask how to wash silks. Learn to iron things.

Cleaning dishes: for some reason we have another kind of detergent for cleaning dishes, too. Somewhere or other I learned to hand-wash plastics and glass items first, then crockery or earthenware, then metal ware like cutlery and pots and pans. I know that is supposed to clean grease and food stains off everything more thoroughly, but not when or where I learned it.

Cleaning house: one of the reasons we say “a woman's work is never done” is that a) houses shed dust like nobody's business, b) cleaning and cooking and child care kept being given to women to do. I don't know why. A really thorough cleaning – from ceilings and walls to doors, knobs, handles, stove hood tops, oven elements, windows, drapes, blinds, to furniture and floors – is a major project, something to do once a year. Maybe that is what people mean by spring cleaning. Regular housecleaning means doing dishes daily, doing laundry weekly, and taking out garbage and recycling when the bins are full. Also the recycling service collects your recycling weekly. (In Vancouver the city collects garbage every other week.)

Do the household chores when you live with others, or house-sit – things like dishwashing, laundry, feeding and watering the pets and plants, and just leaving the place as clean and tidy as possible, are surprisingly satisfying.

Cleaning teeth: it's a good idea to brush and floss your teeth at least twice a day. It is also good to rinse your mouth with a good mouthwash. Not everybody knows this, which is why there are dentists. Nobody likes going to the dentist, especially not when they have to pay dentists' bills, but it is a good idea to go to the dentist even if you make a regular daily effort to clean your teeth. For one thing, they have a record of your dental condition and how long since they cleaned the plaque away, or whether you have any tendency to gum disease or cavities. For another thing, a problem with your oral health can lead to a problem with your health, further down in your body.

If you don't floss, you will get cavities so bad that you will need to pay for a root canal. It can take upwards of five years to pay for a root canal.

Language Skills, Reading and Writing

Language starts with how people say things. If you keep what you say simple and to the point, it is understandable. If you speak up, and speak clearly, people will hear you. Unfortunately, a lot of what people say sounds like a low, rapid mumble at any distance, and many social spaces have loud background music so that you might be better off using sign language anyway.

Some people get very nervous about reading and writing. Some people are convinced they simply can't write, even if they're really good at talking, or telling stories face to face. Really, writing is based on speech, and is not actually different. Unfortunately, some people think writing has to be a lot fancier and more pretentious than speaking.

I keep saying that all people have to do is name the subject they are talking about, then what you are saying about it; but some people just don't get it. In fact, anything you say or write comes down to one of four things – making an assertion, giving directions, asking a question, or inviting people to do something. Put that way, it looks pretty simple.

Handwriting

Writing is a lot simpler today than it used to be, at least in most European and Asian languages. Most languages are written in alphabets. The basic idea is that any language is built up from just a few sounds, usually about two dozen, or a few more. Just a few languages have been written the same way for so long that pronunciation has changed a lot, since the spelling was standardized. (English spelling may be a problem for many people, but French spelling is a bigger problem this way, and I won't even talk here about Gaelic.)

People used to make a big deal of handwriting, and spend a lot of time and attention on developing a good, clear hand. That was back when everything depended on handwritten records, of course, and machine printing was pretty expensive. Businesses still require handwritten telephone messages and interoffice memos, but sometimes we have to write in block capitals so that the messages can be understood.

If people have trouble reading your handwriting, and you can't read your own notes after some time has passed, you can teach yourself to improve your handwriting. It doesn't have to be very elaborate. For example, there is a self-teaching course you can obtain from Portland State University called *Write Now*.² I obtained my copy in the mid- 1990s. The same authors published a later course called *Italic Handwriting*, and a video in 1996 titled *Write Now*. You may find other, similar resources online.

W5: To go into more detail: whenever someone talks or writes, there are at least a few questions that their words should answer. *Who* is the speaker, and who is he or she speaking to? *What* are

² Getty, Barbara M. & Inga S. Dubay, *Write Now: a complete self-teaching program for better handwriting* (Portland, OR: Continuing Education Press, Portland State University, 1991).

they talking about, and what are they saying about it? (That isn't just one thing.) *When*, and *where*, does anything happen that the talk is about? *How* did events come about? *Why* is anyone mentioning it just now? It is sometimes surprising how much of this people don't think to say, or write. This is why we now have words like "vaguebooking".

There is a section on Basic English in the References at the back of this book. This should help you with basic vocabulary, spelling, and grammar, but as I wrote at the beginning, you can contact Stop Press with complaints or corrections.

When you get the hang of English sentences, you can write about anything at any length. The key thing to remember is to stick to a point, and know what the point is. Sometimes people forget that when they write to the people they voted for.

When you understand one language, you can learn other languages. Children are good at learning other languages, even from other children, especially before the age of 10 or 12. For some reason, though, a lot of schools in my country did not start teaching children any other languages until after that age.

Making and Receiving Telephone Calls

I never understood why people make telephone calls without much reason just to talk about nothing at all, until someone told me about social signalling among animals. Sometimes animals make random vocal calls, or groom each other, or play-fight just for mutual recognition, to maintain bonds, or ego strokes. Something like that.

Most of the time, though, we make telephone calls – or text messages, or use the Messenger feature on Facebook – to send specific information to specific people about specific things. Once again, this brings up at least five or six basic questions that any communication ought to answer – who, what, when, where, why, how, and anything else you can think of.



Letter Writing

It isn't very surprising to hear that some teenagers in the 2010s don't know how to write or mail a letter. A great deal of communication now is carried by email, social networks, or text messages. But these messages are modeled on old-fashioned letters, so it might be worthwhile to look at how they worked.

An informal, personal letter will start with the sender's address, and a date; include the receiver's address, and a salutation ("Dear _____", "Hi _____", etc.), then the body of the letter, then a signature block ("Yours truly/cordially/sincerely", some vertical space for a signature, and maybe an abbreviation such as "Enclosures"). Different positions for these elements, or different formats for the paragraphs, have been in fashion at different times.

Different countries can have rather different layouts for addresses. In Canada and in the United States, the usual layout is:

- First line – personal name, or company name (if both are included, company comes next)
- Next line – street address (for example, "130 Granville St."; apartment/suite numbers usually come last on this line)
- Next line – city and province/state, followed by postal/zip code
- Country

(Notes:

- United States practice is invariably to put zip codes last on the same line as a city and state.
- When Canada's current postal code system was first adopted, postal codes were invariably put on the last line, by themselves.
- When Canadian correspondence is going outside of Canada, the postal code follows the word "Canada" on the last line.)

A formal letter, from a government or business office, will have the sender's address as part of printed letterhead paper; after the receiver's address, or after the salutation, there will be a "re" line, indicating the subject of the letter. Formal letters from law offices often have a fixed format for running headers, including a short form of the subject and recipient's name on second and following pages.

The *Canadian Secretary's Handbook* (1983) offered a checklist of questions to ensure your letter is effective:

1. *Purpose*. Have you determined the purpose of the letter? Is it to sell, to inform, to persuade, to entertain? Defining the purpose helps organize your thoughts.
2. *Conciseness*. Are only the essential facts included? Information that is irrelevant or wordy reduces comprehension.
3. *Clarity*. Has your purpose been set forth clearly? Are ideas presented in logical sequence?
4. *Completeness*. Did you include all the facts, figures, dates, names, and addresses? Are all possible questions answered that might be raised? (Once again, this brings up at least five or six basic questions that any communication ought to answer – who, what, when, where, why, how, and anything else you can think of.)
5. *Tone*. Does the tone of your letter indicate friendliness and co-operation? The manner in which ideas are conveyed will influence the reader's response.
6. *Correctness*. Are the dates, facts and figures correct?³

³ *Canadian Secretary's Handbook* (Don Mills, ON: Collier Macmillan Canada, Inc., 1983), p. 158.

Mailing a Letter: I have heard of teenagers in the 2010s not knowing how to prepare an envelope for mail, which is a sign that the task rarely falls to them. But for sending some legal documents and parcels, it will still be necessary.

Essentially, a Canadian or American letter/package should have the sender's address in the upper left-hand corner, the recipient's address in the centre, and postage in the upper right-hand corner of an envelope. As nearly as possible, a package or parcel should arrange information in the same way, on the top face.

Canadian, U.S., and other postal offices maintain websites where their services and postal rates are kept up to date (e.g. www.canadapost.ca and www.usps.com).

Email: Apparently the idea of email is like the idea of letters. You just have to keep clear in your mind who an email is addressed to, what it says it is about, where the salutation and body and signature block go, and you can treat it like a letter. But not everybody knows how to write a letter anymore. (Some kids don't even know how to address an envelope. Garth says very little surprises him anymore.)

Arithmetic

Some people get very nervous about anything to do with numbers. Some people are convinced they simply can't handle numbers at all. Like other practices, though, arithmetic makes sense and adds up when you learn enough about it.

Different countries have used different counting systems at different times. Most countries today count by tens, and use Arabic numerals (which were actually invented in India). The way we write numbers today was actually big news to Europeans, just a few centuries ago: writing the numbers below 10 in one column, then writing numbers like 10, 20, 30 and so on in the column to the left, then writing numbers like 100, 200, 300 in the column right of that, and so on. This made addition and subtraction a lot easier and faster than it was with Roman numerals. It also made multiplication and division a lot easier and faster.

Of course there are jokes now about people who depend on calculators and mobile phones to do simple arithmetic, but then the people who were taught long division had to do it manually, there were no cheap and available calculators back then.

Calendars: Calendars are one of the ways we spread out the things we have to do, and bills we have to pay, and not have to rely on our memories alone. Garth Spencer tells me that calendars work because they keep track of time, and time is nature's way of keeping everything from happening at once. Also, I think, calendars are a good way to keep from panicking.

Record-keeping

Some people get very exasperated about any paperwork, or computer records, or messages or reports. It is helpful to remember there is actually a purpose for keeping records, and indeed for

anything that someone says you have to do. Even in grade school, rules were not actually pointless, even if they seemed to be pointless and arbitrary.

Recording what you earn and what you spend, for example, helps you know what you really have available, as well as helping you calculate your taxes. But some people throw away these records thinking they're "just paper".

Bills and Budgeting: Learning how to pay bills and not spend all your money is why we teach arithmetic to children. The trick is to remember a) things do add up rationally, b) you will tend to forget about one bill when you're paying another, or when you're shopping for clothes or groceries or anything else. This is also why it's a good idea to practice attention and memory drills regularly.

Keeping the sales receipts and the manuals for your appliances can help you figure out what model or make of appliance you have, as well as helping you maintain it or get it repaired. But some people throw these records away immediately.

Keeping records on your education and employment history will help you keep an updated resume, and keeping medical records on your pet, your child, and yourself can save a life, but not everyone can find these records when they're needed.

Keeping records does not have to be complicated. You only have to decide where and how to keep records – in a place where they can be found, and in an order you find easy enough for organizing, and for getting out what you need. Some people remember things best by name, so an alphabetical system works for them. Some people remember things best by number, or date, so numerical or chronological systems work for them. There are other records that naturally organize very well on a geographic basis.

Basic Mechanics

Expect machines and mechanical processes always to respond the same way, to the same inputs or commands. When they don't, Something Is Going On and you can solve the problem. Do not lose your temper with them, but take detailed notes.

You have to secure objects with placeholders and tape and a Post-It note, or they will fall down or get moved out of sight or people will eat your lunch, not realizing they are supposed to be left alone.

There are basic machines, or mechanical parts, and they can accomplish several things – if they are strong enough, or well designed for the jobs they have to do. It is worthwhile to learn what they are. Lightbulbs and batteries and electrical cords are not all the same, and cannot all do the same jobs.

There is a way to make sense of spaces, and motions, and forces. Not everyone has the words to describe them, though. Not everyone understands the words, either.

The interesting thing is that people have done a lot, just with simple measuring sticks. Any given length can be a standard measure, whether it is a yard or a metre or a cubit. A measuring stick, or a part of one, or several measures end to end, can measure a distance. Two standard distances, at right angles, can be a standard area. Another standard measure, at right angles to one corner of an area, can give you a volume, and that can be the basis for a standard of weight. Most countries have had their own system of weights and measures, just as they have had their own languages and writing systems and styles of dress and cooking. It took surprisingly long, though, to come up with accurate standards of time, shorter than a day.

Today, most countries in the world use a metric system, usually based on the metre (for distance), the kilogram (for weight – well, really for mass), and the second (for time). A few countries still use “Imperial” units (the foot or yard, the pound, and the second), such as the United States. The main advantages of the metric system are that

- everything is multiplied or divided by tens. You have to remember a lot of different factors to get from yards down to inches, or from yards up to miles.
- It is tricky to distinguish weight from mass in the Imperial system, but easy to tell them apart in the metric system.

When you describe anything in motion, you describe something moving through a distance over a period of time (velocity = distance/per second). You could say that a car is moving at so many miles per hour, or kilometres per hour, or metres per second.

When you describe anything speeding up or slowing down, you describe a change in motion over a period of time (acceleration = distance/per second per second).

When you describe a force, you describe a mass being sped up or slowed down (force = mass/acceleration = mass x distance/second x second).

When you describe energy, you describe a slightly more complicated thing (energy = the *square root* of mass x distance/second x second).

For more facts about mechanics, look up websites such as <https://www.indiabix.com/engineering-mechanics/questions-and-answers/> and www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2433e/i2433e03.pdf .

There are several kinds of energy that can be measured this way, from the energy that moves a water wheel to heat to electricity or magnetism.

For more facts about electrical circuits, see websites such as <http://engineeringinterviewquestions.com/electrical-engineering-interview-questions-and-answers-eee/>.

Drawing: Some people are convinced they can’t draw. I used to think so until a friend and I started teaching ourselves. The key seemed to be to start with a very approximate vague pencil figure composed of blocks and ovals, then refine it by degrees, erasing mistakes and guidelines as

we went. We went through a lot of erasers that way, and learned how to use different grades of pencils.

Basic Geography: some time ago – maybe decades ago – people started noticing that high school students and college freshmen could be surprisingly unaware of basic geography. There are maps around. There are atlases around. Maybe people just don't realize they need them. Men are famous for refusing to ask for directions, for instance.

The basic facts are

- We live on a big round thing called a planet, and ours is called Earth
- There are seven continents and people live on six of them, except for one at the South Pole, which is inconveniently covered with ice two miles thick
- All the dry land is claimed by one country or another, and a lot of seas and oceans, at least up to several kilometres from shore
- A country is where a government enforces its own laws, and issues its own money and stamps
- Almost everyone is a citizen of one country or another
- There are almost two hundred countries
- Not all countries are members of the United Nations

Computers: Whether you love them or hate them, computers are a part of daily life now. Actually they're just tools, and basically they won't do anything you don't tell them to. Garth Spencer tells me that they're really like Swiss Army knives, only instead of having a combination of mechanical tools, computers have a combination of information tools, called "programs" or "apps". If we have a problem with what computers do, for instance with the way they handle our bank accounts, our bill payments, our Facebook or Twitter information, or the letter or report we just lost track of, it's an even bet whether the problem is the way the program was designed, or the way we used it.

When everything works, computers are great for record-keeping, or generating letters and reports, or doing calculations with big masses of numbers, or even communicating around the globe. They are great at obtaining information, too, from all around the world.

My problem with computers is that they're great when they work and a pain when they don't. Usually I can't understand what's wrong when they don't work, even when an Information Technology guy tells me what the problem is. I think their innards are more complicated than they have to be. Garth does not disagree with me.

Cooking: Cooking can be simple. Spicing can be just a matter of taste. Judging portions, heat, and time can be as complicated as you want to make it. Getting everything ready at the same time for serving is the hard part.

- Potatoes take most of an hour at 375°F to roast, or bake.
- White rice takes 15 minutes to boil, then simmer, until it is soft enough to eat.
- Brown rice takes about 45 minutes.

- Most kinds of meat take about 30 minutes at 375°F to roast, or bake.
- Frying takes potatoes about 30 minutes, but meat can take a lot less.
- Beef you can serve rare. DO NOT undercook ham or pork or bacon, or chicken. Lamb should be treated like pork, and duck or turkey like chicken.
- Fish can take as little as 15 minutes, depending on the frying or baking heat.

Baking can be a little more complicated:

RATIO - doughs & batters

	Flour	Fat	Liquid	Egg	Sugar	Notes
Bread	5		3			Rule of thumb: Salt: 2% of flour's weight. Yeast: 1tsp for 1 pound (454gr) of flour. Bread's temperature: 180-210F (82-98C)
Pasta	3			2		1 egg per person. 1 egg = 2oz (56gr). If scale less: 2 eggs per 1 cup of flour
Pie dough	3	2	1			Butter (fat) must be as cold as possible. Dough must be worked as little as possible
Biscuit	3	1	2			1 tsp baking powder per 4oz (225 gr) of flour. Use butter as your fat
Cookie	3	2			1	Flavor will vary depending on additions. Use butter as your fat
Pound / sponge cake	1	1		1	1	Combining order gives different results. Pound cake order: butter, sugar, egg and flour. Sponge cake (foaming method): whip eggs and sugar first. Creaming method: paddling sugar into batter, add eggs then dry ingredients
Pate a' choux	1	1	2	2		Savory (Parisien gnocchi) & sweet (cream puff dough) preparations (depends on salt/sugar)
Muffin	2	1	2	1		Straight mixing method. Baking powder
Fritter	2		2	1		Straight mixing method. Baking powder
Pancake	2	1/2	2	1		Straight mixing method
Crepe	1/2		1	1		Works also with volumes ratio, if scale less
Popover	1		2	1		Straight mixing method. No baking powder

www.tuscanfoodie.com

Dining: At a restaurant, how do you tell whether you wait for the server to take your credit card or you take your bill to the cashier to pay?⁴ Those often say on the bill you're brought. "Please Pay Your Server" or "Please Pay Cashier" is printed on them.⁵

Basic Electrical Knowledge: There was a man named Ripley who never quite believed in the way electricity worked, and was frightened of using the telephone. I was frightened of dealing with electricity at all, until Garth explained that until and unless there was a way to "conduct" electricity from the wall socket to your body, there was no way to get electrocuted. Electrical appliances should not electrocute you unless something is very wrong with them. Just having socks and slippers on, not to mention a dry floor, should prevent a shock anyway.

⁴ [Roger Wells](#) , Facebook, November 5, 2015

⁵ [Carrie Schulz](#) , Facebook, November 5, 2015

I still didn't understand why cell phones or computers can talk to each other, until Garth said that they have little radios inside, and cell phone companies built a lot of radio repeater towers in cities and towns. I guess that explains why it is easier to use cell phones and computers to communicate in some places than in others.

Emergency Preparedness: Prepare emergency kits for your home, your workplace, and your vehicle. Arrange a meeting place for you and your family. Emergencies and catastrophes will happen unexpectedly, - everything from floods and droughts and tornadoes to earthquakes, not to mention power outages and epidemics. (If you can't afford a backpack or carryall with a first-aid kit, at least three days' worth of bottled water, food, clothes, cash, and a precharged cell phone ... are you hooped?)

A really good emergency bugout kit will include:

- Emergency dried food sufficient for three weeks
- Minimal water supply, plus water purification tablets, or a water purifier kit
- Durable sports casual clothes sufficient for three weeks
- At least one fully-equipped first aid kit
- Rechargeable two-way radio, with information on emergency frequencies
- Disposable cell phone(s)
- Rechargeable batteries, and recharger
- Survival tool kit, from knives through bush saws to hatchets
- Rope
- String
- Duct tape

Look up the emergency management programs in your area, and be familiar with their plans.

Hobby - When you're not earning money, do something that doesn't cost anything, like fanwriting or websurfing. It may not be constructive, or even adult behavior, but it keeps you harmlessly occupied and may even lead to an accomplishment, or at least saleable writing.

Medical - See a doctor and a dentist once or twice a year. In fact, schedule regular medical checkups, eye examinations and hearing exams. You don't need to be a bodybuilder or marathon runner. A little exercise can go a long way and it's important to show that you care about your body. If you don't exercise at all, start by taking a 20-minute walk. Then perhaps join a gym, fitness class or local softball team. Good health also includes going to the doctor, dentist, and eye professional.⁶

Moving - When you move, cut down your possessions to what you really need, or want; give your new address to a wide variety of authorities and services, from your tax office to your dentist; and arrange for the post office to forward your mail.

⁶ "20 Things Every Man Should Learn to Be a Respectable Person" (from Facebook, August 24, 2014)

Social Knowledge and Skills



Not everyone understands this, but once people secure their physical needs, they usually start thinking about social needs. Some people are satisfied when they meet their material needs. Social needs include having family and friends, a community of people you know, a place where you can belong. Some people are satisfied to have these things, and a church to belong to, a sports team, maybe a political party. But some people always want more.

A List of Social Skills and Things to Know

Conventional Behaviour – there are some normal things to do that not everyone is taught, so I will mention them here.

- Saying "Please" and "Thank you".
- Giving the waiter a 15% tip
- Dressing modestly
- Offering the elderly your seat
- men paying for dinner when on a date
- Being a generous host at parties and such
- Smiling when being introduced to a stranger
- Wearing the proper attire for an occasion
- Chewing with your mouth closed

Random Manners and Morals - Rely on yourself first. Ask others for help only at need. If you can do any courtesy, do so. Strangers and morons and assholes deserve common consideration as much as family and friends. Be polite and be authentic. Don't be a bully. Don't yell at others. Don't be aggressive. Live the Golden Rule by treating other people the way /you/ want to be

treated. This doesn't mean you are a pushover, but it means that you treat others with dignity and respect.

Non-conformism - It isn't natural to stand out, or to disagree with others; yet sometimes it is necessary for legal or moral reasons. It is natural for humans to imitate each other in physical behavior, speech, dress, and expressed values and attitudes. Perhaps everyone is normally in a state of light hypnosis. This is the basis for the acceptance of prejudices, sexism, sophomoric low initiation rites, and criminal abuse. (Look up Thomas More, and contemporary whistleblowers.) Think very carefully before calling people on their popular nonsense, or bad reasoning, or gay-bashing, or Paki-bashing, or political slander, or just throwing their weight around (particularly the police, or other authorities). Sometimes you have to ask yourself whether to lose friends, your employment, your reputation, and even your physical safety in public. Be prepared for these consequences.

Random Observations about Humans

People don't read signs. If you work in customer service, you know what this means.

Telephone callers will not give you their last names or numbers or a message, even though you are supposed to write them down.

Managers often hinder, impede, defeat, sabotage, or simply slow down your work by demanding your attention to tell you how to do your job, usually when you already know it, often by giving you mistaken directions. There is a theory that aliens – any aliens – would be better managers than humans. Garth Spencer says he, for one, welcomes our future alien overlords. I think he's kidding.

Telemarketers will not get the message when you say they called you a dozen times already, well after you already donated/voted/participated.

Americans will often find themselves destitute, homeless, and unemployed after paying for a major accident or illness. Canadians will often find themselves destitute, homeless and living on unemployment insurance, or on social assistance when that runs out.

Self-help programs often depend on more time, energy, or disposable income than destitute people have.

You might imagine that politics is how we organize to improve our living conditions; or you might imagine that political structures are designed to divert and defeat our efforts to organize. That would be paranoid conspiracy thinking.

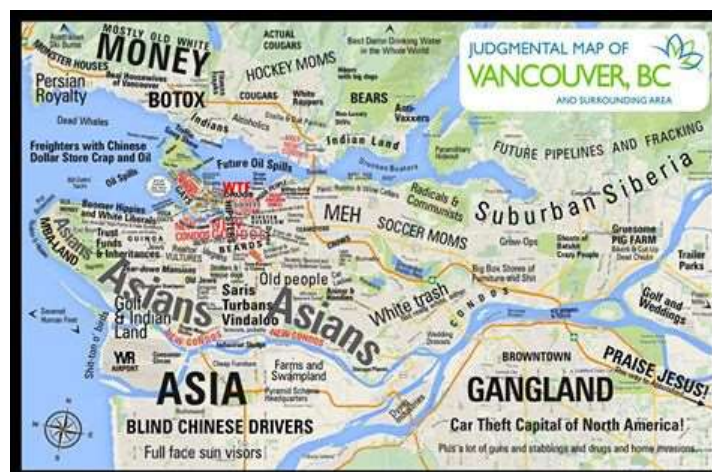
Our lives are not constricted by conspiracies; it just feels that way. Actually, our lives are constricted by a combination of blind, unintentional circumstances. They aren't really the consequences of *bad* public planning, fifty or a hundred years ago, but of unforeseen consequences. Nobody foresaw, when Greenland was colonized, that a little Ice Age would cut

off the colony, or lead to the disappearance of the colonists. Nobody foresaw, when the Americas were colonized, that European diseases would kill more native Americans than bullets or distilled alcohol or residential schools. Nobody foresaw, when the major port cities of western North America were built, that they were built in major earthquake zones. Nobody foresaw that importing foreign species into the Americas, Hawaii, New Zealand, Australia would in effect create plagues. Nobody foresaw, when the Irish were forced to live on potatoes, that a potato plague would lead to a great famine. Nobody foresaw, when the Treaty of Versailles was imposed on Germany, that it would lead by stages to the rise of a fascist regime. Nobody foresaw, when the Great Plains and prairies were ploughed for agriculture, that a major drought would turn them into the Dustbowl. Nobody foresaw in the 1960s and 1970s that sending lots of twenty-somethings to college would result in a lot of unemployed people with degrees. Nobody foresaw that heavy investment in petroleum industries would result in large revolving plastic trash dumps in the oceans. Nobody foresaw that downsizing and outsourcing in the 1980s and 1990s would result in large underemployed classes in Western industrialized nations. Nobody foresaw that this would result in massive proto-fascist movements in the 2000s, the way that the worldwide Great Depression led to massive fascist movements in the 1930s. It just worked out that way.

Some people think governments and corporations are in control; other people think they are tools of international conspiracies. This is to imagine that governments or corporations are better organized, more unified and more competent than any other organizations. Work for one of them and you will find out what they are really like. People in public office are infamous for making executive decisions or public spending priorities that don't make sense to the public, because they get entirely different news on which to base their decisions. It seems that this is why public transit schedules never match the times when buses actually arrive and leave, and some bus lines are infamous for having no buses for half an hour, then three at once after you gave up and started walking home.

Some people think international conspiracies control governments and corporations. This is to imagine that conspiracy movements are better organized, more unified and more competent than any other organizations. If you try to organize a conspiracy and you will find out what this means.

Some people think aliens are actually in control of everything. You only wish life was under that much control by minds we could understand.



Variety and Inconsistency

It took a long time to realize that people have different personalities, and not everyone feels the same way as others about temptations, threats, benefits, deterrents, insults, flattery, come-ons or put-downs. We don't even grow up the same way.

There are more kinds of people, even within one community at one time, than most of us will learn to appreciate. There are more ways that people behave than most of us learn to deal with. In fact, some people are technically labeled toxic, and we have to learn to avoid them.

Some people think a lot about status, which means having a social role or a trade or a profession. Some people think a lot about prestige, how much people respect them in their role. Others think about their look, or their influence or power, or their "cool" factor.

Sometimes humans are nearly alien to each other. (Question: how long should it take to figure someone out? Anyone at all? Does it simply *take* weeks or months in their company to realize who's brilliant, who's stupid, who's evil, and who is simply not worth dealing with?) Is the Myers-Briggs temperament range the best description of human variation, or is it just another pseudoscience? Maybe you should just rely on what you notice about people.

Social Difficulties

There are people who have problems observing other people. One of the most common problems is not understanding what people are saying, as well as what they are doing. If you do not accurately pick up connections called "connotations", or "implications", or things called "subtext" or "nuance", you may have what is called an "autism range condition". This can be really tiresome and exasperating. You may learn to work around it, but it can last your whole life.

There are a few people who really cannot read facial expressions and tones of voice at all. I would like some suggestions about what to do!

Tactics for Reading People:

1. The shoulder shrug is a universal signal of not knowing what's going on.

According to Barbara Pease and Allan Pease, authors of "The Definitive Book of Body Language," everybody does the shoulder shrug.

The shrug is a "good example of a universal gesture that is used to show that a person doesn't know or doesn't understand what you are saying," they write.

"It's a multiple gesture that has three main parts," they continue. "Exposed palms to show nothing is being concealed in the hands, hunched shoulders to protect the throat from attack, and raised brow, which is a universal, submissive greeting."

2. Open palms are an ancient display of honesty.

Ever notice how when someone swears to tell the truth in a court of law, they put one hand on a religious text and raise their other hand into the air, palm facing whoever they're speaking to?

That's because, the Peases write in "The Definitive Book of Body Language," an open palm has been associated with "truth, honesty, allegiance, and submission" throughout Western history. "Just as a dog will expose its throat to show submission or surrender to the victor," they write, "humans use their palms to show that they are unarmed and therefore not a threat."

3. A pointed finger with a closed hand is an attempt at displaying dominance.

If someone is closing their palm and pointing with their index finger, then they're trying to display dominance, though it doesn't always work out.

"The Palm-Closed-Finger-Pointed is a fist where the pointed finger is used like a symbolic club with which the speaker figuratively beats his listeners into submission," the Peases write. "Subconsciously, it evokes negative feelings in others because it precedes a right overarm blow, a primal move most primates use in a physical attack."

4. Look for a lack of crinkles around the eyes to detect a fake smile

command. It's why family photos tend to look so awkward.

The smile, it turns out, is all about the crow's-feet around your eyes. When you're smiling joyfully, they crinkle. When you're faking it, they don't.

If someone's trying to look happy but really isn't, you won't see the wrinkles.

5. Raised eyebrows are often a sign of discomfort.

In the same way that real smiles shape the wrinkles around your eyes, University of Massachusetts professor Susan Krauss Whitbourne says worry, surprise, or fear can cause people to raise their eyebrows in discomfort.

So if someone compliments your new hairstyle or outfit with their eyebrows raised, it may not be sincere.

6. If their voice goes up or down, they're likely interested.

Whether you know it or not, your vocal range shows your interest.

"Once a conversation begins, besotted women slip into sing-songy voices," Psychology Today reports, "while men drop theirs an octave."

7. If they mirror your body language, the conversation is probably going well.

When two people are getting along, their postures and movements mirror each other's. When your best friend crosses her legs, you will, too. If you're on a date that's going well, you'll both be making the same goofy hand gestures.

This is because we mirror each other when we're feeling a connection, says positive psychologist Barbara Fredrickson.

8. Eye contact shows interest — both positive and negative.

When you look at someone in the eyes, it sets an arousal state in the body.

"How that arousal is interpreted, however, depends on the parties involved and the circumstances," writes Claremont McKenna College organizational psychologist Ronald E. Riggio. "Being stared at by a stranger who appears large or ominous can be seen as a threat and elicit a fear response ...

However, the gaze of a potential sexual partner causes arousal that can be interpreted positively — as a sexual invitation."

9. But if they look into your eyes for too long, they might be lying.

In an attempt to avoid looking shifty-eyed, some liars will purposefully hold their gaze a touch too long, so that it's slightly uncomfortable.

They may also stand very still and not blink.

10. An expansive pose signals power and a sense of achievement.

How people hold themselves is a big clue as to how they're feeling. Harvard professor and relaxed, they feel powerful and in control. Similarly, research shows that even people born blind raise their arms in a V shape and lift their chins slightly when they win a physical competition. On the other hand, a low-power pose — seen when someone closes up and wraps their arms around themselves — increases cortisol, a stress hormone.

11. Crossed legs are usually a sign of resistance and low receptivity, and are a bad sign in a negotiation.

Out of 2,000 negotiations videotaped by Gerard I. Nierenberg and Henry H. Calero, the authors of "How to Read a Person Like a Book," there wasn't a single settlement when one of the negotiators had their legs crossed.

Psychologically, crossed legs signal that a person is mentally, emotionally, and physically closed off — which may mean they're less likely to budge in a negotiation.

12. A 'cluster' of gestures shows a real feeling of connection.

Attraction isn't communicated through one signal but a sequence.

Neuropsychologist Marsha Lucas has a good one to watch for: "After making eye contact, she looks down a bit, gathers or otherwise preens her hair, and then looks up at you while her chin is tipped."

13. If they're laughing with you, they're probably into you.

If someone is receptive to your humor, they're likely interested in you.

Evolutionary psychologists say that humor plays a pivotal role in human development. It serves as a way of signaling a desire for a relationship, be it platonic or romantic.

14. A clenched jaw, tightened neck, or furrowed brow shows stress.

All these are "limbic responses" associated with the limbic system in the brain.

"Emotion, spotting and reacting to threats, as well as assuring our survival, are all heavy responsibilities of the limbic system," says former FBI counterintelligence agent Joe Navarro. "The bus leaves without us, and we are clenching our jaws, rubbing our necks. We are asked to work another weekend, and the orbits of our eyes narrow as our chin lowers."

Humans have been displaying discomfort this way for millions of years, Navarro says.

15. Expansive, authoritative postures show leadership.

Whether they're innate or learned, there are a number of signals and behaviors people use when they feel that they're a leader, or at least are trying to convince you that they are.

They include holding an erect posture, walking purposefully, steepling and palm-down hand gestures, and generally open and expansive body postures.

16. A shaking leg signals a shaky inner state.

"Your legs are the largest area of your body," University of Massachusetts professor Susan Whitbourne says, "so when they move, it's pretty hard for others not to notice." A shaky leg signals anxiety, irritation, or both, she says.

17. Crossed arms can signal defensiveness, depending on the context.

It's easy to seize on body-language cues, but it's important to be aware of the context. While crossed arms typically indicate that someone is closed off, people are also more likely to cross their arms when it's cold and when their chair doesn't have an armrest.

Be aware of the environment before making a decision or changing strategy based on these types of behaviors.⁷



Boys and Girls Together:

Signals a woman might send that a guy will completely miss:

1. Looking at us, then looking away.

You Think: You're coyly telling a guy that you're interested in him.

He Thinks: He's got something on his face that you don't want to look at for very long. Either that, or you're trying to figure out what kind of beer he's drinking. Guys tend to take the "looking, then looking away" thing as an insult, and end up giving a cold shoulder to women genuinely interested in them.

2. Verbal innuendo.

You Think: By dropping suggestive words, you're initiating a romantic flirtation or otherwise getting your message across.

He Thinks: You're using weird words. Guys completely miss verbal innuendo from women on a regular basis, because the words we use for innuendo are so different from the words that you use. Again, we're looking for something obvious. Dropping words into a conversation isn't going to work unless you're being fairly explicit.

3. Acting tired.

You Think: You're telling a guy that you want to leave a party to go home right away, in a way that doesn't offend the people around you.

He Thinks: You want to go sleep in the car while he continues to have a good time. "Tired" to a man means "manageable." We're only going to get that you don't want to be in a certain place if you actually tell us that. Yes, men are actually that obtuse.

4. Various breakup lingo.

You Think: By being polite, you're sparing the guy the indignity of being dumped.

He Thinks: You're still interested. When you break off a relationship with a guy, be clear about your intentions; don't say anything about "taking a break for a while" or "taking some time to rethink things." This is just leading the guy on, and he'll think that he still has a shot - and men are nothing if not tenacious. Don't give him the wrong impression by accident. It's better to get dumped than to be misled, even if it's unintentional.

⁷ Baer, Drake. "17 Tactics for Reading People's Body Language" (<http://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-read-body-language-2014-11?op=1>)

5. Flirting touches.

You Think: You're flirting by making excuses to touch him, wiping some lint off of his shirt or touching his shoulder when he says something mildly amusing.

He Thinks: You're flirting, but he's unlikely to notice the touches unless you stick with it. Once again, I've got to point out that guys are less sensitive to subtlety than rocks - the first few flirting attempts go right over our heads. Keep at it, though, and he'll figure out what you're getting at.⁸

Humans You May Meet

When I asked for descriptions of the kinds of people I might meet, my friend Garth Spencer gave me this list:

Q: How many accountants does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: What kind of answer did you have in mind?

Q: How many actors does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Only one. They don't like to share the spotlight.

Q: How many agnostics does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. Agnostics question whether electricity really exists.

Q: How many anarchists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: ALL of them!!

How many Anglicans does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: A whole synod. One to move that the bulb be changed while the others debate until the room spins.

Q: How many anthropologists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: One or two, plus their grad students — but they'll want to know how your mother's family did it and whether that knowledge is passed along at adolescence.

Q: How many subscribers to AOL does it take to change a light bulb?

A: What? You can change light bulbs?

Q: How many Apple employees does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Seven: one to change the bulb and six to design the T-shirt.

Q: How many archaeologists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: One team, but they'll label every piece of the old one, mark its location in the room, and write a detailed description before determining that it was used to store cornmeal.

⁸ Phil Dotree, "5 Subtle Signals Guys Won't Pick Up On", on Reddit, October 20, 2009

Q: How many assholes does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None; assholes never see the light anyway.

Q: How many astronomers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. Astronomers prefer the dark.

Q: How many dead babies does it take to change a light bulb?

A: As many as it takes to make a pile big enough to climb on to reach the bulb. (*Comment: Ugh!*)

Q: How many Bell Labs vice presidents does it take to change a light bulb?

A: That's proprietary information. The answer is available from AT&T on payment of license fee (binary only).

Q: How many bikers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: It takes two, one to change the bulb, and the other to kick the switch.

Q: How many company biotechnologists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Four; one to write the proposal, one to design the bulb-changer, one to design the bulb-fetcher, and one to design the bulb.

Q: How many freelance biotechnologists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One; she designs the bulb to crawl up the wall, unscrew the old one, and screw *itself* in.

Q: How many dumb blondes does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: What's a light bulb?

Q: How many board meetings does it take to get a light bulb changed?

A: This topic was resumed from last week's discussion, but is incomplete pending resolution of some action items. It will be continued next week. Meanwhile . . .

Q: How many body-builders does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Six, one to do it and five to stand around and say "Man, you've got such awesome muscles. You're so cut."

Q: How many brewers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One-third less than for a regular bulb.

Q: How many BBS jokers does it take to tell yet another LBJ?

A: 1,622. One to tell the original joke, and the rest to submit give some minor variation of it! For example:

Q: How many BBSers does it take to submit a new light bulb joke?

A: 1,000: One to submit the joke and 999 to submit "How many programmers does it take to screw in a light bulb? None, that's a hardware problem."

Q: How many bureaucrats does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two. One to assure us that everything possible is being done while the other screws the bulb into the water faucet. (Note: See also "Civil Service.")

Q: How many supporters of George W. Bush does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. First, denounce the nearest Democrats as liberal pantywaists who deliberately caused the bulb to blow. Second, announce that the Bush administration has proved that the science of electricity is faulty, so no action ever needs to be taken on global light change. Third, keep the need for a new light bulb strictly secret. Fourth, use the money for new light bulbs as an excuse for another tax cut for Bush's wealthy friends. Fifth, explain that you would never "disassemble" about the need for light, you are way too busy spreading freedom and democracy in the Middle East by eliminating freedom and democracy in the United States.

Q: How many members of the Bush administration does it take to change a light bulb?

A: That information <deleted > when the <deleted > <deleted > possibly at the behest of <deleted > national security <deleted > 9/11 <deleted > freedom <deleted > 9/11 <deleted > liberty <deleted > 9/11. Which is why it is vitally important for Congress to enact another tax cut for the wealthy.

Q: How many Californians does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Silly, Californians don't screw in a light bulb, they screw in hot tubs.

Q: How many cats does it takes to screw in a light bulb?

A: You can throw away your light bulbs. Just douse the cat with gasoline, light it up with a match, and you'll have all the light you need. (*Comment: BLEAH!*)

Q: How many Centauri does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Nowadays, just one; but back in the glorious days of the Republic, hundreds of servants would change thousands of light bulbs at your slightest whim!

Q: How many charismatics does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Three — one to cast the bulb into the outer darkness, and two to catch it when it falls.

Q: How many Chinese Red Guards does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: 10,0000 — to give the bulb a cultural revolution.

Q: How many chiropractors does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Only one, but it takes six visits.

Q: How many Christians does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Three, but they're really only One.

Q: How many Christian Scientists does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A: None, but it takes at least one to sit and pray for the old one to go back on.

Q: How many Civil Service GS-6s does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. Changing light bulbs is not in our job description.

Q: How many college girls does it take to change a light bulb?

A: That's "women," you unfunny jerk!

Q: How many college football players does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One, and he gets three credits for it.

Q: How many TV comedians does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Two, one to screw it in, and another to say "Sock it to Me." (Notes: *Sock it = Socket. Also, for the infant readers among you, this was a popular catch-phrase from "Laugh In."*)

Q: How many computer programmers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. That's a hardware problem.

Q: How many conservatives does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One; after reflecting in the twilight on the merit of the previous bulb.

Q: How many consultants does it take to change a light bulb?

A: I'll have an estimate for you a week from Monday.

Q: How many cops does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: None. It turned itself in.

Q: How many creatures from Altair VII does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One. Though he will break the new bulb, the glow from his fingerprints will provide a quite nice illumination.

Q: How many database people does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Three: one to write the light bulb removal program, one to write the light bulb insertion program, and one to act as a light bulb administrator to make sure nobody else tries to change the light bulb at the same time.

Q: How many doctors does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Three. One to find a bulb specialist, one to find a bulb installation specialist, and one to bill it all to Medicare.

Q: How many dull people does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One.

Q: How many economists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two. One to assume the ladder, and one to change the light bulb. (Note: *See also "supply-side economists."*)

Q: How many editors of Poor Richard's Almanac does it take to replace a light bulb?

A: "Many hands make light work."

Q: How many efficiency experts does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. Efficiency experts replace only dark bulbs.

Q: How many Einsteins does it take to change a light bulb?

A: That depends on the speed of the change and the mass of the bulb. Or vice versa, of course. It just might be easier to leave the bulb and change the room. It's all relative.

Q: How many environmentalists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: If the light bulb is out, that's the way Nature intended it!

Q: How many ergonomists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Five. Four to decide which way the bulb *ought* to turn, and . . .

Q: How many Episcopalians does it take to change a light bulb?

A: What? Change the light bulb? My grandmother donated that light bulb!

Q: How many [ethnics] does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: 115. One to hold the bulb and 114 to rotate the house.

Q: How many strong [ethnics] does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Ten. One to hold the bulb and nine to rotate the ladder.

Q: How many [ethnic] gods does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Two. One to hold the bulb and the other to rotate the planet.

Q: How many existentialists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two — one to screw it in and one to observe how the light bulb itself symbolizes a single incandescent beacon of subjective reality in a netherworld of endless absurdity reaching out toward a cosmos of nothingness.

Q: How many fatalists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: What does it matter? — we're all gonna die anyway.

Q: How many federal employees does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Sorry, that item has been cut from the budget!

Q: How many radical feminists does it take to change a light bulb?

A1: Six. One to do it, and five to write angry articles about it.

Q: How many field service engineers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: That depends on how many defective bulbs they brought.

Q: How many folk singers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two — one to change the bulb, and one to write a song about how good the old light bulb was.

Q: How many football players does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: The entire team! And they all get a semester's credit for it!

Q: How many frat guys does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Three: One to screw it in, and the other two to help him down off the keg.

Q: How many fundamentalists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None; the Bible doesn't mention any light bulbs.

Q: How many gays does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Two. One to screw it in, and the other to say "Fabulous!"

Q: How many gorillas does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Only one, but it sure takes a big load of light bulbs!

Q: How many graduate students does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Only one, but it may take him/her more than five years to do it.

Q: How many hardware engineers does it take to change a light bulb?

A1: None. Any changes will have to be implemented in software.

A2: None. They always work in the dark.

Q: How many Harvard students does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Just one. The student holds the light bulb and the universe revolves around her/him.

Q: How many Holocaust revisionists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: None: they just deny that the bulb ever went out in the first place.

Q: How many Hollywood executives does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Just one, but you have to promise creative control and an \$80 million budget and that someone on the level of Tom Cruise will star.

Q: How many IBM PC owners does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Only one, but she/he'll have to go out and buy the light bulb adaptor card first, which is extra.

Q: How many IBM documentation pros does it take to change a light bulb?

A: 100. Ten to do it and 90 to write document number GC7500439-001, "Multitasking Incandescent Source System Facility," of which 10 percent of the pages state only "This page intentionally left blank" and 20 percent of the definitions are of the form "A series of non-blank characters separated by blanks."

Q: How many IBM engineers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. They just let Marketing explain that "Dead Bulb" is a feature.

Q: How many members of the Impossible Mission Force does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Five. While Cinnamon creates a diversion by wearing a skimpy dress, I use a tiny narcotic dart to knock out the fascist dictator and remove his body. Rollin, wearing a plastic mask, masquerades as the dictator long enough for Barney to sneak up to the next floor, drill a hole down to the fixture, remove the burned-out bulb, and replace it with a new, super-high-tech model of his own design. Meanwhile, Willy has driven up to the door in a laundry truck. Just before Rollin's identity is revealed, we escape to the laundry truck, drive to the airfield, and return to the United States.

Q: How many Internet mail list members does it take to change a light bulb?

A: 1,331:

- One to change the light bulb and to post to the mail list that the light bulb has been changed.
- 14 to share similar experiences of changing light bulbs and how the light bulb could have been changed differently.
- Seven to caution about the dangers of changing light bulbs.
- 27 to point out spelling/grammar errors in posts about changing light bulbs.
- 53 to flame the spell checkers.
- 156 to write to the list administrator complaining about the light bulb discussion and its inappropriateness to this mail list.
- 41 to correct spelling in the spelling/grammar flames.
- 109 to post that this list is not about light bulbs and to please take this email exchange to alt.lite.bulb.
- 203 to demand that cross-posting to alt.grammar, alt.spelling, and alt.punctuation about changing light bulbs be stopped.
- 111 to defend the posting to this list saying that we all use light bulbs and therefore the posts ****are**** relevant to this mail list.
- 306 to debate which method of changing light bulbs is superior, where to buy the best light bulbs, what brand of light bulbs work best for this technique, and what brands are faulty.
- 27 to post URLs where one can see examples of different light bulbs.
- 14 to post that the URLs were posted incorrectly, and to post corrected URLs.
- Three to post about links they found from the URLs that are relevant to this list, which makes light bulbs relevant to this list.
- 33 to concatenate all posts to date, then quote them, *including* all headers and footers, and then add "Me Too."
- 12 to post to the list that they are unsubscribing because they cannot handle the light bulb controversy.
- 19 to quote the "Me Too's" to say, "Me Three."
- Four to suggest that posters request the light bulb FAQ.
- One to propose new alt.change.lite.bulb newsgroup.
- 47 to say this is just what alt.physic.cold_fusion was meant for, leave it here.
- 143 votes for alt.light.bulb.

Q: How many investment brokers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two. One to take out the bulb and drop it, and the other to try and sell it before it crashes.

Q: How many Irishmen does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Twenty-one — one to hold the bulb and 20 to drink until the room spins.

Q: How many Italians does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: I dunno exactly, but my brother's girlfriend's father's boss's secretary's sister's next-door neighbors' priest's cousin's union shop steward's uncle's Knights of Columbus club Sergeant-of-Arms' nephew's best friend did it real cheap for me once.

Q: How many jazz musicians does it take to replace a light bulb?

A: A-one . . . a-two . . . a one-two-three-four!

Q: How many Jewish American Princesses does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Two, one to call Daddy, and one to get the (*pick one:*) mineral water/Tab.

Q: How many Jewish mothers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: "None, son — I'll just sit here in the dark...alone...."

Q: How many Jewish renewal rabbis does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Depends. One, if it's an eco-kosher bulb that isn't going to be lit by electricity generated from nuclear power. Two, as long as a man and a woman rabbi have equal turns putting in the bulb. Three, one to change it, one to do a Buddhist mindfulness practice during the change, and one to document the paradigm shift in a best-selling book called *The Jew in the Lightbulb*. Four, same as above plus an additional rabbi to study the psycho-halachic implications of such a change and then lead a retreat weekend on the experience.

Q: How many jugglers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One, but it takes at least three light bulbs.

Q: How many junkies does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Oh wow, is it, like, *dark*, man?

Q: How many KGB agents does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two. One to change it and the other to check for bugs.

Q: How many Klingons does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A: Two. One to screw it in, and one to stab the other in the back and take all the credit.

Q: How many L.A. cops does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Six: one to do it and five to smash the old bulb to pieces.

Q: How many lawyers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Fifty-three. Eight to argue, one to get a continuance, one to object, one to demur, two to research precedents, one to dictate a letter, one to stipulate, five to turn in their time cards, one to

depose, one to write interrogatories, two to settle, one to order a secretary to change the bulb, and 28 to bill for professional services.

Q: How many lesbians does it take to change a light bulb?

A1: One, and it's not funny!

Q: How many liberals does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Five. One to screw it in and four to screw up rebutting the neocons' lies about them.

Q: How many libertarians does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Libertarians never change light bulbs, because someone might enter the room who wants to sit in the dark.

Q: How many light bulbs does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One, if it knows its own Goedel number.

Q: How many light bulb jokes does it take to change a light bulb joke?

A: The probability that a given light bulb joke will be submitted to the network in any given week is .4, and the probability that it will have changed detectably since the last transmission is .2. Hence (assuming independence, which is reasonable since no submitter of a light bulb joke ever seems to know it has been submitted before), the probability that it will change in a given week is .08. So it takes about 12.5 light bulb jokes to change a light bulb joke.

Q: How many Macintosh users does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. You have to replace the whole motherboard.

Q: How many magicians does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Depends on what you want to change it into.

Q: How many managers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Nearly unanswerable, since the one who tries to change it usually drops it, and the others call for a planning session.

Q: How many Maoists does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: One to screw in the bulb and a thousand to chant "fight darkness."

Q: How many U.S. Marines does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Fifty — one to screw in the bulb and 49 to guard him/her.

Q: How many Martians (mutants) does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Two and a half.

Q: How many Marxists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. The light bulb contains the seeds of its own revolution.

Q: How many men does it take to change either a light bulb or a roll of toilet paper?

A: No one knows. It has never happened.

Q: How many Mensans does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: None. Mensans can't screw in a light bulb. It's too small in there.

Q: How many Mensans does it take to tell Mensa light bulb jokes?

A: Five. One to tell the joke and one to get it.

Q: How many Methodists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Undetermined. Whether your light is bright, dull, or completely out, you are loved — you can be a lightbulb, turnip bulb, or tulip bulb. A church-wide lighting service is planned for Sunday, August 19. Bring a bulb of your choice and a covered dish.

Q: How many Microsoft executives does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. Bill Gates will just redefine Darkness® as the industry standard.

Q: How many mice does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Only two, but the hard part is getting them into the light bulb.

Q: How many militarists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: 1,000,001: One to change the bulb and 1,000,000 to rebuild civilization to the point where they need light bulbs again.

Q: How many military information officers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: At the present point in time it is against policy and the best interests of military strategy to divulge information of such a statistical nature. Next question, please.

Q: How many missionaries does it take to change a light bulb?

A: 101. One to change it and 100 to convince everyone else to change light bulbs too.

Q: How many modern artists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Four; one to throw bulbs against the wall, one to pile hundreds of them in a heap and spray-paint it orange, one to glue light bulbs to a cocker spaniel, and one to put a bulb in the socket and fill the room with light while all the critics and buyers are watching the fellow smashing the bulbs against the wall, the fellow with the spray-gun, and the cocker spaniel (what goes clink-clink-clink, ow-woooo?).

Q: How many big black monoliths does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Sorry, light bulbs are an evolutionary dead end.

Q: Do you know how many musicians it takes to change a light bulb?

A: No, big daddy, but hum a few bars and I'll fake it.

Q: How many Muslim women does it take to change a light bulb?

A: The glorious Qur'an states many times that it takes a minimum of three women to equal one penis.

Q: How many Muslim men does it take to change a light bulb?

A: There is no Islamic way to change a light bulb. You must get an evil degenerate despicable unbelieving American to change your light bulb for you if you wish to enjoy evil degenerate despicable American technology.

Q: How many mystery writers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two — one to screw it most of the way in and the other to give it a surprise twist at the end.

Q: How many necrophiliacs does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A: None. Necrophiliacs prefer dead bulbs.

Q: How many people from New Jersey does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Three. One to change the light bulb, one to be a witness, and the third to shoot the witness.

Q: How many New Yorkers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Noneaya gahdamn f*****g bizness, Jack!

Q: How many polite New Yorkers does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Both of them.

Q: How many survivors of a nuclear war does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: None. People who glow in the dark don't need light bulbs.

Q: How many nuclear engineers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Seven: One to install the new bulb, and six to figure what to do with the old one for the next 10,000 years.

Q: How many Oregonians does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Five. One to turn the bulb and four to chase off all the Californians who have come to relate to the experience.

Q: How many orgy attenders does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: As many as possible, and don't *ask* what they do with the old bulb.

Q: How many Pentecostals does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Just one — plus 99 more to cast out the spirit of darkness.

Q: How many plastic surgeons does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Just one, but he'll also want to do something about your nose.

Q: How many dead politicians does it take to change a light bulb?

A: As many as you can arrange for would be great.

Q: What is the difference between a pregnant woman and a light bulb?

A: You can unscrew a light bulb.

Q: How many professors does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Only one, but they get three tech. reports out of it.

Q: How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None; the bulb will change itself when it is ready.

Q: How many pre-med students does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Five: One to change the bulb and four to pull the ladder out from under him/her.

Q: How many programmers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. It's a hardware problem.

Q: How many pro-choicers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Five — one to change the bulb and four to protect her life from anti-choicers who are convinced that all new light bulbs glow from the moment the manufacturer assembles the materials to *make* the light bulb, so their God of Love wants them to murder her.

Q: How many "pro-lifers" does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Nine — four to block the entrance to the room, four to hold up pictures of burnt-out bulbs, and one to try and convince the person with the new bulb to let the room stay dark.

Q: How many psychics does it take to change a light bulb?

Just one, but she'll say your disbelief is why she didn't know it would go out.

Q: How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Only one, but the light bulb has to really *want* to change.

Q: How many punk rockers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Twenty. One to hold the bulb, two to turn the ladder, and seventeen on the guest list.

Q: How many pygmies does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: At least three. (Note: Think height!)

How many Rambo's does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. Conan the Commando replaces it while Rambo is momentarily distracted by the whole Laotian Army.

Q: How many Real Men does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. Real Men aren't afraid of the dark.

Q: How many "Real Women" does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None: A "Real Woman" would have plenty of Real Men around to do it.

Q: How many referral agents does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two: One to screw you out of a fee, and the other to send you to a store where they ran out of bulbs weeks ago.

Q: How many recovering addicts does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: One, but it takes twelve steps.

Q: How many Roman Catholics does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: None; they always use candles.

Q: How many Romulans does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: 151: One to screw the light bulb in, and 150 to self-destruct the ship out of disgrace..

(Warning: do not tell this to a Romulan, or be ready for a fight. Romulans consider this joke a disgrace, though it's not bad for a LBJ.)

Q: How many Russian leaders does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Nobody knows. Russian leaders don't last as long as light bulbs.

Q: How many Carl Sagans does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Billllyuns and billllyuns. Light bulbs are part of the interstellar "goo" that pervades our universe; they are star stuff.

Q: How many straight San Franciscans does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Both of them.

Q: How many shaggy dogs does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Fewer than it takes to screw in a heavy bulb.

Q: How many Shiites does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Four: one to hijack a light bulb, one to commandeer a jet to Beirut airport one to hold press conferences, and one to negotiate with Israel and the US for the release of fluorescent bulbs held in hostage around the world!!

Q: How many soap opera heroines does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Three. The heroine, who goes up on a ladder to do it, and her psychopathic twin sister, who pulls the ladder out from under her and then locks her in the attic so she can take her place, plus their cousin, who has plastic surgery to make her look like both of them so she can search for the jewels that are hidden in the socket.

Q: How many socialists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One to petition the Ministry of Light for a bulb, 50 to establish the state production quota, 200 militia to force the factory unions to allow production of the bulb, and one to surreptitiously dial an "800" number to order an American light bulb.

Q: How many social scientists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: They do not change light bulbs; they search for the root cause as to why the last one went out.

Q: How many alumnae of (sorority name) does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two. One to change it and one to act as chaperone.

Q: How many sorority sisters does it take to change a light bulb?

A: 51. One to change the bulb, and 50 to sing a sentimental song about the bulb being changed.

Q: How many Southern Baptists does it take to change a light bulb?

A1: One hundred and nine. Seven on the Lightbulb Task Force Sub-committee, who report to the 12 on the Lightbulb Task Force, appointed by the 15 on the Trustee Board. Their recommendation is reviewed by the Finance Executive Committee of five, who place it on the agenda of the 18-member Finance Committee. If they approve, they bring a motion to the 27-member Church Board, who appoint another 12-member review committee. If they recommend that the Church Board proceed, a resolution is brought to the Congregational Business Meeting. They appoint another eight-member review committee. If their report to the next Congregational Business Meeting supports the changing of a lightbulb, and the Congregation votes in favor, the responsibility to carry out the lightbulb change is passed on to the Trustee Board, who in turn appoint a seven-member committee to find the best price in new lightbulbs. Their recommendation of which hardware is the best buy must then be reviewed by the 23-member Ethics Committee to make certain that this hardware store has no connection to the Disney corporation. They report back to the Trustee Board who then commissions the Trustee in charge of the Janitor to ask him to make the change. By then the janitor discovers that one more light bulb has burned out.

Q: How many spammers does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: None, but they'll offer to sell everybody in the world a quick and profitable method for doing it.

Q: How many Stanford professors does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: One to write a paper claiming that light is a pig whitey invention, one to organize a Darkness Studies program, and one hundred to protest the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Generating Station.

Q: How many crew members of "Star Trek's" U.S.S. Enterprise does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Nine. Scotty will report to Captain Kirk that the light bulb in the Engineering Section is burnt out, whereupon Kirk will send Bones to pronounce the bulb dead. Scotty, after checking around, notices that they have no more new light bulbs, and complains that he can't see in the dark to tend to his engines. Kirk must make an emergency stop at the next uncharted planet, Alpha Regula IV, to procure a light bulb from the natives. Kirk, Spock, Bones, Sulu, and three red-uniformed security officers beam down. The three security officers are promptly killed by the natives, and the rest of the landing party is captured. Meanwhile, back in orbit, Uhura reports that a Klingon ship is approaching, and the Enterprise warps out of orbit to escape detection. Bones cures the native king, who is suffering from an SF variation on the flu, and as a reward the landing party is set free and given all the light bulbs they can carry. Scotty cripples the Klingon ship and warps back to the planet just in time to beam up Kirk *et. al.* The new bulb is inserted, and the Enterprise continues its five-year mission.

Q: How many supply-side economists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. The darkness will cause the light bulb to change by itself.

Q: How many surrealists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two. One to hold the giraffe and the other to fill the bathtub with brightly colored machine tools.

Q: How many Teamsters does it take to change a light bulb?

A1: Seventeen. Do ya wanna make something of it?

Q: How many technical writers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Just one, provided there is a programmer around to explain how to do it.

Q: How many tech support people does it take to change a light bulb?

A: "We have an exact copy of the light bulb here and it seems to be working fine. Can you tell me what kind of system you have? Okay, now, exactly how dark is it? Okay, there could be four or five things wrong. Have you tried the on-off switch?"

Q: How many teenage girls does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: One, but she'll be on the phone for five hours telling all her friends about it.

Q: How many terrorists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Two: one to stage a suicide attack on the bulb and another to claim responsibility in a phone call to the news media.

Q: How many thought police does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: None. There never *was* any light bulb.

Q: How many Torontonians does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: 100: Fifty-one to do it and the other forty-nine to message New York it's the greatest event in the history of creation, a truly world-class bulb screwing.

Q: How many TV evangelists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One. But for the message of light to continue, send in your donation today.

Q: How many members of U2 does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: One: Bono will hold the bulb while the world revolves around him.

Q: How many UFO buffs does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: One. You don't believe me do you? I've got photos! See that big blob? Well, just squint your eyes a bit. . . .

Q: How many union members does it take to change a light bulb?

A1: Are you kidding?

A2: 50.

Q2: Why 50?

A3: It's in the contract.

Q: How many members of the United Church of Canada does it take to change a light bulb?

A: How dare you be so intolerant! So what if the light bulb has chosen an alternative light-style?

Q: How many United Methodists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: This statement was issued: "We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that a light bulb works for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your personal relationship with your light bulb (or light source, or non-dark resource), and present it next month at our annual light bulb Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long- life, and tinted — all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence."

*Q: How many UN*X hacks does it take to change a light bulb?*

A: As many as you want; they're all virtual anyway.

Q: How many Valley Girls does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Oooh, like manual labor? Gag me with a spoon! Fer shure!

Q: How many Vulcans does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: "The odds are precisely 5,271,009 to one that only one Vulcan will be necessary, Captain."

Q: How many webspinners does it take to change a light bulb?

A: 404 (not found).

Q: How many women with raging hormones does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Only one, me. And do you know *why*? Because no one in this house ever lifts a finger except me! *Not one!* And even if someone even *noticed* that the light bulb needed changing, I'm the only person who knows where the replacement light bulbs are kept, and why? Because they've only been in the same cupboard for the last FIFTEEN YEARS! And even if by some miracle someone *did* notice the light bulb needed changing and *did* find where the replacement bulbs are kept, they would either decide that getting a stepstool is just too much work, or they would leave the stepstool in the middle of the floor, not to mention all the trash they generated, because they think I'm their bleeping SERVANT! . . . I'm sorry, what was the question again?

Q: How many (WASPs does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Two, one to call the electrician, and one to mix the drinks.

Q: How many Zen masters does it take to change a light bulb?

A: A tree in a golden forest.

[Things to Know about Organizations](#)

Garth Spencer gave me this list to explain organizations. He says charities and churches and government ministries work the same way. I didn't know any of this stuff.

A CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Leaps tall buildings in a single bound,
Is more powerful than a locomotive,
Is faster than a speeding bullet,
Walks on water,
Gives policy to God.

A CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Leaps short buildings in a single bound,
Is more powerful than a shunting engine,
Is just as fast as a speeding bullet,
Walks on water if sea is calm,
Talks with God.

A VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

Leaps short buildings with a running start and favourable winds,
Is almost as powerful as a shunting engine,
Is almost as fast as a speeding bullet,
Walks on water in an indoor swimming pool,
Talks with God if special permission is approved.

A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

Barely clears the bicycle shed,
Loses a tug-of-war with a locomotive,
Can fire a speeding bullet,
Swims very well,
Is sometimes addressed by God.

A SUPPLY CLERK

Runs into buildings,
Recognizes locomotives,
Is not issued ammunition,
Can stay afloat with a lifejacket,
Talks to walls.

A CUSTOMER

Falls over doorsteps when trying to enter buildings,
Says "look at the choo-choo!",
Wets himself with a water pistol,
Drowns in large puddles,
Mumbles to himself.

A SECRETARY

Lifts buildings and walks under them,
Kicks locomotives off the tracks,
Catches flying bullets in her teeth and eats them,
Freezes water with a single glance,
IS God.

Things to Know about Politics and Economics

Garth Spencer gave me this list, too. I didn't know any of this stuff either.

FEUDALISM: You have two cows. Your lord takes some of the milk.

PURE SOCIALISM: You have two cows. The government takes them and puts them in a barn with everyone else's cows. You have to take care of all the cows. The government gives you as much milk as you need.

BUREAUCRATIC SOCIALISM: You have two cows. The government takes them and puts them in a barn with everyone else's cows. They are cared for by ex-chicken farmers. You have to take care of the chickens the government took from the chicken farmers. The government gives you as much milk and as many eggs as the regulations say you should need.

FASCISM: You have two cows. The government takes both, hires you to take care of them, and sells you the milk.

PURE COMMUNISM: You have two cows. Your neighbors help you take care of them, and you all share the milk.

RUSSIAN COMMUNISM: You have two cows. You have to take care of them, but the government takes all the milk.

DICTATORSHIP: You have two cows. The government takes both and shoots you.

SINGAPOREAN DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. The government fines you for keeping two unlicensed farm animals in an apartment.

MILITARISM: You have two cows. The government takes both and drafts you.

PURE DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. Your neighbours decide who gets the milk.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. Your neighbours pick someone to tell you who gets the milk.

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: The government promises to give you two cows if you vote for it. After the election, the president is impeached for speculating in cow futures. The press dubs the affair "Cowgate".

BRITISH DEMOCRACY: You have two cows. You feed them sheeps' brains and they go mad. The government doesn't do anything.

BUREAUCRACY: You have two cows. At first the government regulates what you can feed them and when you can milk them. Then it pays you not to milk them. After that it takes both, shoots one, milks the other and pours the milk down the drain. Then it requires you to fill out forms accounting for the missing cows.

ANARCHY: You have two cows. Either you sell the milk at a fair price or your neighbours try to kill you and take the cows.

CAPITALISM: You have two cows. You sell one and buy a bull.

HONG KONG CAPITALISM: You have two cows. You sell three of them to your public-listed company, using letters of credit opened by your brother-in-law at the bank, then execute a debt / equity swap with associated general offer so that you get all four cows back, with a tax deduction for keeping five cows. The milk rights of six cows are transferred via a Panamanian intermediary to a Cayman Islands company secretly owned by the majority shareholder, who sells the rights to all seven cows' milk back to the listed company. The annual report says that the company owns eight cows, with an option on one more. Meanwhile, you kill the two cows because the feng shui is bad.

ENVIRONMENTALISM: You have two cows. The government bans you from milking or killing them.

FEMINISM: You have two cows. They get married and adopt a veal calf.

TOTALITARIANISM: You have two cows. The government takes them and denies they ever existed. Milk is banned.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS: You are associated with (the concept of "ownership" is a symbol of the phallogentric, war-mongering, intolerant past) two differently-aged (but no less valuable to society) bovines of non-specified gender.

COUNTER CULTURE: Wow, dude, there's like ... these two cows, man. You got to have some of this milk.

SURREALISM: You have two giraffes. The government requires you to take harmonica lessons.

It was at this point I started thinking about retiring to a Unitarian monastery.

Self-Actualization

Not everyone understands this, but people who have satisfied their physical needs and their social needs often want something more. What more can they want? Until the Industrial Revolution, people who wanted something more were often directed to their religion.

Motivation - Your Passion and Interests. There are some people who live what I call the “extreme life,” which they often describe as “sick,” “gnarly,” or “stoked.” Life is an adventure but we don’t all need to live on the edge (or even appear to be). Simply be passionate about /something/ and be proud of it. Learn something new that you never took the time to learn. Maybe it’s a new language or a new skill.⁹

Religious Goals

If your self-actualization is religious, you may want to think seriously about what that means, to you.

In our culture, we usually combine religious and ethical values. In Christianity, this is most often reduced to the Golden Rule – “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” (There are versions of this in Judaism, Buddhism, and a number of other faiths, as well.)

In other cultures, other values come first. Someone said that in Thailand, the plan for a man’s life is to find a wife, have a son, and build a pagoda. This sounds like a folktale about Thai culture.

In new religions, there are other statements of values. In Wicca (modern witchcraft), the rule is “As long as it harms no one, do as you will.” In Asatru there are seven (or nine) major virtues, which come down to honouring all the gods, honouring the spirits of all living things, and honouring your ancestors.

(See over)

⁹ “20 Things Every Man Should Learn to Be a Respectable Person” (from Facebook, August 24, 2014)

A Flowchart to Determine What Religion You Should Follow



Misconceptions and Misinformation

Common MythConceptions

World's most contagious falsehoods

HEALTH
FOOD
ENTERTAINMENT
LANGUAGE
SCIENCE
HISTORY
GENERAL
SPORT

<p>The Vanierken Not a Ken. Vanier is a name for the ten thousand in a stadium.</p>	<p>Different tongue parts There are no different sections for each letter. Different parts of the tongue are used for different sounds.</p>	<p>Electric fan is right By right in South Korea that this is a deadly. Very unlikely to harm you. Unless you put the fan on the bed.</p>	<p>Sharks = no cancer Oh yes they do get cancer. Unfortunately the cancer.</p>
<p>Black holes Not really black. Not highly dense objects with immense gravitational pull.</p>	<p>Wake sleepwalkers? They're really confused. Not at all. They're awake. They're not asleep.</p>	<p>Napoleon was short A tall tale. At 5'7" he was actually above average height for a Frenchman of the time.</p>	<p>Bulls hate red They actually react to the color of the matron's outfit, not the color of the matron.</p>
<p>Great Wall of China Not visible from space. Myths from this saying it.</p>	<p>Missing persons reports Police don't accept a 24-hour period unless you're reporting a missing person.</p>	<p>Bananas grow on trees Actually grow on massive plants that resemble trees. But you don't know that.</p>	<p>Oil stops stuck pistons Nope. But it can help lubricate the piston.</p>
<p>Dogs sweat by salivating No. They regulate temperature through panting. They actually sweat through footpads.</p>	<p>Body heat & the head Only a certain amount of heat is lost through the head. Of the head is the only source of heat for the body.</p>	<p>Vikings' horned helmets Actually created by a costume designer for a 19th-century Wagner opera.</p>	<p>Bats are blind Don't be fooled. Bats can see. They can also use echolocation. That's why they're so amazing!</p>
<p>Safari hated Mozart Nothing like the lion. They were composed of lions with extremely fitting eyes.</p>	<p>Iran epidemics Never were medieval for Iran. In the 18th century, they created for seasonal epidemics.</p>	<p>Don't touch baby birds! Birds have a limited sense of smell. It's not as good as humans.</p>	<p>Don't eat & swirl Don't mix. It's the biggest mistake. But it will make you look like a fool.</p>
<p>Einstein failed maths Nope. He failed a entrance exam for a school but still excelled in maths.</p>	<p>We have 5 senses We actually have close to 20. Including taste, pain, temperature, hunger, thirst, etc.</p>	<p>"Yes, I'm a cop" A cop and a police officer are not the same. A cop is a police officer. A police officer is a cop.</p>	<p>MSG = headaches Nope. Just a headache. MSG is a natural flavor enhancer. It's not a chemical.</p>
<p>Goldfish 3-sec memory Not the most accurate. Goldfish have a memory span of 3-5 months. Not 3 seconds.</p>	<p>Humans & dinosaurs People 80% of US adults think they coexisted. We actually existed each other by 100 million years.</p>	<p>Evolution is a 'theory' In science, a 'theory' is anything from a hypothesis to a well-established theory. It's not just a hunch.</p>	<p>Charity belts Not just a charity. Charities are organizations that provide services to people in need. They're not just a belt.</p>
<p>We evolved from chimps No. We share a common ancestor with chimps. We didn't evolve from them.</p>	<p>Glass is a liquid Actually an amorphous solid. But that's why it's called glass. It's not a liquid.</p>	<p>Caffeine dehydrates you Not really. The diuretic effect of caffeine is offset by the amount of water in a caffeinated drink.</p>	<p>Shaving thickens hair Nope. Hair isn't thicker, coarser, or darker. It just appears so because it's no longer tapered.</p>
<p>Sugar = hyperactivity Studies have shown that the ADHD and poor behavior is common in children with sugar-free diets.</p>	<p>Vaccines cause autism Scientists have found no link between vaccines and autism. It's been proven to be a myth.</p>	<p>Dropped pennies kill Terminal velocity of a penny is 10-20 mph. Not fast enough to kill. Not even close.</p>	<p>Left & right brain No left-brain vs. right-brain. Both sides of the brain are used for everything we do.</p>
<p>The Three Wise Men No one in the New Testament does it specify there were three.</p>	<p>Alcohol keeps you warm Alcohol warms blood vessels near the skin, creating the impression of warmth. It can decrease body heat.</p>	<p>Fatwa = death sentence It's actually more like a religious legal opinion.</p>	<p>Only 10% of brain Misconception. The brain uses 20% of the body's energy. It's not just 10%.</p>
<p>Satan rules Hell Satan isn't actually in Hell. He's not even in the Bible.</p>	<p>Milk increases mucus Nope. It just adds to the mucus. There's no mucus in milk. It's just a liquid.</p>	<p>Salty water boils quicker Adding a pinch of salt to the water makes it boil faster. It's not a myth.</p>	<p>Alcohol kills brain cells Only a heavy dose of alcohol can kill brain cells. It's not a myth.</p>
<p>Multiple personalities Schizophrenia is not multiple personalities. It's a mental health condition.</p>	<p> Jihad is 'holy war' It's actually a struggle. It's not a war. It's a struggle.</p>	<p>No sex before the game No evidence shows that athletes perform better if they have sex before a game.</p>	<p>Flushed water rotation Doesn't rotate. The water rotates. The flusher just pushes the water down.</p>
<p>7 years to digest The average human takes 24-72 hours to digest food. It's not 7 years.</p>	<p>Washington & weed The great general made hemp & tobacco. But there's no evidence he smoked a pipe.</p>	<p>Black belts are masters A black belt is a rank, not a title. It's not a master.</p>	<p>Martyrs & 72 virgins Martyrs are people who die for their beliefs. Virgins are people who are not married.</p>

Source: Mythbusters (17/11/11), Fact or Fiction (17/11/11), The Guardian (17/11/11), The New York Times (17/11/11), The Washington Post (17/11/11), InformationIsBeautiful.net

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while I'm here:

- aspartame does not give you cancer
- gluten is not bad for you if you're not allergic/don't have celiac disease
- superfoods aren't real, they're just healthy things with maybe some nicer levels of certain vitamins
- vaccines do not cause autism or really anything else and the chemicals present in them that typically scare you are in such minute amounts that they do precisely fuck-all in your body (we're talking scales of one part per million)
- you cannot do a cleanse or diet to "rid your body of toxins;" your kidneys and liver have that covered
- GMO foods will not kill you; most genetic crop modification just makes our crops hardier and produce more food (and genetic modification doesn't inject more chemicals into your food, it's just minor altering of DNA that is made of the exact same stuff your DNA is made from)
- if you feed your cat a vegan diet I will personally come to your home with the skull of a long-dead predator, point out the shape of its jaw and teeth as indicators of predatory feeding habits, and then beat you with it

Reference Materials and/or Links

Basic English

A surprising number of people don't know some basic things about English. A man named C.K. Ogden tried to do something about that, by defining a core vocabulary in English of 850 words, and some very basic ground rules for using them.¹⁰

If you try translating his core vocabulary into another language, though, you realize that he cheated a bit. In English we sometimes use nouns as adjectives, or even verbs. In fact, we make words do enough double- or triple-duty that you need more than one translation for an English word, even in a closely-related language like French. For that matter, there are words that look and sound just the same but mean entirely different things, in English as in other language; here again, Ogden let one word stand for both (or all) of them. In any case, several trades and professions have words that don't come up in the core vocabulary.

For what it's worth, here is a list of Basic English vocabulary, followed by the few core rules of grammar and syntax:

a; able; about; account; acid; across; act; addition; adjustment; advertisement; after; again; against; agreement; air; all; almost; among; amount; amusement; and; angle; angry; animal; answer; ant; any; apparatus; apple; approval; arch; argument; arm; army; art; as; at; attack; attempt; attention; attraction; authority; automatic; awake; baby; back; bad; bag; balance; ball; band; base; basin; basket; bath; be; beautiful; because; bed; bee; before; behavior; belief; bell; bent; berry; between; bird; birth; bit; bite; bitter; black; blade; blood; blow; blue; board; boat; body; boiling; bone; book; boot; bottle; box; boy; brain; brake; branch; brass; bread; breath; brick; bridge; bright; broken; brother; brown; brush; bucket; building; bulb; burn; burst; business; but; butter; button; by; cake; camera; canvas; card; care; carriage; cart; cat; cause; certain; chain; chalk; chance; change; cheap; cheese; chemical; chest; chief; chin; church; circle; clean; clear; clock; cloth; cloud; coal; coat; cold; collar; color; comb; come; comfort; committee; common; company; comparison; competition; complete; complex; condition; connection; conscious; control; cook; copper; copy; cord; cork; cotton; cough; country; cover; cow; crack; credit; crime; cruel; crush; cry; cup; current; curtain; curve; cushion; cut; damage; danger; dark; daughter; day; dead; dear; death; debt; decision; deep; degree; delicate; dependent; design; desire; destruction; detail; development; different; digestion; direction; dirty; discovery; discussion; disease; disgust; distance; distribution; division; do; dog; door; doubt; down; drain; drawer; dress; drink; driving; drop; dry; dust; ear; early; earth; east; edge; education; effect; egg; elastic; electric; end; engine; enough; equal; error; even; event; ever; every; example; exchange; existence; expansion; experience; expert; eye; face; fact; fall; false; family; far; farm; fat; father; fear; feather; feeble; feeling; female; fertile; fiction; field; fight; finger; fire; first; fish; fixed; flag; flame; flat; flight; floor; flower; fly; fold; food; foolish; foot; for; force; fork; form; forward; fowl; frame; free; frequent; friend; from; front; fruit; full; future; garden; general; get; girl; give; glass; glove; go; goat; gold; good; government; grain; grass; great; green; grey/gray; grip; group; growth; guide; gun; hair; hammer; hand; hanging; happy; harbor; hard; harmony; hat; hate; have; he; head; healthy; hearing; heart; heat; help; here; high; history; hole; hollow; hook; hope; horn; horse; hospital; hour; house; how; humor; I; ice; idea; if; ill; important; impulse; in; increase; industry; ink; insect; instrument; insurance; interest; invention; iron; island; jelly; jewel; join; journey; judge; jump; keep; kettle; key; kick; kind; kiss; knee;

¹⁰ Ogden, Charles K. *Basic English: A General Introduction with Rules and Grammar*. (1930) <http://ogden.basic-english.org>

knife; knot; knowledge; land; language; last; late; laugh; law; lead; leaf; learning; leather; left; leg; let; letter; level; library; lift; light; like; limit; line; linen; lip; liquid; list; little (comparative words: less, least); living; lock; long; loose; loss; loud; love; low; machine; make; male; man; manager; map; mark; market; married; mass; match; material; may; meal; measure; meat; medical; meeting; memory; metal; middle; military; milk; mind; mine; minute; mist; mixed; money; monkey; month; moon; morning; mother; motion; mountain; mouth; move; much (comparative words: more, most); muscle; music; nail; name; narrow; nation; natural; near; necessary; neck; need; needle; nerve; net; new; news; night; no; noise; normal; north; nose; not; note; now; number; nut; observation; of; off; offer; office; oil; old; on; only; open; operation; opinion; opposite; or; orange; order; organization; ornament; other; out; oven; over; owner; page; pain; paint; paper; parallel; parcel; part; past; paste; payment; peace; pen; pencil; person; physical; picture; pig; pin; pipe; place; plane; plant; plate; play; please; pleasure; plough/plow; pocket; point; poison; polish; political; poor; porter; position; possible; pot; potato; powder; power; present; price; print; prison; private; probable; process; produce; profit; property; prose; protest; public; pull; pump; punishment; purpose; push; put; quality; question; quick; quiet; quite; rail; rain; range; rat; rate; ray; reaction; reading; ready; reason; receipt; record; red; regret; regular; relation; religion; representative; request; respect; responsible; rest; reward; rhythm; rice; right; ring; river; road; rod; roll; roof; room; root; rough; round; rub; rule; run; sad; safe; sail; salt; same; sand; say; scale; school; science; scissors; screw; sea; seat; second; secret; secretary; see; seed; seem; selection; self; send; sense; separate; serious; servant; sex; shade; shake; shame; sharp; sheep; shelf; ship; shirt; shock; shoe; short; shut; side; sign; silk; silver; simple; sister; size; skin; skirt; sky; sleep; slip; slope; slow; small; smash; smell; smile; smoke; smooth; snake; sneeze; snow; so; soap; society; sock; soft; solid; some; son; song; sort; sound; soup; south; space; spade; special; sponge; spoon; spring; square; stage; stamp; star; start; statement; station; steam; steel; stem; step; stick; sticky; stiff; still; stitch; stocking; stomach; stone; stop; store; story; straight; strange; street; stretch; strong; structure; substance; such; sudden; sugar; suggestion; summer; sun; support; surprise; sweet; swim; system; table; tail; take; talk; tall; taste; tax; teaching; tendency; test; than; that; the; then; theory; there; thick; thin; thing; this; though; thought; thread; throat; through; thumb; thunder; ticket; tight; till; time; tin; tired; to; toe; together; tomorrow; tongue; tooth; top; touch; town; trade; train; transport; tray; tree; trick; trouble; trousers; true; turn; twist; umbrella; under; unit; up; use; value; verse; very; vessel; view; violent; voice; waiting; walk; wall; war; warm; wash; waste; watch; water; wave; wax; way; weather; week; weight; well; west; wet; wheel; when; where; while; whip; whistle; white; who; why; wide; will; wind; window; wine; wing; winter; wire; wise; with; woman; wood; wool; word; work; worm; wound; writing; wrong; year; yellow; yes; yesterday; you; young;

Ogden's Basic English Rules

- 1.Plurals are formed with a trailing "S". The normal exceptions of standard English also apply, notably "ES" and "IES".
- 2.There are four derivatives for the 300 nouns: -"ER" and -"ING", and two adjectives, -"ING" and -"ED".
- 3.Adverbs use -"LY" from qualifiers.
- 4.Degree is expressed with "MORE" and "MOST". Be prepared to find -"ER" and -"EST" in common usage.
- 5.Negative adjectives are formed with "UN"-
- 6.Questions are formed by inversion and by "DO".
- 7.Operators and pronouns conjugate in full.
- 8.Compound words may be combined from two nouns (milkman) or a noun and a directive (sundown).
- 9.Measurement, numerals, currency, calendar, and international terms are in English form.
- 10.Technical expressions required and customary for the immediate task are included in the locally used form.

Calendar

A surprising number of people may not know just how many days there are in a year, or why months are so called and how many days there are in each, or even the fact that different countries have different calendars, and dating systems. As it is, our calendar is a mixture of borrowings from several different cultures.

English-speaking countries, and most industrialized countries, use the “Gregorian” calendar invented in the late medieval era in Europe. This was an improvement over an older calendar which didn’t take very good account of the actual length of the year. The simple reason for this is that there is no even number of days in a cycle of the moon, or in the course of a year. When you know that a year is actually 365.2422 days, you begin to understand why different people worked out different calendars at different times.

The first or “index” year was supposed to be calculated from the birth of a religious figure in the Middle East, now called Jesus Christ, a little over two thousand years ago. In the Gregorian calendar we divide up the year into twelve unequal months, originally inspired by the cycles of the moon. An old English rhyme goes like this:

Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November,
All the rest have thirty-one
Except for February alone
Which hath but twenty-eight days clear
And twenty-nine on each Leap Year.

The order of the months and their length of days runs like this:

Month	Order	Days
January	1	31
February	2	28/29
March	3	31
April	4	30
May	5	31
June	6	30
July	7	31
August	8	31
September	9	30
October	10	31
November	11	30
December	12	31

If you know any Latin you realize how different this calendar is from the Roman calendar, since the months from September to December are named for numbers two months away from their actual order.

Leap Year, every fourth year, is obviously a correction to bring the cycle of days back to the same starting point, astronomically speaking; otherwise the cycle would drift out of synchronization with the solstices and equinoxes. (The summer solstice, or height of summer in the northern hemisphere, when the day is longest, is June 21. The winter solstice, when the night is longest, is December 21. The spring equinox, when day and night are the same length of time, is March 21; the fall equinox, defined the same way, is September 21.)

Once a century the Leap Year day has to be omitted, again to bring the cycle of days back into sync with the solstices and equinoxes.

For several planning purposes we divide up a month into weeks of seven days, which again are not even subdivisions of each month. We name the days of the week Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. If you know any Germanic languages you realize that most of these days are named for old pagan gods. It could be worse, they could be named after dead generals or politicians. There is evidence that the Romans renamed July and August that way.

There are odd things about the ways in which we divide up the length of a day. Ever since the Romans, we have been used to dividing up both daytime and nighttime into twelve parts; but that didn't lead to accurate measurements, since daytimes and nighttimes have very different lengths, depending not only on the season of the year, but on how far you live from the equator. It was surprisingly late in history that we established every day has 24 hours of equal length.

For another thing, the way we divide up the hours and minutes goes back to ancient Sumeria, a civilization which made amazing progress in mathematics and astronomy, compared to their many other crafts. One of their practices was to count the finger joints of one hand with the thumb (which comes to 12), then to count the number of "hands" with the digits of the other hand (which comes to a total of 60). You can accomplish a lot, if you count by 60s. Maybe that is why we count 60 minutes to the hour, and 60 seconds to the minute.

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