

TruthQuest – Joke Book

A Spark & Anvil joke book. Groan-worthy puns, tricky riddles, silly nonsense, and real fun facts from the world of TruthQuest – read them out loud and make someone laugh.

Why did the argument go to school?

To get a better premise!

How to use this book

Read a joke, pause at the question, and try to guess the answer before you read on. Best of all: read them out loud to a friend, a grown-up, or your class. A good laugh makes the tricky stuff easier – that's real science.

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Puns

Why did the argument go to school?

💡 To get a better premise!

What do you call a fact that's been proven wrong?

💡 A has-been-lief!

Why did the logic puzzle break up with the riddle?

💡 It said, "You never make any sense!"

What did the conclusion say to the evidence?

💡 "I couldn't have done it without you!"

Why was the hypothesis always nervous?

💡 It was afraid of being tested!

What do you call someone who jumps to conclusions?

💡 A leaper of logic!

Why did the straw man argument lose the debate?

💡 Because it was full of stuffing and no substance!

What did the critical thinker say at the magic show?

💡 "Impressive, but I need to see the evidence behind the illusion!"

Why are logical fallacies like weeds?

💡 They look like they belong but they ruin the whole garden!

What did one premise say to the other?

💡 "Together, we can really draw some conclusions!"

Why was the ad hominem attack kicked out of the debate?

💡 It kept attacking the person instead of the argument!

What do you call a circular argument?

💡 A reasoning merry-go-round – you end up right where you started!

Why did the correlation refuse to date causation?

💡 "Just because we're seen together doesn't mean I caused you!"

What's a cognitive bias's favorite game?

💡 Confirmation – it only looks for pieces that fit!

Why was the slippery slope argument so dramatic?

 It always assumed the worst-case scenario from one small step!

What did the deductive argument say to the inductive argument?

 "I guarantee my conclusion; you just make it probable!"

Why is the bandwagon fallacy so popular?

 Because everyone else is using it!

What do you call someone who only considers evidence that supports their view?

 A cherry-picker with a very small basket!

Why did the false dilemma fail the test?

 It thought there were only two answers – but there were five!

What did the appeal to authority say when challenged?

 "But a FAMOUS person said it, so it MUST be true!"

Riddles

I can be strong or weak, but I'm not a muscle. I'm built from evidence. What am I?

 An argument!

I'm what you call a statement that can be proven true or false. What am I?

 A claim (or fact)!

I'm the reason WHY you believe something is true. What am I?

 Evidence!

I'm an educated guess that you test with experiments. What am I?

 A hypothesis!

I'm what happens when you look at specific examples and find a general pattern. What am I?

 Inductive reasoning!

I'm what happens when you start with a general rule and apply it to a specific case. What am I?

 Deductive reasoning!

I'm a mistake in reasoning that makes an argument invalid, even if it sounds convincing. What am I?

💡 A logical fallacy!

I attack the person making the argument instead of the argument itself. What am I?

💡 An ad hominem fallacy!

I assume that because one thing happened after another, the first caused the second. What am I?

💡 Post hoc fallacy (false cause)!

I make you think there are only two options when there are actually more. What am I?

💡 A false dilemma (either/or fallacy)!

I'm a mental shortcut that helps you think fast but sometimes leads you astray. What am I?

💡 A cognitive bias (or heuristic)!

I make you favor information that confirms what you already believe. What am I?

💡 Confirmation bias!

I prove my conclusion by restating it as my premise – going in circles. What am I?

💡 Circular reasoning (begging the question)!

I misrepresent someone's argument to make it easier to attack. What am I?

💡 A straw man fallacy!

I claim that one small action will inevitably lead to extreme consequences. What am I?

💡 The slippery slope fallacy!

I'm when two things happen together but one didn't necessarily cause the other. What am I?

💡 Correlation without causation!

I argue something is right because most people do it or believe it. What am I?

💡 The bandwagon fallacy (appeal to popularity)!

I use someone's fame or title to prove a point, even outside their expertise. What am I?

💡 Appeal to authority fallacy!

I'm the ability to consider multiple perspectives before forming a judgment. What am I?

💡 Critical thinking!

I deliberately leave out evidence that contradicts my conclusion. What am I?

💡 Cherry-picking (selection bias)!

Silly Stuff

A student argues that since they ate pizza before acing a test, pizza makes you smarter. – The teacher: "That's a delicious example of false cause. Now explain why pizza didn't help you on LAST week's test."

A detective solves a mystery by only looking at clues that match their first guess. – They arrest the butler immediately. Turns out it was the gardener. "But the butler LOOKED suspicious!"

A debate team tries to win by saying "because I said so" for every argument. – The judge: "That's not evidence, that's just... volume."

A school bans all snacks after one student gets crumbs on a textbook. – "One crumb leads to crumbs everywhere, which leads to ants, which leads to anteaters in the classroom!" – classic slippery slope.

A kid argues their bedtime should be midnight because "all the cool kids stay up late." – Parents: "If all the cool kids jumped off a cliff–" Kid: "That's a straw man! I said bedtime, not cliffs!"

A robot is programmed to find patterns in everything. – It concludes that ice cream sales cause shark attacks because both increase in summer. "Correlation found! Ban ice cream to save swimmers!"

A courtroom where the lawyer argues by insulting the other lawyer's haircut. – Judge: "Counsel, please attack the argument, not the hairstyle." Lawyer: "But Your Honor, LOOK at that hair!"

A philosopher chicken tries to determine which came first: the chicken or the egg. – After years of research, it concludes: "The QUESTION came first. Everything else is just circular reasoning."

A world where people can only think in either/or terms. – "Do you want chocolate or vanilla?" "Are those really the only options?" "YES. This is a false dilemma, and we LIKE it."

A student builds a "Fallacy Detector" app that beeps during class discussions. – It beeps so much during the student council election speeches that it runs out of battery.

A scientific study concludes that wearing mismatched socks improves test scores. – Sample size: one student. Methodology: "I felt smarter." The peer review comments: "This is not how any of this works."

An AI is asked to evaluate arguments but has confirmation bias programmed in. – It rates every argument it already agrees with as "BRILLIANT" and everything else as "NEEDS MORE DATA."

A town votes on whether the Earth is round by majority rule. – The flat-earthers win 51-49. "Democracy has spoken!" says the mayor. "That's... not how scientific truth works," says the geologist.

A celebrity endorses a new math textbook despite never passing algebra. – "If a famous actor says this textbook is great, who am I to question it?" asks the principal. The math teacher weeps.

A critical thinking class debates whether critical thinking classes are useful. – They go so deep analyzing their own assumptions that they forget to reach a conclusion. The teacher: "...and THAT'S metacognition."

Fun Facts

The word "logic" comes from the ancient Greek word "logos," meaning... – Word, reason, or principle! The ancient Greeks were the first to formally study how to reason correctly.

Your brain uses mental shortcuts called "heuristics" to think faster. – These shortcuts work most of the time, but they can sometimes trick you – that's where biases come from!

There are over 100 known cognitive biases that can affect how we think! – Scientists have cataloged them all – the most common ones include confirmation bias, anchoring bias, and the availability heuristic.

Aristotle identified the first logical fallacies over 2,300 years ago. – He wrote a whole book called "Sophistical Refutations" listing 13 types of bad arguments – and people are STILL making them!

The "Socratic method" – asking questions to test ideas – is named after Socrates. – He believed the best way to find truth wasn't to lecture, but to keep asking "Why?" and "How do you know?" until the answer became clear.

Confirmation bias is so strong that even scientists have to design experiments to fight it. – Double-blind studies, where neither the researcher nor the participant knows who's in the test group, were invented specifically to counteract this bias!

The "Dunning-Kruger effect" is a bias where less-skilled people overestimate their abilities. – People who know the least about a topic often feel the MOST confident about it – because they don't know enough to realize what they're missing!

Optical illusions prove that even your eyes can be "biased." – Your brain fills in patterns and makes assumptions about what you see – which is why two identical lines can look different lengths!

Formal logic uses symbols like $\wedge$ (and), $\vee$ (or), and $\rightarrow$ (if...then) to analyze arguments. – Just like math uses symbols to work with numbers, logic uses symbols to work with ideas – making it easier to spot errors!

The "sunk cost fallacy" makes people continue doing something just because they've already invested in it. – It's why you might finish watching a bad movie just because you paid for the ticket – even though leaving would make you happier!

A "Venn diagram" – those overlapping circles you use in school – was invented to visualize logical relationships. – John Venn created them in 1880 to show how different sets of things relate to each other, and they're still one of the best tools for organizing arguments!

The "burden of proof" means the person making a claim is responsible for proving it. – In logic, you can't say "prove me wrong!" – the person who asserts something must provide the evidence to support it.

"Occam's Razor" is a principle that says the simplest explanation is usually the best. – Named after a 14th-century friar, it doesn't mean the simple answer is always RIGHT – just that you shouldn't make things more complicated than necessary.

Ancient Greek philosophers held public debates where logical fallacies could get you disqualified. – The "Sophists" were teachers who taught people to argue persuasively (even with bad logic), which gave us the word "sophisticated" – AND "sophistry" (clever but misleading arguments)!

Studies show that teaching critical thinking skills actually makes students better at EVERY subject. – Students trained in logic and reasoning score higher in science, reading, and math – because good thinking tools work everywhere!

Keep laughing

That's **70 jokes** from TruthQuest. Made someone laugh? Try making up your own – the best jokes are the ones you tell.

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