

A LIGHTHEARTED VIEW

By

William Reville, University College, Cork

Let us take a break this week and have a light hearted look at things. More material in the same vein as this article can be consulted on the web under “My Little Sister’s Humorous Sayings”.

First of all I will give you a quick IQ test. This test only works if you answer the questions spontaneously and immediately.

1. You are running in a race and you overtake the runner in second place. What place are you in now?

Answer: If you said first place you are wrong and you must try harder. You overtook the runner in second place, which now puts you in second place.

2. You overtake the last runner in the race. What position are you in now?

Answer: If you said last place, you are wrong. How do you explain overtaking the last person? If you are behind them, they cannot be last. Thinking may not be your strong suit.

3. Do this sum in your head – no notes or calculator. Take 1000 and add 40. Now add another 1000 and then add 30. Add 1000 again, plus 20. Then another 1000 and then add 10.

Answer: If you answered 5000 as the total you are wrong. The correct answer is 4,100.

4. Marie’s father has 5 daughters.

1. Chacha
2. Cheche
3. Chichi
4. Chocho
5. ??????

Answer: If you answered Chuchu you are wrong. The answer is Marie – read the question again.

The following list of phrases and their definitions will help anyone reading a scientific report.

‘A definite trend is evident’..... The data are practically meaningless.

‘Typical results are shown’.....This is the prettiest graph

‘In my experience’ Once

‘In case after case’ Twice

‘It is believed that’ I think

‘Correct within an order of magnitude’ Wrong

‘According to statistical analysis’ Rumour has it

‘Thanks to Joe Bloggs for assistance with the experiments and Mary Murphy for valuable discussions’ Joe Bloggs did the work and Mary Murphy explained the results to me

‘ It is hoped this study will stimulate further investigations in this area’,,,,,, I quit.

Some Gems of Wisdom

Never be afraid to try something new. Remember amateurs built the Ark and professionals built the Titanic.

Èat Safely – always use condiments

Age doesn’t always bring wisdom. Sometimes age comes alone.

Time is a great healer, but a lousy beautician

For every action there is an equal and opposite criticism.

Nobody is listening until you make a mistake.

If you had to identify in one word why the human race has never, and will never, achieve its full potential, that word would be ‘meetings’.

You should never confuse your career with your life.

How do you make God laugh? Tell Him your plans for your future.

T-Shirt Slogans

‘I have a degree in liberal arts – Do you want fries with that?’

‘The meek shall inherit the earth – after we’re through with it.’

‘Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.’

Signs seen in various hotels

Hotel in Acapulco. ‘The manager has personally passed all the water served here’

Nairobi Restaurant. ‘Customers who find our waitresses rude ought to see the manager.

Hotel in Japan: ‘You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid’

The Difference Between MD’s and PhD’s

4 MDs and 4 PhDs are going to a meeting by train. The 4 MDs each have their own ticket, but the 4 PhDs have 1 ticket between them.

The MDs ask the PhDs, “How are you going to manage with just one ticket between the 4 of you? “Just watch,” reply the PhDs.

They all get on the train and the 4 MDs take their seats and hand their tickets to the conductor. But the PhDs all pile into a bathroom, and when the conductor comes by, a single arm reaches out and gives him the ticket.

The MDs, feeling enlightened, decide to try the same thing on the way home, so they purchase just one ticket among 4 of them. The PhDs buy no ticket at all.

“How are you going to get home?” ask the MDs

“Just watch” the PhDs reply.

When they get on the train, all the MDs pile into a bathroom. 3 of the PhDs go into another bathroom. The fourth PhD then knocks on the MDs’ bathroom door and says “Ticket please.”

Science Sayings (Mostly)

‘This is a one-line proof – if we start sufficiently far to the left’

‘Thus the metric system didn’t catch on in the States, unless you count the increasing popularity of the nine millimetre bullet’ (Dave Barry)

‘When I was in school I cheated in my metaphysics exam. I looked into the soul of the boy sitting next to me (Woody Allen)

‘Her figure described a set of parabolas that would cause cardiac arrest in a yak’ (Woody Allen)

‘What if everything is an illusion and nothing exists? In that case I definitely overpaid for my carpet (Woody Allen)

‘Poets have been mysteriously silent on the subject of cheese’ (G.K. Chesterton)

University President: ‘Why is it that you physicists always require so much money for expensive equipment? The Maths Dept. requires nothing but money for pencils, paper and erasers. And the Philosophy Dept. is even better. It doesn’t even ask for erasers.

Who Engineered the Human Body?

Three engineering students were gathered together discussing the possible designers of the human body.

One said, “It was a mechanical engineer. Just look at all the joints.”

Another said, “No, it was an electrical engineer. The nervous system has many thousands of electrical connections.”

The last said, “Actually, it was a civil engineer. Who else would run a toxic waste pipeline through a recreational area?”

(This article first appeared in The Irish Times, October 31, 2002.)