



Daniel Kahneman: Thinking, fast and slow

Quick quiz:

- A bat and ball costs \$1.10. The bat costs \$1 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?
- If it takes 5 machines 5 minutes to make 5 widgets, how long does it take 100 machines to make 100 widgets?
- In a pond there is a patch of lily pads. Every day the patch doubles in size. If it takes 48 days for the patch to cover the entire pond, how long does it take to cover half the pond?

These questions test your reliance on logic versus intuition, or as Daniel Kahneman puts it, your fast mind versus your slow mind.

Vocabulary:

Which words imply *thinking fast* and which imply *thinking slow*?

Impulsive	Deliberate	Calculating	Cautious	Hasty	Abrupt	Pondered
Thoughtful	Automatic	Intuitive	Emotional	Conscious	Instinctual	Considered

Questions:

- When is thinking fast important?
- When is thinking slow important?
- Can you give an example of a time when your fast mind got you into trouble?
- How has your tendency to think fast or slow changed as you have aged?

Video and Comprehension:

Add the correct prepositions to this passage:

Usually, when faced _____ a situation it can't comprehend, System 1 calls on System 2 to help solve the problem, but sometimes System 1 is tricked. For example _____ the Bat-and-Ball problem when it perceives the problem as simpler than it is, and incorrectly assumes it can handle it _____ its own.

The issue these kinds _____ problems expose is our innate mental laziness. When we use our brain we tend to use the minimum amount _____ energy possible for each task. In other words, if our mind thinks it can get _____ without using System 2, it will.

This laziness is important, because using system 2 is an important aspect _____ our intelligence. Research shows that practicing System 2 tasks, like focus and self-control, lead to higher intelligence scores. The bat-and-ball problem illustrates this as our minds could have checked the answer _____ using System 2 and thereby avoiding making this common error.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PirFrDVRBo4>

- What examples of *thinking fast* does Kahneman mention?
- Explain Kahneman's chess analogy and how he uses it to show when we can 'trust our gut'?
- Write down 3 situations where *you* think you can trust your gut and explain why.

Things to look out for:

The halo effect - the tendency for a positive impression in one area to influence in another.

Example: _____

Priming - exposure to a stimulus to influence a later stimulus.

Example: _____

Substitution heuristic - answering a question that is easier than the one actually posed.

Example: _____

Availability heuristic - overestimating the probability of something due to relevant information being highly frequent or overly reported.

Example: _____

Base rate neglect - regression to the mean is very hard to avoid.

Example: _____

Action Points:

- Recognise that repeated exposure to things with no bad consequences are not inherently good.
- Don't be influenced by rare statistical events that are over reported. You probably won't be killed in a terrorist attack if you visit London.
- Mood affects creativity and intuition. Work on being happy.