

# THE NATIONWIDE STANDARD

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## How to Sound Reasonably Knowledgeable about World Trends (Even When You are Not)

What would you select as the answer to the following question?

What is the average Life expectancy of the world population as a whole?

- A. 50 years
- B. 60 years
- C. 70 years

Your gut reaction might be to suspect that it is a trick question. You might well assume that people live longer in developed nations like the USA or Britain or Japan. You might also reasonably guess that impoverished or 3<sup>rd</sup> world nations would bring this average down, because we are talking about the *whole* world.

So, in making an educated guess, you would probably rule out the top (70) and since it is an average, the bottom (50) seems kind of low. So let's choose B, right? 60 years is the average Life expectancy of the world as a whole.

The right answer is C. The average Life expectancy of the world population is 70 years.

Ola Rosling is the director of Gapminder, a non-profit venture promoting sustainable global development and achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. He has launched The Ignorance Project, dedicated to fighting devastating ignorance with a fact-based worldview that everyone can understand. In a recent survey from Gapminder, the majority of respondents had a negative outlook on certain global trends that have actually vastly improved over the last few decades. For instance:

- 66% think world poverty has doubled in the last 20 years... it has actually been cut in half.
- 83% think that less than half of the world's 1-year olds are vaccinated against measles... actually, 80% have been vaccinated.
- 78% think that 60% or less of adults in the world are literate... when actually 80% are.

Using Ola Rosling's four rules of thumb, you will likely do just fine the next time someone quizzes you on such things:

- 1) Most things improve over time. Opt for the "better" alternative whenever you are expected to know something about some aspect of global development.
- 2) There's only one hump. Most people in the world find themselves in the middle of the income scale. There are extremely poor people, and there are extremely rich people, but those groups are minorities.
- 3) First social, then rich. One might intuitively think that countries have to be rich to be able to improve health care and put more girls in school. Health and literacy revolutions in low and middle income countries since the 1970s show that this view is no longer self-evident.
- 4) Sharks don't kill many people. But it is their gruesomeness combined with their rarity that is precisely why they get disproportionate attention in the media (as do other spectacular, violent events). Always remember that while the press thrives on drama, the news is not a full summary of the world; it's a tiny sample of information that fits specific needs.

## Did You Know?

Taxpayers lost \$90.5 million on the production of pennies and nickels in the fiscal year 2014, according to a U.S. Mint report. The report said the unit cost for pennies remained above face value for the ninth straight fiscal year.

- The unit cost for a Penny = 1.7 Cents
- The unit cost for a Nickel = 8.1 Cents

When thinking of units of measure:

- 1 Million = 11.5 Days
- 1 Billion = 32 Years
- 1 Trillion = 32,000 Years



## Best & Worst Stocks of 2014

Here are the Top 10 performing stocks in the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index last year. The chart below shows performance in December, the final quarter of 2014 and full-year 2014.

TICKER	COMPANY	DEC	Q4,'14	2014
LUV	Southwest Airlines	1.20%	25.32%	124.63%
EA	Electronic Arts	7.02%	32.03%	104.95%
EW	Edwards Lifesciences	-1.77%	24.70%	93.70%
AGN	Allergan, Inc	-0.61%	19.31%	91.38%
AVGO	Avago Technologies Ltd	7.70%	15.62%	90.22%
MNK	Mallinckrodt	7.38%	9.85%	89.49%
DAL	Delta Air Lines	5.40%	36.07%	79.07%
GMC	Keurig Green Mountain	-6.86%	1.74%	75.26%
RCL	Royal Caribbean Cruises	11.78%	22.50%	73.83%
KR	Kroger Co	7.30%	23.48%	62.43%

On the losing side, six of the 10 worst-performing stocks in the S&P 500 were from the energy sector. Oil and gas driller Transocean, for example, suffered the biggest loses in the S&P 500 in 2014.

TICKER	COMPANY	DEC	Q4,'14	2014
RIG	Transocean Ltd	-12.76%	-42.66%	-62.91%
NE	Noble Corp	-7.89%	-25.43%	-55.78%
DNR	Denbury Resources	-1.57%	-45.91%	-50.52%
ESV	ENSCO Plc Cl'A'	-11.39%	-27.50%	-47.62%
AVP	Avon Products	-3.99%	-25.48%	-45.47%
GNW	Genworth Financial'A'	-6.49%	-35.11%	-45.27%
FCX	Freeport McMoRan Copper&Gold'B'	-13.00%	-28.45%	-38.10%
RRC	Range Resources	-18.58%	-21.18%	-36.60%
DO	Diamond Offshore Drilling	24.99%	7.12%	-35.51%
MAT	Mattel, Inc	-1.92%	0.96%	-34.96%

S&P Dow Jones Indices

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**Easter, 4/5**

*"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."*  
~ Anne Bradstreet

**Cinco de Mayo, 5/5**

*"Cinco de Mayo has come to represent a celebration of the contributions that Mexican Americans and all Hispanics have made to America."* ~ Joe Baca

**Mothers' Day, 5/10**

*"A man loves his sweetheart the most, his wife the best, but his mother the longest."*  
~ Irish Proverb

**Fathers' Day, 6/21**

*"Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children, and no theories."* ~ John Wilmot

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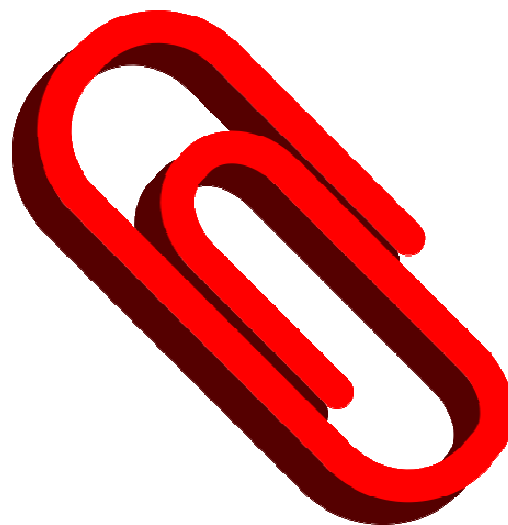
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## One Red Paperclip

This is a true story. Over the course of a year, between 2005-2006, Canadian blogger Kyle MacDonald traded a simple red paper clip for a house. It took 14 trades.

1. He traded the paper clip for a fish-shaped pen.
2. He traded the pen for a hand-sculpted doorknob.
3. He traded the doorknob for a Coleman camp stove.
4. He traded the stove for a Honda generator.
5. He traded the generator for an "instant party": an empty keg, an IOU for filling the keg with the beer of the holder's choice, and a neon Budweiser sign.
6. He traded the party for a snowmobile.
7. He traded the snowmobile for a trip to Yahk, British Columbia.
8. He traded the trip for a cube van.
9. He traded the van for a recording contract.
10. He traded the recording contract for one year's rent in Phoenix, AZ.
11. He traded the rent deal for a day with Alice Cooper, the rock star.
12. He traded the celebrity day for a KISS snowglobe.
13. He traded the KISS snowglobe to Corbin Bernsen for a film role in *Donna on Demand*.
14. He traded the film role for a two-story farm house in Kipling, Saskatchewan.



## Privilege

I once saw a high school teacher lead a simple, powerful exercise to teach his class about privilege and social mobility. He started by giving each student a scrap piece of paper and asked them to crumple it up.

Then he moved the recycling bin to the front of the room.

He said, "The game is simple. You all represent the country's population. And everyone in the country has a chance to become wealthy and move into the upper class."

"To move into the upper class, all you must do is throw your wadded-up paper into the bin while sitting in your seat."

The students in the back of the room immediately piped up, "This is unfair!" They could see the rows of students in front of them had a much better chance.

Everyone took their shots, and, as expected, most of the students in the front made it (but not all) and only a few students in the back of the room made it.

He concluded by saying, "The closer you were to the recycling bin, the better your odds. This is what privilege looks like. Did you notice how the only ones who complained about fairness were in the back of the room?"

"By contrast, people in the front of the room were less likely to be aware of the privilege they were born into. All they can see is 10 feet between them and their goal."

## Quotes for the Quarter

*"We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face...we must do that which we think we cannot."* **Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962)**

*"A man is but the product of his thoughts. What he thinks, he becomes."* **Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)**

*"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort."* **Franklin Roosevelt (1882-1945)**



## Just For Laughs

### An Average Performance

A biologist, a chemist, and a statistician are out hunting. The biologist shoots at a deer and misses five feet to the left. The chemist takes a shot and misses five feet to the right. The statistician yells "We got 'em!"

### Caesar on the Rocks, Please

A Roman walks into a bar and asks for a martinus.  
"You mean a martini?" the bartender asks. The Roman replies, "If I wanted a double, I would have asked for it!"

Another Roman walks into the bar, holds up two fingers, and says, "Five beers, please."

### The Sartre of Living

Jean-Paul Sartre is sitting at a French cafe, revising his draft of Being and Nothingness. He says to the waitress, "I'd like a cup of coffee, please, with no cream."

The waitress replies, "I'm sorry, Monsieur, but we're out of cream. How about with no milk?"

### The Bear

A bear walks into a bar and says, "Give me a whiskey and... cola."

"Why the big pause?" asks the bartender.

The bear shrugged. "I'm not sure; I was born with them."



## The Tale

### The Perils of Obedience, Part II

Hofling et al (1966) investigated obedience among nurses to an order from a doctor. They used real nurses in a real hospital, but the nurses did not know they were taking part in a research study.

During their shift a researcher telephoned the ward, introduced himself as a doctor, and instructed the nurse to administer a patient with 20mg of Astroten, which was a drug the nurses would have been unfamiliar with. Standard hospital rules prohibited nurses from taking telephone orders from an unfamiliar doctor, administering a drug that was not on a list of permitted drugs, and administering drugs without a signed order from a doctor. In addition, the fake drug was clearly labeled that 10mg was the maximum dose a person could take per day.

Despite this, 21 out of 22 nurses followed the fake doctor's orders and administered the drug.

~ Hofling et al (1966):  
*Obedience in a Hospital Setting*

## WORD WEIRD

**ANACHRONISM:** a person or a thing that seems to belong to the past and not to fit in the present

**ETYMOLOGY:** from Middle English *anachronismos*, from Greek *anachronizesthai* to be an anachronism, from Late Greek *anachronizein* to be late, from Greek *anaka-* + *chronos* time; First Known Use: 1617

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