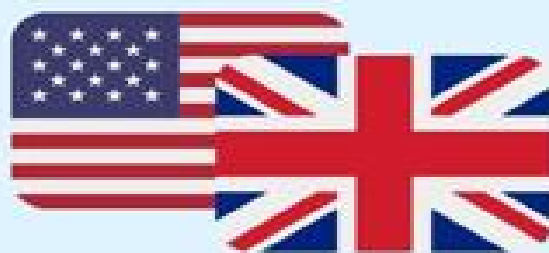


A book for upper-intermediate adult English learners

100 ENGLISH SENTENCE STRUCTURES

for Speaking Fluency



1

VOL.

DR NICK JAMES

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1

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DR NICK JAMES

100 English Sentence Structures for Speaking Fluency (Vol. 1)

by Dr Nick James

[Instagram](#) • [Website](#)

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1st Edition

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Please read me

Hello and welcome! [On my website](#), you can find an **up-to-date** list of **links** to the resources I mention in this book along with many others.

Is this book for me?

This book is for **adult** English language learners at the **upper-intermediate** level. It is especially for those of you who understand a lot of English, but have difficulty speaking fluently, accurately, and/or confidently. Even if you have an **advanced** level of English, you may still find the book useful (for my advanced students, it usually is).

What are sentence structures?

Sentence structures are continuous or discontinuous **sequences** of **words** that **native English speakers often use** when they speak. Examples include:

Come to think of it...

How come you...?

To have... looked at

I'd hate to...

Do you happen to...?

If it hadn't been for...

Would it kill you...?

It's too bad that...

To what extent...?

To arrange for... to...

Why should you learn sentence structures?

1. **To speak more fluently.** Actively learning sentence structures could significantly reduce the amount of thinking you do while speaking because you don't have to spend time formulating

structures in your head. They're ready-to-go. And the less thinking you do when you speak, the more fluent your speech should be. Seems pretty obvious, doesn't it?

2. **To have different options to choose from when you speak.** Similar to the previous point, I think it's safe to say that having a wider variety of structures in your repertoire means less hesitancy when speaking, and a richer quality of expression. I mean, who wants to be stuck using the same structures over and over again?
3. **To speak like native speakers.** By learning and using sentence structures commonly used by native speakers, you will begin to speak more like them, and you will gradually evolve from a language learner whose choice of expressions is likely to be strongly influenced by your mother tongue. Makes sense, right?
4. **To shorten your sentences.** Experience has taught me that the more sentence structures you know, the shorter and more succinct your sentences can be. And this, I believe, is one of the key features of effective communication in the English language — but which is also a challenge for many learners.
5. **To speak with more accuracy.** In my experience, not having a wide array of sentence structures in one's repertoire (which seems to be the case for most intermediate and even advanced learners, according to research [1]) can result in using structures which, although close to what you want to say, don't quite convey the precise meaning. Yet another reason to learn English sentence structures, wouldn't you agree?
6. **To make fewer mistakes when you speak.** Sentence structures are error-free speech templates. Therefore, it's fair to say that using them could make your spoken English less error-filled.
7. **To be more confident speakers.** When you learn a sentence structure, you can immediately start formulating (in most cases) hundreds of sentences that you can use in almost any situation. Noticing this instant growth in your spoken English, as research suggests [2], should have a positive impact on your confidence in speaking. I have personally seen this with my students.
8. **Because it works!** I, as well as a growing number of studies, have found that learning language patterns such as sentence structures can improve one's fluency considerably [3]. This isn't

surprising since it is estimated that about 66% of native speakers' speech comes from prefabricated sentences such as sentence structures [4]. Yet another reason why I advocate learning English sentence structures.

About the 100 sentence structures

In the following pages, you will find **100 sentence structures** along with **examples** of usage taken from **spoken English**. The structures are accompanied, where necessary, by **short notes** (marked with ~) to aid understanding.

All sentence structures are **widely used** by **native speakers**.

Please note that even if the sentence structures and their examples use a certain **pronoun** in this book, this doesn't mean that they can only be used with that pronoun. For instance, "I'd better..." can also be "You'd better...", "She'd better...", etc.". Also, note that although the structures are presented with a **particular meaning**, they may also have other meanings in some cases.

How to work with the sentence structures

You're almost ready to get started. Below are **my recommendations** for working with each structure in order to learn it.

These recommendations also apply **even if** you're already **familiar** with the structure; you may be familiar with it but still use less accurate and/or longer structures or even not know how to use it correctly (e.g. put it in the wrong part of the sentence).

If you **already use** the sentence structure (or use a similar one) **in your speech correctly**, try completing Steps 1 and 2 below anyway, for good measure.

Step 1

Read **all 3** examples. This should help you (better) **understand** the sentence structure's **meaning** and/or **usage** — or **learn** something **new** about it, provided that you already use it in your speech (e.g. a new position within a sentence or a new phrase that you can use before or after it).

If the meaning or use of the structure is **unclear** after looking at the notes and examples, I recommend looking for more examples of the use of the sentence structure. That generally solves the issue. To do this, you can use **Corpora** (links [on my website](#)), or type the sentence structure in **Google** in inverted commas to see the structure in use in website descriptions. Here's an example of "I'd hate to...":

<https://quotepark.com › quotes › 1057739-melina-marc...> ▼

You know something, Jacob, I'd hate to be as smart

Jun 3, 2021 — You know something, Jacob, I'd hate to be as smart as Jonh. I mean he was really, really smart, and to be that smart means you know all the ...

Sometimes it might be useful to skip the first few results if the structure matches the title of a song, film, etc. as you may not find many useful examples in the site descriptions.

Depending on the structure, you may also be able to find **videos** on **social media** or **articles** on the Internet that explain it in more detail. Some structures may even be discussed in English **dictionaries**. If so, they usually appear as the first results in a Google search (you may not need to write them in inverted commas for this).

In any case, in most cases, you'll most likely **not need** to do any further **investigation** once you've read the 3 examples.

Step 2

Choose one of the 3 examples and ask yourself the following question: *“Would I also have used this structure if I were making this sentence?”*

If you would have used the sentence structure in question (or a similar one), you can move to the next sentence structure and skip Step 3.

However, if the answer is negative, ask yourself: “*How would I have said it in my own words?*”

In my experience, this exercise should help you see whether you’d convey the message in a longer, more complex, and/or less precise way. You should also be able to see shortcomings in your speech (e.g. bad habits, grammatical errors) that you were not previously aware of.

Step 3

Write down a few lines (around 150 characters) using the structure and have them **corrected** by a **native** or a proficient English speaker (e.g. a non-native English teacher).

If you **don’t have access** to **anyone** who can correct your use of the structures, you can turn to online communities where people correct each other or to paid services that will correct your sentences in a matter of minutes ([on my website](#) I link to several).

It’s **recommended** that you do not skip this step if you want to learn how to use the sentence structures correctly. Otherwise, not only might you misuse them, but you might also form bad habits that could be difficult to break later on.

From personal experience, it is true that **repeated exposure** to sentence structures through the consumption of native content (TV programmes, video games, books, etc.) or by conversing with native or proficient speakers can sometimes suffice when learning about their usage.

Nevertheless, I still recommend that you write some sentences using the sentence structures and have them checked, time permitting, — or **at least** say your examples out loud to someone who can correct them (if you don't want to write them down).

I believe this is a more **reliable** (and faster) way to learn their use, rather than simply relying on your subconscious, which, for one, is subject to cognitive biases or illusions such as the *Baader–Meinhof* effect — I talk more about this effect at the end of the book.

Personally, for what it's worth, when it comes to learning the uses of sentence structures, I can easily distinguish between the students who completed this step and those who didn't.

Regarding what to write (or say), write things that are **meaningful to you** using the structures. Neuroscience research has shown that the brain seems to remember better when the information we learn is relevant to our lives [5]. Seems obvious, doesn't it?

In this respect, I generally recommend that my students write their sentences as part of:

- A Daily Journal: Write about key events in your day.
- A Gratitude Journal: Write about things (typically three) that you are grateful for each day.
- A Goals Journal: Write about your progress towards your life goal(s).
- Any journal of your choice.

In this way, you can kill two birds with one stone, i.e. practice the use of sentence structures and work on your personal growth. If journaling isn't your thing, you can simply write sentences for a future email, cover letter, university application, etc. Or, if you prefer, you can write the sentences as part of a story (check [my website](#) for writing prompts).

The point is, write whatever is **relevant** or meaningful to you. The most important thing is to use the sentence structure and receive feedback on its use.

When you have **completed** these 3 steps, you should have **learnt** the sentence structure, i.e. you are aware that it exists and you know how to use it correctly.

You can now start to **reinforce** it in your memory by **using** it in your speaking and writing and/or by **repeatedly exposing** yourself to it when consuming native content or having conversations with native or competent speakers.

This should help the structure **stay in your speech** or **become part** of it, if it isn't already. I'll talk more about this at the end of the book.

With that said, completing all 3 steps may only allow you to work with **a few structures per week** if not one. I understand that this may be too slow of a learning process for you.

If that is the case, a relatively **faster route** could be to complete Steps 1 and 2 first for all the sentence structures, and attempt Step 3 after reaching the 100th structure. I actually like this option better because it would allow you to review the structures one more time, which would help you learn them better, as science has shown [6].

And, if you really **don't have time** for Step 3? Well, completing Step 1 only should be better than completing none at all, and completing Steps 1 and 2 should be better than completing Step 1 alone.

So, **you do you**, as they say. Something is better than nothing.

Let's meet again at the end of the book after you've learnt the last sentence structure. Enjoy!

100 Sentence structures

1. All kinds of

~ A wide variety ~



It takes **all kinds of** people to help a community thrive, which is why I volunteer at the local YMCA during the summer for children's activity camps.



I enjoy playing **all kinds of** video games. My favourite lately is called *God of War*. I especially like how the game uses mythic heroes and creates new stories for them.



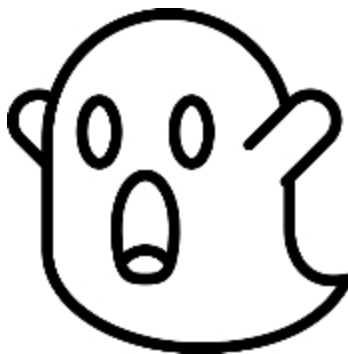
When asked what my favourite movie is, I usually say I like **all kinds of** films. The new *Spider-Man* films are fantastic; I can talk endlessly about whether Tobey Maguire was a better Spider-Man than Tom Holland.

2. And stuff like that

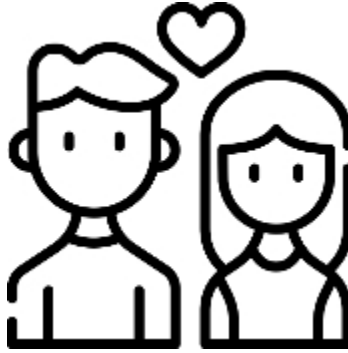
~ And similar things ~



I forget things all the time, so I set alarms for important things I have to do, like buying beer **and stuff like that**.



I'm telling you, Neil. There are no "spirits" **and stuff like that**. It's only hallucinations and mental illness. Plain and simple.



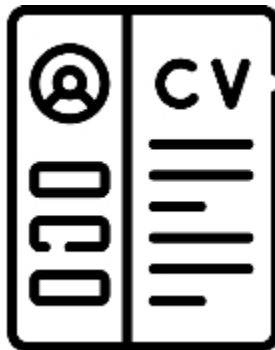
Honestly Susan, I don't have time for boyfriends **and stuff like that** right now. I'm just so busy with work and studies, how do you expect me to juggle it all?

3. Are you used to...?

~ Literal meaning ~



Kim, **are you used to** wearing a bra? I never got used to them and they do nothing for me but create pain and discomfort.



Hey Alana, why did you say my video CV was long? It's like 40 seconds. What kind of content **are you used to** watching? Flashes of light?



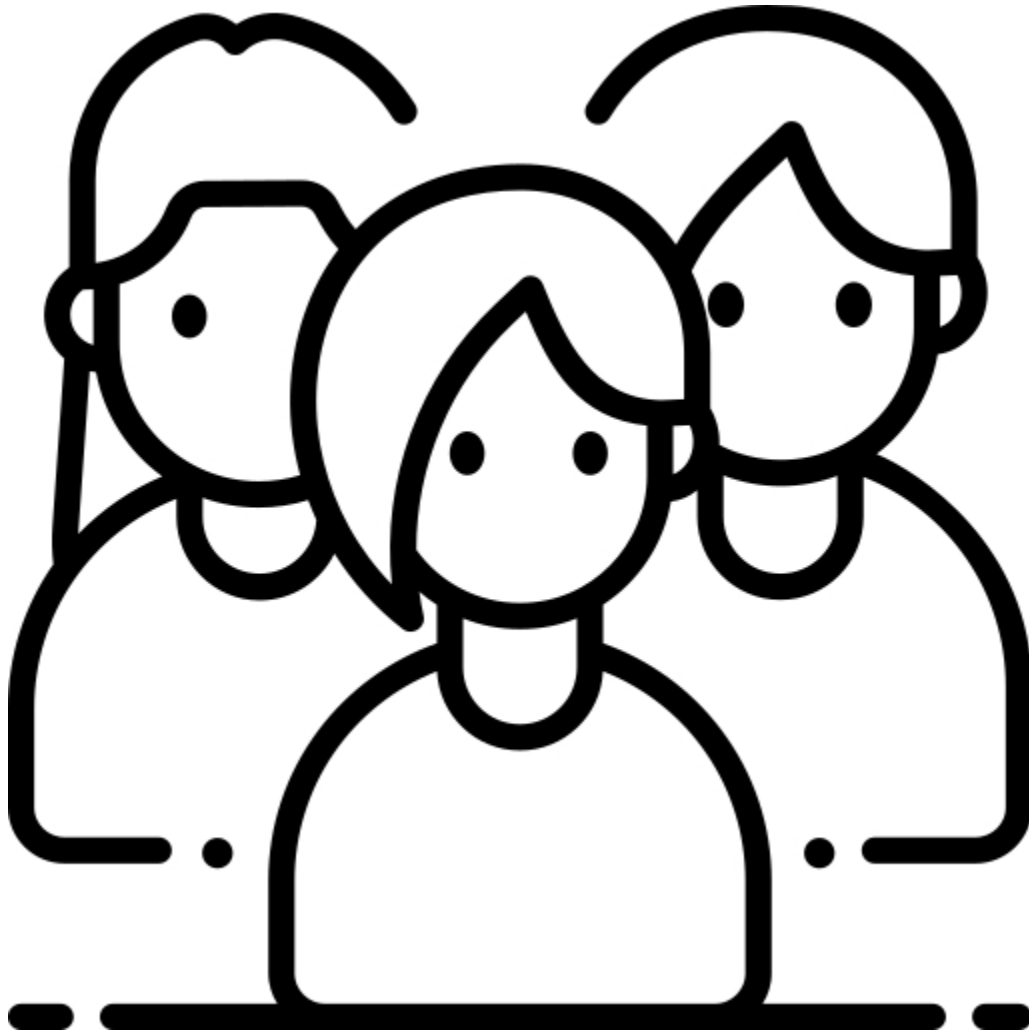
Are you used to crowds, noise, and pollution? I'm not, that's why I never leave my room. It makes dating a little challenging but I manage. Ha!

4. **Be bound to...**

~ Very likely ~



Son, you're **bound to** get in trouble if you keep calling your teachers by their first names. By the way, you're grounded.



I'm single but hopeful. Out of the millions of women out there, I'm sure one of them **is bound to** like me, right? Please don't look at me like that.

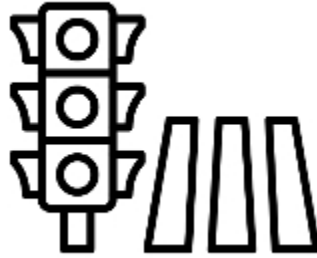


A: Darn, man, my bike got stolen in the street yesterday.

B: Sorry mate, I won't offer you sympathy. It **was bound to** happen since you never lock it properly.

5. Be careful...

~ Literal meaning ~



The policeman came into school to warn the kids to **be careful** when using the zebra crossing as a boy had been hurt by a car the previous day.



I should **be careful** when I'm using my hair straighteners; yesterday I burnt my forehead, and it's so sore, I can't even cover it up with my hair.



A: **Be careful** taking that dish out of the cooker, Lou, the oven gloves have a—

B: Ouch! Why didn't you tell me there's a hole in the oven gloves?

6. Come to think of it...

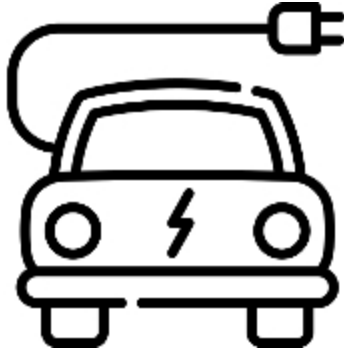
~ Sudden realisation when speaking ~



Mum has a job interview next Friday. **Come to think of it**, it's her birthday too! That can only be a good sign, right?



When I have a bad day, I console myself with a bowl of ice cream. **Come to think of it**, I do the same when I'm having a good day. Hahaha.



A: Tom, what is legal now, but likely to be illegal in 100 years?

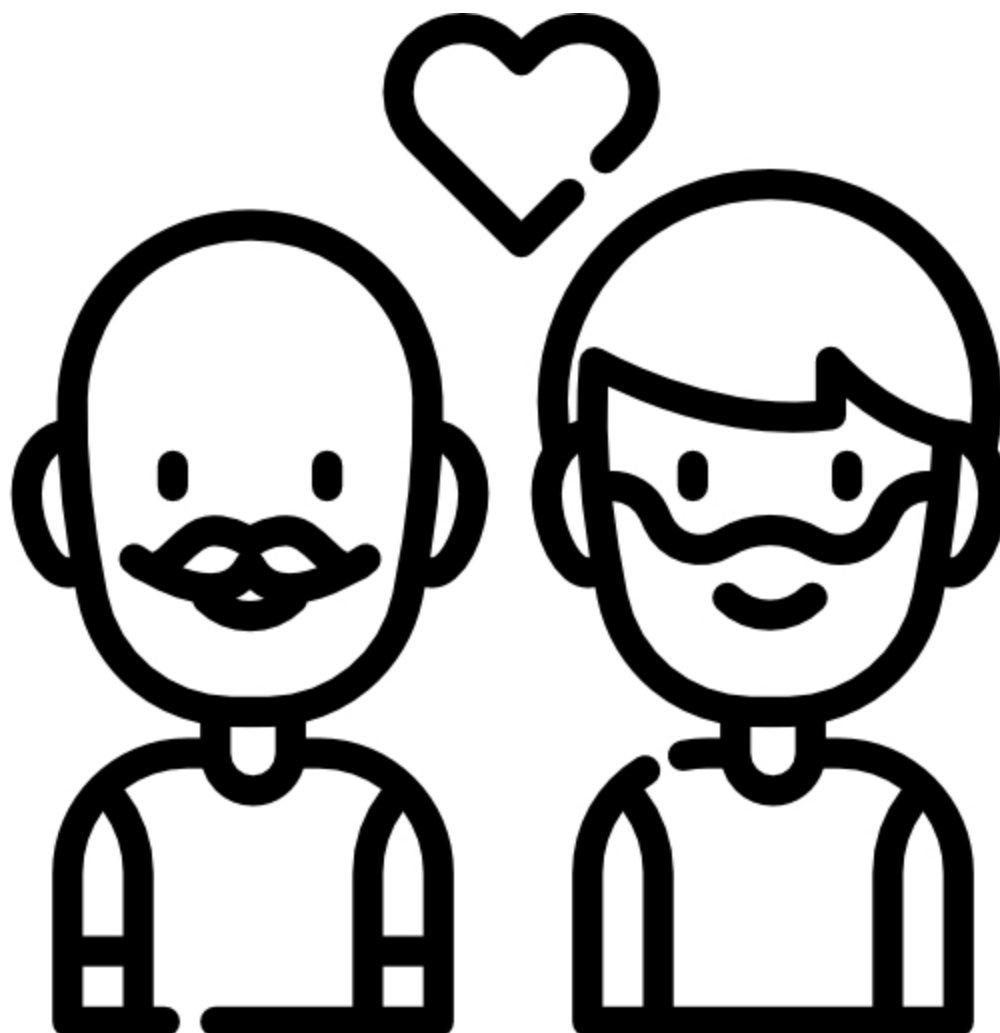
B: Driving non-electric cars. Or **come to think of it**, probably driving at all.

7. Did you use to...?

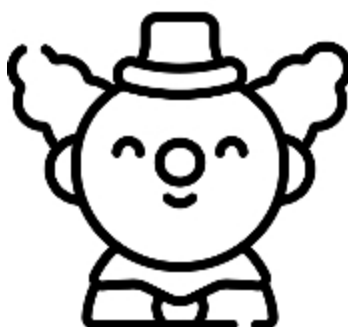
~ Asking about past things that no longer happen ~



Hey Phoebe, **did you use to** smoke in the bathroom when you were in school? I used to do it all the time. Those were the days!



What?! **Did you use to** think I was gay? My goodness, that explains why you never made a move on me. I always thought you didn't like me.



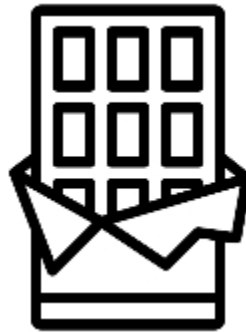
Mum, **did dad use to** be a politician? I have a hard time telling when he's being genuine and I've noticed that he keeps several clown suits in his wardrobe.

8. Do you agree that...?

~ Do you have the same opinion as me? ~



Do you agree that David Tennant was the best *Doctor Who*? That episode when he almost told Rose he loved her still brings tears to my eyes.



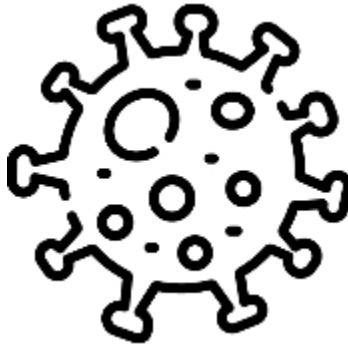
These chocolates were on special offer – **do you agree that** we should give the big box to Mum for her birthday and keep the rest for ourselves?



Do you agree that the workweek should be four days instead of five? People would be far happier, which means they'd work even harder. Or not.

9. Do you happen to...?

~ Is there any chance that...? ~



Excuse me, **do you happen to** know if the airline offers a full refund if the flight is cancelled due to the virus?



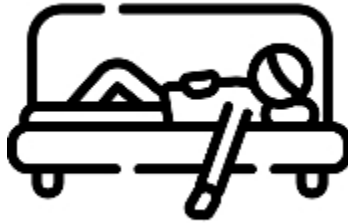
Hey Dakota, **did you happen to** see the picture I sent you yesterday? I guess not; otherwise you would've shouted at me by now.



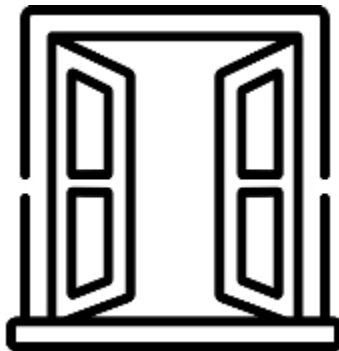
OMG! That curry you made the other day was lovely. It was the perfect blend of spices, with just a little kick! **Do you happen to** have the recipe?

10. Do you mind if...?

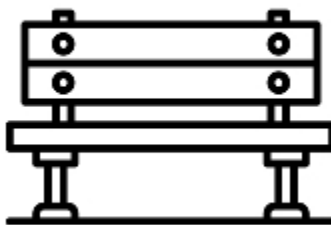
~ Politely ask for permission ~



Hey love, I'm tired and need some time to unwind by myself. **Do you mind if** we raincheck the movie night?



Ryan, **do you mind if** I open the window? It's boiling in here. Don't you feel hot? I am literally roasting in this heat.



Hi, **do you mind if** I sit next to you? The park is just so crowded today; I can't seem to find another empty seat. I think it's because of the free music festival.

11. Don't ever...

~ Telling someone seriously never to do something ~



You're a disturbed human being. Please **don't ever** message me again. If you do, I'll report you to the police.



Don't ever give up on your dreams, Tom. Well, unless they're rubbish. In that case, you should totally give up on them.



My girl used to joke “**Don't ever** leave me, because I'll find you”. I hope she does because she's the best thing that ever happened to me.

12. Even after...

~ More emphasis than “after” alone ~



I once had a classmate who would pick his nose and eat his boogers. It turns my stomach, **even after** 30 years.



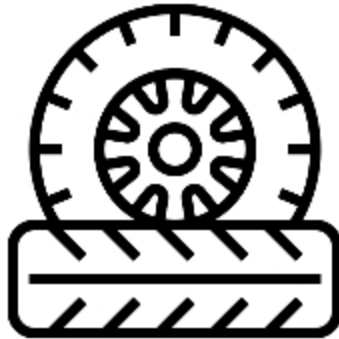
My daughter wanted a guinea pig for her birthday, but **even after** she promised to take care of it, guess who's cleaning out the cage today.



Even after everything that went wrong on our camping trip, we still had the best time ... apart from Dad falling over the peg and breaking his nose.

13. For now

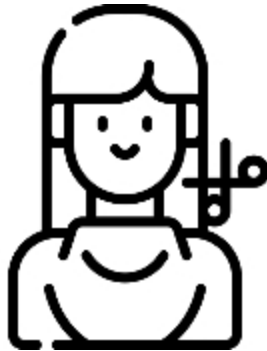
~ For the moment ~



I'm going to put new tyres on my car and keep it **for now** until I can afford a new one; it's still working fine, and it was my first car.



Our tutor told us that she's shelving our current topic **for now** because she doesn't think it will come up in our end-of-year exams.



Rose asked the hairdresser to just trim the ends of her hair **for now** as she's trying to grow it long for her sister's wedding in the summer.

14. For one thing

~ One reason is... ~



I'm not coming shopping with you on Saturday. **For one thing**, I have no money, and also, they've shut Primark for refurbishment.



I love sitting at the harbour and eating fish and chips out of the paper; **for one thing**, there's no washing up, and they definitely taste better.



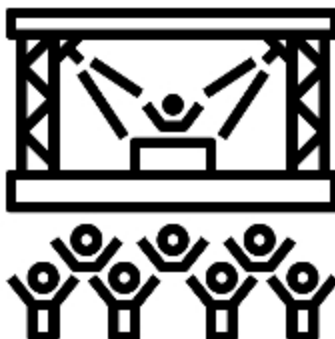
You can't have all your friends round for drinks on Friday; **for one thing**, me and your dad will be away for the weekend and can't keep an eye on you.

15. For what it's worth

~ If it helps at all ~



For what it's worth, I never liked that old armchair, but Mum won't be happy the dog buried his bone inside the cushion.



I know you're upset the tickets sold out before you could buy one, but **for what it's worth**, I heard that the band lip-synchs anyway.



A: It's such a shame my favourite restaurant is closing.

B: **For what it's worth**, I heard that the chef is going to work in the new restaurant across the road.

16. Haven't you heard that...?

~ Literal meaning ~



Did you buy that hummus from the supermarket in town? **Haven't you heard that** they recalled them all — something to do with nuts or salmonella.



Haven't you heard that they had to close the gym because of that awful smell; turns out it was a pair of sweaty old trainers stuffed behind a radiator.



A: I've got tickets for the play tonight; I'm so excited.

B: **Haven't you heard that** the show has been cancelled? The entire cast tested positive for Covid.

17. Help yourself

~ Take without permission ~

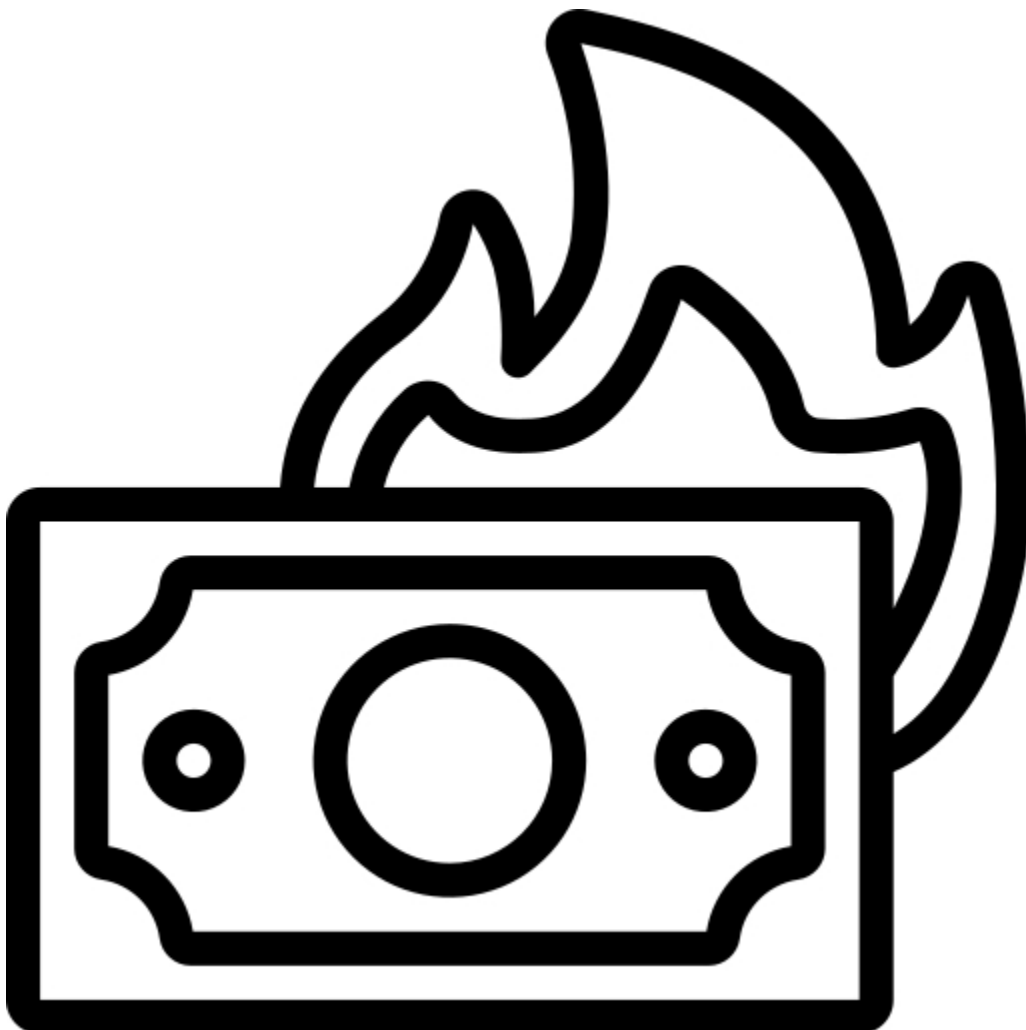


A: Dad, is there any pizza left or you ate it all?

B: What's left is on the kitchen table. **Help yourself.**



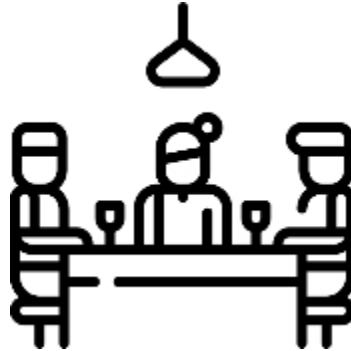
Today at the office, I **helped myself** to some food that belonged to my co-workers when no one was looking. I'm pure evil. Muahaha!



My 12-year-old niece is a little sociopath. One time, while I was in another room, she **helped herself** to £100 from my purse and went on a little shopping spree.

18. How come you...?

~ Not as confrontational as “why” ~



Lisa, **how come you** didn't show up for dinner last night? We waited half an hour for you before ordering, you know?



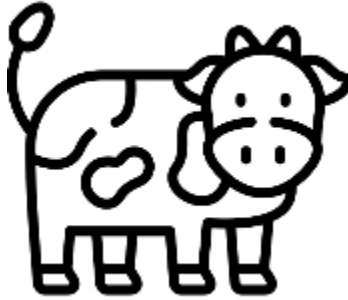
How come you don't text me anymore? Have you got a new best friend or something? I miss you, we should hang out next Friday.



Hey grandad, **how come you** bought a £1000 smartphone if you don't know how to use one? Last I knew you were using smoke signals to communicate.

19. How dare you

~ Expresses indignation ~



Tony, did you tell my sister that she was a fat cow? **How dare you!** I should punch you in the face right now!



Oi! **How dare you** talk to me like that! I'm older than you, and therefore I know more than you! Hey, why are you rolling your eyes?!



How dare you say I'm a lousy driver because I'm a woman! Did you know that men commit four times as many driving offences as women do?

20. How do you like...?

~ What's your opinion? ~



Kate, have you seen the new company logo?! **How do you like** it? I think it's rubbish. It looks like a giant turd.



Honey, look at me. **How do you like** my new dress? I bought it half price in the sales. Oi! What's with that face!



Hey Justin, **how do you like** our new English teacher? I prefer Mr Smith, but she's also very good. I just wish she wouldn't yell at me every day.

21. How will I be...?

~ Literal meaning ~



Thanks for booking the flights, Jen, but **how will I be** travelling from the airport to the resort with all my diving equipment?



I have a few questions about the course. Can I change modules after the semester has started? And, also, **how will I be** assessed?



A: **How will I be** able to get in if I don't have a ticket?

B: They'll be selling tickets at the door, but my brother might have one spare.

22. I bet...

~ I'm pretty sure it's true ~



I've got a hundred things to do today, but **I bet** my boss will eye up my tidy desk and ask me to make tea and coffee for the board meeting.



Dan said he's working late tonight but **I bet** they've got the rugby match on in the office and all the guys are sitting in front of the TV with their feet up.



I bet my sister asks if she can wear my new black dress tonight when she goes out. I knew I should've hidden it at the back of my wardrobe before she saw it.

23. I can hardly believe that...

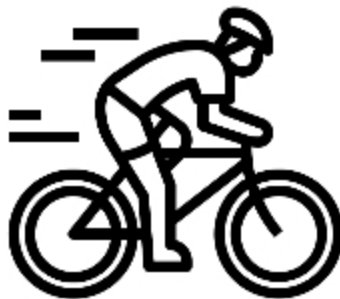
~ It's hard to believe (emphatic) ~



I love your pixie cut! **I can hardly believe that** your hair used to be blonde and reach down to your waist. What made you dye it green?



I can hardly believe that we met fifteen years ago – it feels like last week we were watching the Hannah Montana movie and dancing the “Hoedown Throwdown”.



A: Did you watch that documentary on Netflix last night?

B: Yes, **I can hardly believe that** guy cycled across a rope between tower blocks; I closed my eyes when he was wobbling.

24. I can't bear...

~ It's unpleasant for me ~



I can't bear to see pictures of rescue dogs waiting to be rehomed; I'd adopt them all if I had a big garden and my mum would let me.



My car skidded one winter when the roads were icy, and it scared me so much that now **I can't bear** the thought of driving in the snow.



Whenever I'm in the city and see a homeless person wrapped in an old blanket, **I can't bear** to walk past without stopping and at least buying them a coffee.

25. I can't bring myself to...

~ I just can't do it ~



I need to speak to my boss about a raise, but **I can't bring myself to** do it while his mum is so poorly in hospital.



The shed needs clearing out, but **I can't bring myself to** go in there ever since I saw a rat the size of a dog scurrying around.



I can't bring myself to tell my dad that I broke my finger playing golf last week, not when I know he's bought me a new set of clubs for my birthday.

26. I can't help but...

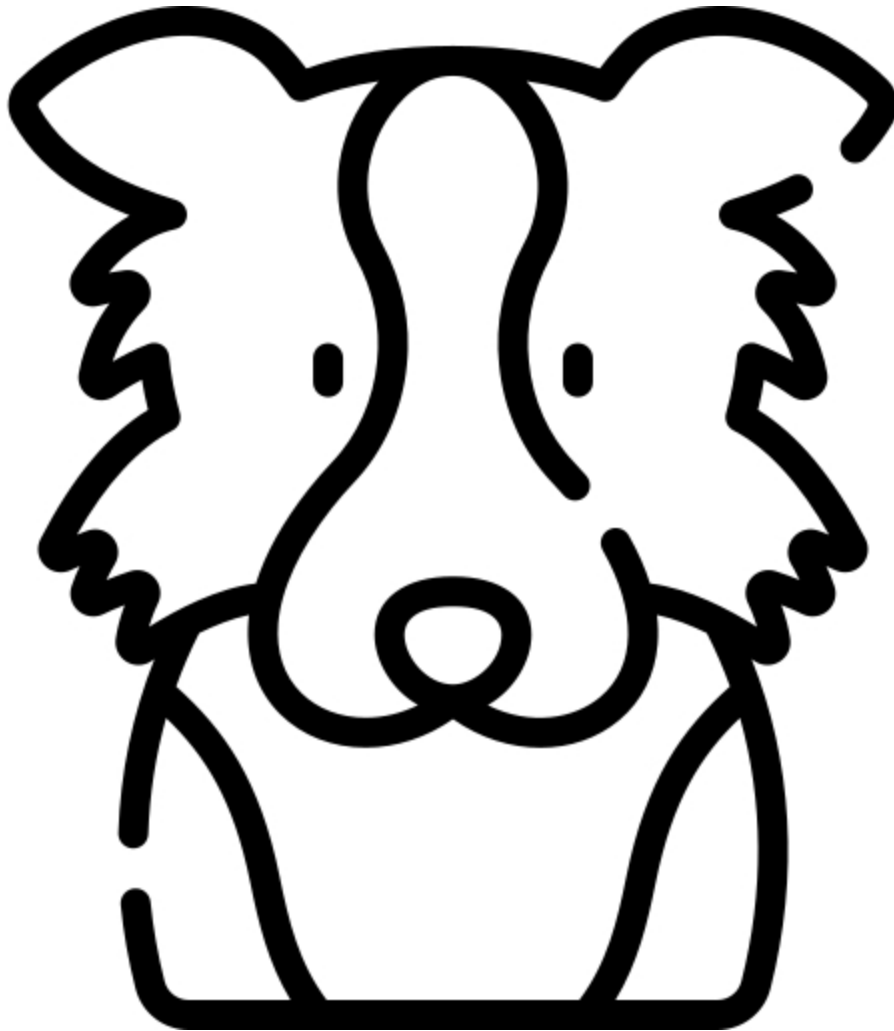
~ I can't stop myself ~



Sorry mate, **I can't help but** laugh when you say you're going to stop smoking weed. Weed is who you are!



I can't help but be angry at our government for being more concerned about winning votes than improving people's lives.



My girlfriend says **she can't help but** think that I'd choose my dog over her if my landlord gave me an ultimatum. Is that so wrong?

27. I can't say...

~ I don't think it's the case ~



I can't say I enjoyed that horror movie last night – it made me feel so on edge, I had nightmares and had to sleep with the light on.



It was a great walk to the top of the Munro, but **I can't say** the same for the downhill journey – we got caught in a storm and I was drenched.



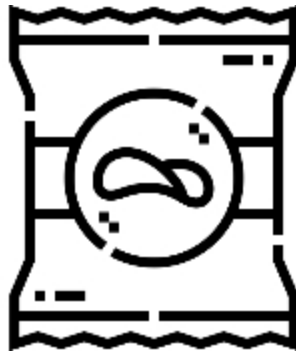
I can't say splitting up with Sam was the best thing that ever happened to me – he kept the car, and my suede cowboy boots – but at least I kept the dog.

28. I can't wait to....

~ Literal meaning (emphasis) ~



Have another drink, Ben, and I'll get the karaoke machine out. **I can't wait to** hear your rendition of *Born to Run* again.



My brother has been backpacking around the Greek islands. **I can't wait to** see him when he gets back — he's bringing me some Lay's crisps.



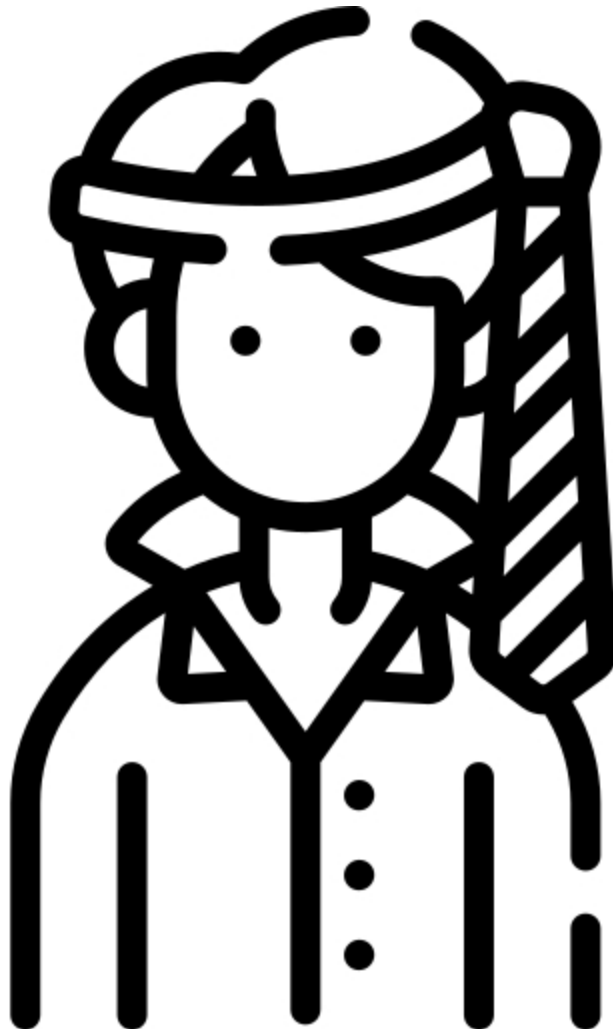
I can't wait to finish my last exam so that I can binge-watch every episode of *Gossip Girl* without reciting *Romeo and Juliet* during commercials.

29. I could've sworn...

~ I was pretty sure, but it seems I was wrong ~



Strange, **I could've sworn** I replied to your text. Apologies, maybe I wrote it but didn't hit the send button...



Interesting post, Jake. Haven't you posted this drunk picture of yourself on Reddit before? **I could've sworn** I saw it last week. Oh, it's a new one.



A: Andy! The parcel the postman brought has no mouse in it.

B: No? **I could've sworn** I ordered a mouse along with the keyboard. I'll go check if I was charged for it.

30. I didn't mean to...

~ To be sorry for something done ~



I'm sorry I made the joke earlier about you being a clown. **I didn't mean to** hurt you. I just wanted us to laugh together.



Hey Daniel, **I didn't mean to** be rude at today's meeting. I'm sorry if it sounded that way. I quite liked your ideas, for what it's worth.



I know Lucy said you're a waste of space, but I'm sure **she didn't mean to** say that. She was probably taking things out on you.

31. I feel like...

~ Literal meaning ~



Dad, **I feel like** you don't care about me when you forget to do the things you said you'd do. Is that really the case?



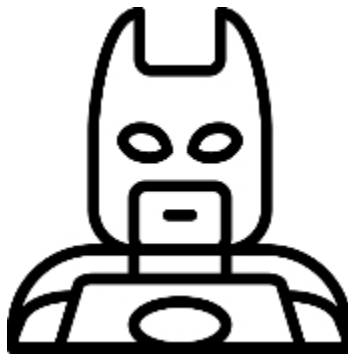
I feel like Becca is out of my league because she's so beautiful, but her behaviour says she is definitely into me.



Hey Jeffrey, do **you** ever **feel like** you don't belong anywhere? I do, so I'm learning to love my own company.

32. I must say...

~ I confess ~



I went to the cinema with very low expectations, but **I must say** that the new *Batman* film was much better than I expected.



I must say your boyfriend is a decent guy. I didn't like him at first, as you know. But the more we interact I can see why you like him.



I'm not very impressed with your work lately, **I must say**. Is everything all right at home? It seems that you're a bit distracted.

33. I was about to...

~ To be on the verge of doing something ~



Oh, good you found my missing trainer. **I was about to** look for it myself, but I wanted to finish this game ... and ... you're in the way, Mum.



I was about to ask my tutor for an extension on my assignment when he said he needs it by the end of today; I haven't even started it yet.



A: Why are you picking my laundry up off the floor, Mum? **I was about to** do it myself.

B: You said that yesterday, Johnny. And the day before. And the day before that.

34. I was under the impression that...

~ I thought that... ~

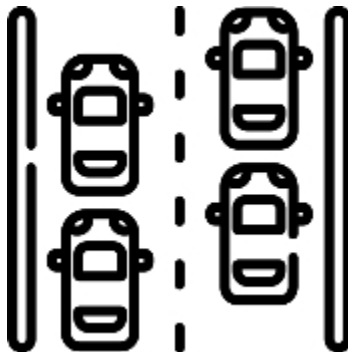


A: Why are you so late? The party started over an hour ago!

B: I'm so sorry! **I was under the impression that** the party started at 6 o'clock, not 5 o'clock!



I ended up not going to the museum when I visited Washington D.C. **I was under the impression that** admission was free, but it turns out it was almost \$20!



I was under the impression that it would only take two hours for me to drive to my uncle's house, but it turns out that with traffic it was more like four hours!

35. I was wondering if...

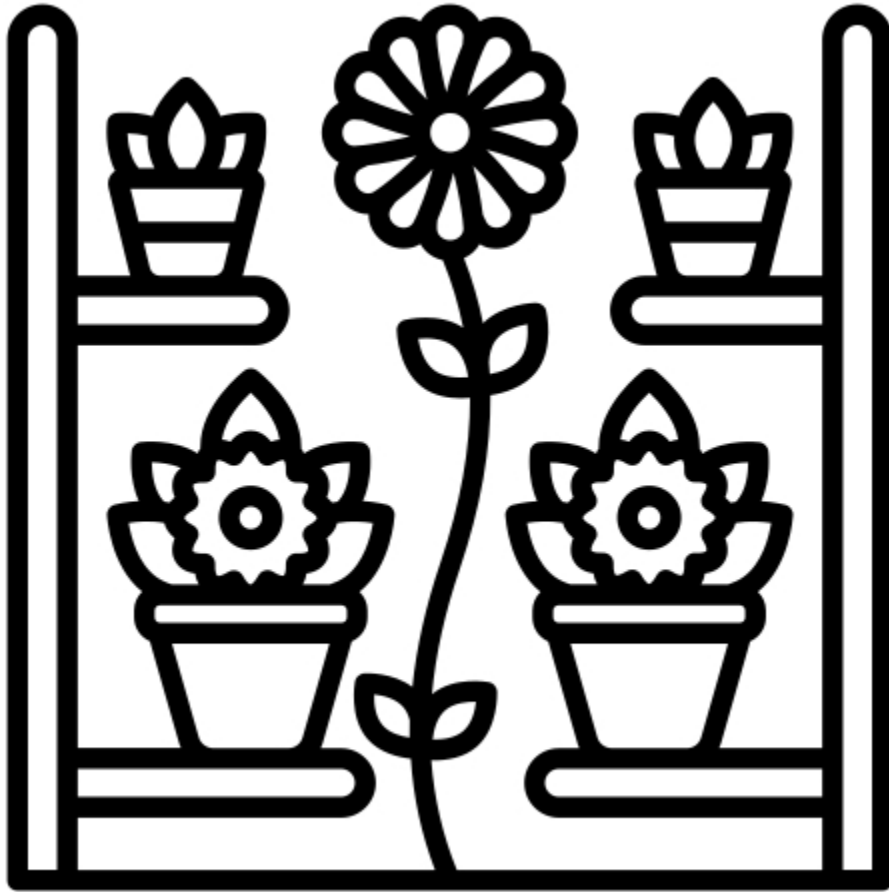
~ Politely ask for something ~



I was wondering if Sophie and I could borrow your console this weekend. We'll take good care of it, I promise.



Hey Mark, **I was wondering if** you could help me. I need someone to pretend to be my boyfriend for a night. Hey, don't walk away!



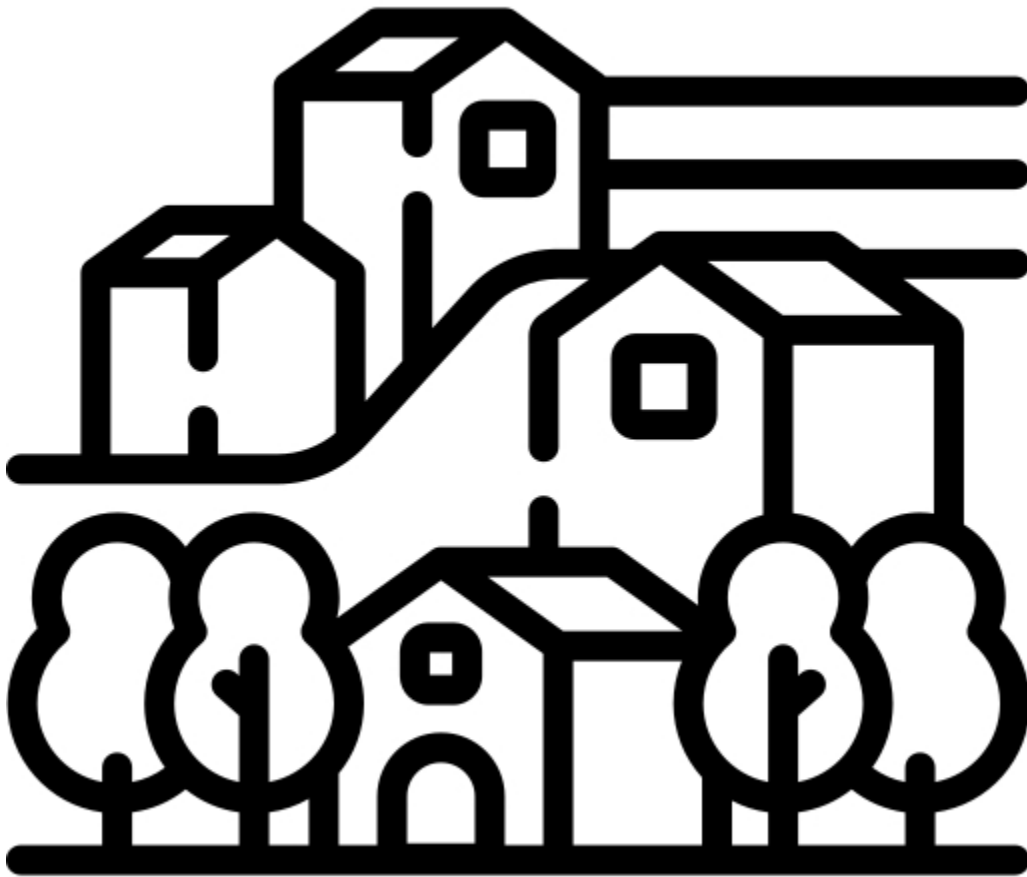
Honey, **I was wondering if** you could tell me where I could find a nice flower shop around here. I'm new to the neighbourhood, but I'd like to get my neighbour some flowers to say thanks for helping me move in.

36. I'd be better off...

~ It would be better for me to... ~



I wish I'd not bought those new boots; they look good, but they're rubbish when it rains. **I'd be better off** wearing plastic bags on my feet.



After talking to Darren about how hard it is to live decently in a big city, I keep reminding myself **I'd be better off** staying in the village for the time being.



Sometimes I think **I'd be better off** working part-time hours closer to home – think of the money I'd save on fuel. I might finally be able to afford that trip to Japan!

37. I'd be grateful if you could...

~ Politely ask for something ~



I'd be grateful if you could return the money you stole from my wallet while I was asleep, Anne. Yes, I know it was you, the baby monitor was on and you didn't realise.



Hey boss, I just finished what you asked me to do earlier. **I'd be grateful if you could** have a look and tell me what you think. There are some elements I'd like to discuss with you.



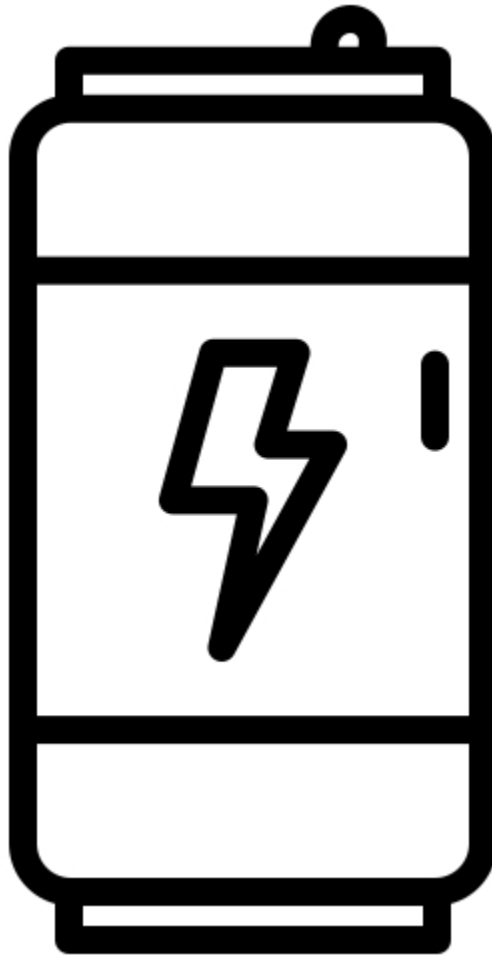
Danny, **I'd be grateful if you could** stop eating junk food in front of my child. It makes it harder for me to get him to eat his vegetables, you know.

38. I'd better...

~ I should ~



The guy I was hooking up with told me yesterday that **I'd better** stop calling him. All because I told him I don't want a boyfriend right now.



Ah, damn, I've got 3 assignments due tomorrow! Well, I guess **I'd better** gulp down a few energy drinks so I can finish at least one of the three.



A: Did you hear about the new virus going around?

B: Another one? Crap! **I'd better** go to the nearest Sainsbury's and stock up on toilet paper before it's sold out.

39. **I'd give anything to...**

~ I'd very much like to... ~



I'm not sure if my one true love is out there, but **I'd give anything to** meet her! I hope she loves dogs as much as I do.



My grandmother used to make the most delicious blueberry pies in the summer. **I'd give anything to** taste one more slice!



A: Who is one actor or actress you'd like to meet?

B: I've always loved Brad Pitt movies. **I'd give anything to** meet him!

40. I'd hate to...

~ It would make me unhappy ~



I'd hate to go back to university. The endless hours of study, the stress... The parties though. Those I wouldn't mind!



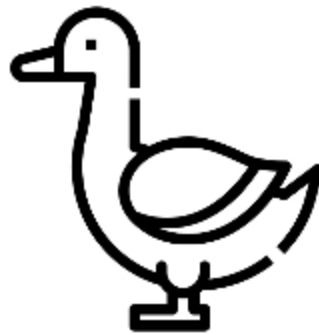
We need to talk to Sam. She keeps texting that guy who ghosted her online. She says things like, "Are you still around? **I'd hate to** not meet you in person".



I'd hate to see citizens' taxes be spent mostly on stupid things. I mean, we work so hard and pay all these ridiculous taxes. And for what? To see fancy government offices staffed by unhelpful employees?

41. I'd like you to...

~ Mild command ~



I'd like you to read through this email one more time before you send it to the director — you've misspelt the word "duck" three times.



A: Same as usual, Mrs Green, trim and blow-dry?

B: **I'd like you to** cut it a bit shorter this time, dear, and try to get rid of all the split ends.



Okay, class, **I'd like you all to** read *The Great Gatsby* over the holidays, and that doesn't mean I want you to watch the Leonardo di Caprio movie, understood?

42. If it hadn't been for...

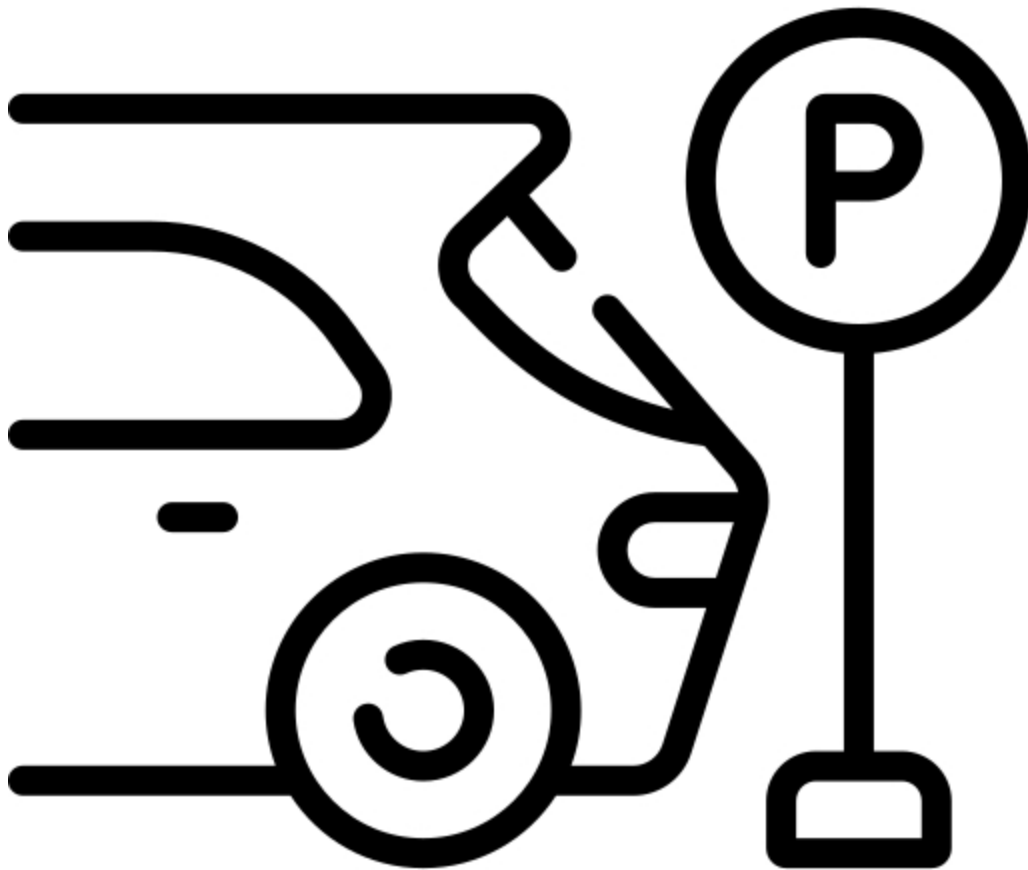
~ Thanks to someone or something ~



If it hadn't been for me spotting the house with the bright yellow door, we'd have been driving around in circles for hours.



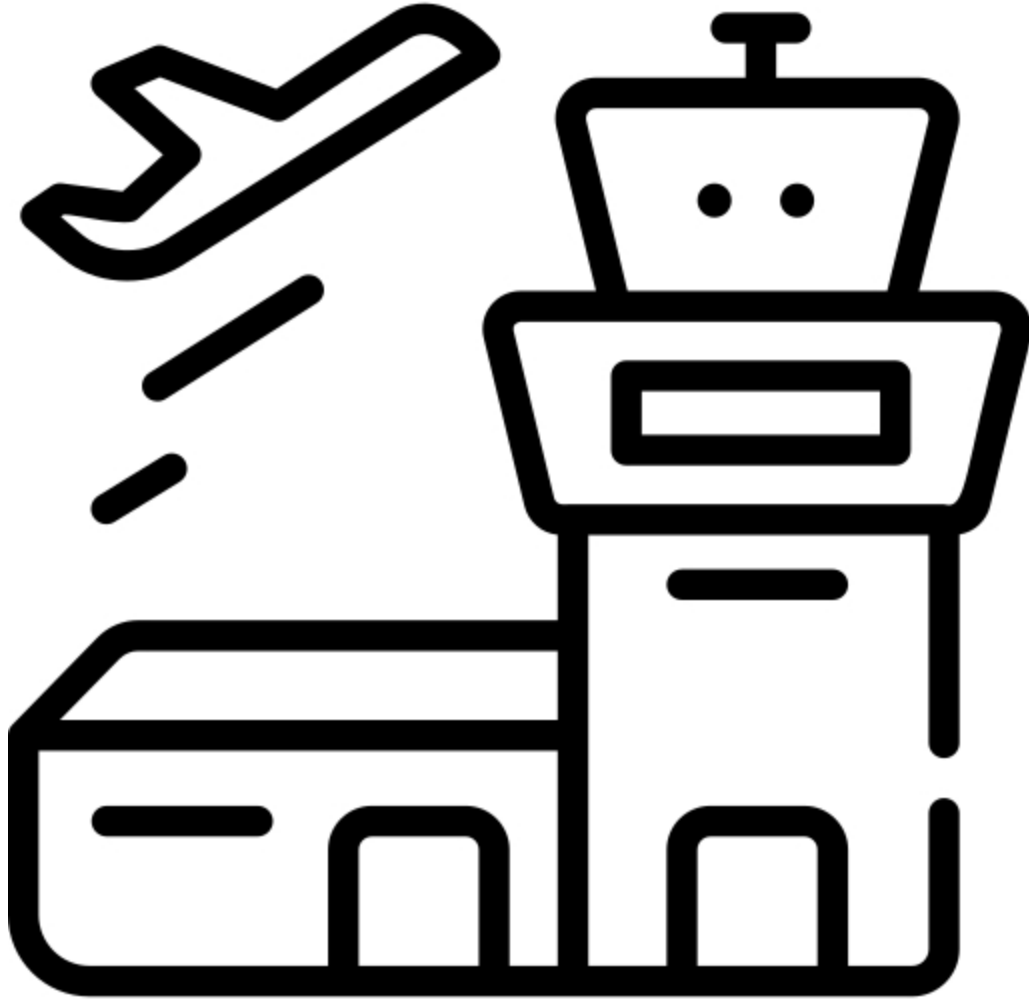
The bad smell was driving Jane crazy and **if it hadn't been for** her dog losing his ball under the sofa, she might never have spotted the rotten apple.



Someone parked so close to me in the Tesco car park, that **if it hadn't been for** Ben's directions, I could have never reversed my car out of the space.

43. If the worst comes to the worst...

~ In the worst-case scenario ~

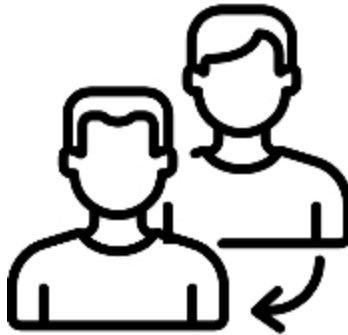


Honey, we should be able to pick you up at the airport when you arrive, but **if the worst comes to the worst**, I'll ask my brother to get you.



A: Richard, what would you do if you were stuck on a mountain with your dog and no food?

B: Well, I guess I'd eat whatever I could get my hands on. **If the worst comes to the worst**, there's always the dog. Just kidding!

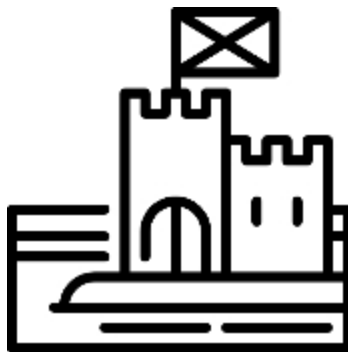


A: Sorry boss, I won't be able to teach today's English class. I have a family emergency.

B: Alright... we'll try to find a substitute and **if the worst comes to the worst**, we'll cancel the class. Hope everything goes well.

44. If there's one thing that... / it's...

~ More emphasis than "something that... is..." ~



If there's one thing that I've enjoyed more than trying haggis and ceilidh dancing in Scotland, **it's** watching the lone piper at the top of the castle.



If there's one thing that I dislike more than cabbage, **it's** cabbage that's been disguised as something else so that by the time you realise, it's too late.



I love reading on a sun lounger by the pool on holiday, but **if there's one** place I enjoy reading more, **it's** snuggled up in bed on a cold winter's evening.

45. I'm afraid...

~ I'm sorry but... ~



I'm afraid your mother and I won't be able to buy you the yacht you wanted this year, son. Please don't be angry with us.



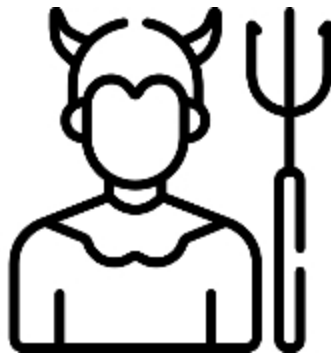
Lucy, **I'm afraid** the only cure for a broken heart is to go to an animal shelter and play with a bunch of puppies – on a daily basis.



Since you asked for my opinion, sister, **I'm afraid** your marriage will never work. Your husband is a gambling addict and a drunkard.

46. I'm calling to...

~ Phone conversation opener ~



Hello, **I'm calling to** see if you have the latest *Diablo* game in stock. I need to complete it before my friend, or it'll cost me an expensive night out.



Hello, **I'm calling to** ask you to fix my broadband; six times I've asked Alexa to play *Monopoly* and she says she's having trouble understanding me.



A: Hi, **I'm calling to** complain about the noise from my neighbours upstairs.

B: Are they throwing late-night parties?

A: Yes, and they never invite me.

47. I'm glad...

~ Expresses happiness ~



I'm glad you have a good partner with whom you can talk openly, Josh. Mine is very stubborn and won't listen to reason.



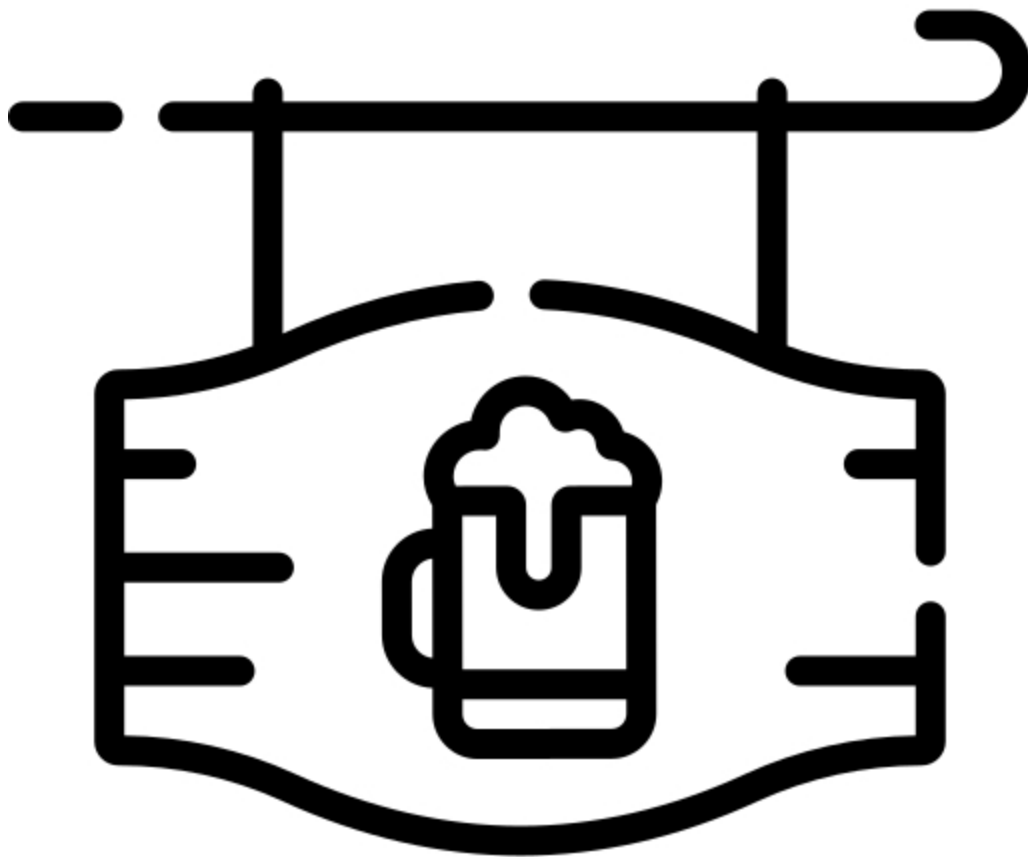
I hate it when my brother gets defensive when you tell him he's done something wrong. **I'm glad** my parents criticise him for it.



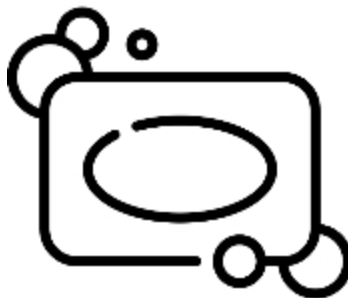
I'm glad to hear Daniel stuck to his guns and pursued his writing career despite society pushing him to seek “more stable” employment.

48. I'm not going to be able to...

~ Literal meaning ~



I'm not going to be able to make the gig on time because I'm dropping my sister to the pub first, so maybe you should go ahead without me.



I wanted to start going swimming on Saturday mornings again, but **I'm not going to be able to** because it clashes with my soap-making class.



A: I've lost my sense of taste since I had Covid, so **I'm not going to be able to** taste this pizza.

B: That's why I ordered it with extra-hot chillies.

49. I'm not really happy with...

~ Softer than "I dislike" ~



Even though I've been working out a lot recently, **I'm not really happy with** how little progress I've made. I thought by now I'd be able to bench press at least 90 kg.



I'm really not happy with how much money I had to spend to fix my car. At first, the mechanic told me that I would only need new tyres, but it quickly turned into a much bigger repair.

HIRED



My boss made a decision recently that **I'm not really happy with**. He hired two new people just after he told me he was going to have to cut my hours, which I don't think is very fair.

50. In any case...

~ Whatever happens or happened ~



I don't see why you can't go to the gig this weekend. **In any case**, I'd rather discuss it with your mother first.



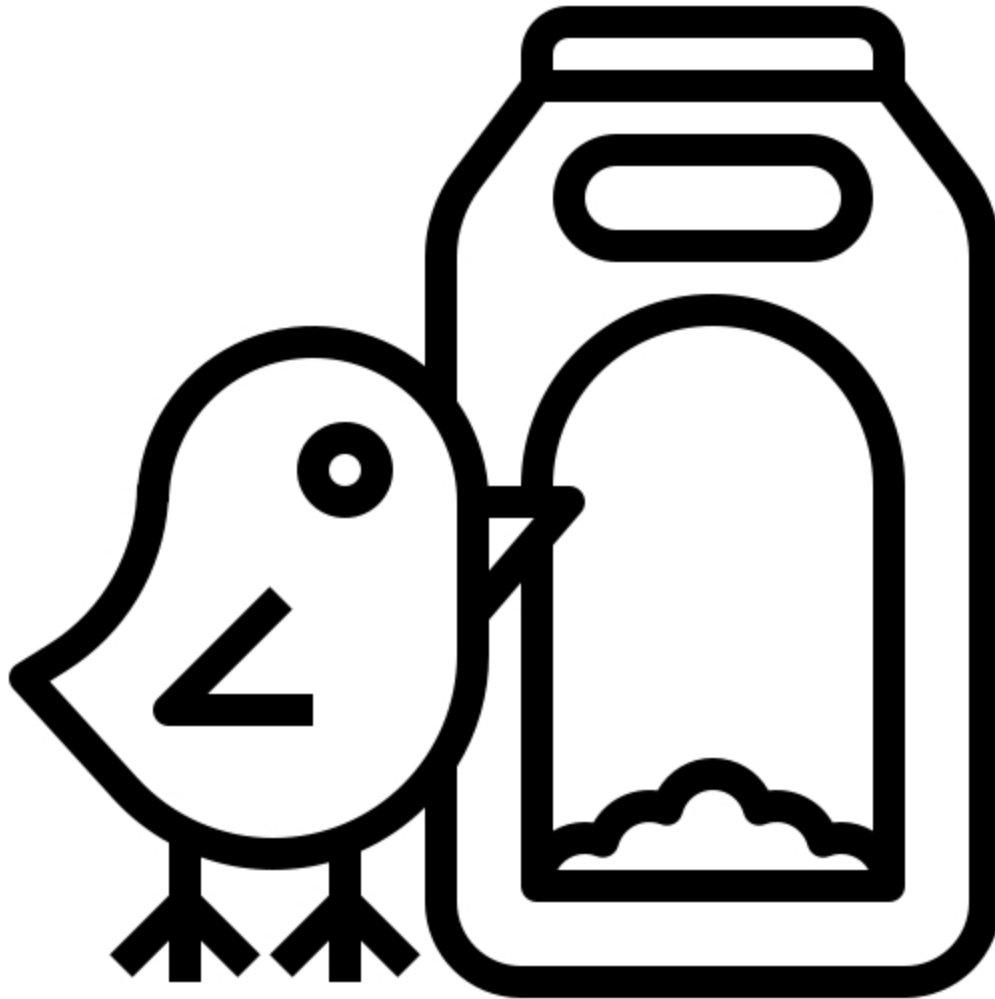
She agreed to do the editing job by next week. And don't worry! She'll let you know if there's something wrong with it **in any case**.



The shop assistant made it clear that, **in any case**, the shop would be stocked every single day. There's no need to buy all this extra cooking oil, Tim!

51. Is it just me or...?

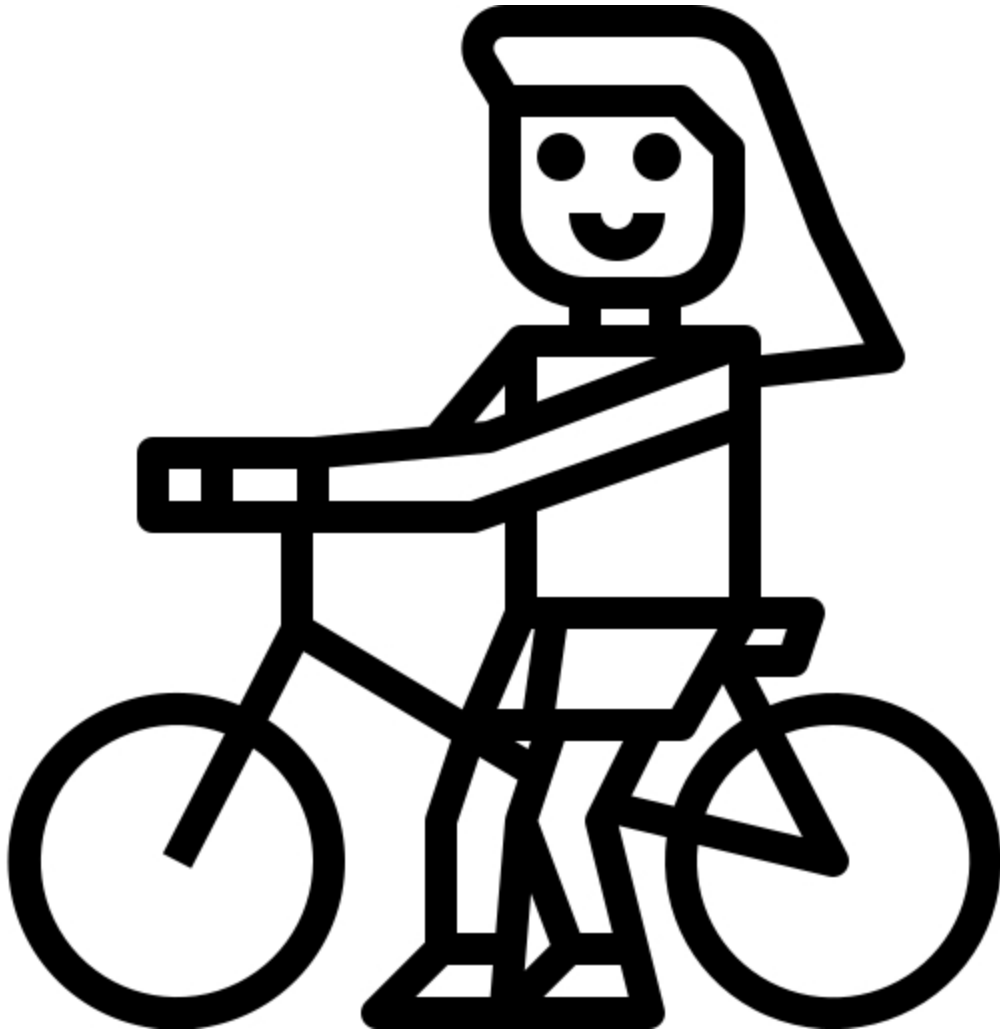
~ Is it in my imagination or...? ~



Mum, **is it just me or** did Dad just walk outside in your dressing gown and slippers in the snow to fill the bird feeder?



Is it just me or did you guys notice how the professor got all flustered and spelt his own name wrong when the librarian walked into the room?

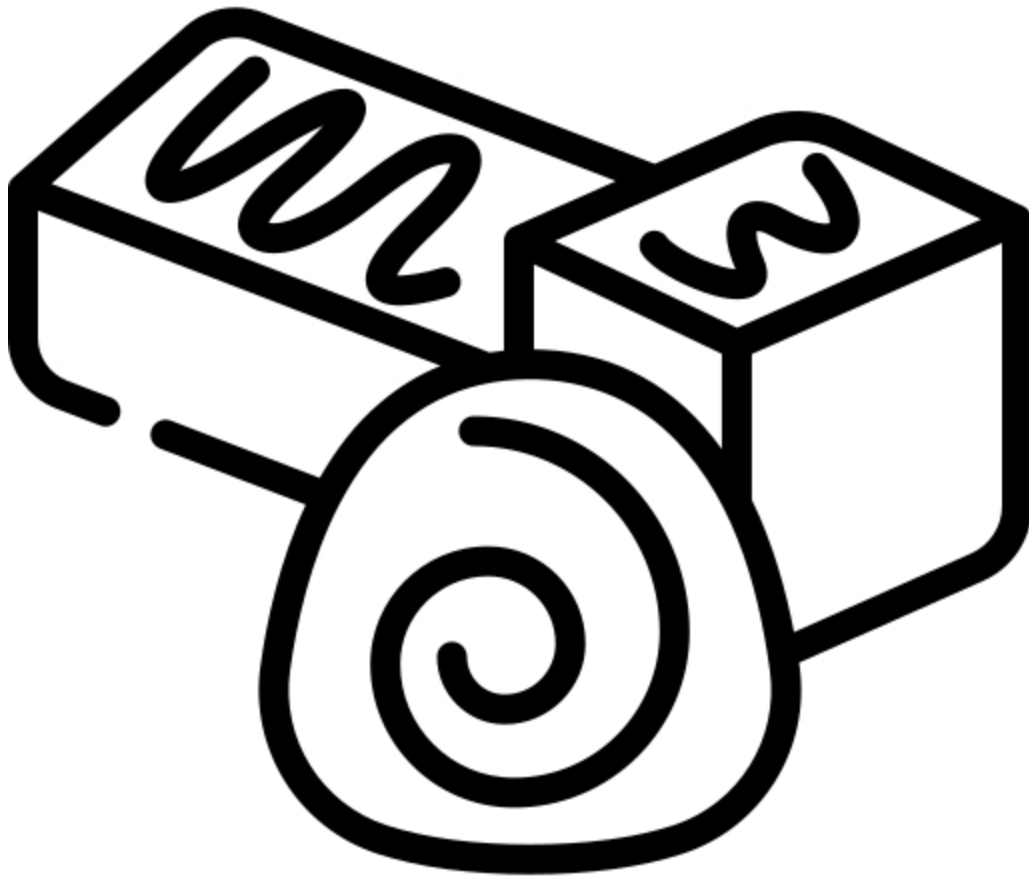


A: **Is it just me or** did that car nearly hit that kid on the bicycle as it came round the corner?

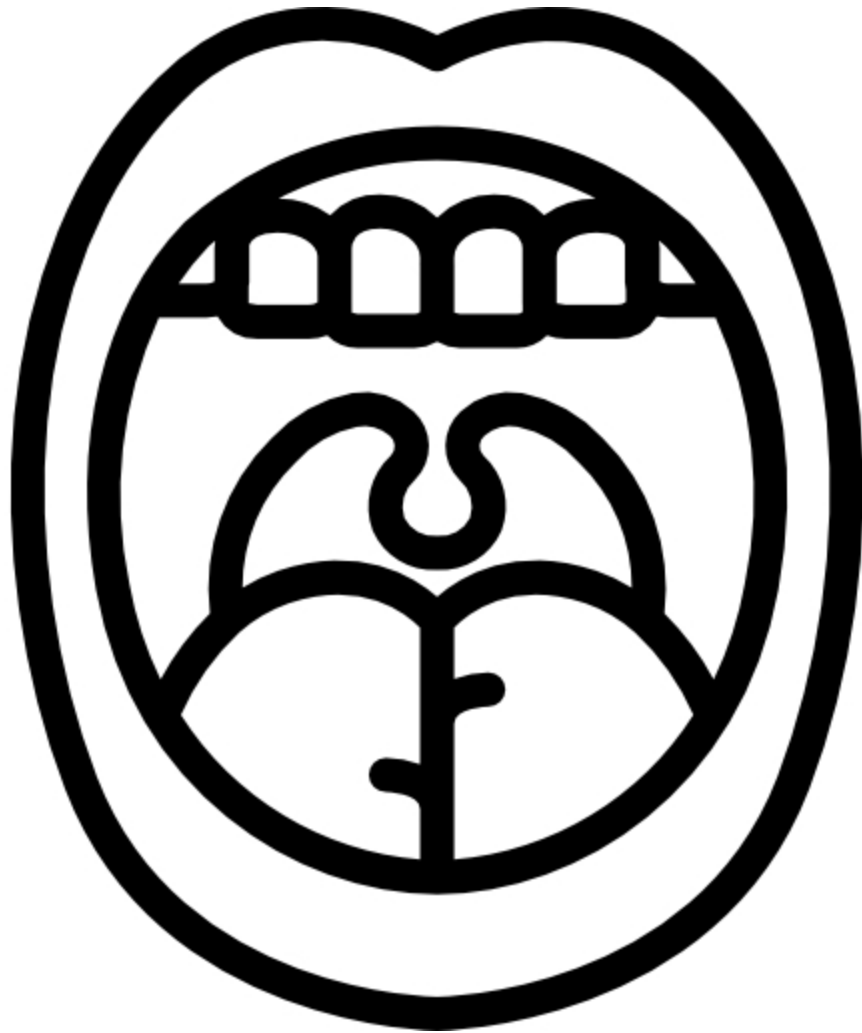
B: I saw it too. I don't know how the bike swerved in time.

52. It must've been...

~ I suspect so, but I could be wrong ~



My chocolates disappeared. **It must've been** a ghost because my roommate said the brown stuff around his mouth was barbecue sauce.



A: Tamara's Twitter account was banned yesterday. Do you know why that might be?

B: **It must've been** something she said. She's got a big mouth.

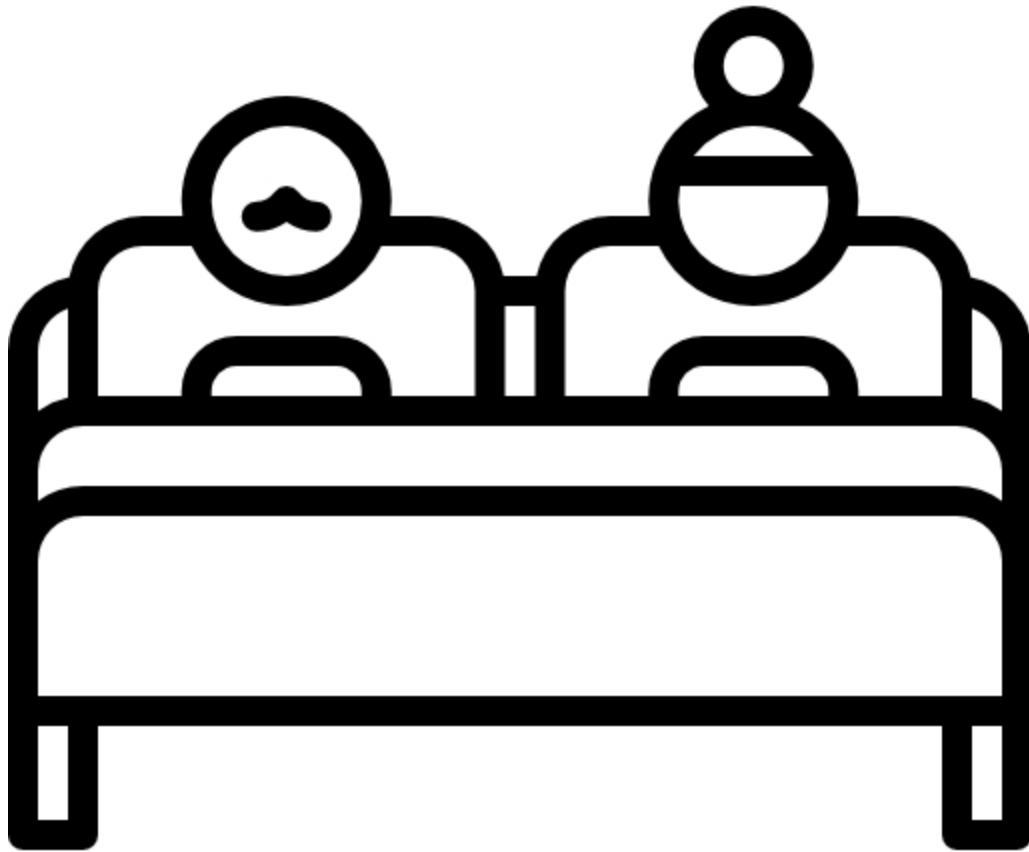


A: Babe, we saw *Lord of the Rings* at the cinema, don't you remember?

B: You didn't see it with me. **It must've been** with your "other" boyfriend.

53. It wouldn't be right...

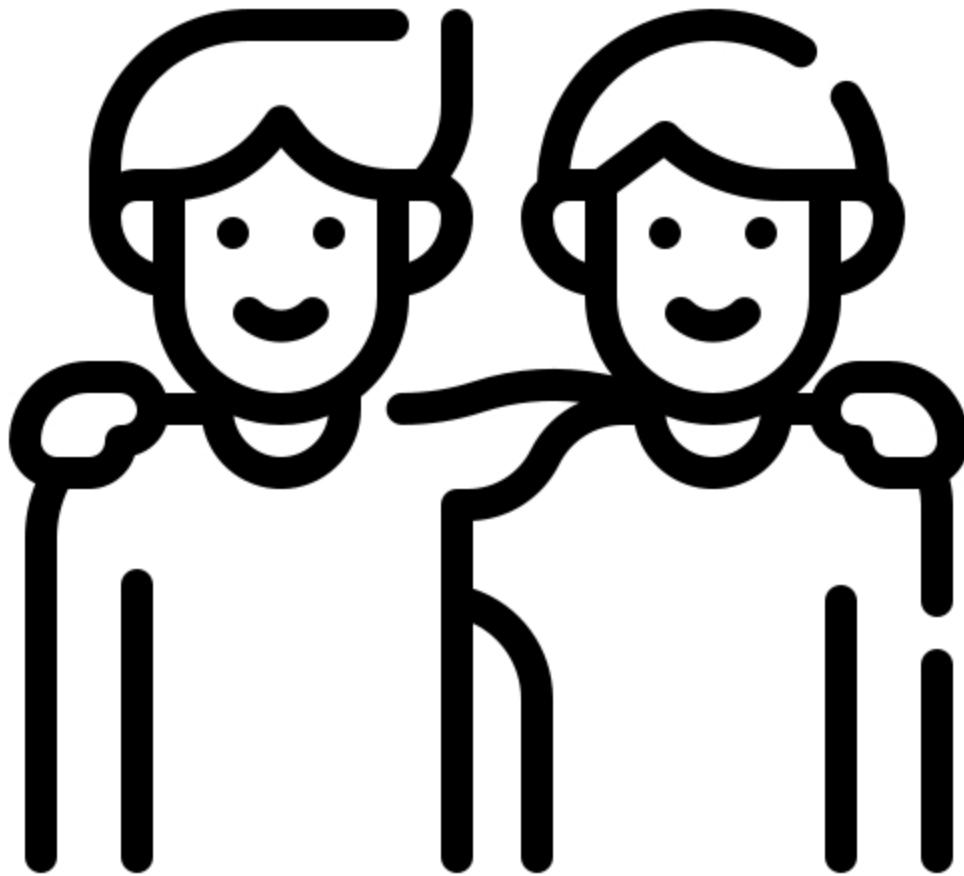
~ I don't think it's a good idea ~



I should tell Jim his wife is cheating on him. **It wouldn't be right** not to tell him. After all, he is my brother.



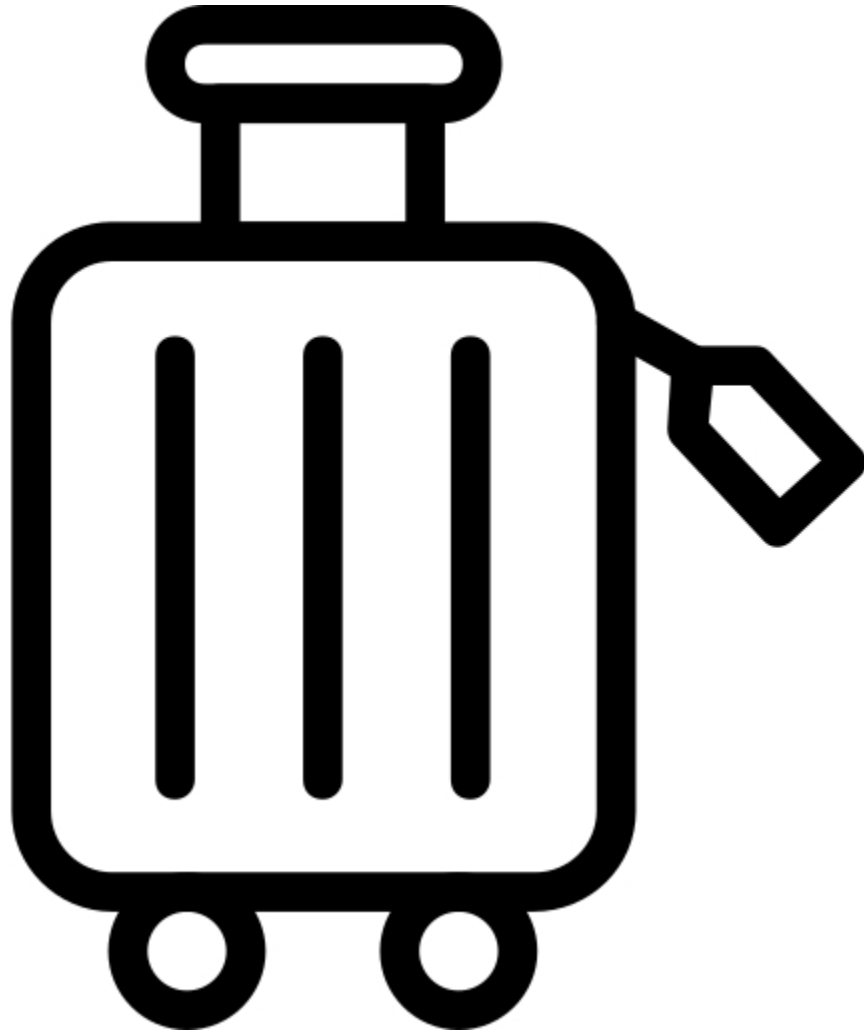
Kay, **it wouldn't be right** to leave a bad review on your friend's book just because you don't like him. Don't you think that'll make you seem rather petty?



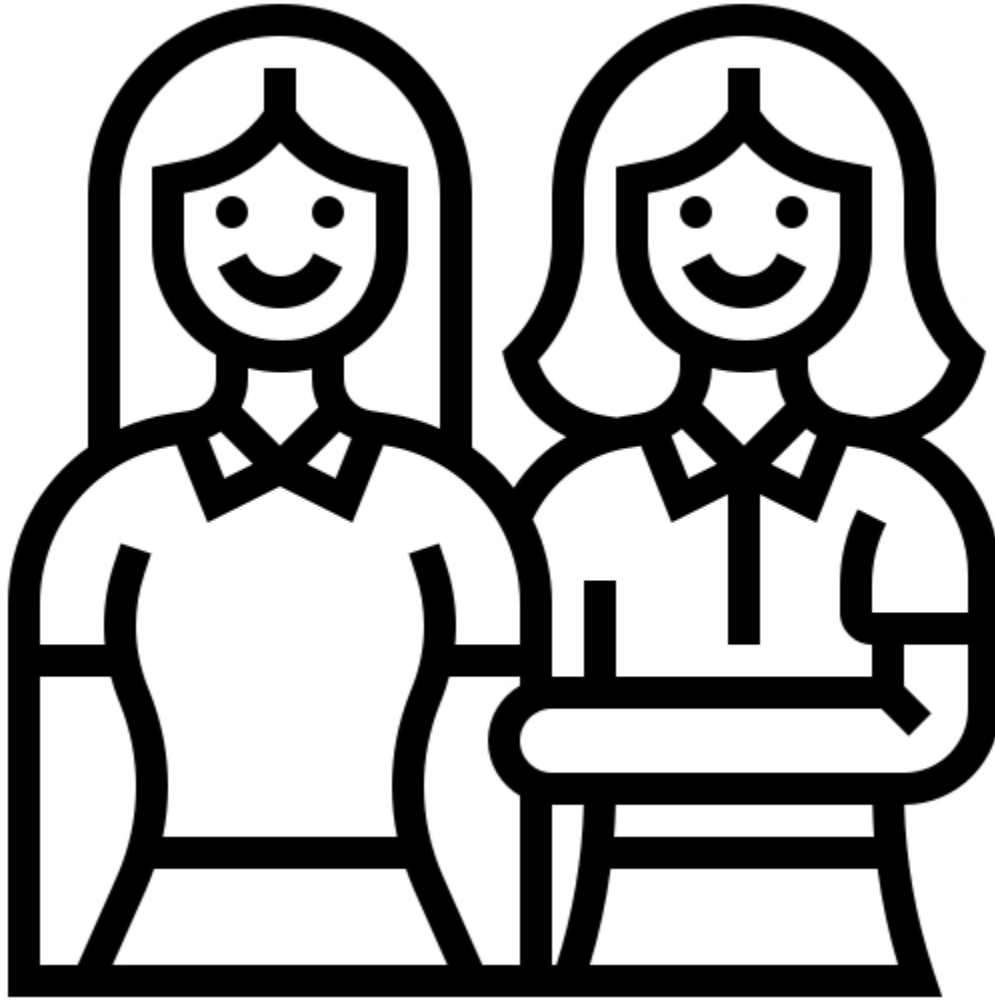
It wouldn't be right for me to hire you to work at my company just because you're my friend. I think things might get pretty awkward should we have a disagreement.

54. It'd be crazy...

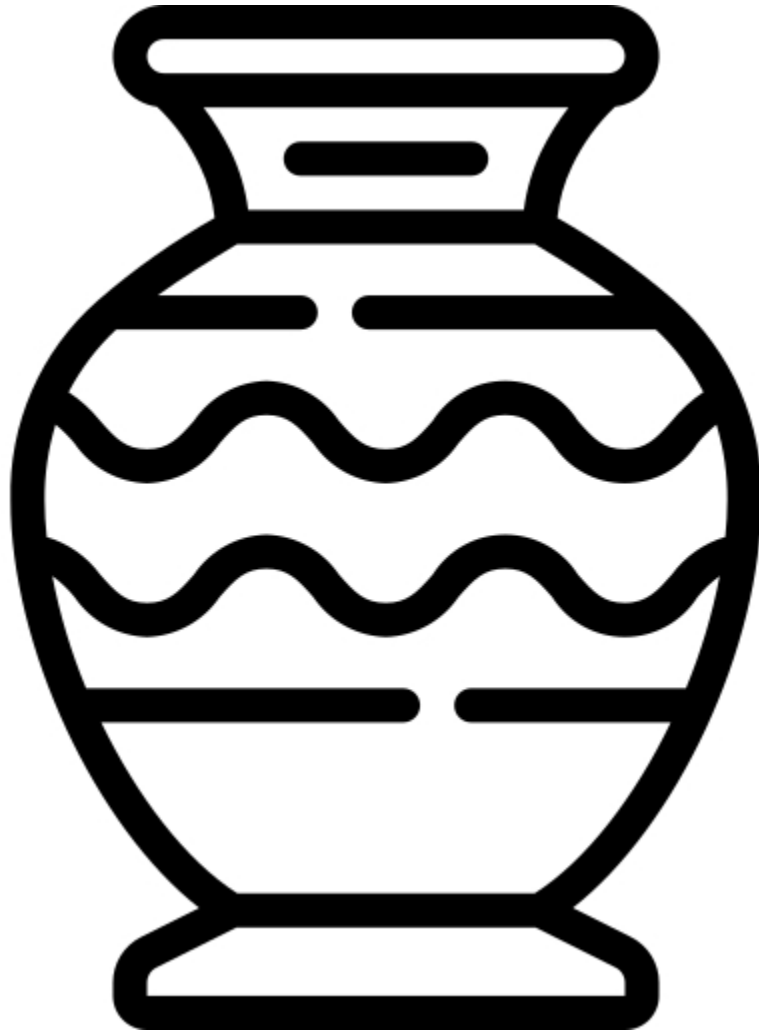
~ Literal meaning (emphasis) ~



It'd be crazy to think you could fit all those clothes and shoes in one suitcase — we're only going away for three days.



I'm surprised Lucy wanted to come to Sara's party tonight, but **it'd be crazy** if they ended up being best friends again after what happened last time.

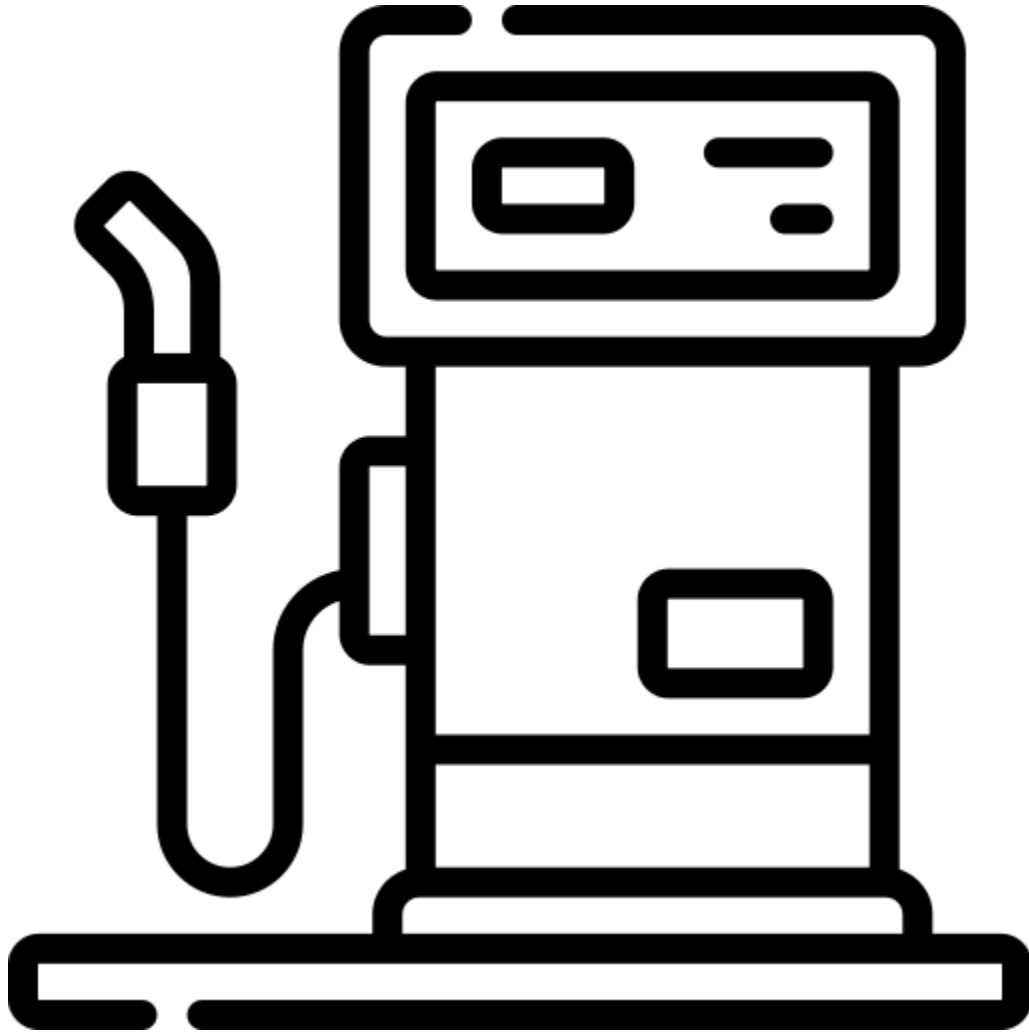


A: I think Emma got engaged last week.

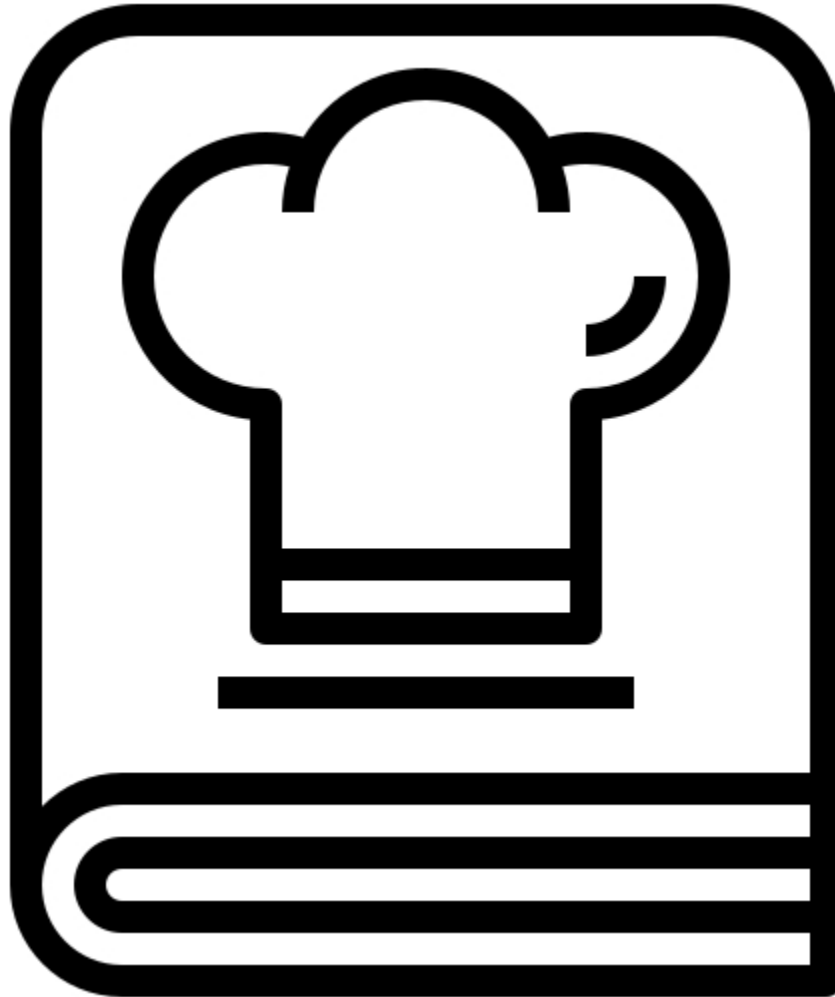
B: **It'd be crazy** if it turns out she's marrying that guy who broke her mum's antique vase the first time he met her.

55. It's a good thing...

~ It's lucky that it happened ~



I think **it's a good thing** that Chevy trucks reworked their gas mileage. The price of fuel is so expensive lately that having a more efficient car is a must!



My grandmother used to tell me that **it's a good thing** she wrote down all of her recipes because now she can't quite remember how much flour goes in her famous chocolate cakes.



A: I can't believe that I forgot my tickets for the concert at home!

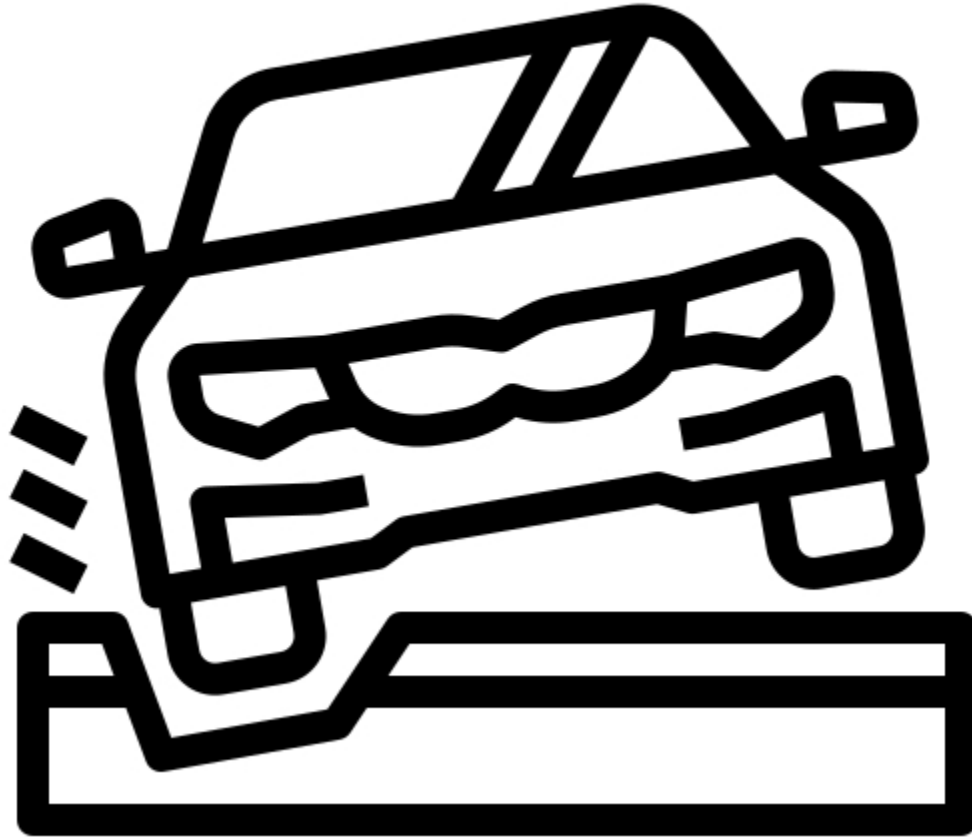
B: **It's a good thing** I took a screenshot of both our tickets weeks ago in case something happened!

56. It's no wonder that...

~ It's not surprising ~



It's no wonder that she left her job — the pay was terrible, she was expected to work every weekend, and her boss kept all the tips.



It's no wonder that you ruined your tyres — the potholes on that road are deep enough to swim in, after all that bad weather we had last week.

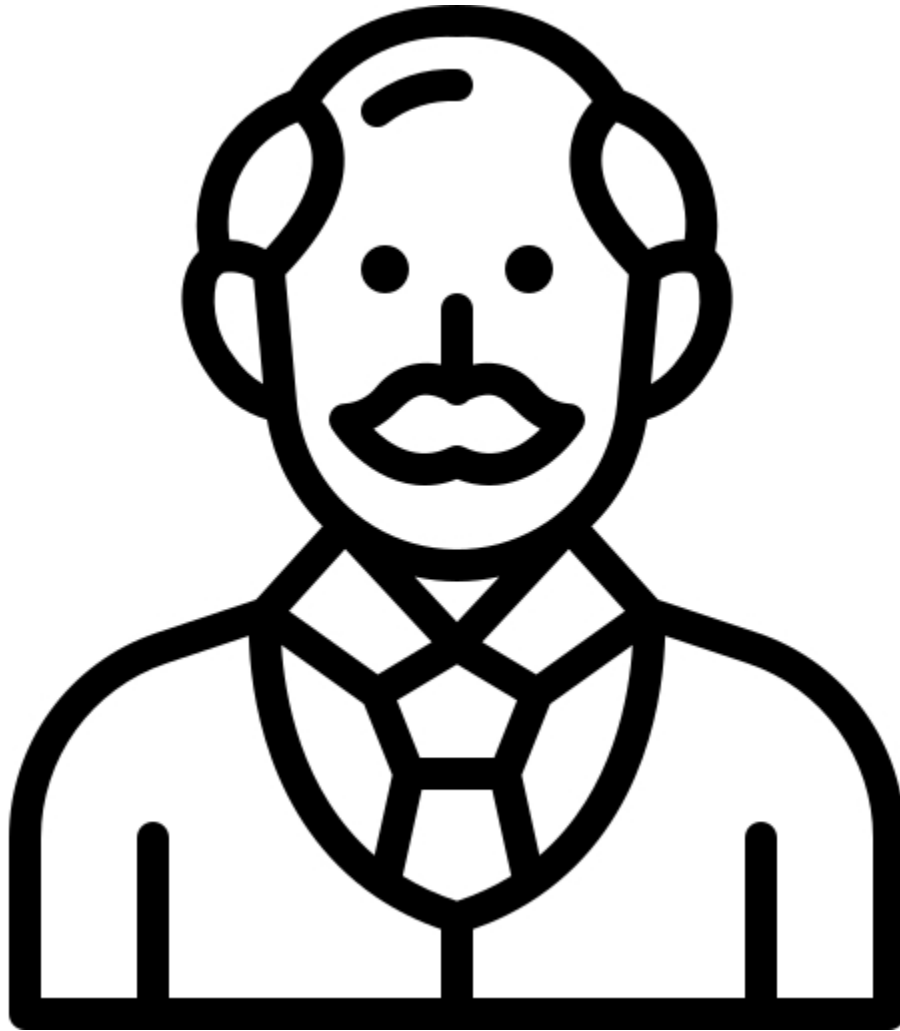


A: Your dad can't fit into his wedding suit anymore.

B: **It's no wonder that** he can't, Mum, you've been married thirty years and you've been feeding him cake ever since.

57. It's not so much that... / it's (just) that...

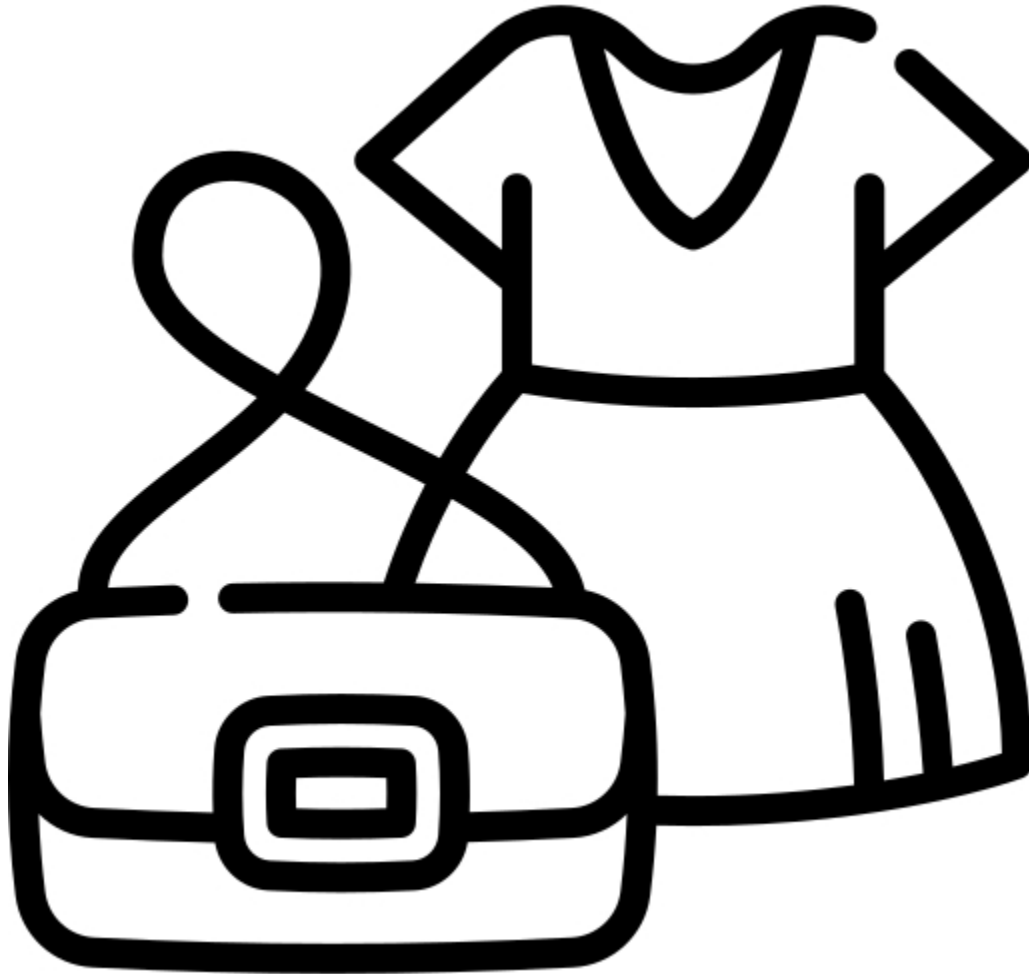
~ Clarification ~



It's not so much that I hated school, **it's just that** I always seemed to trip over or drop something every time the headmaster walked past.



In winter, **it's not so much that** I don't like going outside, **it's just that** I prefer to be inside, wrapped up in a blanket, with a mug of hot chocolate.



A: Do you like this outfit? I was going to wear it next week to the party.

B: **It's not so much that** I don't like it, **it's just that** I think it would look better on me.

58. It's too bad that...

~ It's unfortunate ~



It's too bad that the weather turned cloudy this evening. It would have been so romantic to watch the meteor shower together.



It's too bad that the farmer's market was out of potatoes because I'd planned on making my famous mashed potatoes for dinner.



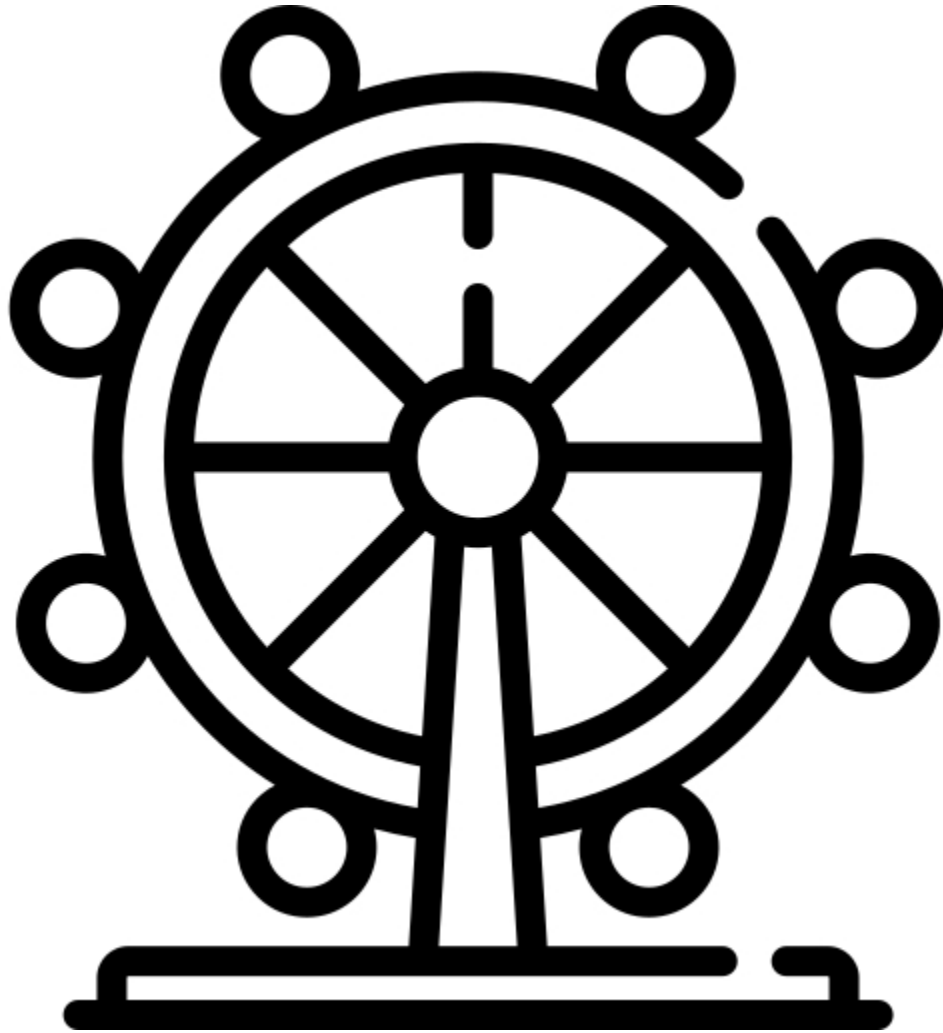
When I was told I couldn't get into the dance club tonight, I pleaded with the bouncer. All he said was that **it's too bad that** I wasn't here twenty minutes earlier.

59. It's too... a/an...

~ Literal meaning ~



Kay told me not to invest in tulips. She says **it's too big a risk** at the moment. I disagree with her. Tulips are just so beautiful. Everyone loves them.



Don't go on the London Eye. **It's too** high a price for a 30-minute rotation. For not much more, you can spend as much time as you want at the top of The Shard.



I'd like to be a politician when I grow up, mum. I think it's a great way to make an impact in the world. **Is it too complicated a job?** Are you okay, mum?

60. I've been meaning to...

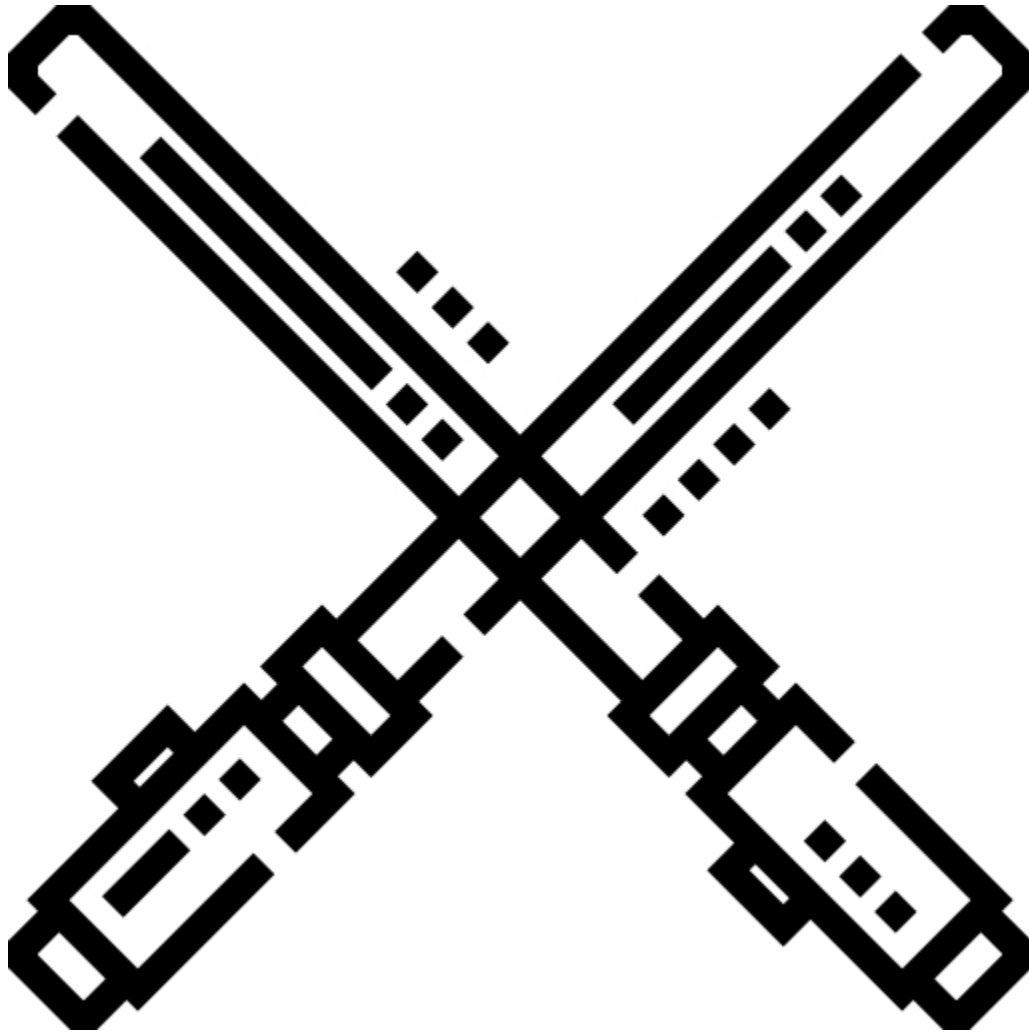
~ I wanted to do it for a while ~



Hey Linda, **I've been meaning to** text you, but my mind has been like a sieve lately. Anyway, how are you?



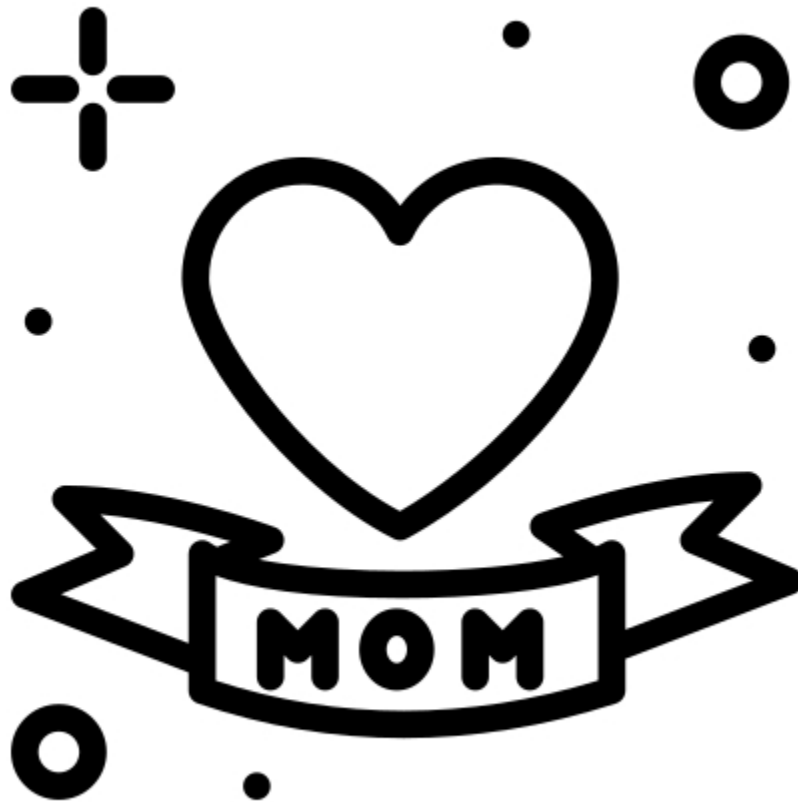
Listen, **I've been meaning to** ask you something since I met your family the other day. Are you adopted?



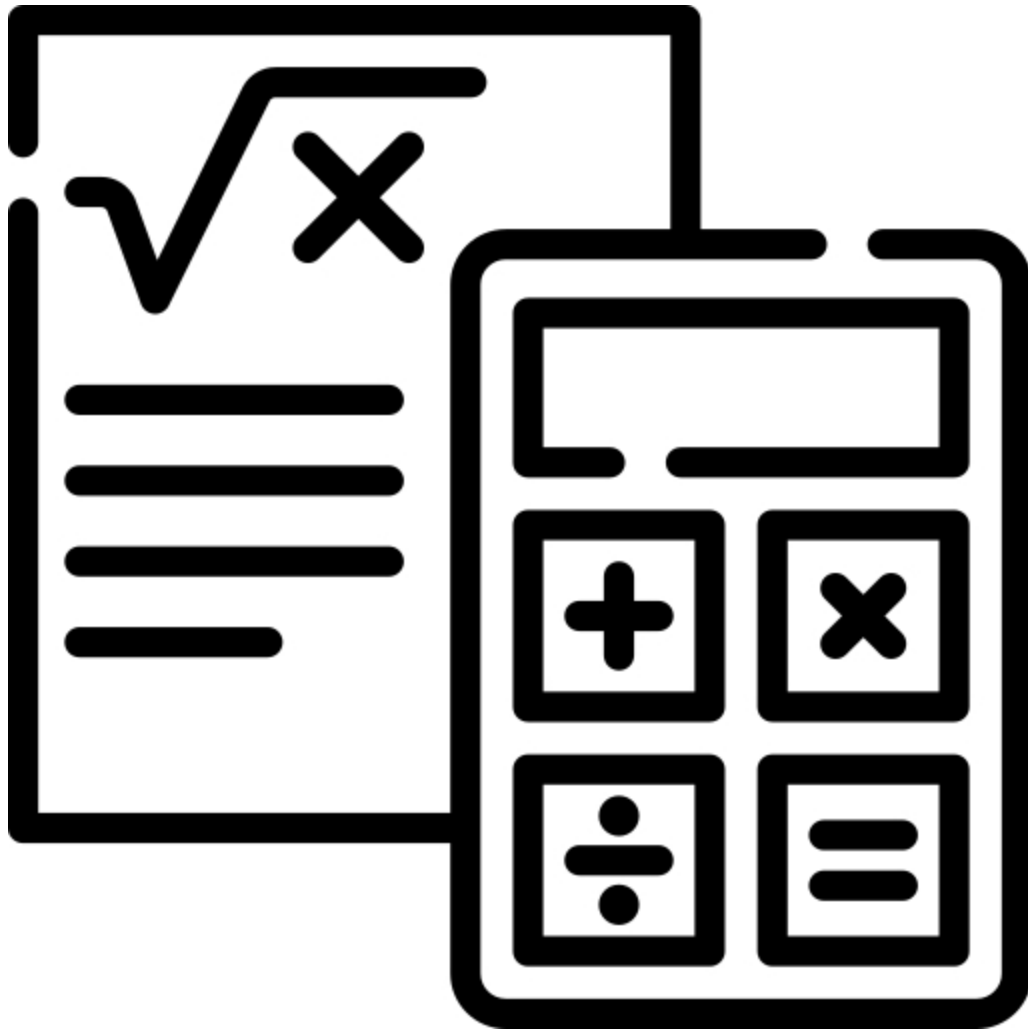
I've been meaning to tell you this for a long time, Luke. I am your father. Just kidding, everyone knows your father in Saint Nic.

61. I've been trying to...

~ It started in the past and has continued until now ~



I've been trying to find a way to tell the cashier at the grocery store that I love her tattoos, but I can't think of a way to bring it up that doesn't sound creepy!



I've been trying to figure out this math problem for hours, and you sat down and solved the whole thing in under fifteen minutes! I knew I should have studied harder in my calculus class.



A: **I've been trying to** think of a way to tell her that there's a piece of broccoli stuck in her teeth.

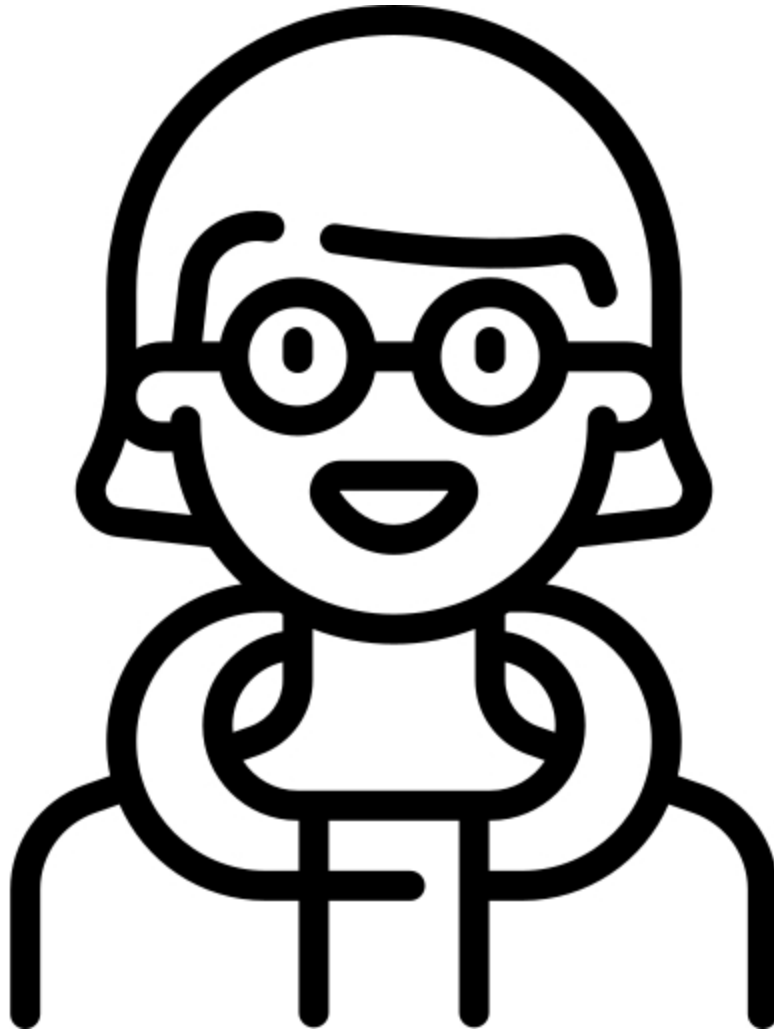
B: The best thing you can do is just tell her. It will be so embarrassing if she gives her presentation with that green blob wedged between her teeth!

62. Just like that

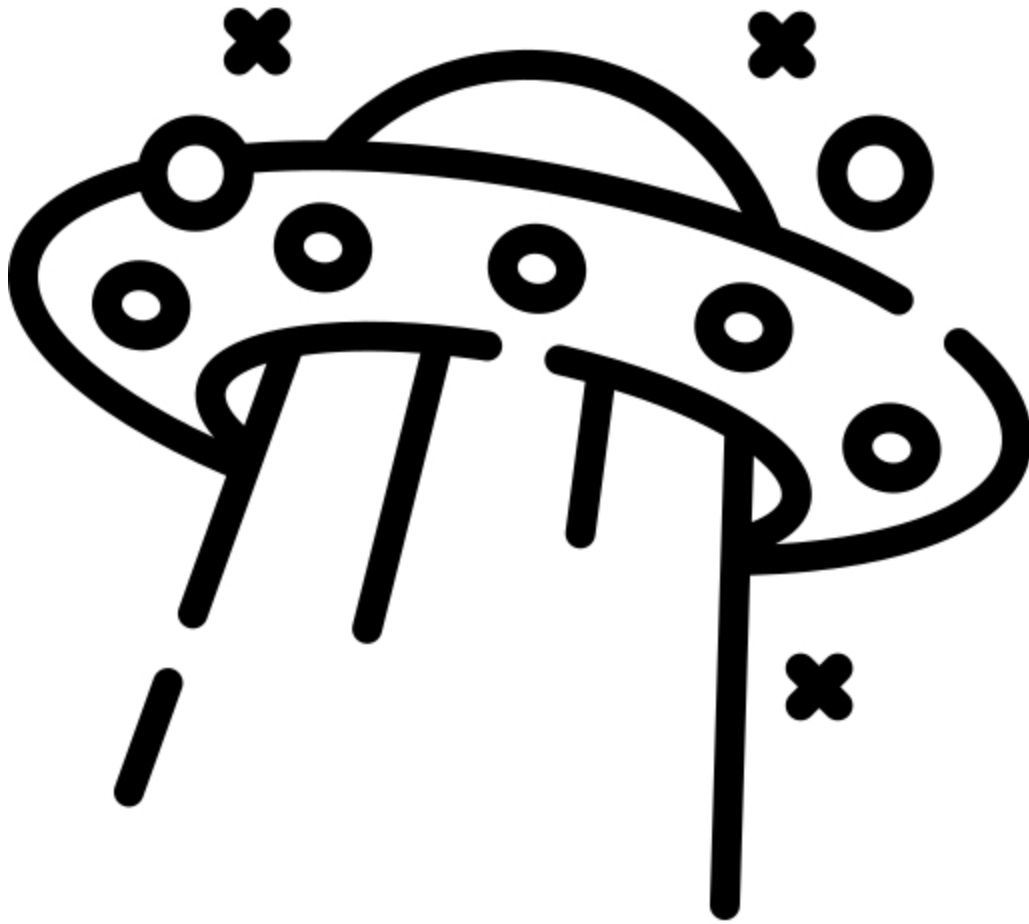
~ Suddenly ~



One baby started crying at playgroup, and **just like that**, the rest of them joined in one by one, until they were all bawling their heads off.



It feels like only yesterday that my youngest daughter was a baby, and **just like that**, she's now a teenager listening to Kanye West and dyeing her hair blonde.



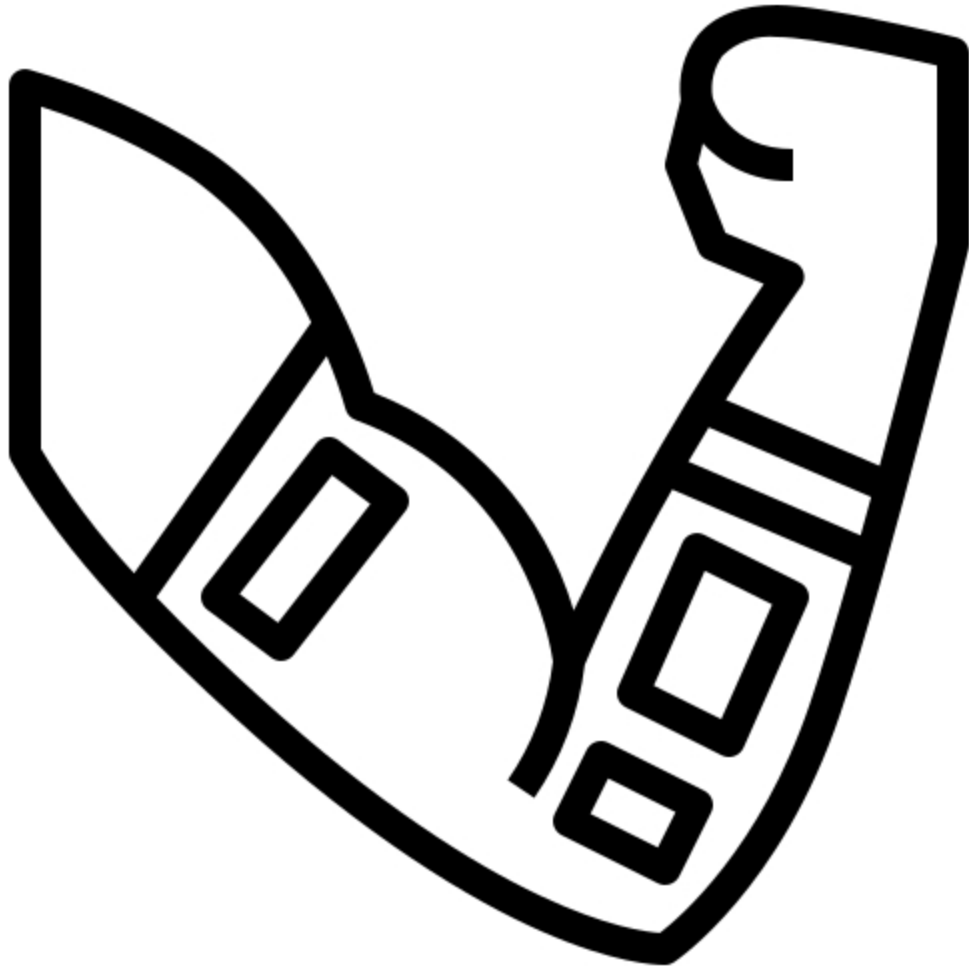
The movie was good, but one minute they were trying to escape the aliens that were taking over the world, and then **just like that**, they were all gone.

63. Like it or not

~ Short for “whether you like it or not” ~



Oi! Put that controller down right now, son. You're coming with us to visit your grandmother **like it or not**. And I don't want to see any faces!



Life will always throw challenges our way, but, **like it or not**, sometimes the best way to overcome them is to roll up our sleeves and slog through them.



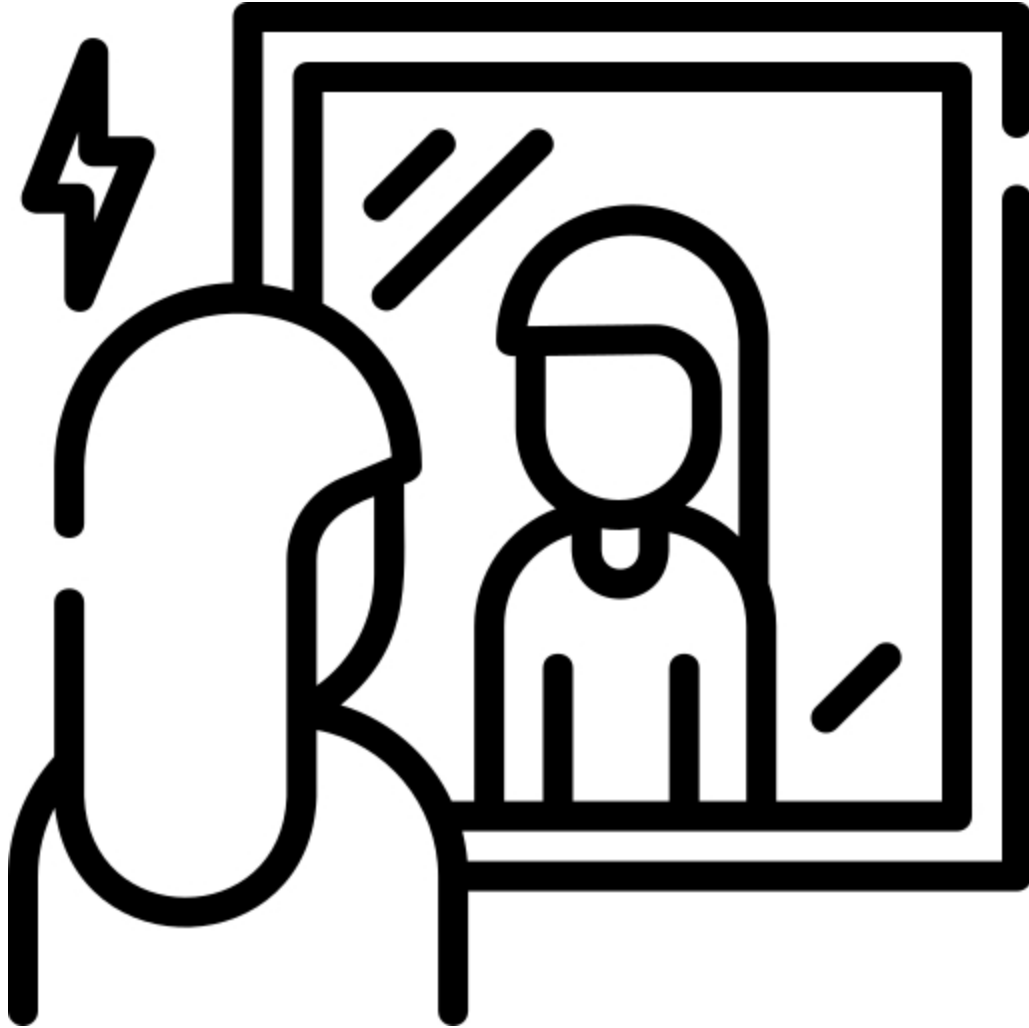
Like it or not, sometimes you have to work with people who aren't your favourite. Just remember that you don't have to be best friends with them, but you do need to be civil.

64. No matter how...

~ Regardless of... ~



Please call me when you get home tonight, **no matter how** late it is; I'll worry all night if I don't hear from you.



I can't be bothered to buy clothes anymore. **No matter how** much I spend on fashion, I always seem to look the same!



No matter how many times I watch *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, I can't help smiling at the scene when they take off their masks and kiss.

65. Nothing but...

~ Only (emphasis) ~



In the worst moments of my life, my partner has been **nothing but** supportive. I cannot say how grateful I am for her support.



I hope Trish will overcome her terrible illness. I wish her **nothing but** the best. Once she recovers we should have her over for tea and biscuits. I think she'd like that.

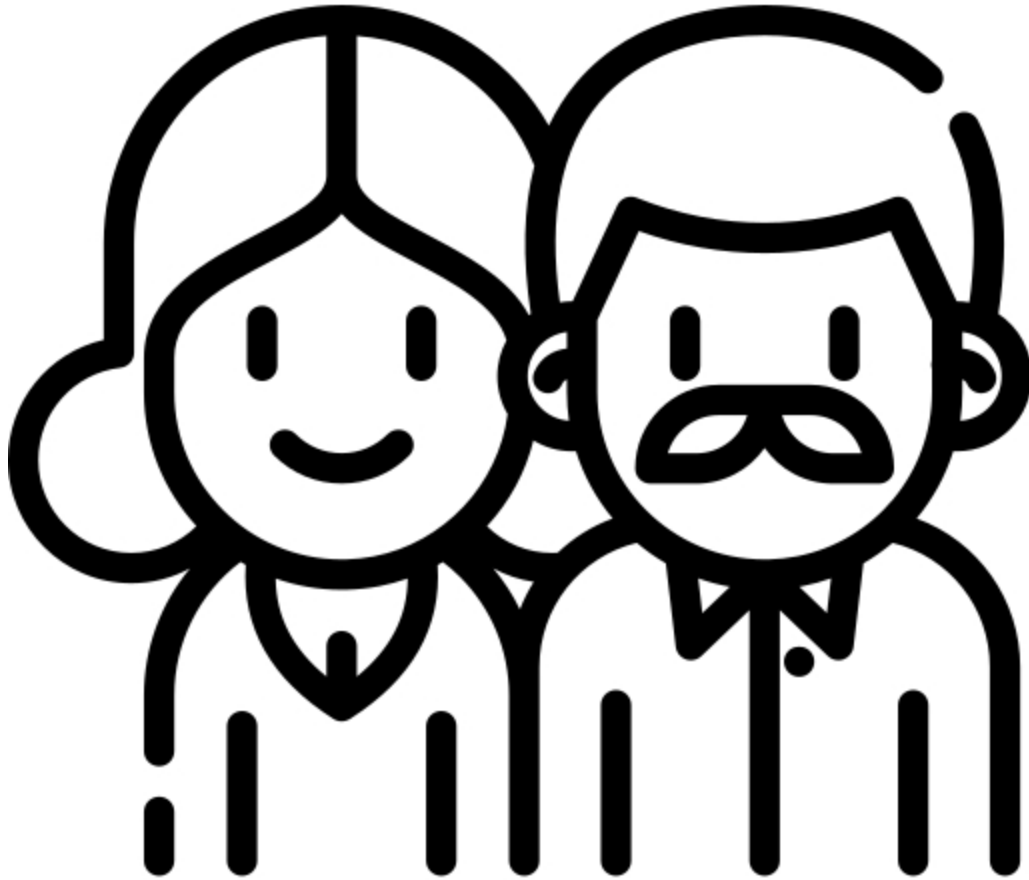


A: Did you just say Monina Orangina is coming to town!? You're not putting me on, are you?

B: Definitely not! It's the truth and **nothing but** the truth!

66. Shouldn't you...?

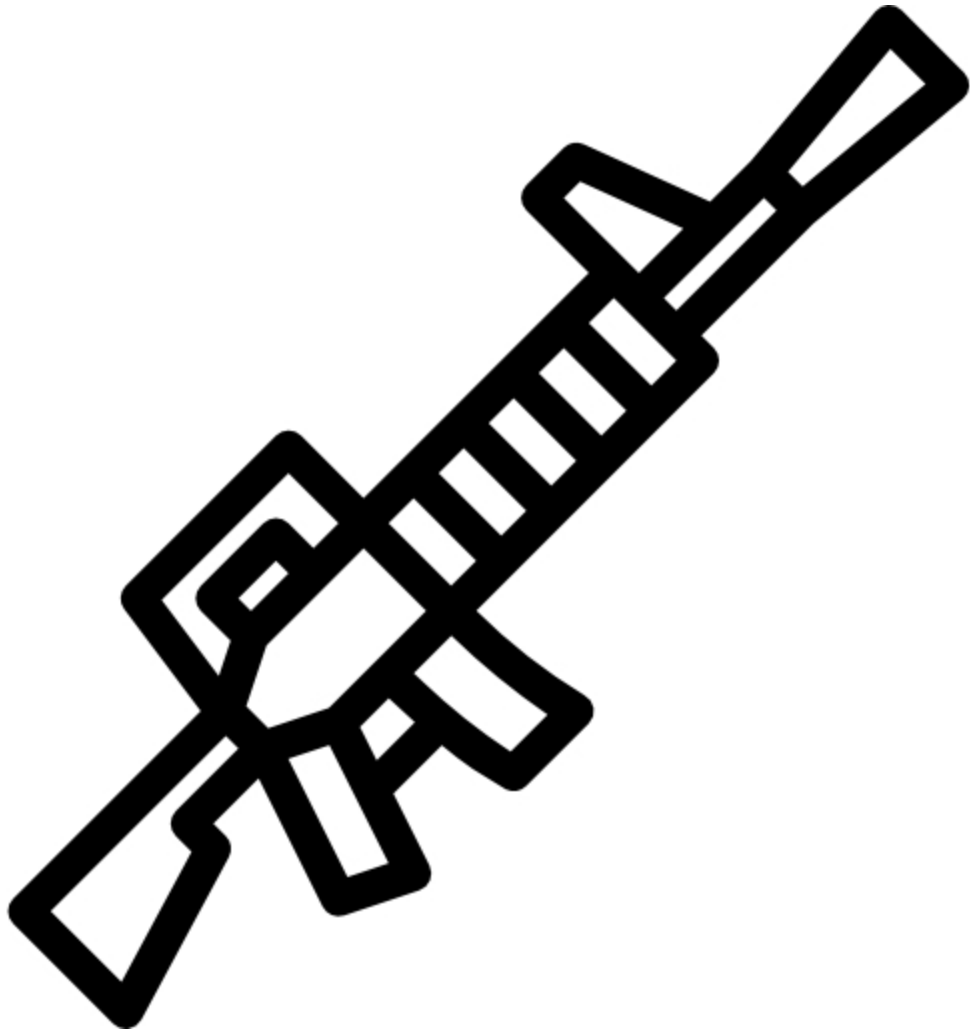
~ I think you should, don't you agree? ~



You never listen to your parents! **Shouldn't you** at least consider their advice? They have more life experience than you do.



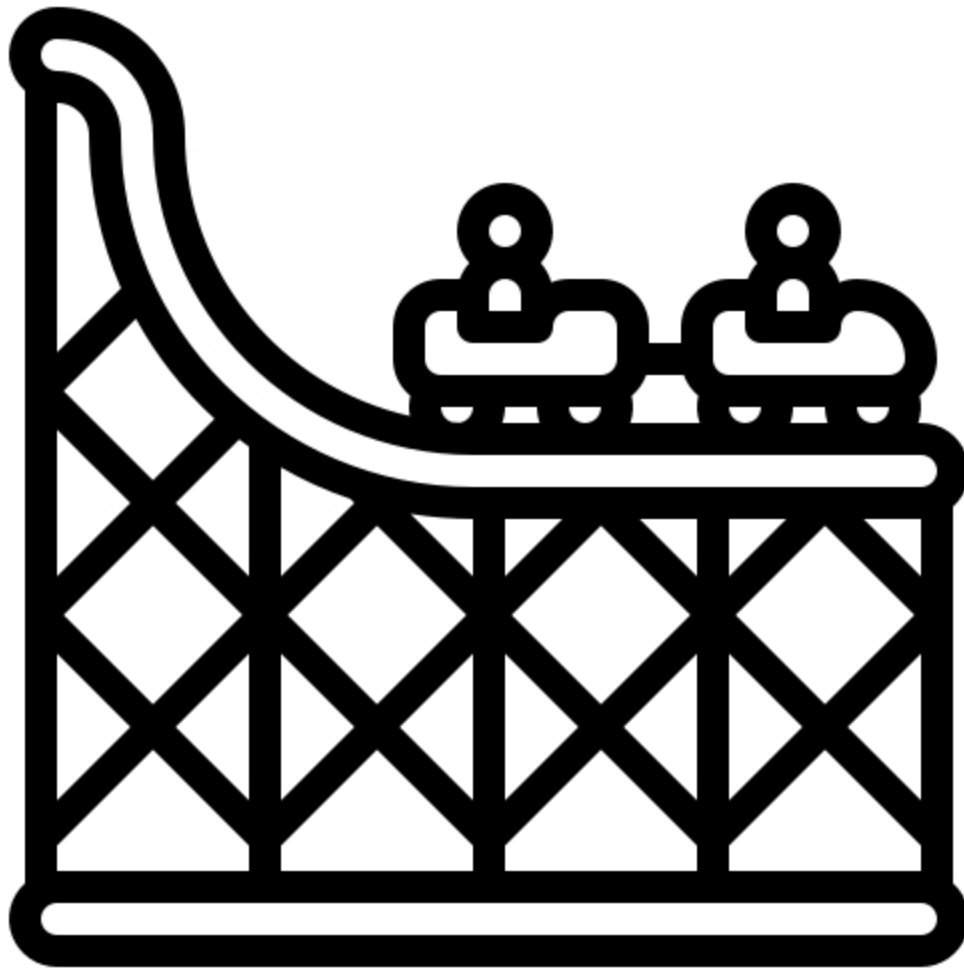
Shouldn't you prioritise your own needs over those of others? If not, you might end up suffering. That's what my dad says anyway.



Joanne, **shouldn't you** be studying Spanish instead of playing *Fornite*?
I don't want to put up with your crying when you fail the exam.

67. So to speak

~ In a way ~



I'm never going on a 6-flag roller coaster ride again! Last time was a horror! I looked death in the face, **so to speak**.



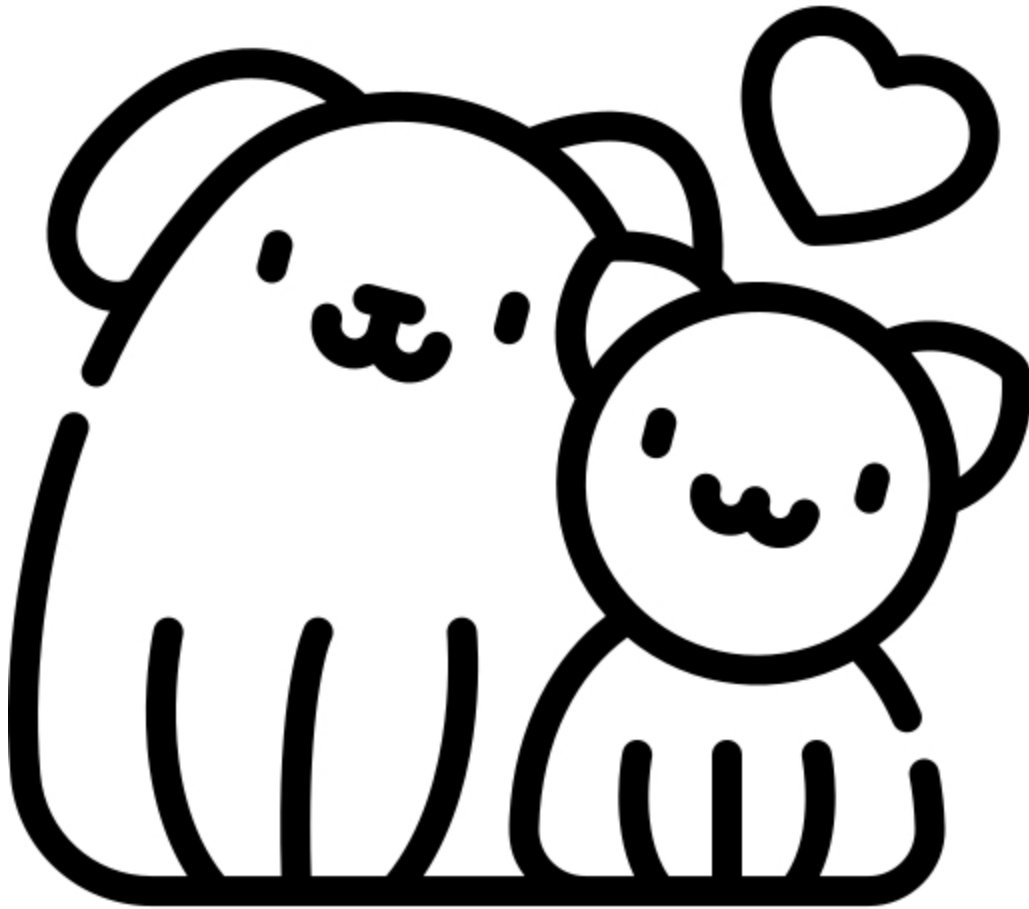
The house across the road from where I live is a bungalow **so to speak**, even though it has stairs leading up to a massive attic.



The book I'm reading is an epistolary **so to speak**, even though all the correspondence is written as emails and text messages rather than letters.

68. The most / least likely...

~ Most probable / Least probable ~

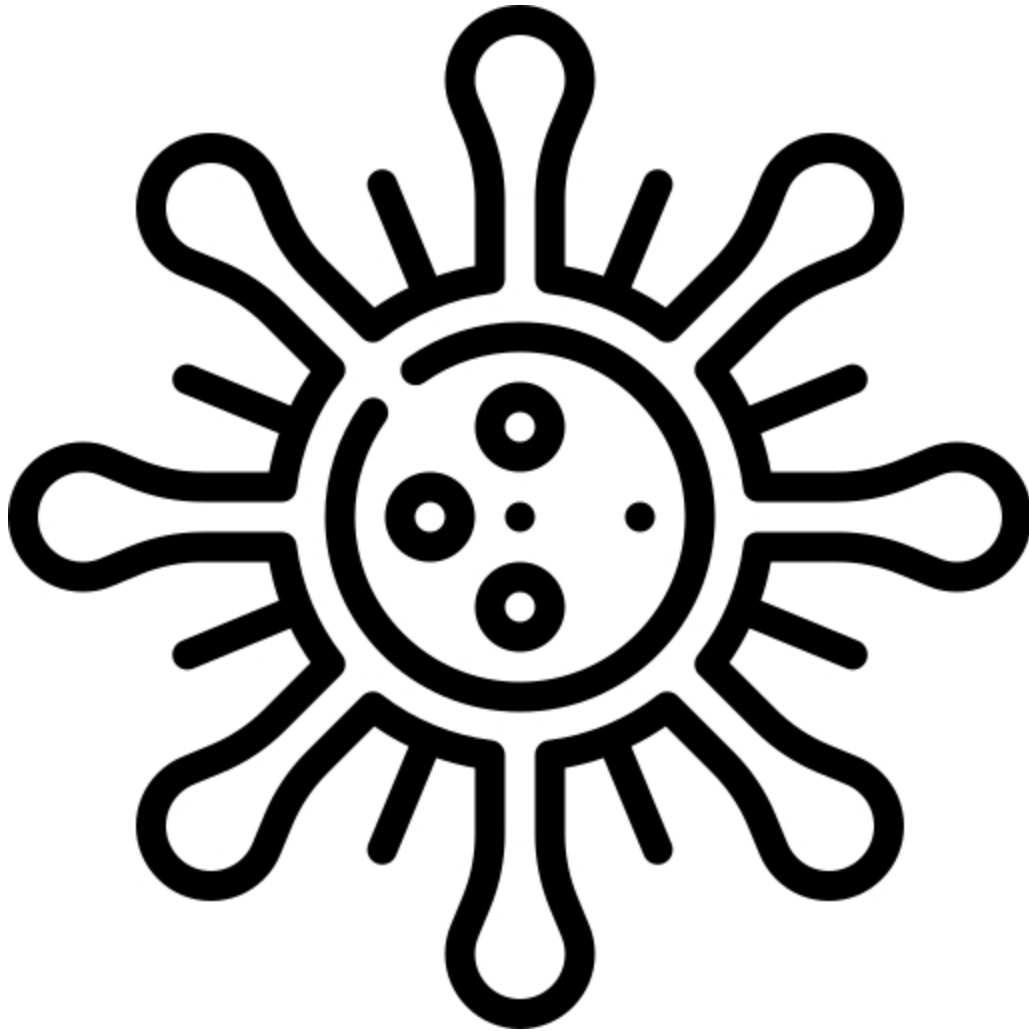


I love dogs and I agree that **the most likely** cause of a dog killing a person is poor training. What do you think?

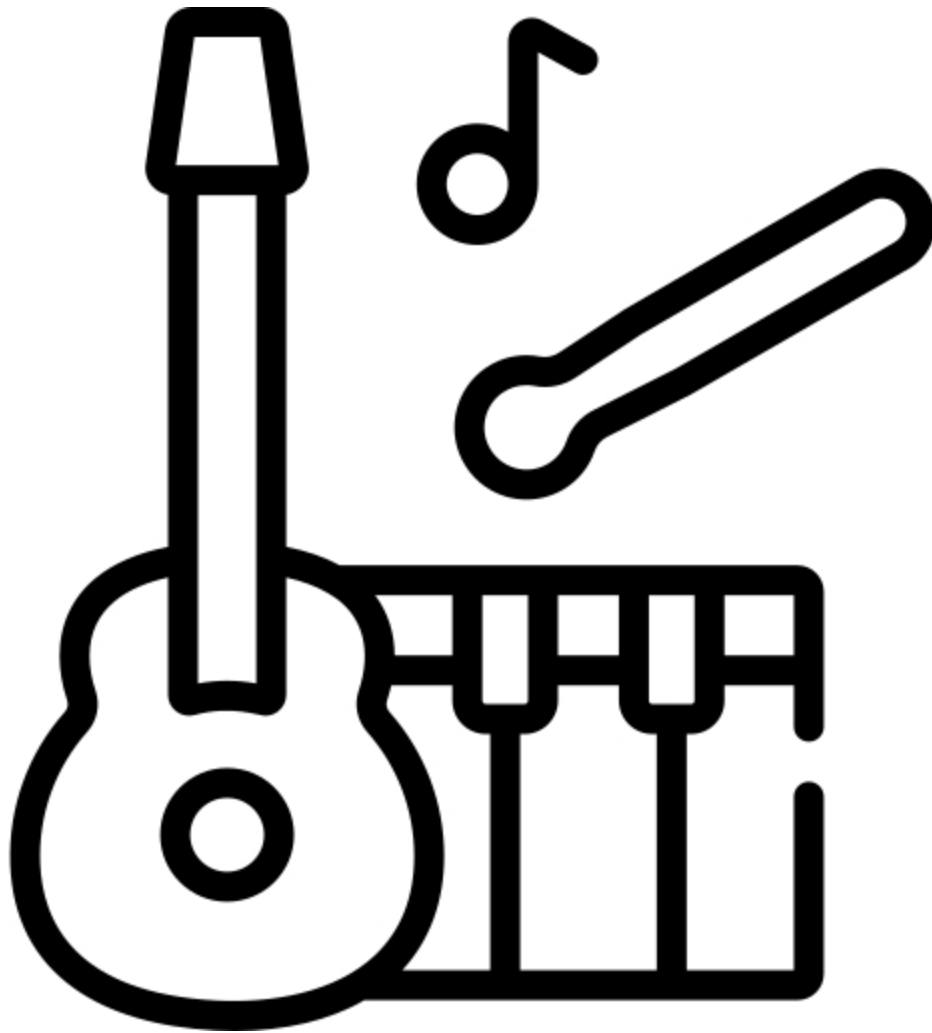


A: Mrs Johnson, why has my daughter failed all her subjects?

B: I think **the most likely** explanation is that you're not doing your parenting job very well.



Gavin said yesterday that HIV in North America is one of **the least likely** STIs to catch. Do you think he's right?



You know they're not very musically talented. That they will get a grant to go to music school in the summer is **the least likely** option ever!

69. The one thing that...

~ More emphasis than "the thing" ~



I was asked about **the one thing that** I'd want to do on vacation. I immediately answered that I was most interested in the zip line that carried visitors out over the canyon.



I was warned that the dog at the shelter was a potential risk. **The one thing that** triggered the poor animal was loud noises; however, after just a few weeks with me, he acted like a sweet puppy again.



The one thing that I'll never forget about my father is how he smelled. He always smelled of coffee and petrol because he worked in an auto shop. Those are still probably my two most favourite smells in the world.

70. The second I...

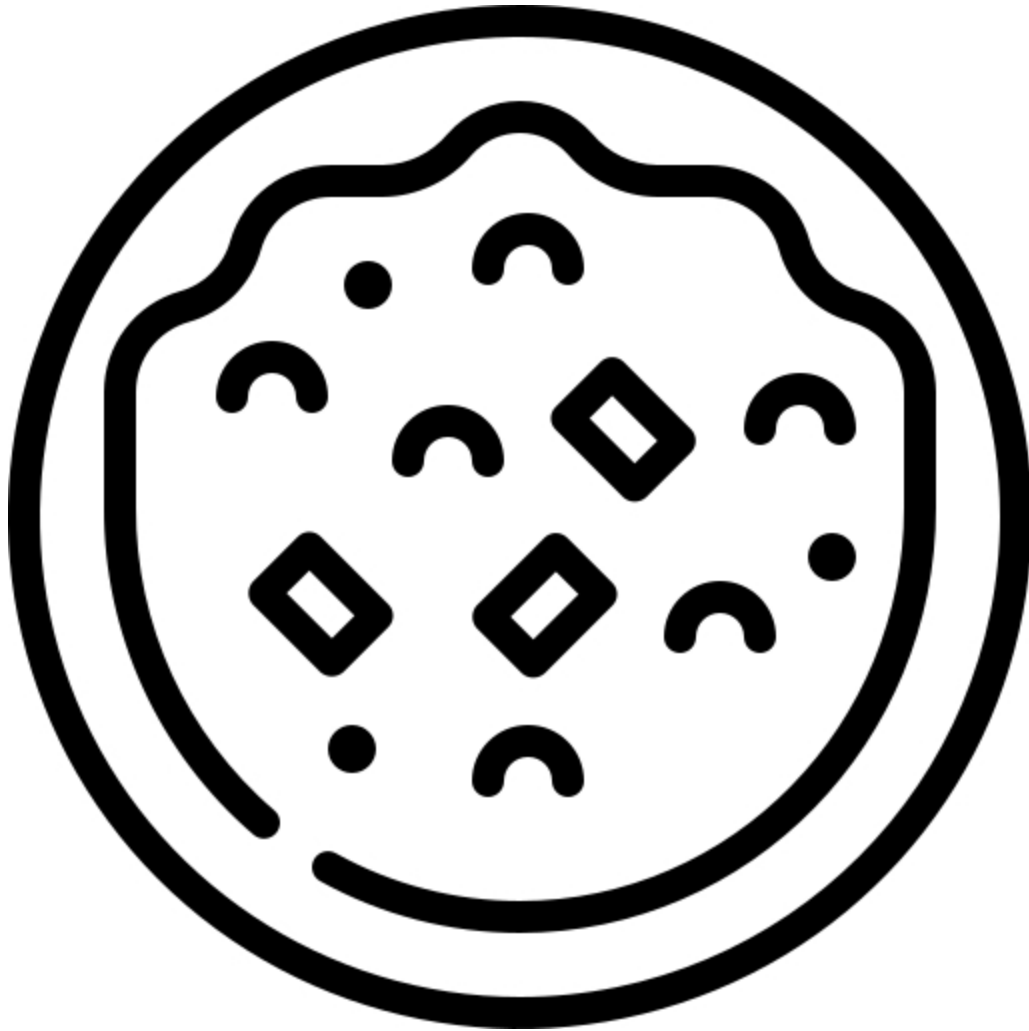
~ As soon as ~



My girlfriend cried **the second I** told her I was taking her to Paris, and now I'm starting to think that she's expecting me to propose to her.



Every morning, my phone rings **the second** I take my coat off and before I've even made a coffee – don't they know I'm no good without caffeine?



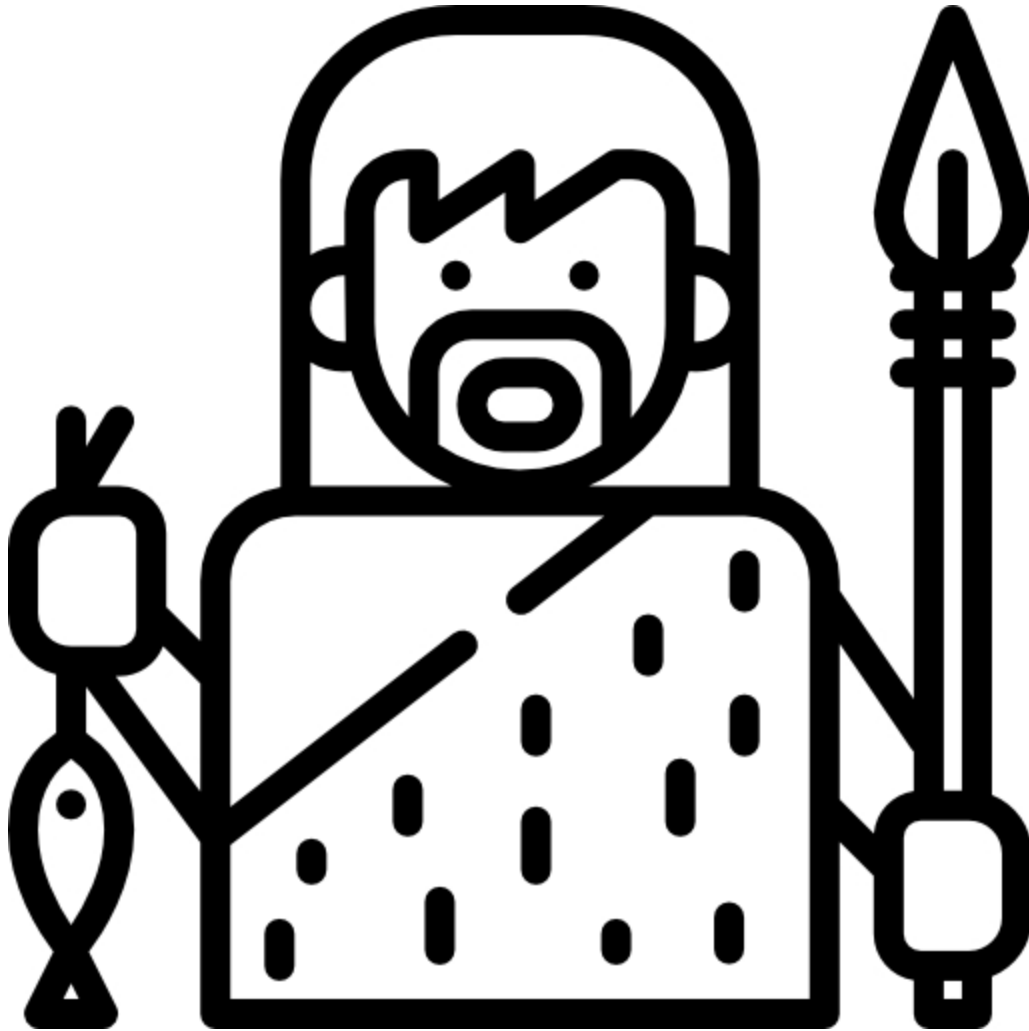
The second I opened my eyes, Ben surprised me with flowers and breakfast in bed. The scrambled eggs were a bit overcooked, but I didn't tell him.

71. There's no point in...

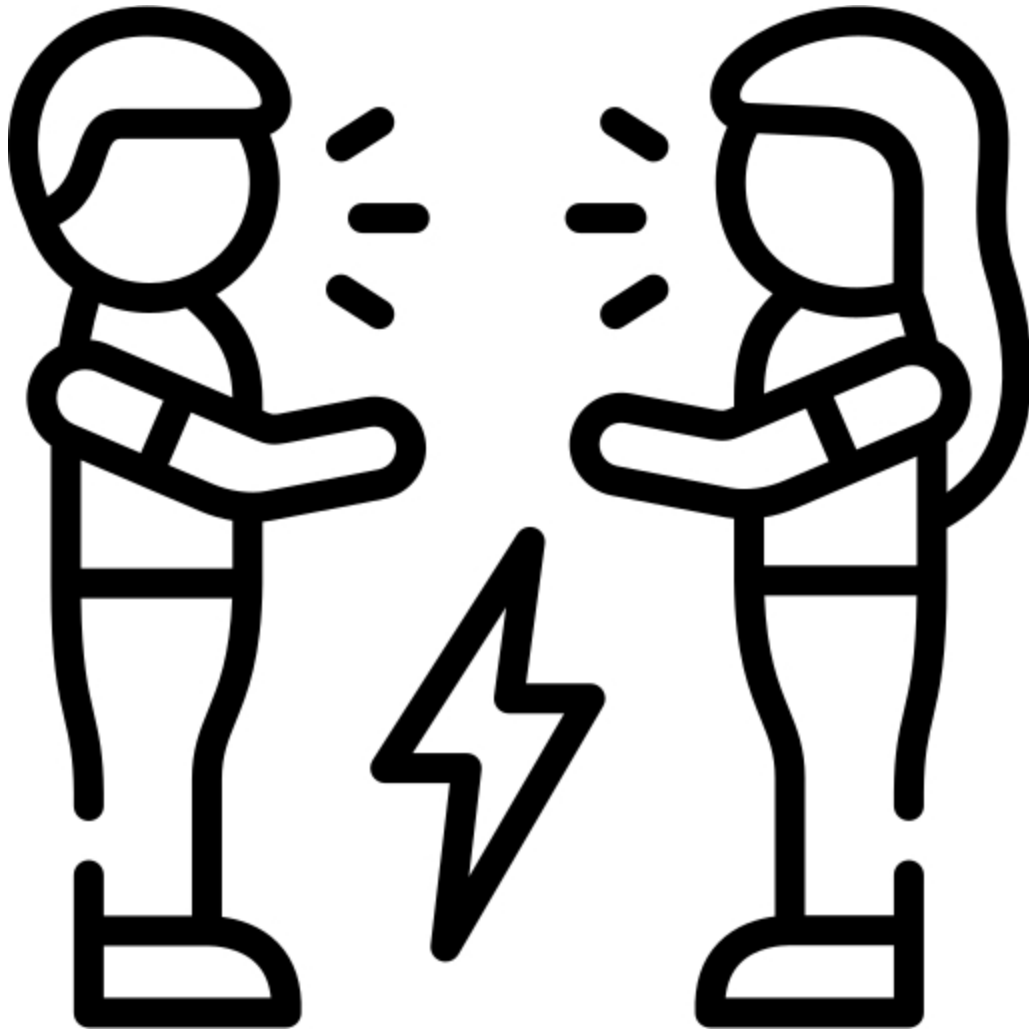
~ It makes no sense ~



Honestly, **there is no point in** worrying before you have to. Otherwise, you worry twice as much as you need to.



There is no point in working 8 hours a day. Hunter-gatherers only worked about 15 hours a week! There's something to be said about our so-called progress.



My grandfather always said **there's no point in** arguing with a fool. What do you think? I think he was on to something. Now I understand why he and grandma never argued.

72. There's nothing I...

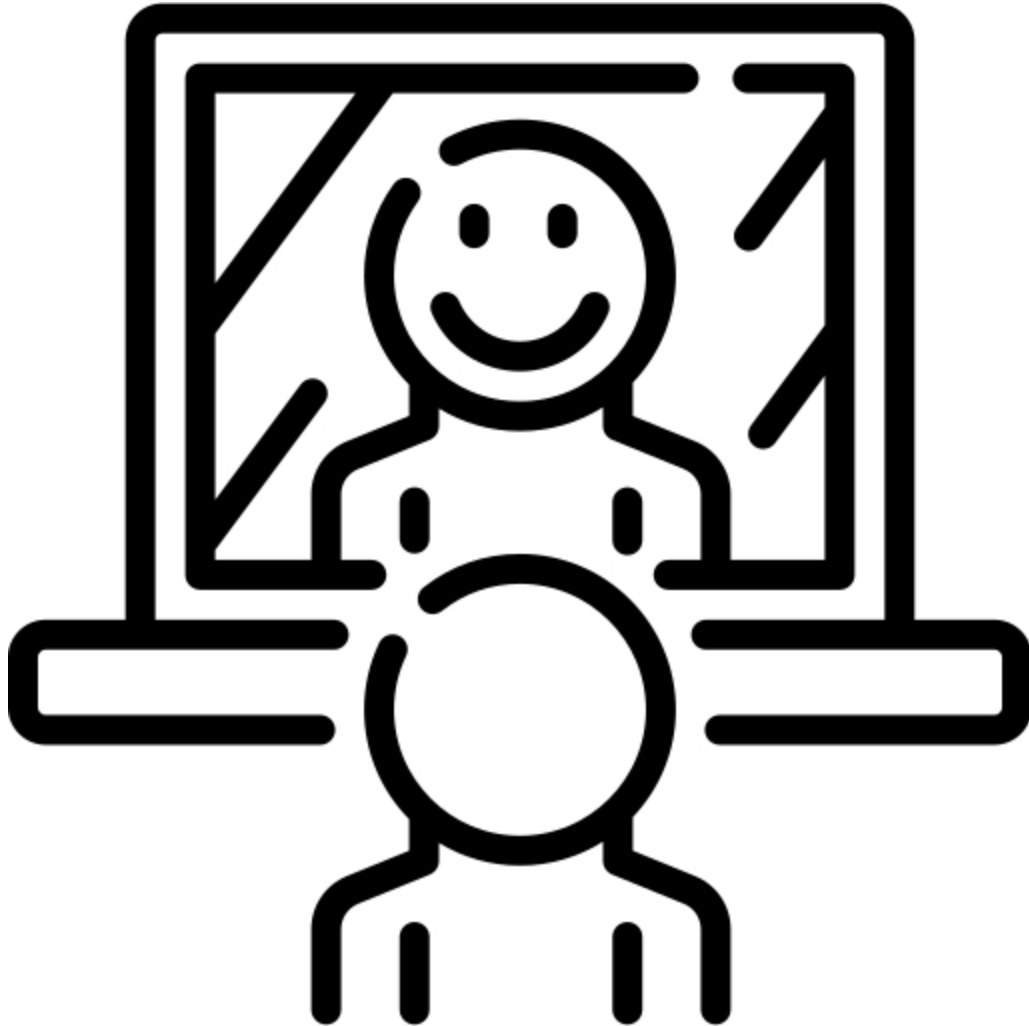
~ Literal meaning ~



There's nothing I can do now but cross my fingers and hope for the best. I know I've done my best and studied hard so all I can do now is wait.



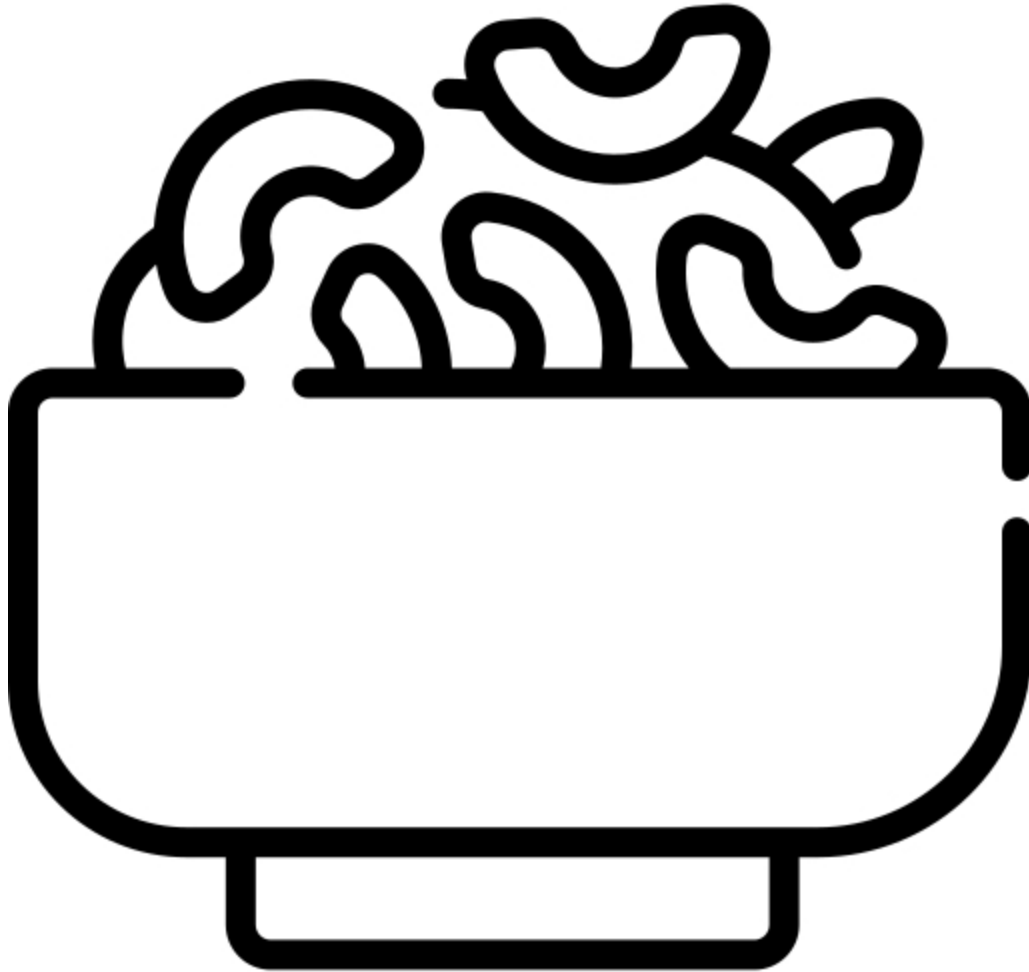
There's nothing I won't do for the people I love, even if it means giving up something I like. Doing what's right for my loved ones will always be my top priority. That's how stupid I am!



There's nothing I cannot achieve once I work hard and trust my abilities! I know that challenges will come my way, but I just have to remember all of the things I've done up until now and keep going.

73. There's still some... left

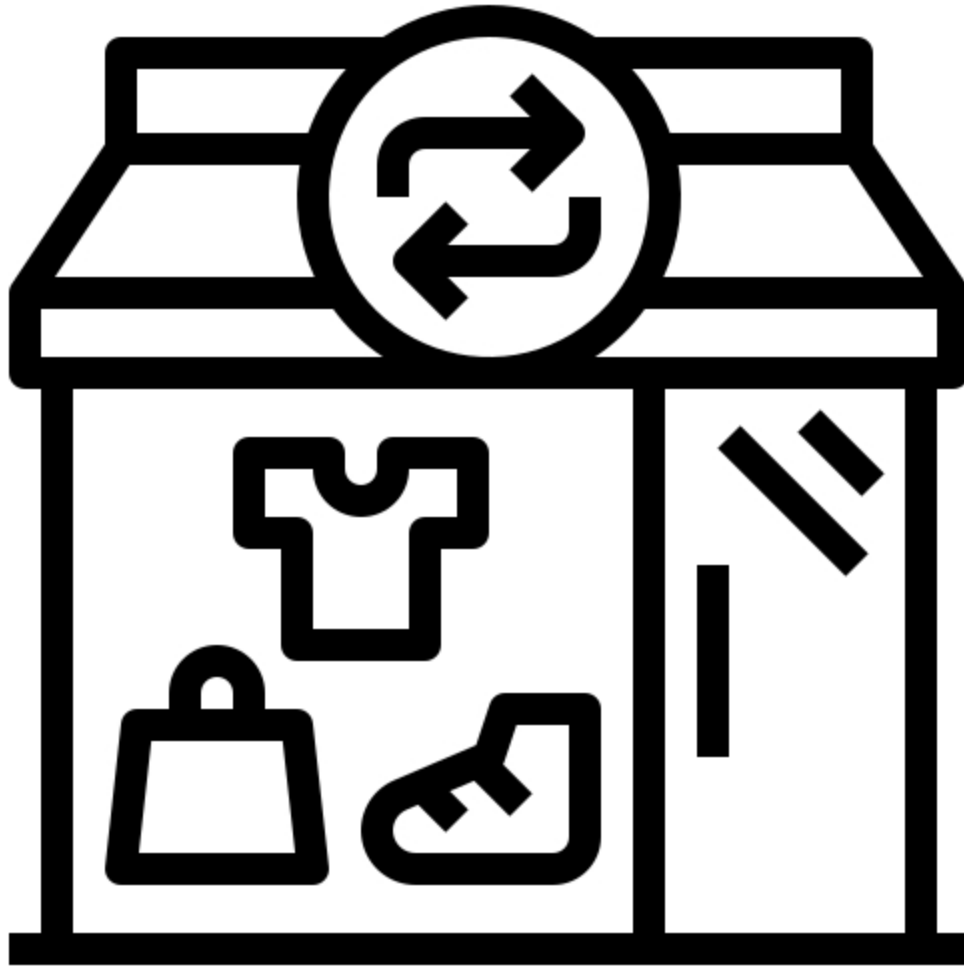
~ Something remains ~



My mother told me that **there's still some** macaroni and cheese **left** in the refrigerator if I wanted to microwave a bowl for lunch.



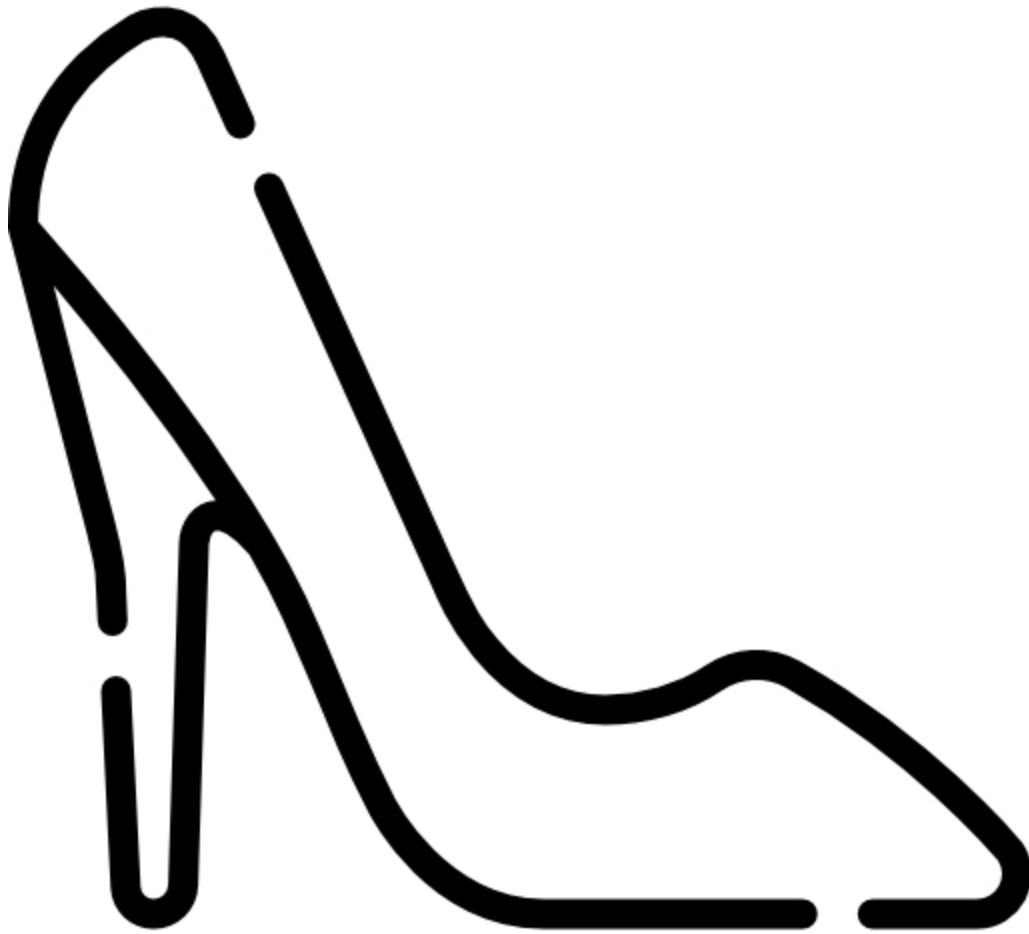
There's still some time left to catch the plane if we hurry! Make sure you keep a tight hold on your bags, so they don't get caught on the escalator!



Even with all the negative reports in the media, I have to believe that **there's still some good left** in the world. That's why I love volunteering at my local thrift store so that I can help families in need.

74. To arrange for... to...

~ Organise or plan something ~



I **arranged for** Sam **to** pick me up from the station, but his car broke down and I had to walk home in the snow in my stilettos.



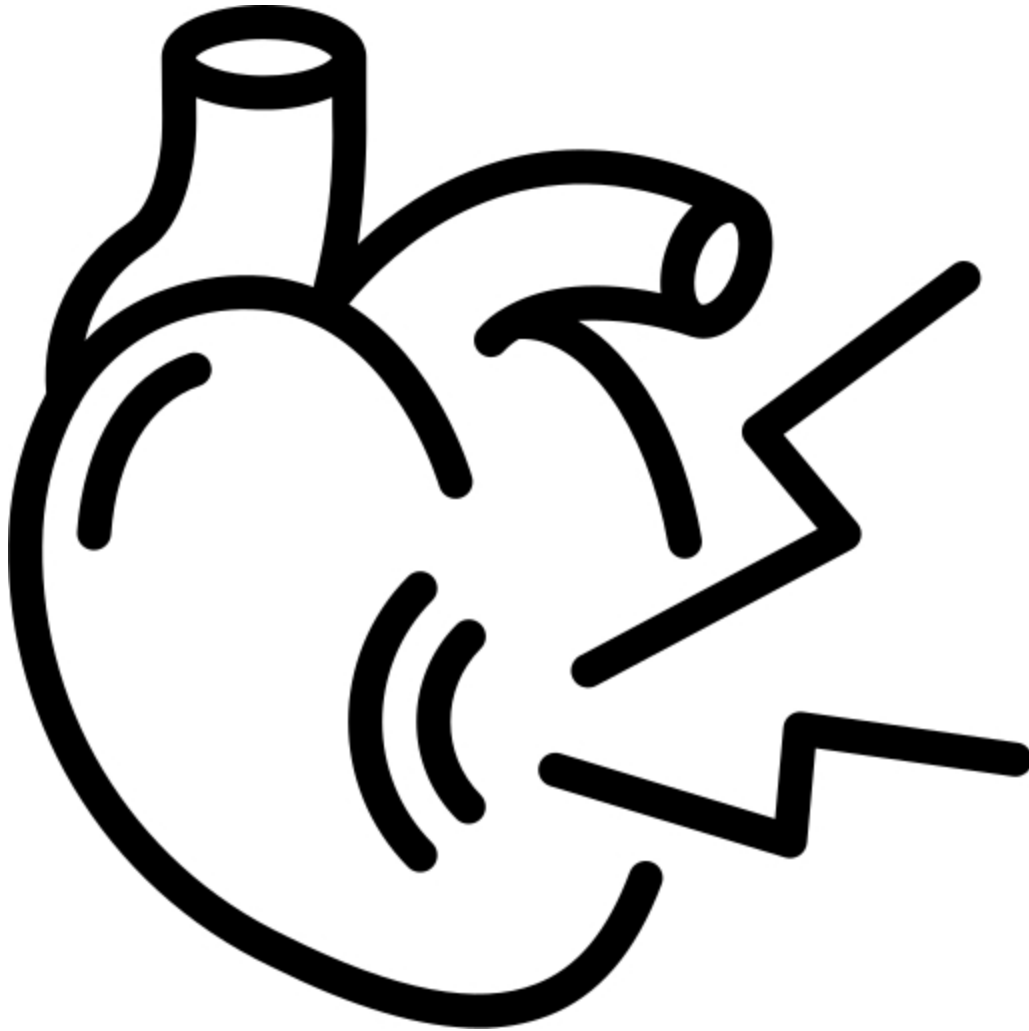
Can you **arrange for** your mum's friend **to** make a Disney princess cake for my daughter? Her cakes are the best I've ever seen.



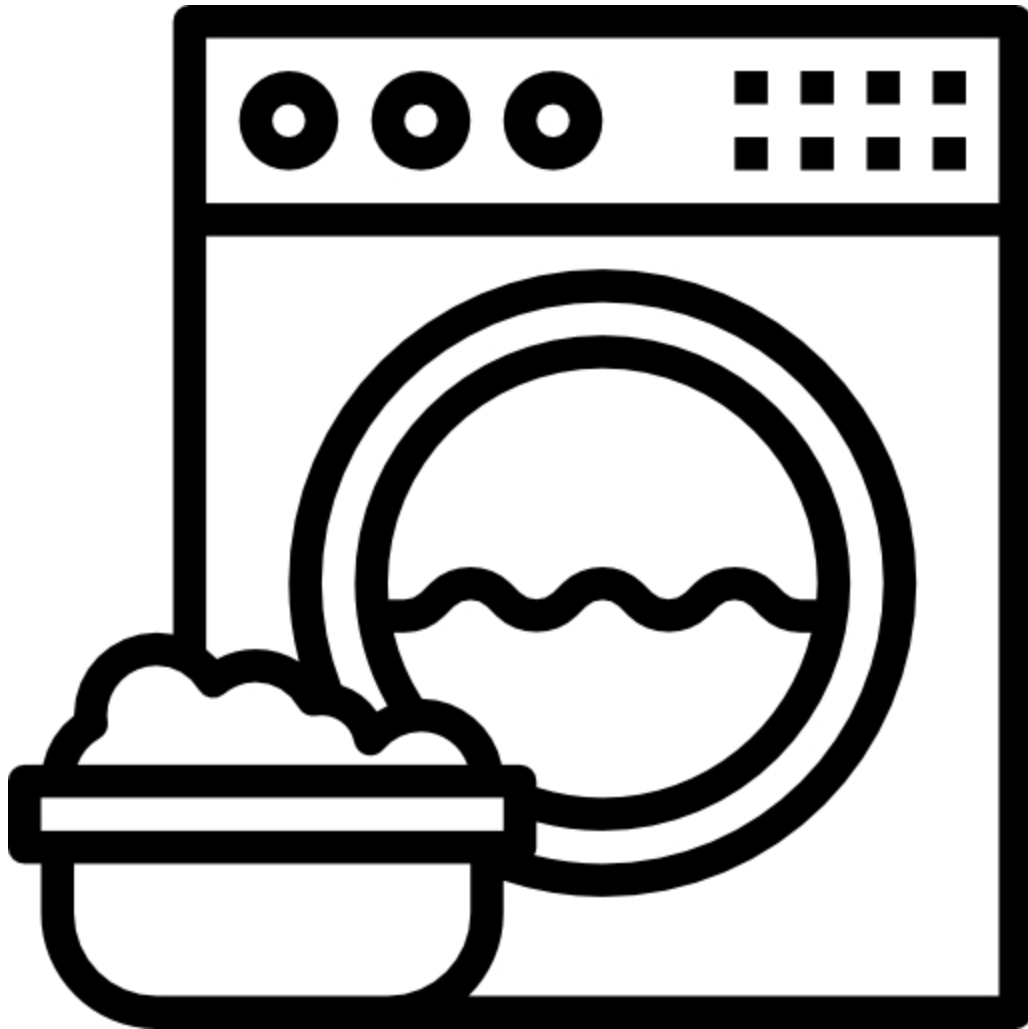
I'll **arrange for** the courier **to** deliver your parcel tomorrow, but can you make sure you keep an eye out for him? You know they can never find your house.

75. To be likely / unlikely to...

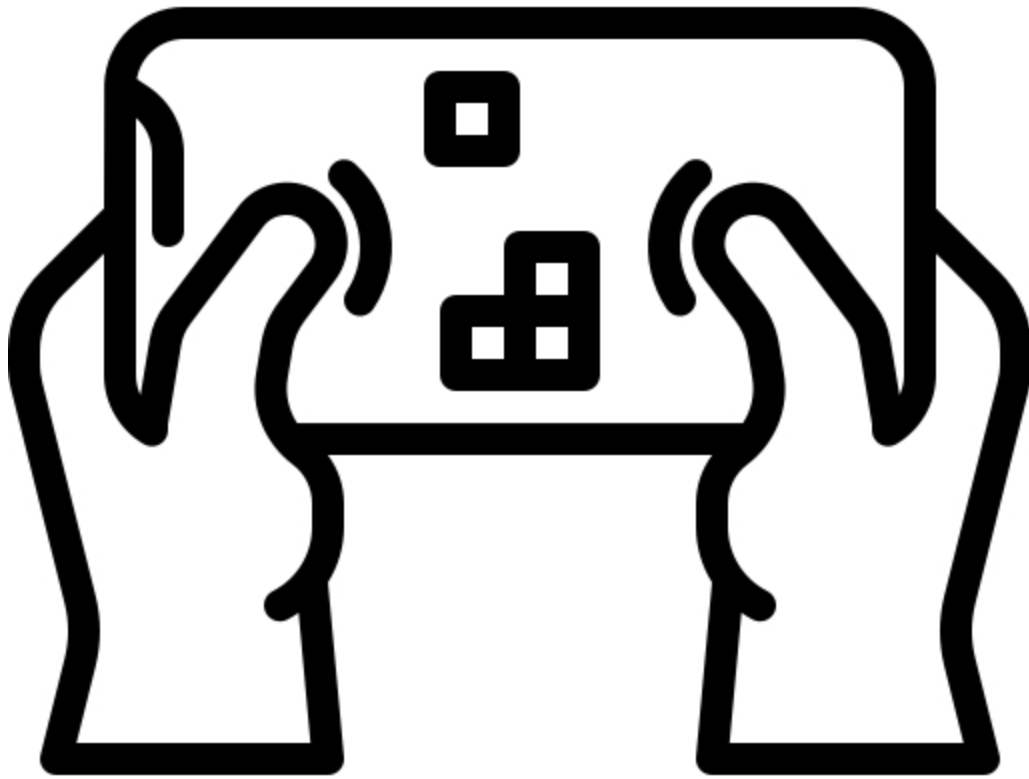
~ Probable / Not probable ~



Mum, did you know that people **are most likely to** have a heart attack in the morning than at any other time of the day?



Honey, could you remind our son to put the washing machine on tomorrow? **He's** very **likely to** forget. And I don't want to come back from vacation to meet dirty laundry.



Let's face it, **I'm unlikely to** pass tomorrow's test. Damn it! I shouldn't have bought that game last week. It's so addictive!



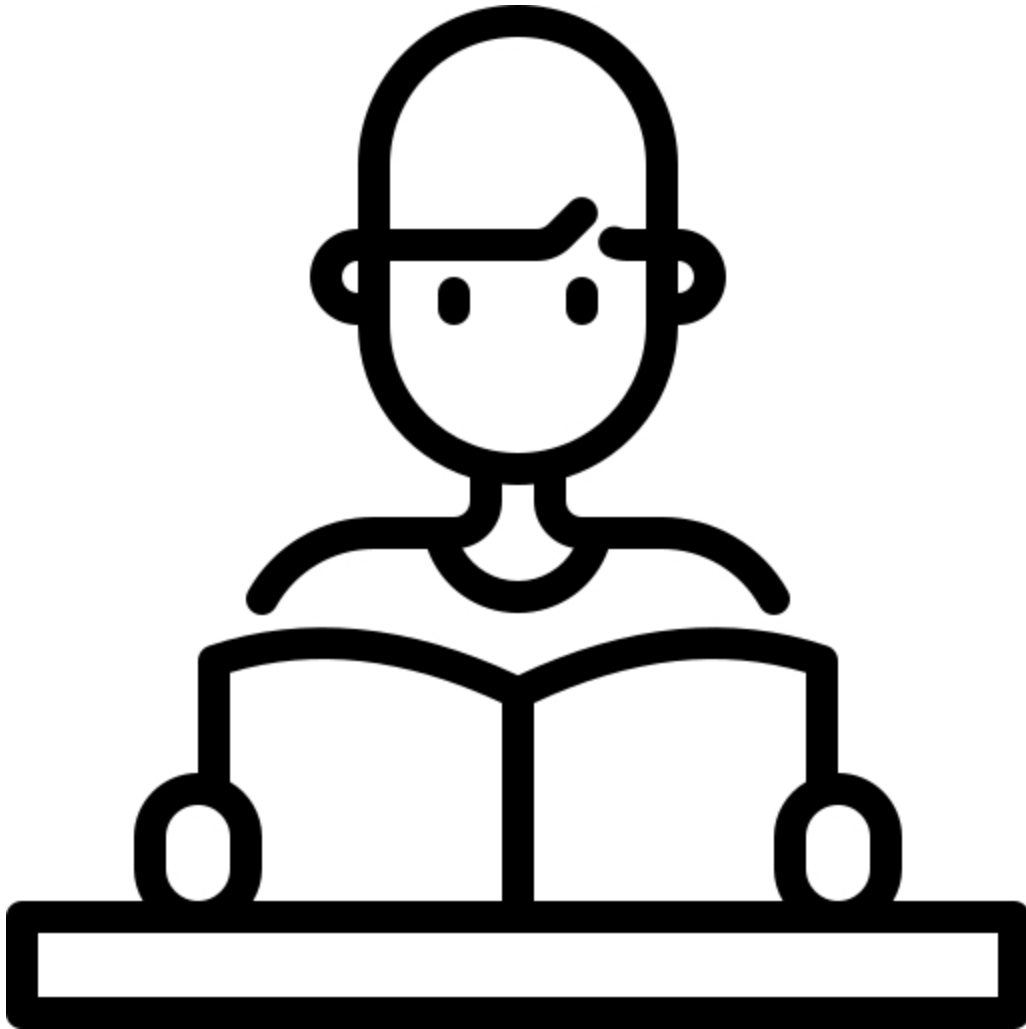
Jonas **is unlikely to** come to your birthday party. He's still mad at you for cheating on him last year. I think it's time he gets over that honestly.

76. To do some...

~ Perform a task or an activity ~



Dad, I'm off **to do some** shopping at the supermarket. Do you need anything? What? I can't hear you.



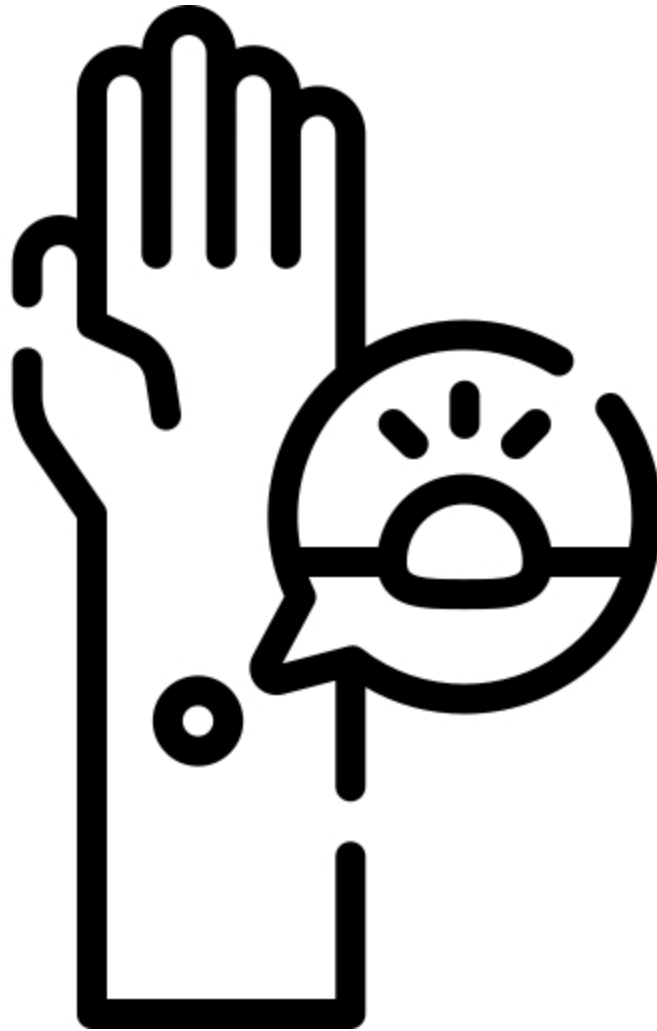
I'd love to come to your birthday party tomorrow, Mike, but I'm in the middle of my finals and need **to do some** studying. Sorry, mate.



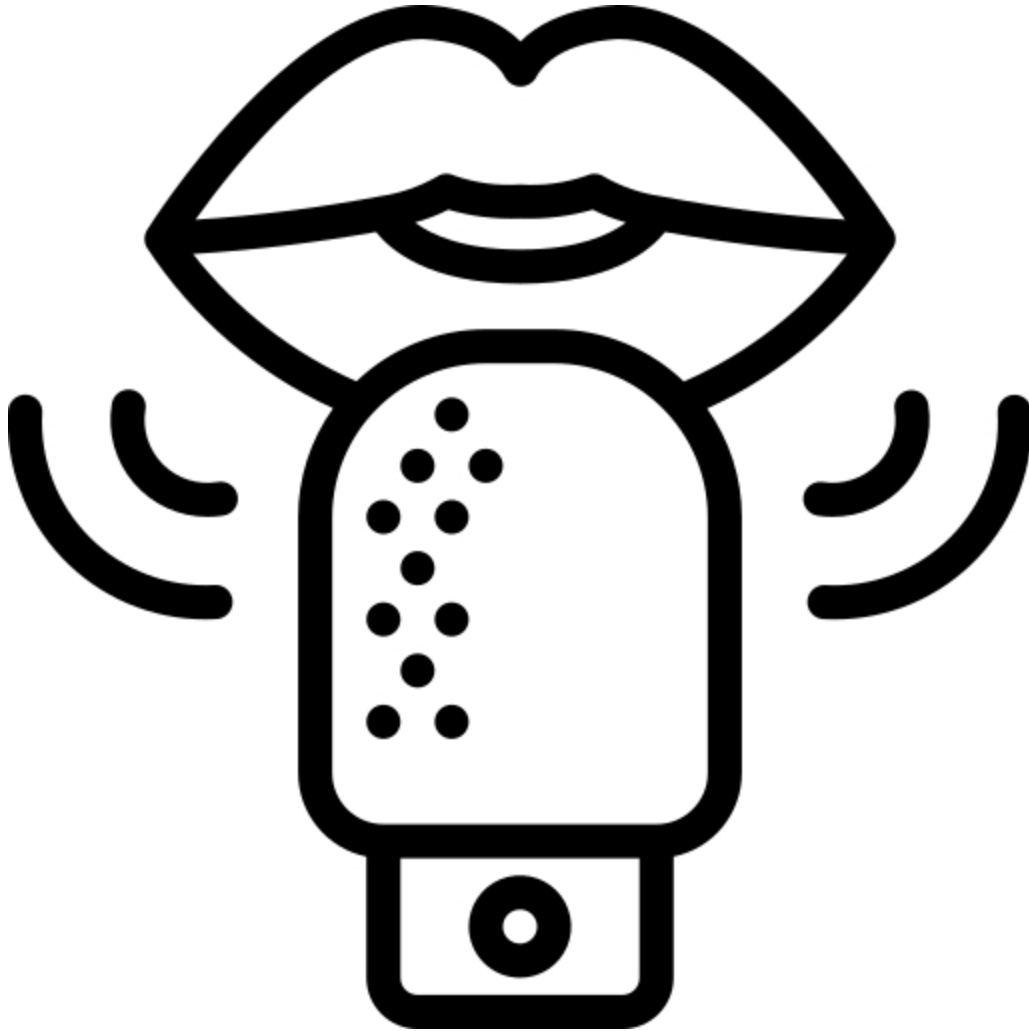
You need **to do some** laundry, honey. Your dirty clothes are piling up! I may have to send a search and rescue team to find you in your room soon.

77. To have... looked at

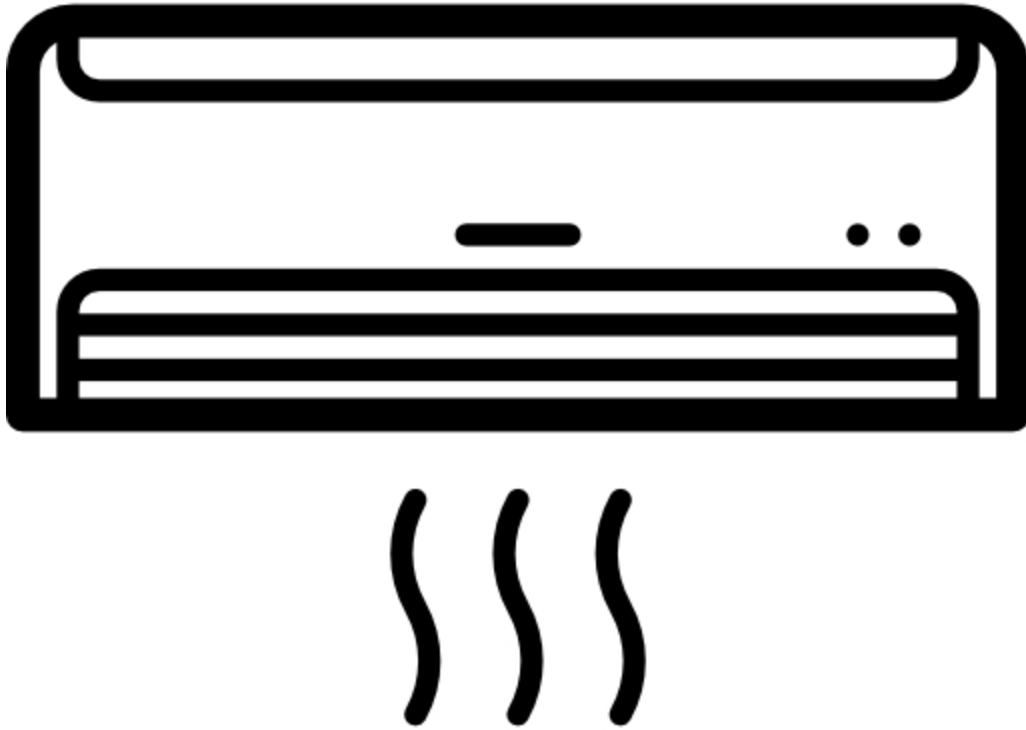
~ Have something checked ~



I don't like the size of that mole. You'd better make an appointment with your GP and **have it looked at** asap!



Jeffrey, I think you need to **have** your head **looked at** by a professional.
There's way too much nonsense coming out of your mouth these days.



Eve should **have** her air conditioner **looked at**. Her cat has been staring at it all day with a funny look on his face. Poo is about to hit the fan!

78. To look good on...

~ Literal meaning ~



I have a lot of great clothes but they don't **look good on** me right now. I hate being pregnant... Time to go shopping, sisters!



Oh Gosh, Neil! Look at you with that gorgeous sweater! You're stunning! I'd never thought pink would **look so good on** you!



They say that having done volunteer work **looks good on** a job application. I guess it depends on the volunteer work you've done, doesn't it?

79. To what extent...?

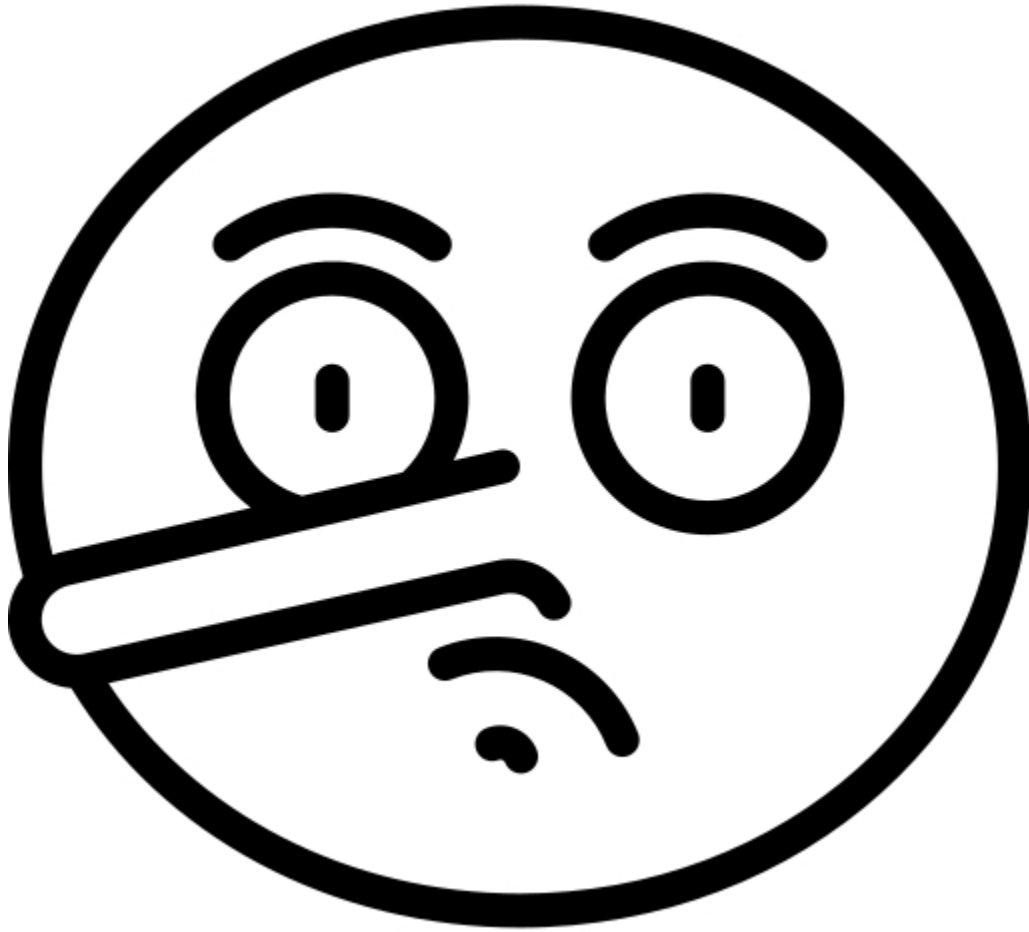
~ To what degree ~



It's virtually impossible to guess **to what extent** his reputation was damaged after what he did to Fanny last week. Not funny at all!



I trust you are familiar with our company policies. **To what extent** have you reviewed the documents associated with this case?



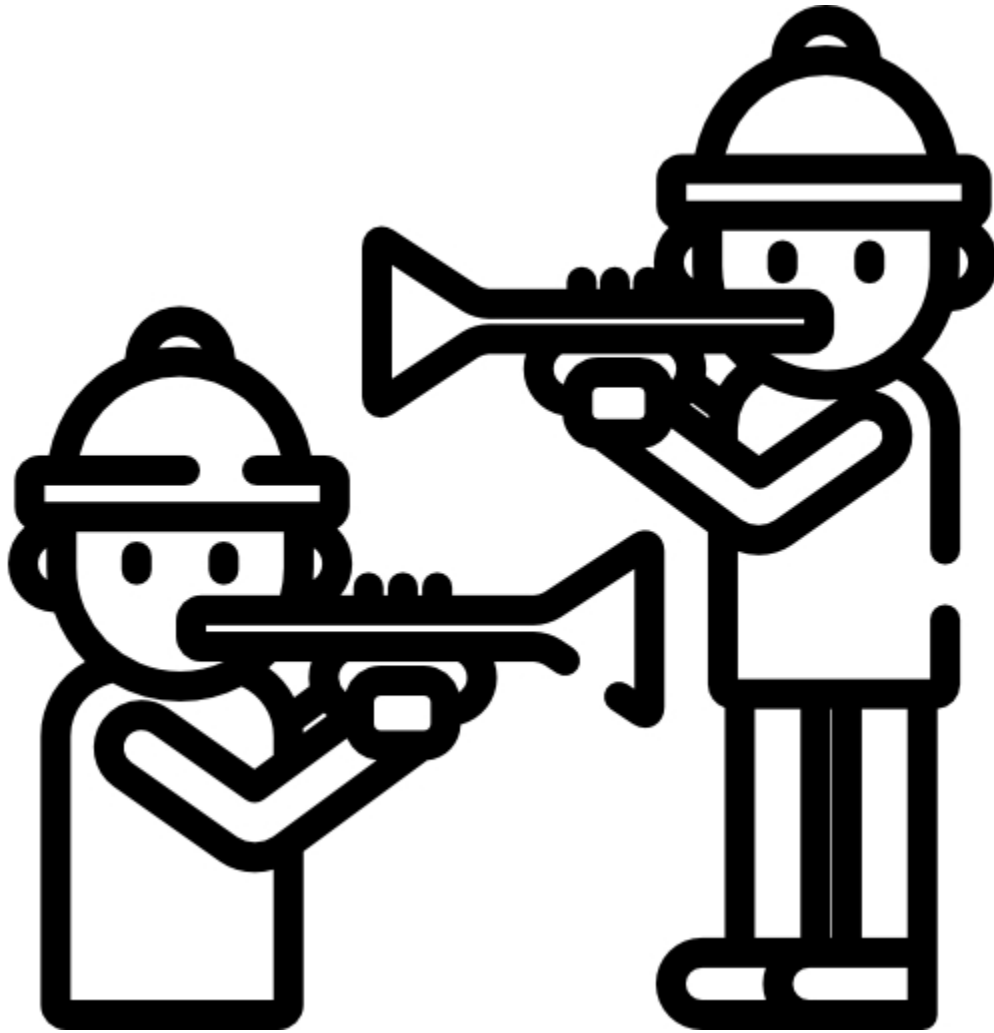
To what extent are you willing to go to cover up the lie you told? You know eventually you'll run out of excuses, so you might as well tell me the truth now.

80. We might as well...

~ It's probably better to do it than not doing it ~



The festival is going to be muddy after all this rain; **we might as well** pack our wellies too so that we don't ruin our trainers.



My brother's band is opening a gig tonight; **we might as well** go along and watch as we don't have classes tomorrow and my TV's broken.

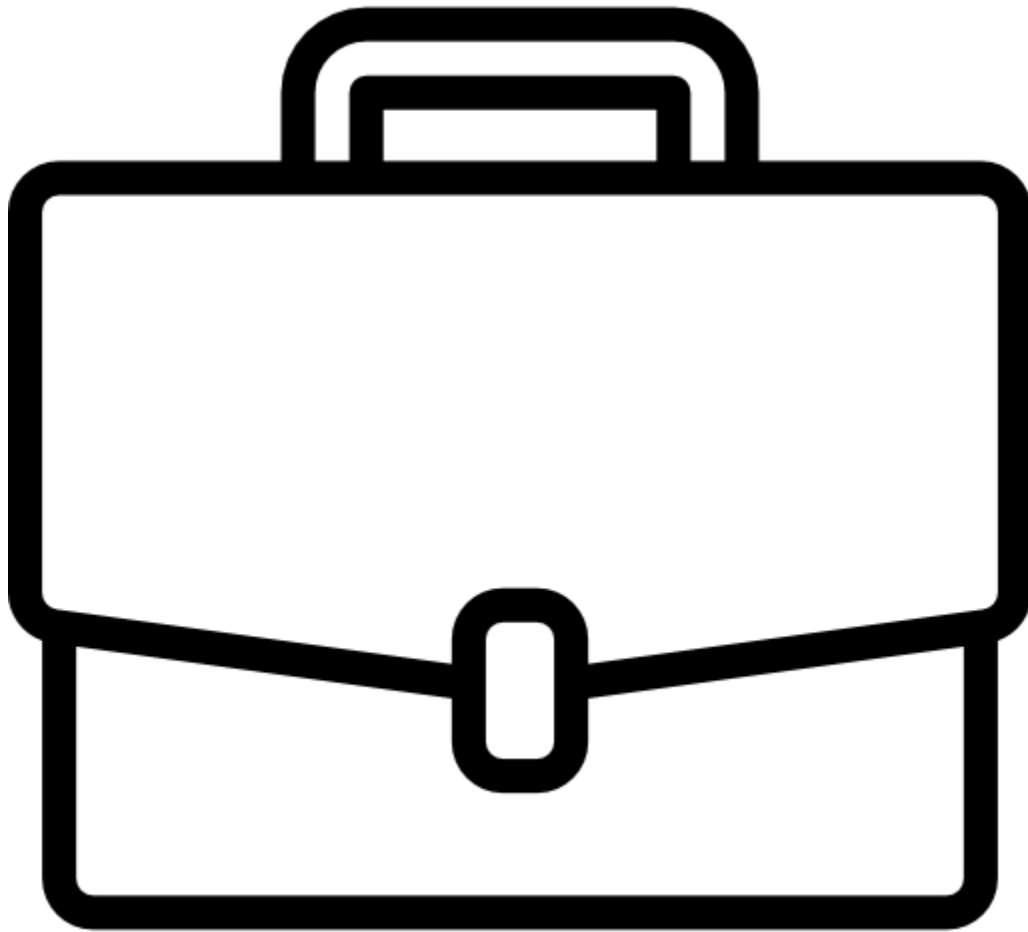


A: Shall we pick up some wine to go with dinner, Paul?

B: **We might as well** if it will stop your mum from reminding me that I've not fixed the cupboard door.

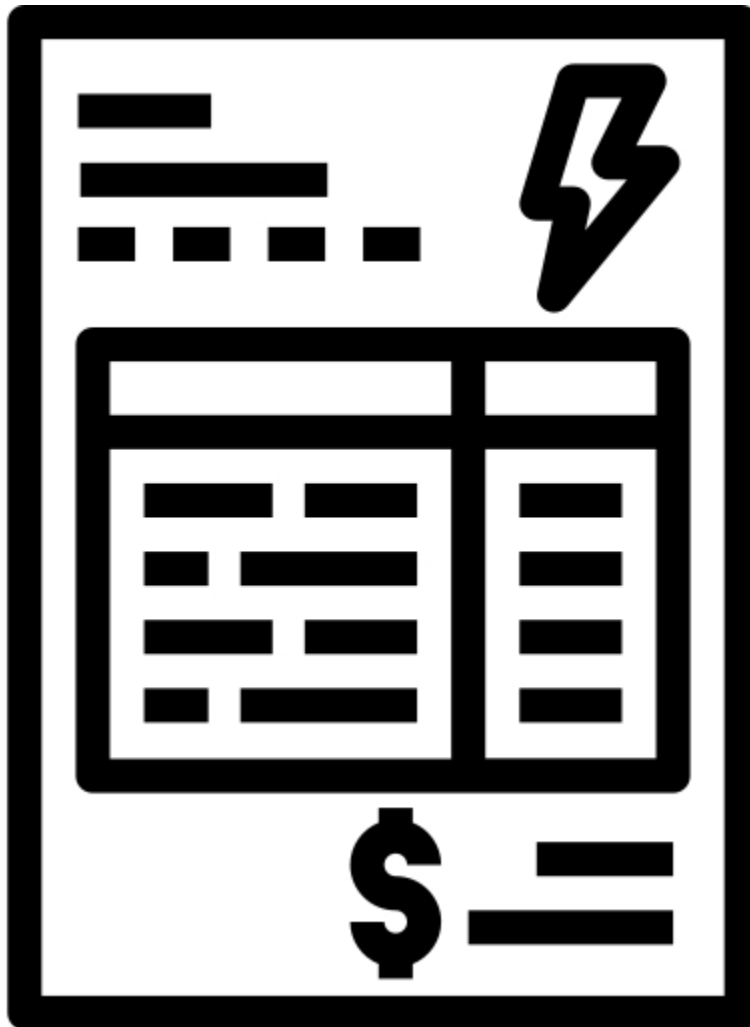
81. What do you mean by...?

~ Explain because I don't like how it sounds ~



A: Honey, because of my new job I won't be able to spend time with you.

B: **What do you mean by not spend time with me?! I'm your freaking husband!**



A: The government has announced it's going to raise the electricity bill a little bit.

B: **What do you mean by "a little bit"?! My bill is already costing me an arm and a leg!**



A: Did you hear Shane? The boss wants us to be nicer to the customers.

B: **What do you mean by “nicer”?** They want us to give them a foot massage too? How about paying us the overtime they owe us first?

82. What do you say...?

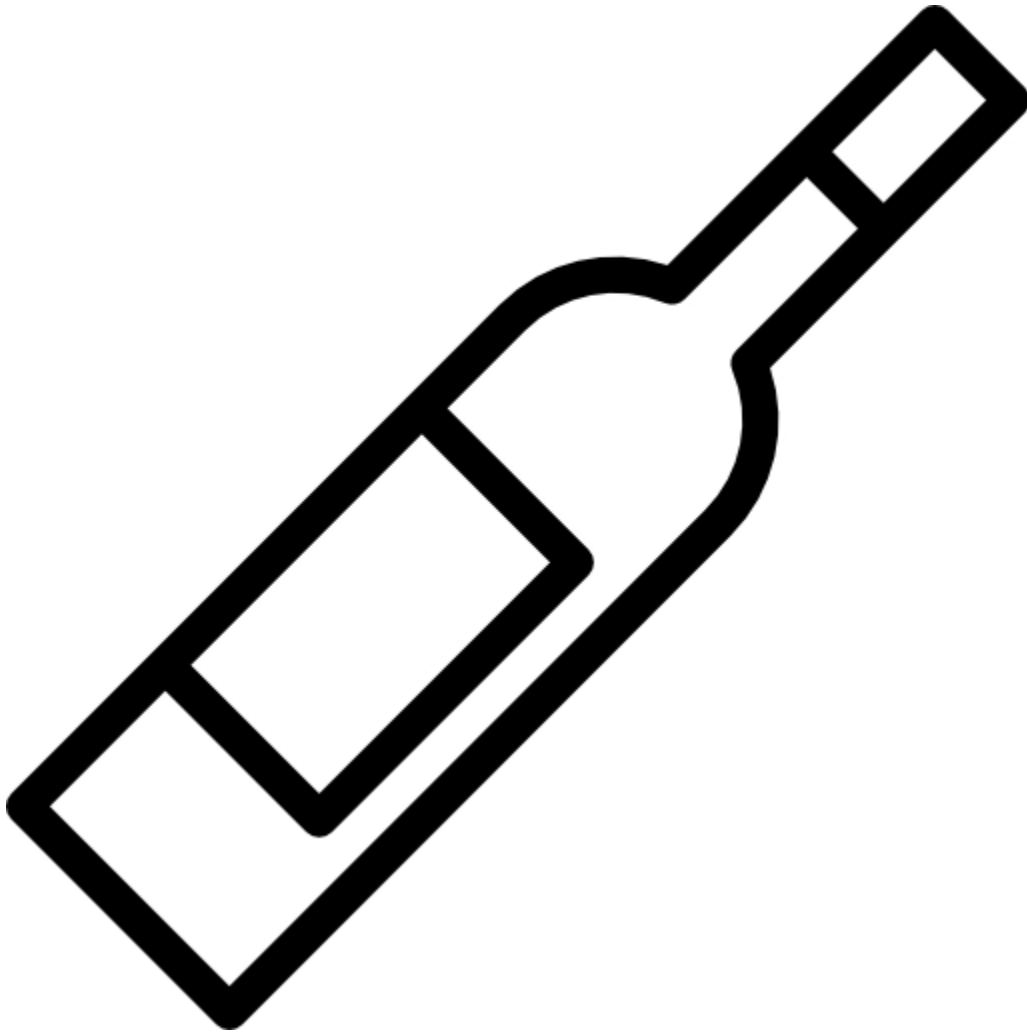
~ Do you like the idea? ~



Jen, they're giving away free tickets for *Moulin Rouge* tonight – first come, first served – **what do you say** we get there early and join the queue?



What do you say about me doing this sponsored skydive next month; they're raising money for dementia research, and you know that means a lot to me.

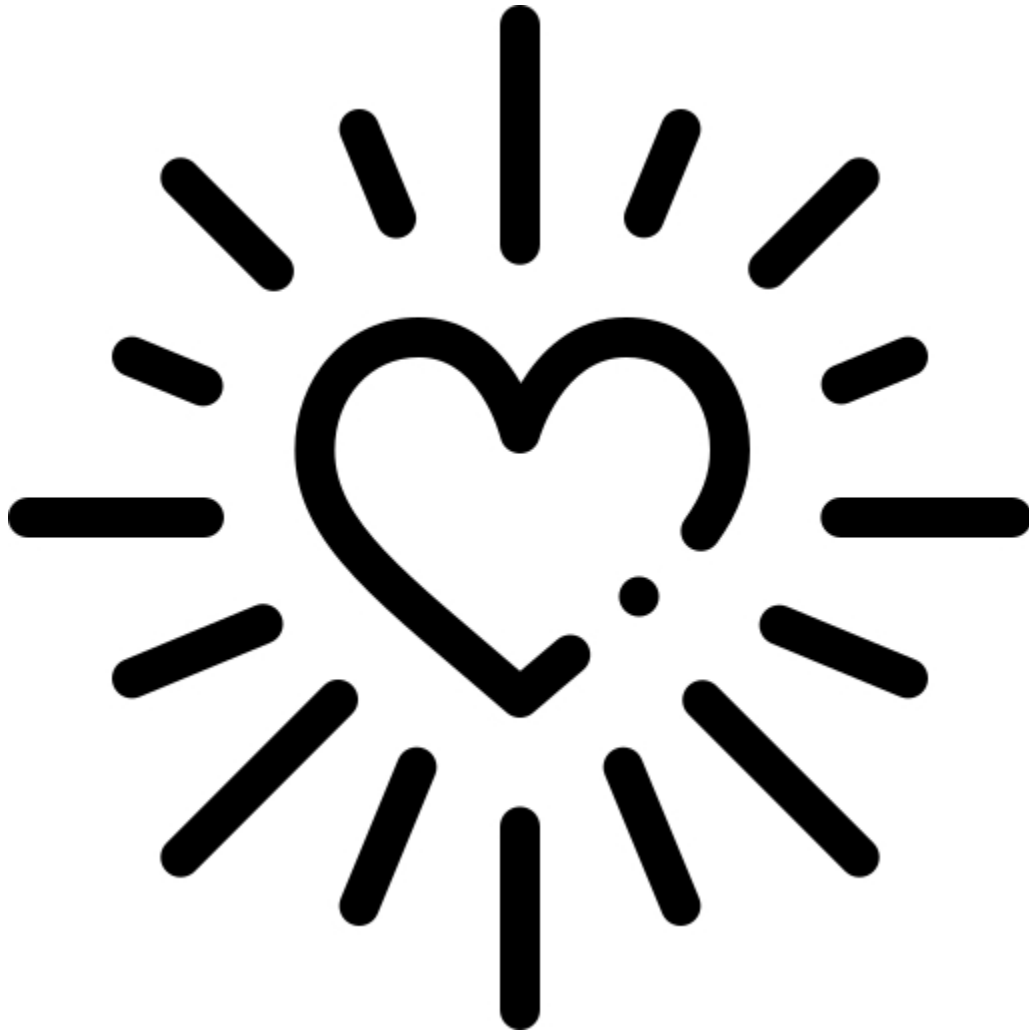


A: I was going to make Gran a birthday cake with a teacup on top.

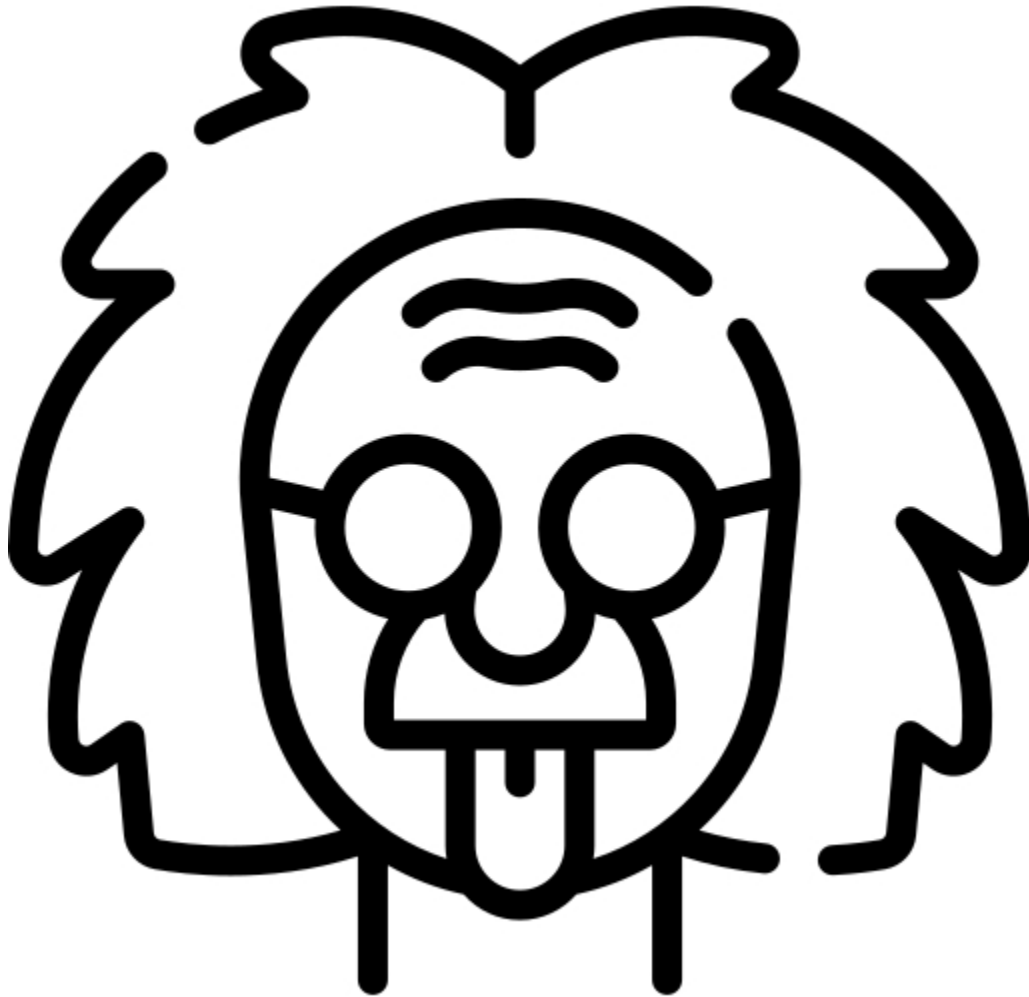
B: I'm not sure about that, **what do you say** we put a bottle of wine on top instead?

83. What if...?

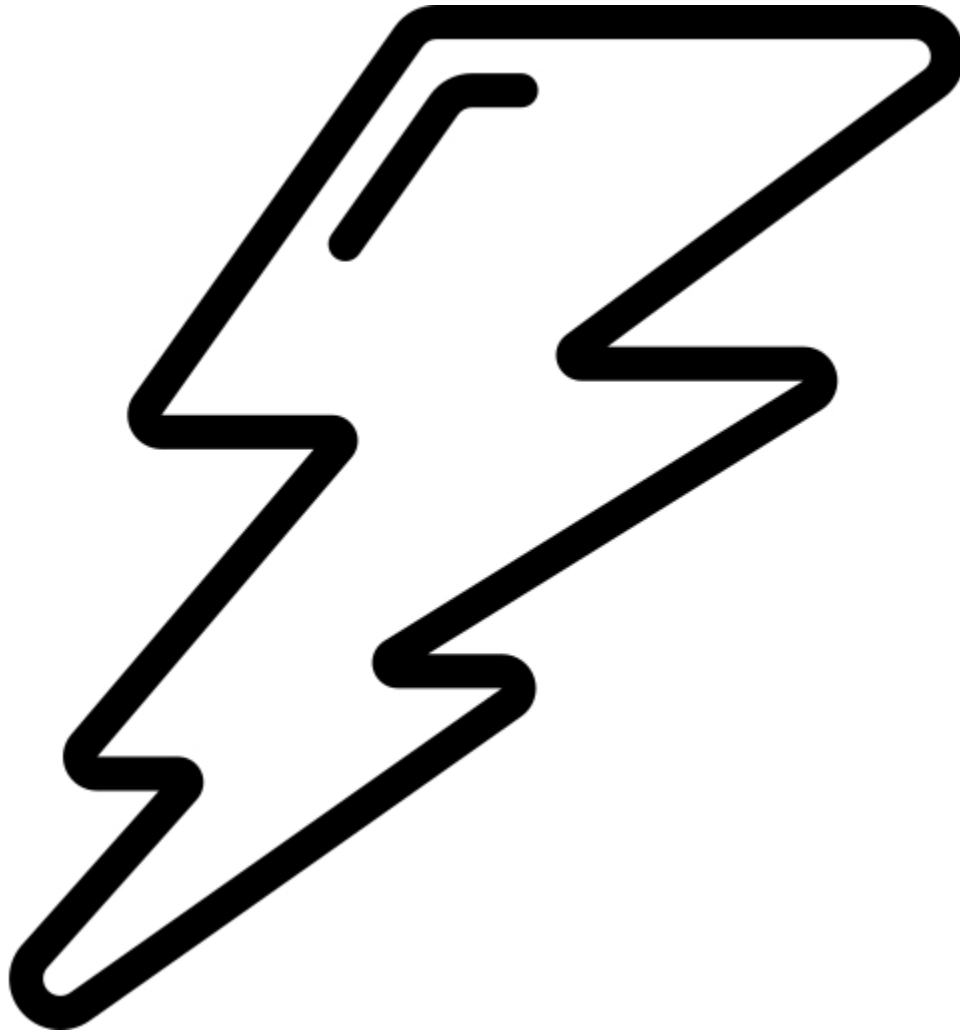
~ Supposing ~



What if this were my last chance to tell him how much I love him? I'm not going to waste a single opportunity to tell him how important he is to me.



What if we try solving the problem this way instead? I think it was Einstein who said the definition of insanity is trying the same thing over again and expecting different results. We'll just have to be creative.



A: **What if** we get struck by lightning?

B: I wouldn't worry. The odds of getting struck by lightning are very small. Let's watch the thunderstorm from a safe distance anyway.

84. What on earth / in the world...? (how, what, why, etc.)

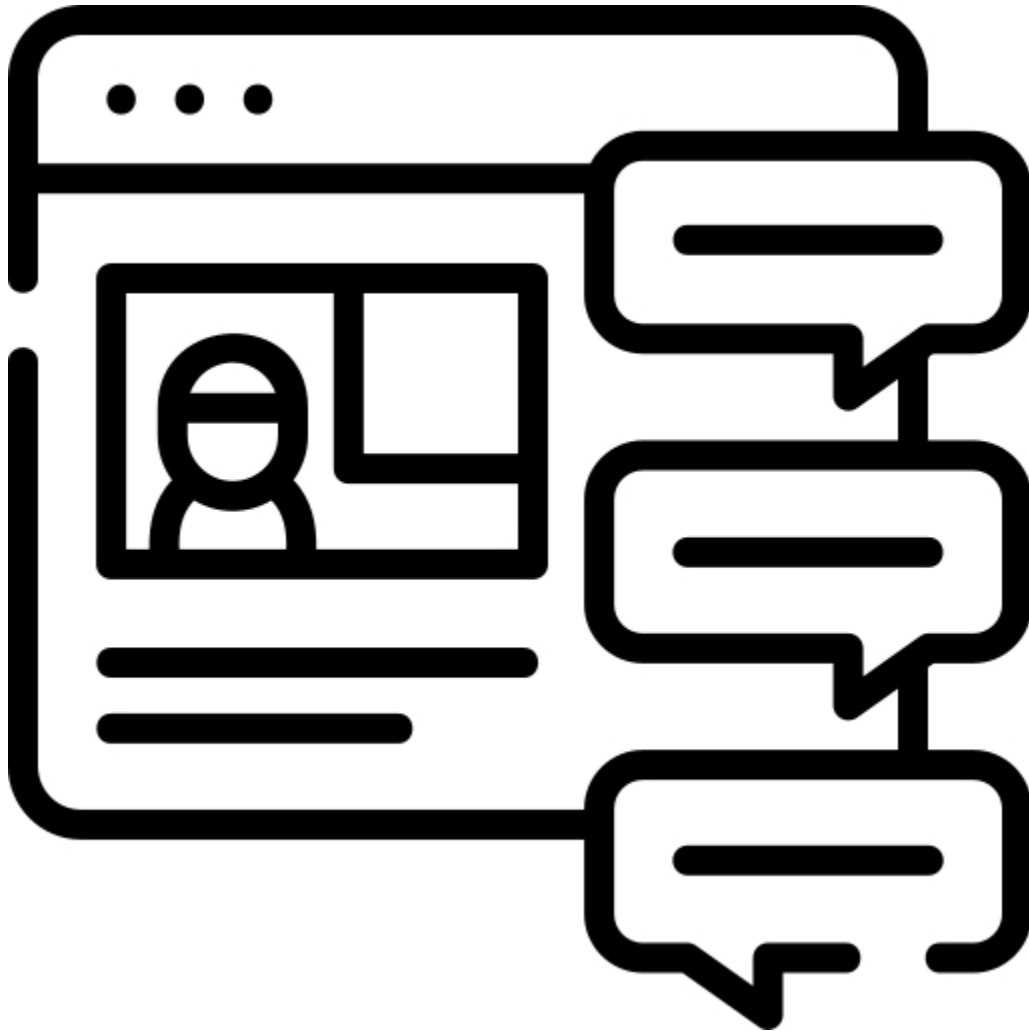
~ Expressing surprise or anger ~



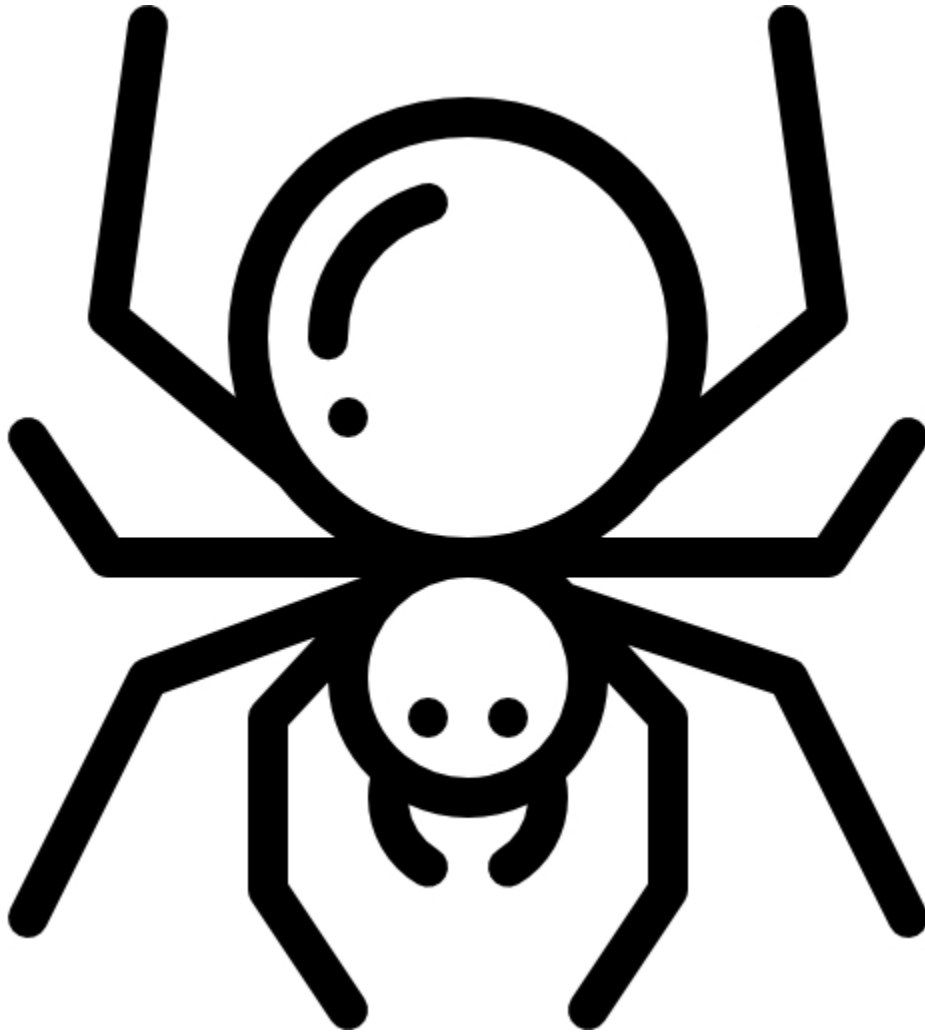
Sarah, **why on earth** do you allow Kara to constantly belittle you? I honestly don't understand it. You should stand up for yourself.



What on earth made Joe think he could be an entrepreneur without having any savings? Jesus...some people are as dumb as rocks.



Why in the world have you been downvoted in the forum for speaking facts? What a toxic place that is! You should unsubscribe from it right away.



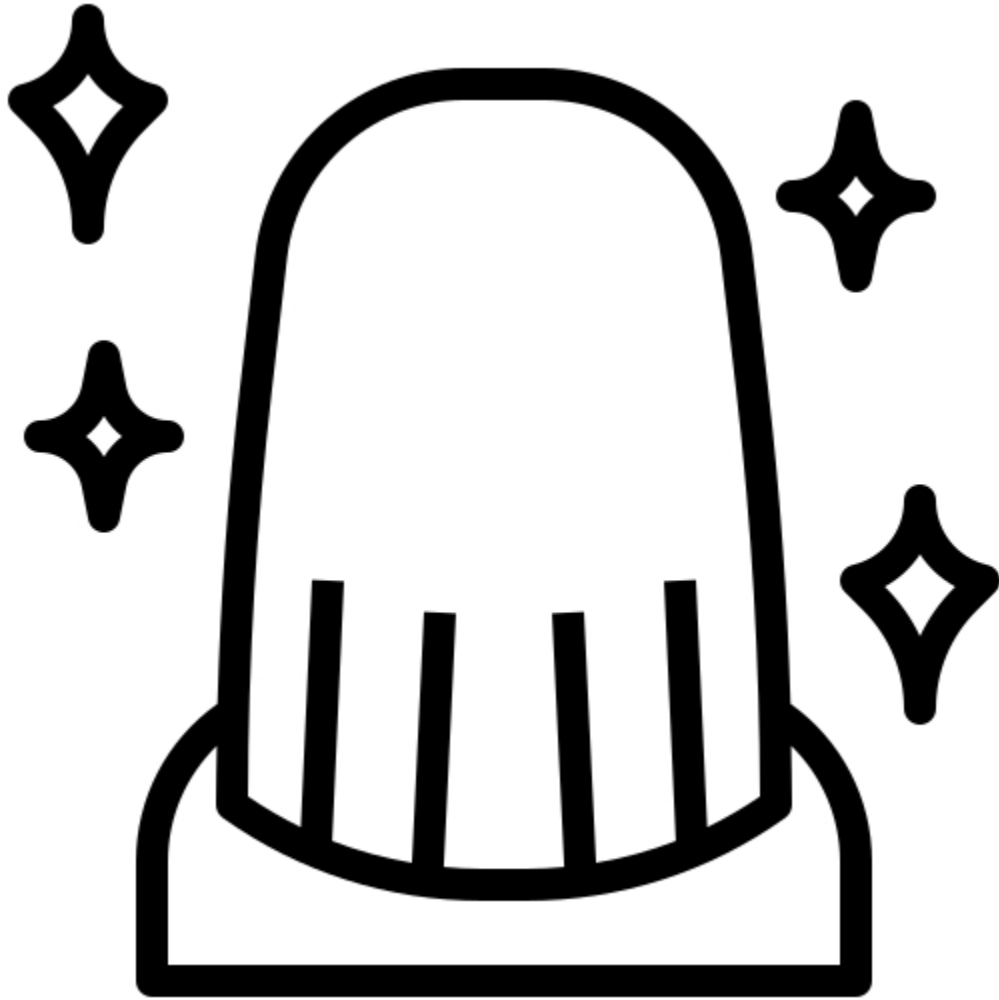
Look at this huge spider, Dad! **What in the world** is this abomination?!
I've never seen anything so hideous in my life!

85. What would you do...?

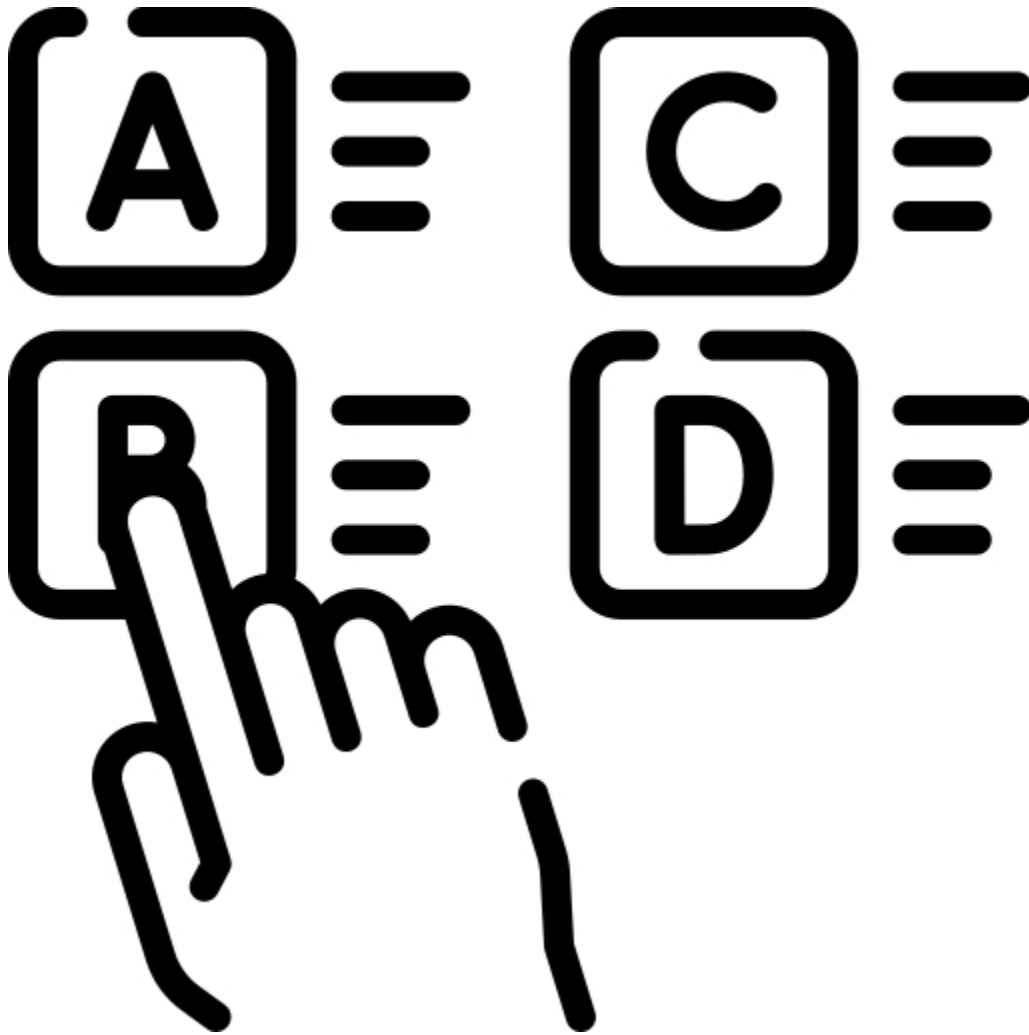
~ Literal meaning ~



What would you do if I went on vacation for a month? I'm sure you'll be fine; we can keep in touch via WhatsApp.



What would you do if I told you that you are the most beautiful person I've ever met? I hope this doesn't embarrass you. I'm just telling you how I feel.

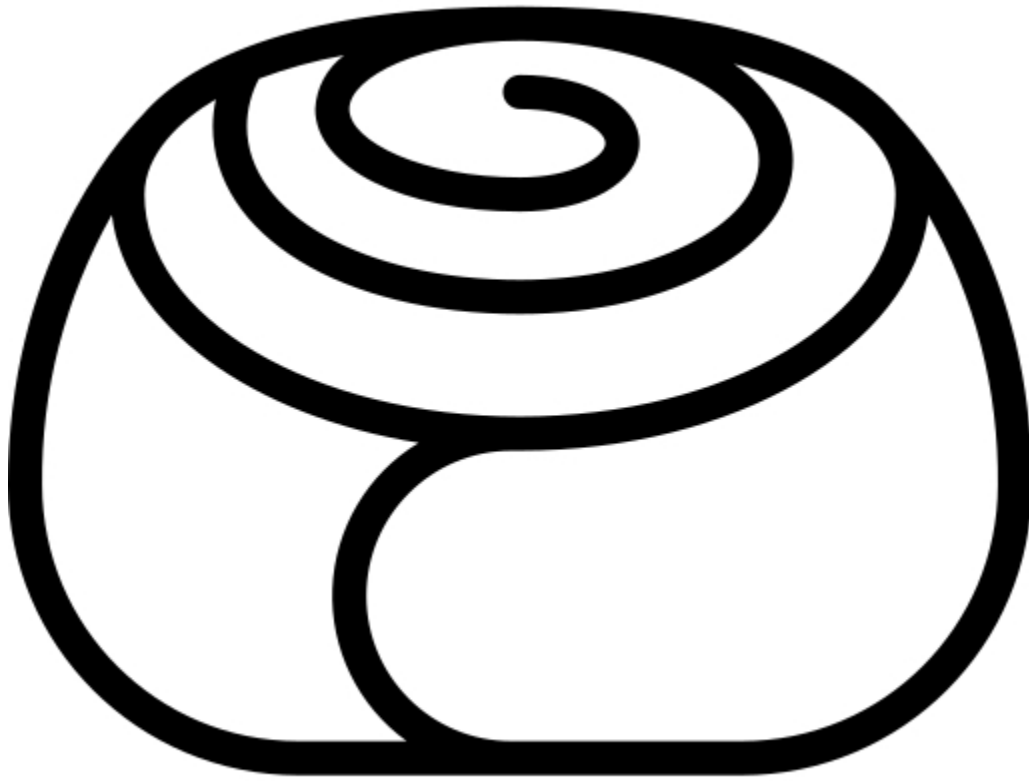


A: **What would you do** without me on your trivia team?

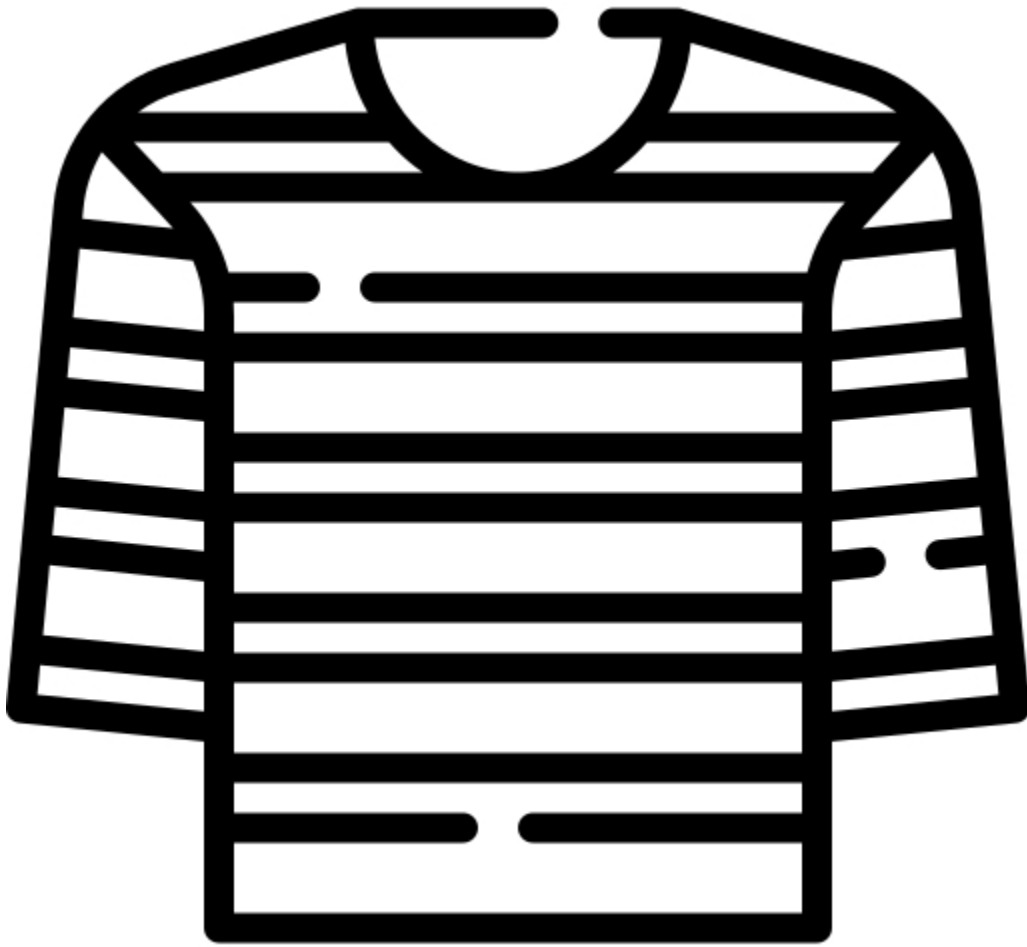
B: Well, I definitely wouldn't have known the answer to that question, so it's a good thing you're here!

86. What's the matter with...?

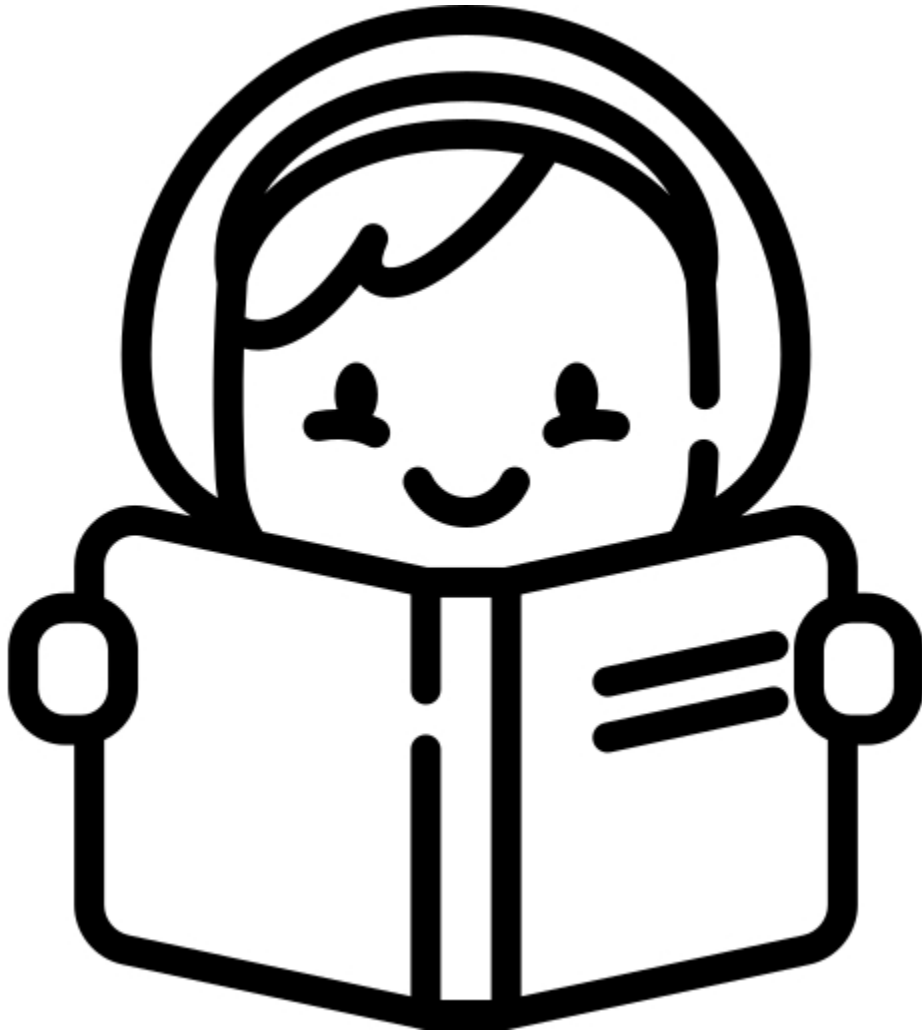
~ Is there a problem with...? (emphatic) ~



All I wanted to do was go to my favourite bakery and get a cinnamon roll, **what's the matter with** that? Don't tell me I'm too fat to be eating rolls.



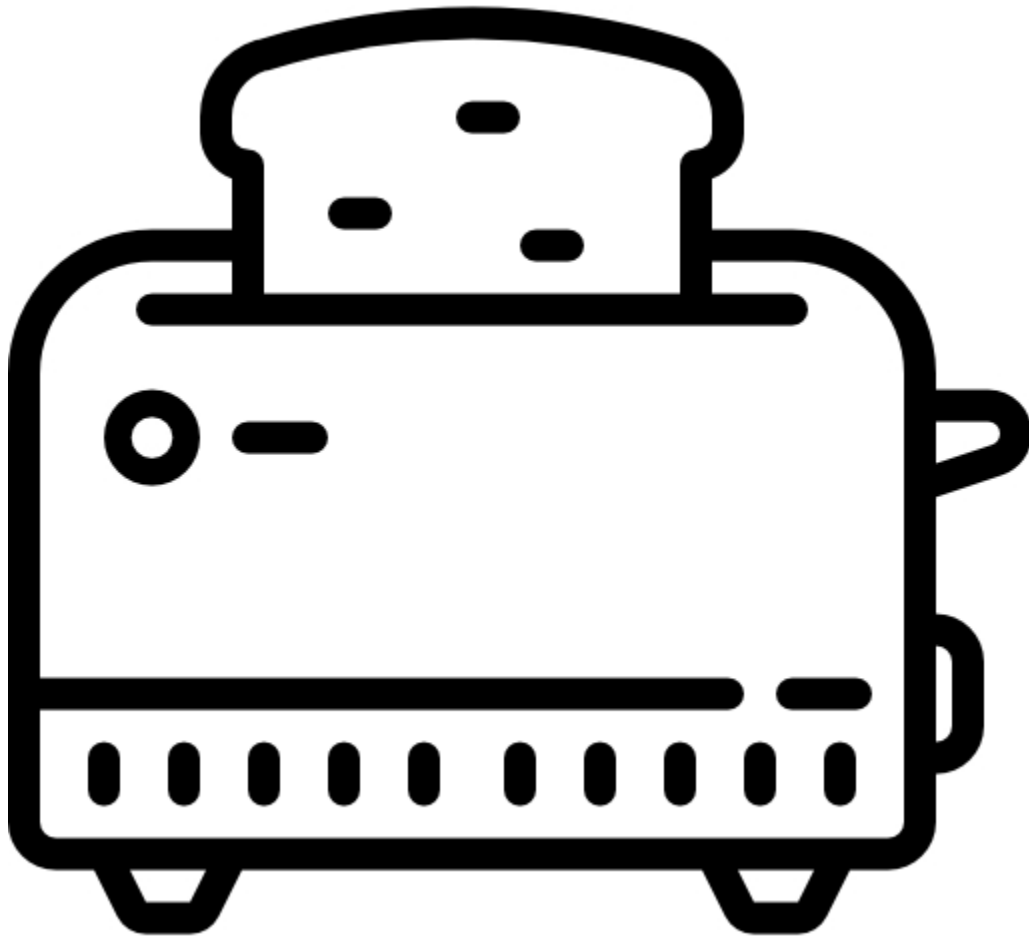
What's the matter with my outfit? My friend told me that the current fashion trend is mixing stripes with leopard print!



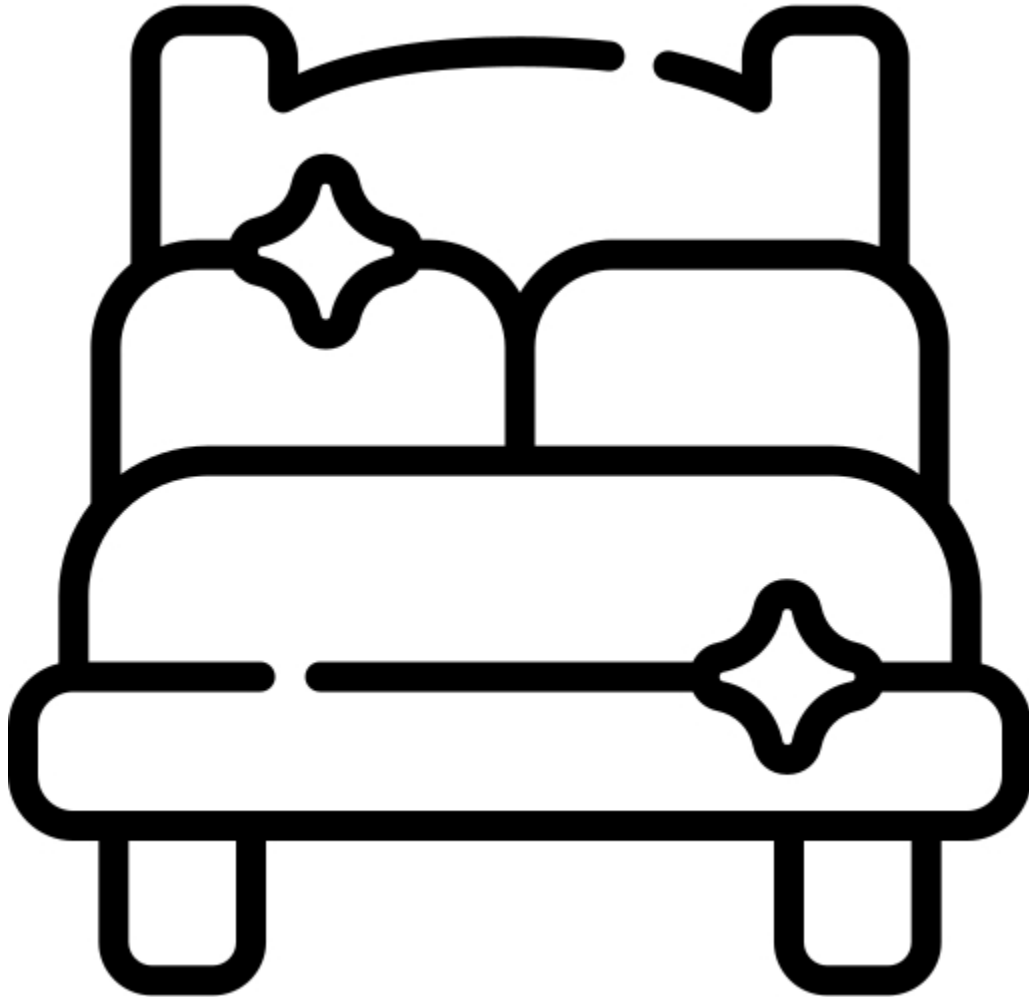
What's the matter with wanting to spend a quiet night at home? On Fridays my friends always want to go to a bar, but I'd really rather just snuggle up at home with a good book.

87. What's the point of...

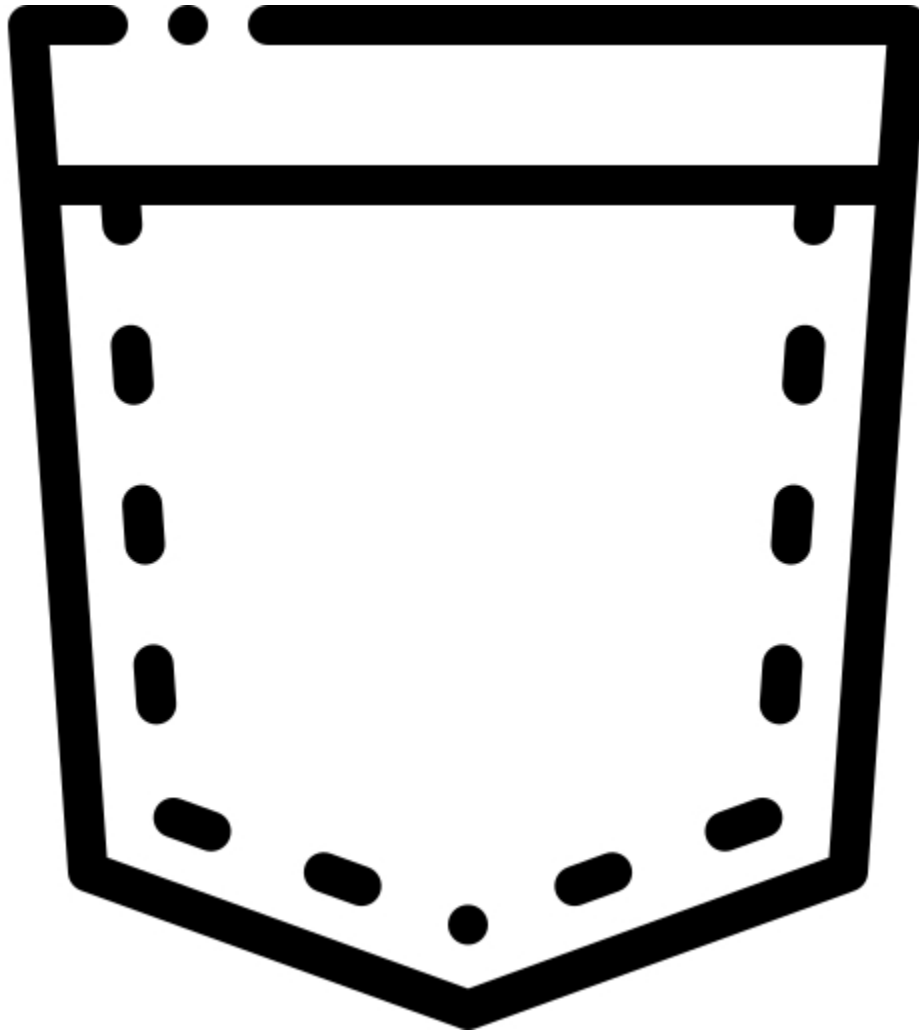
~ What's the purpose? (complaint) ~



What's the point of the highest setting on a toaster? Yes, I'll have my toast in ashes and smoke, please. I mean, really now.



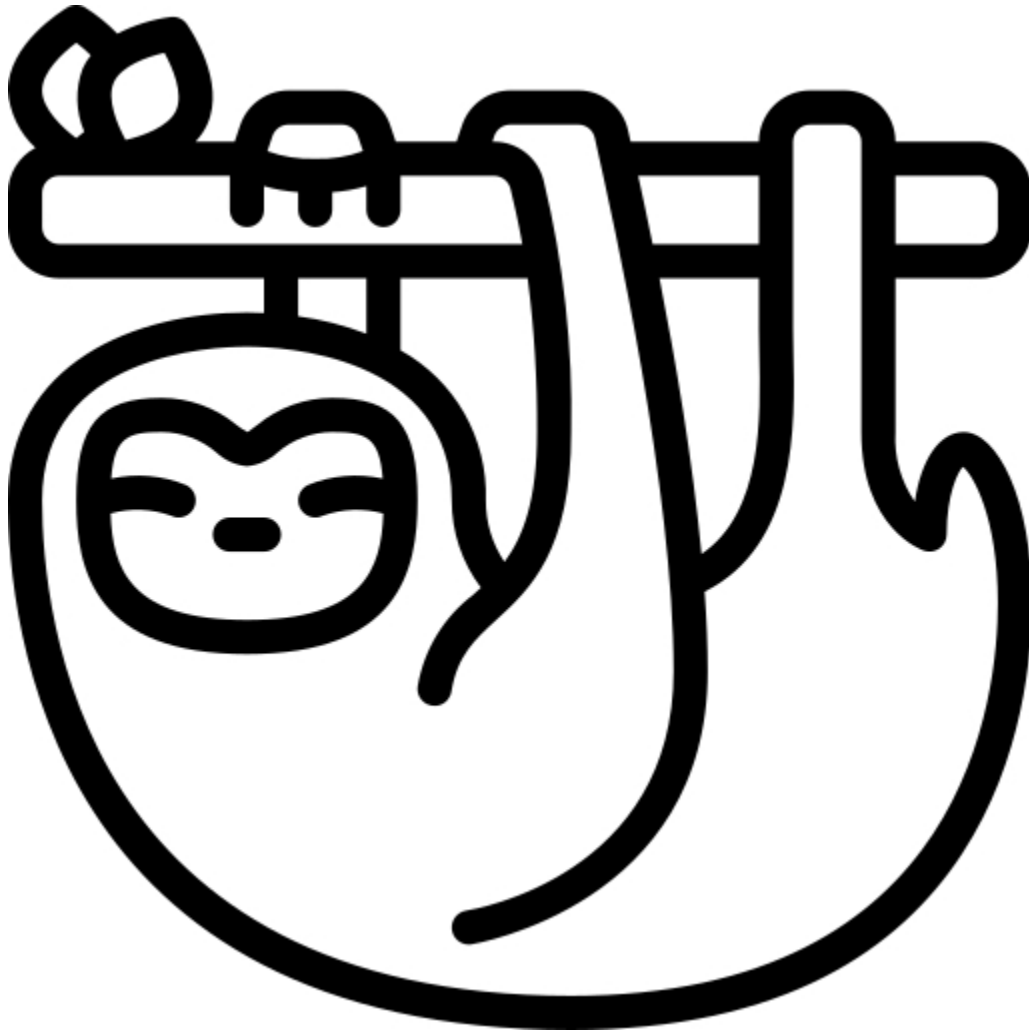
Mum, **what's the point of** making my bed if I'm going to unmake it in a few hours? Really, explain it to me please because I just don't get it.



What's the point of pockets in baby clothes? What does a baby need pockets for? Seriously! The fashion industry will literally sell us the skin off our backs.

88. When it comes to...

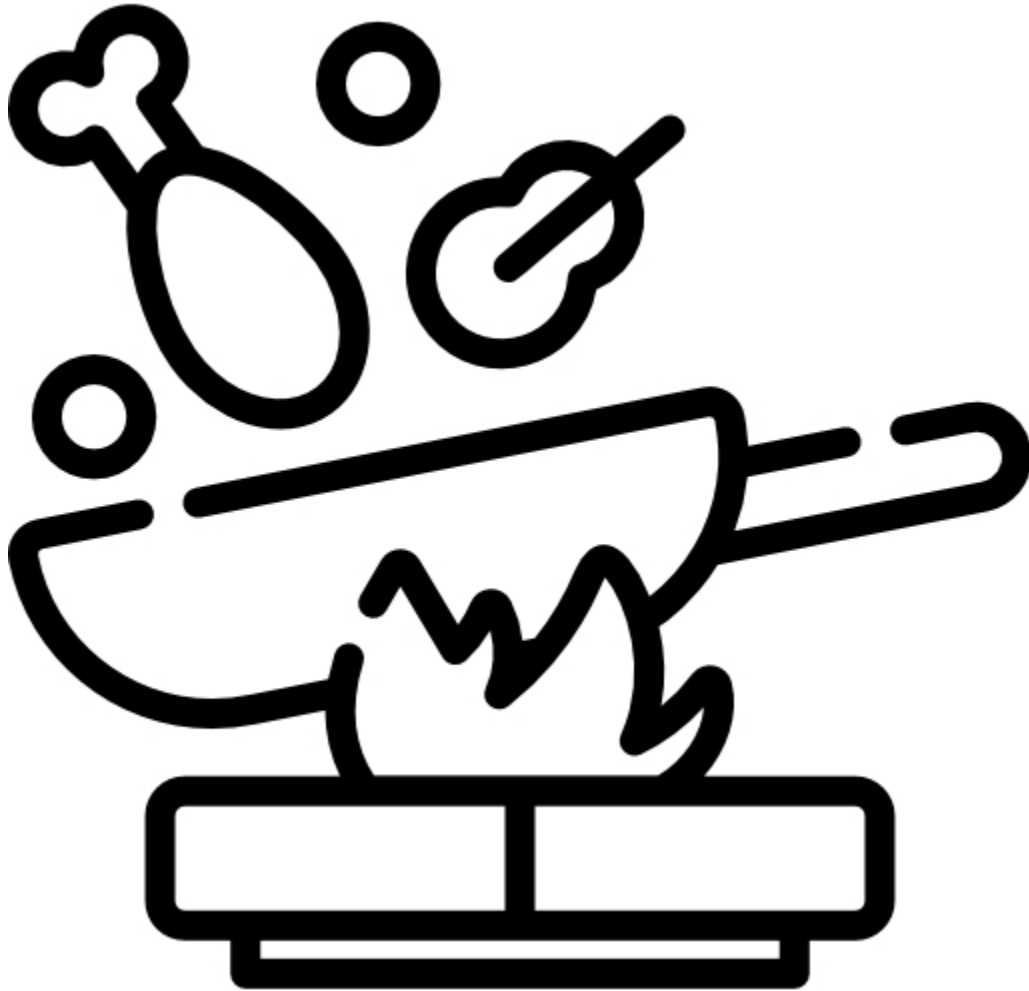
~ In relation to ~



You know I'm pretty lazy about doing things, but **when it comes to** you, love, I'm game for pretty much anything.



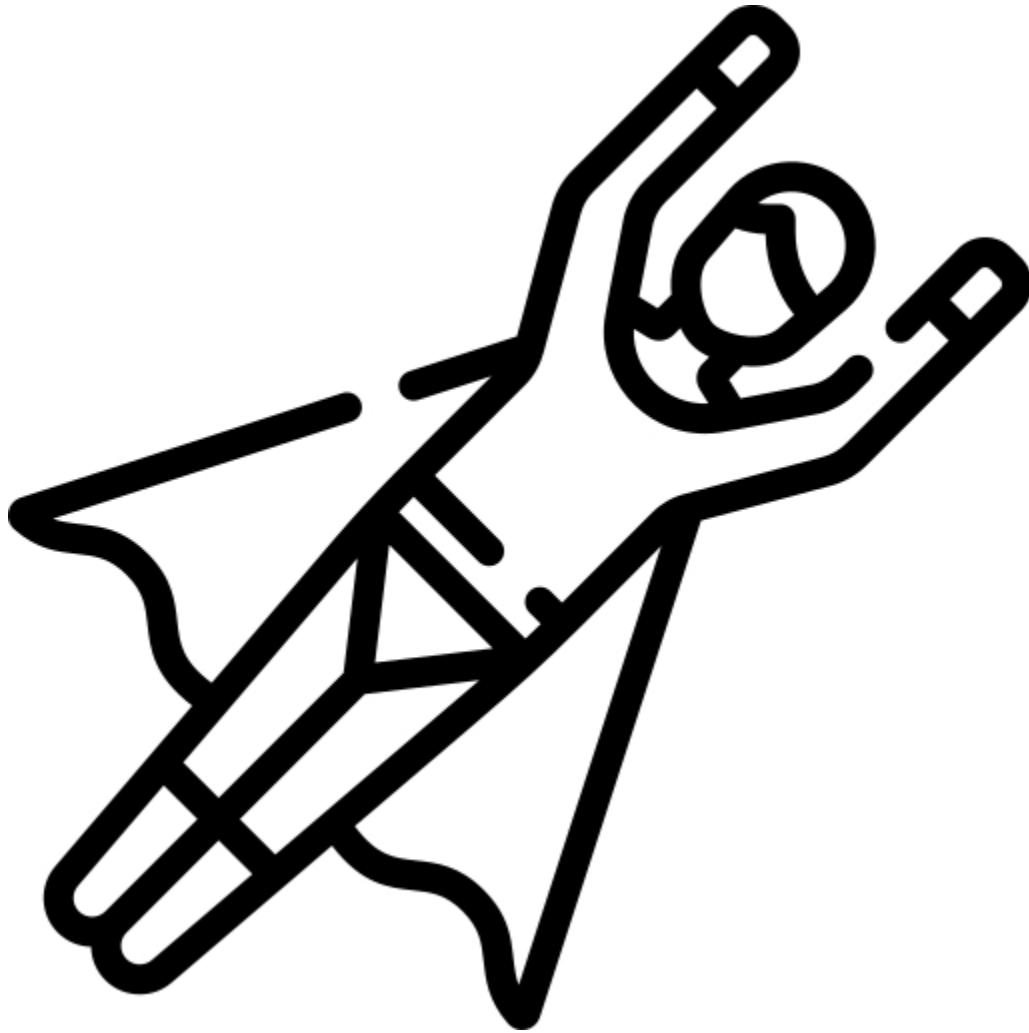
Gemma is a great actress, but I think she's a bit useless **when it comes to** directing films. Anne on the other hand is a pro!



I'm sorry to say this, Harry, but **when it comes to** cooking, your brother is the worst cook I know. He should just resign himself to IT, which is his real forte.

89. Whether... or not

~ No matter if; even if ~



Nobody bothered to ask me **whether or not** I wanted to see the new superhero film. So here I am trying not to fall asleep during the movie.



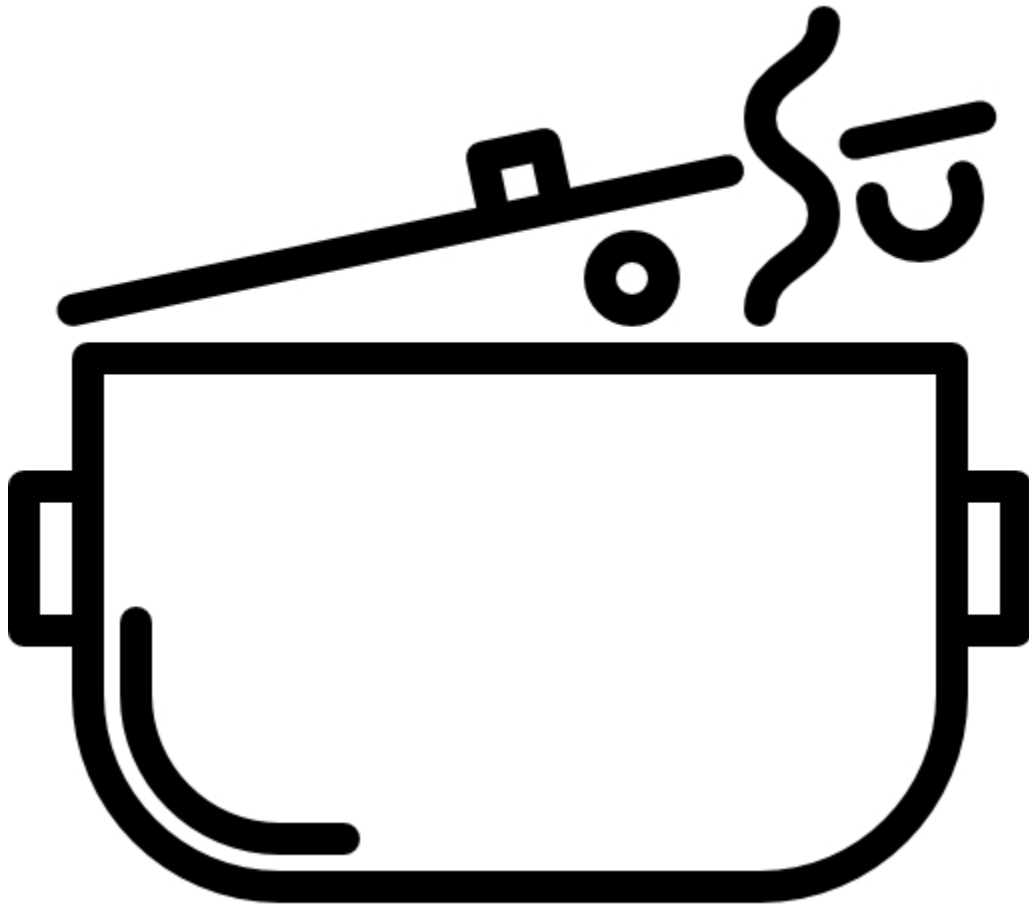
I'm determined to enrol at this university, **whether or not** you get accepted there, too. That's why emails and text messages were invented.



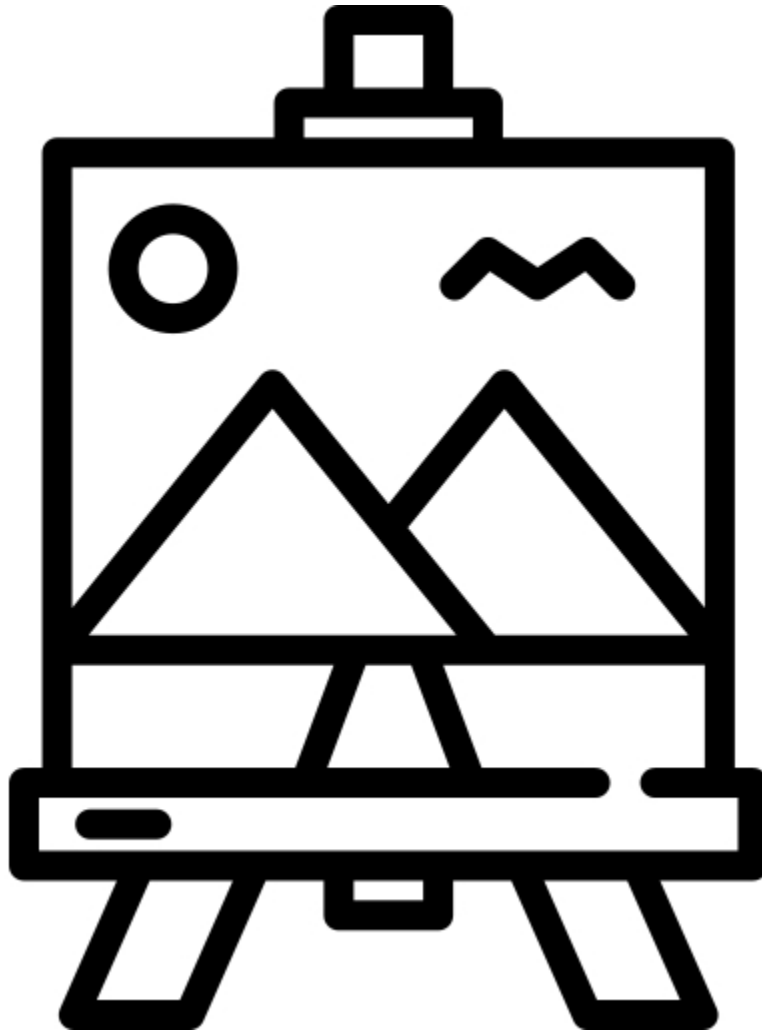
Whether you think so **or not**, I'm sure your haircut will be completely adorable. Besides, it's only hair. I'm sure the mohawk will grow out quickly.

90. While we're on the subject of...

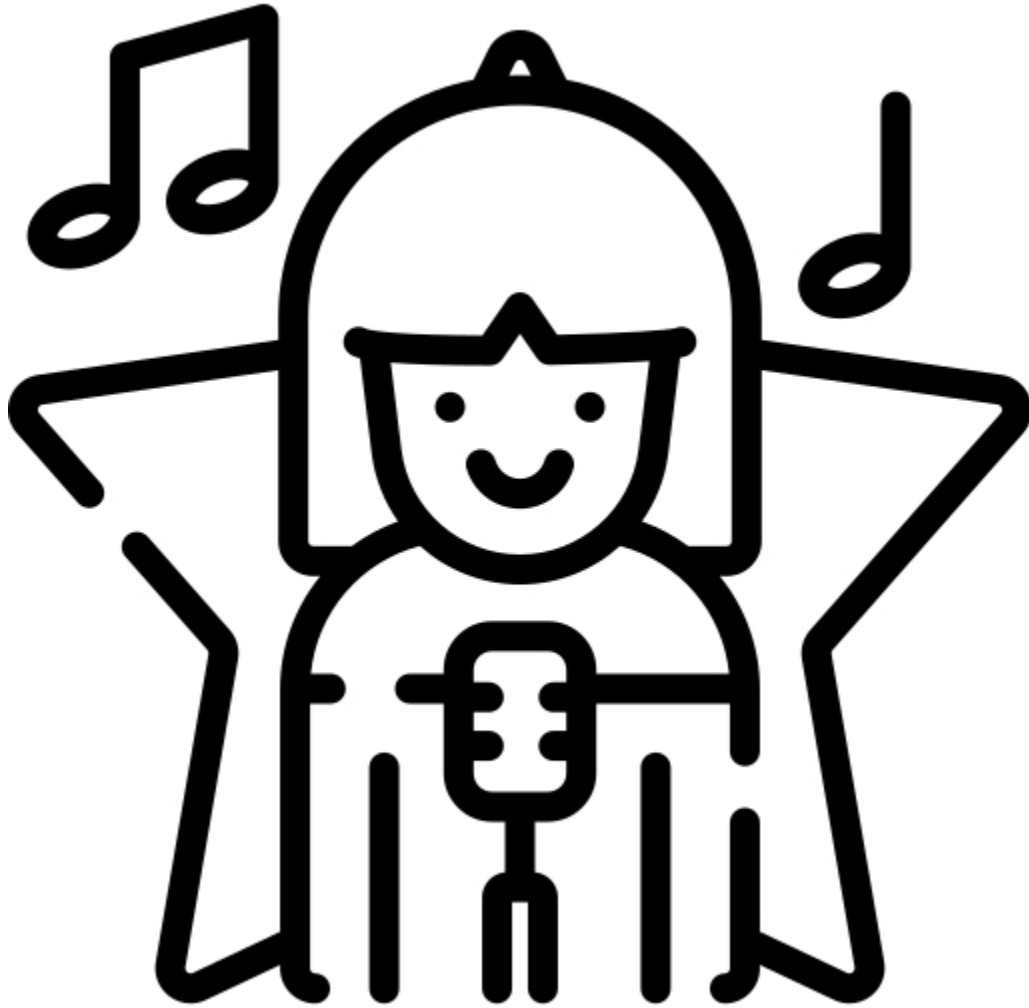
~ Since we're talking about... ~



While we're on the subject of things we don't like, I guess I should tell you that I've never liked your tuna noodle casserole.



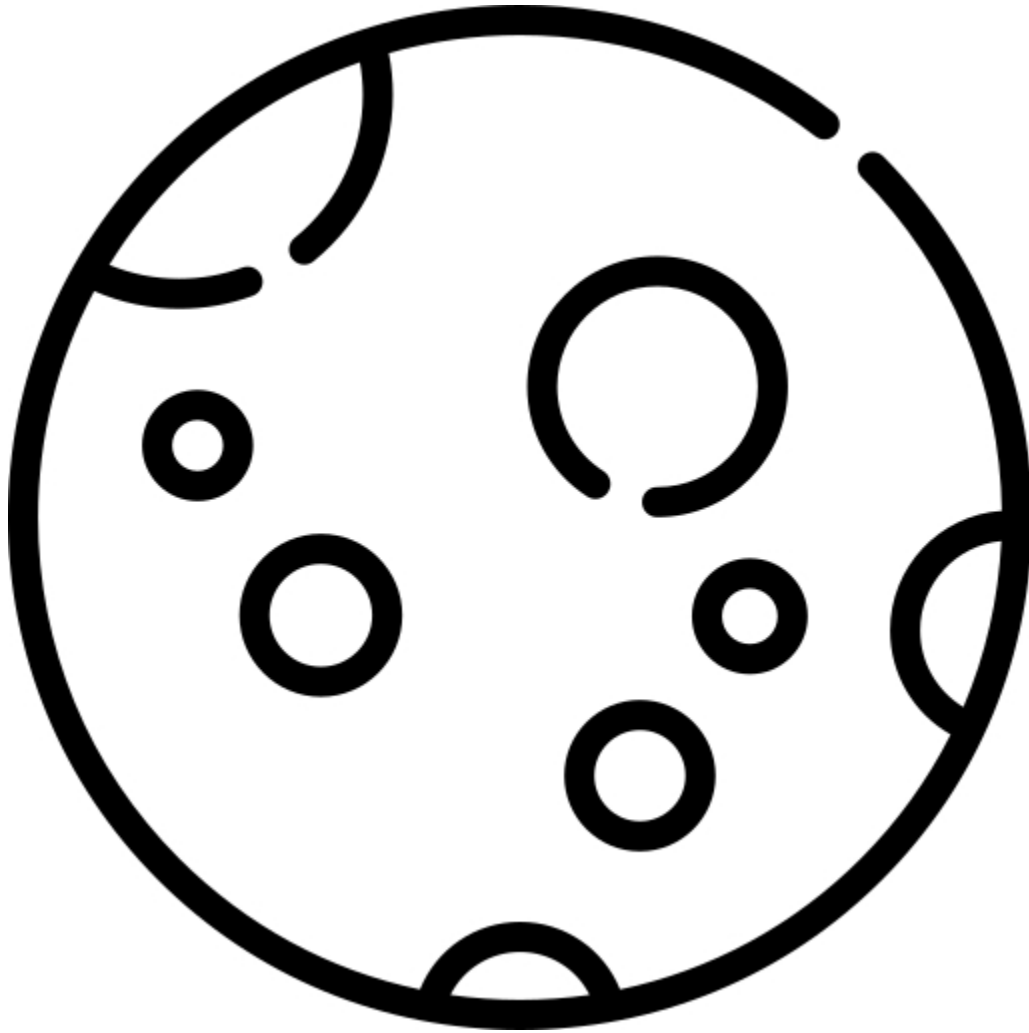
I'd like to draw your attention to this painting, **while we're on the subject of** things that look like a five-year-old could do.



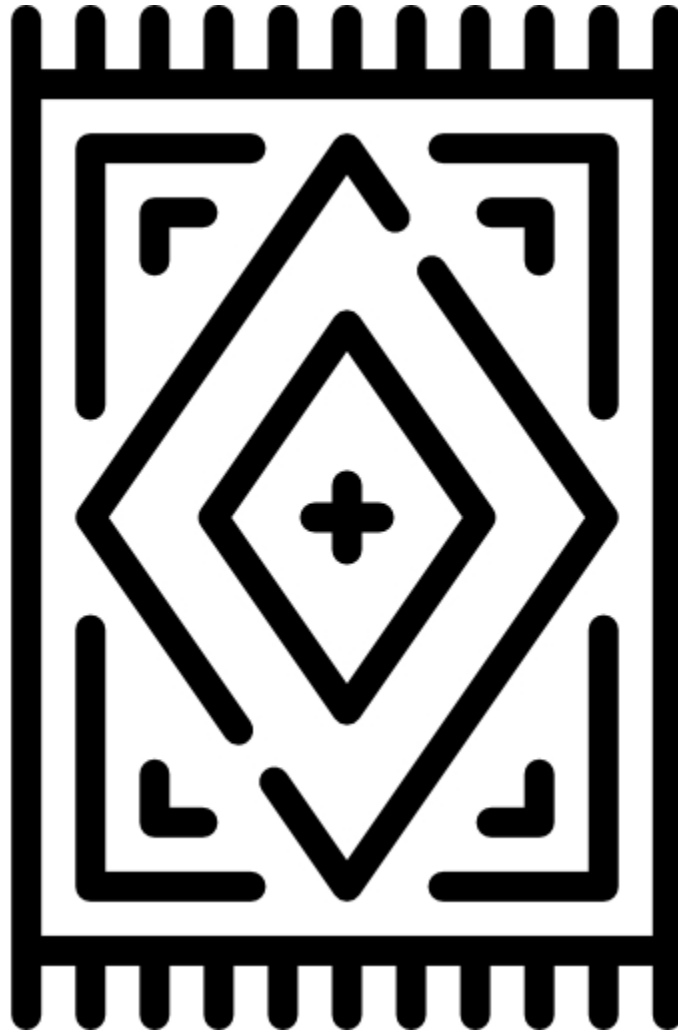
While we're on the subject of celebrities, have I ever told you about the time I met Adele? She was so incredibly nice and told me she loved my purse!

91. Why is there...?

~ Literal meaning ~

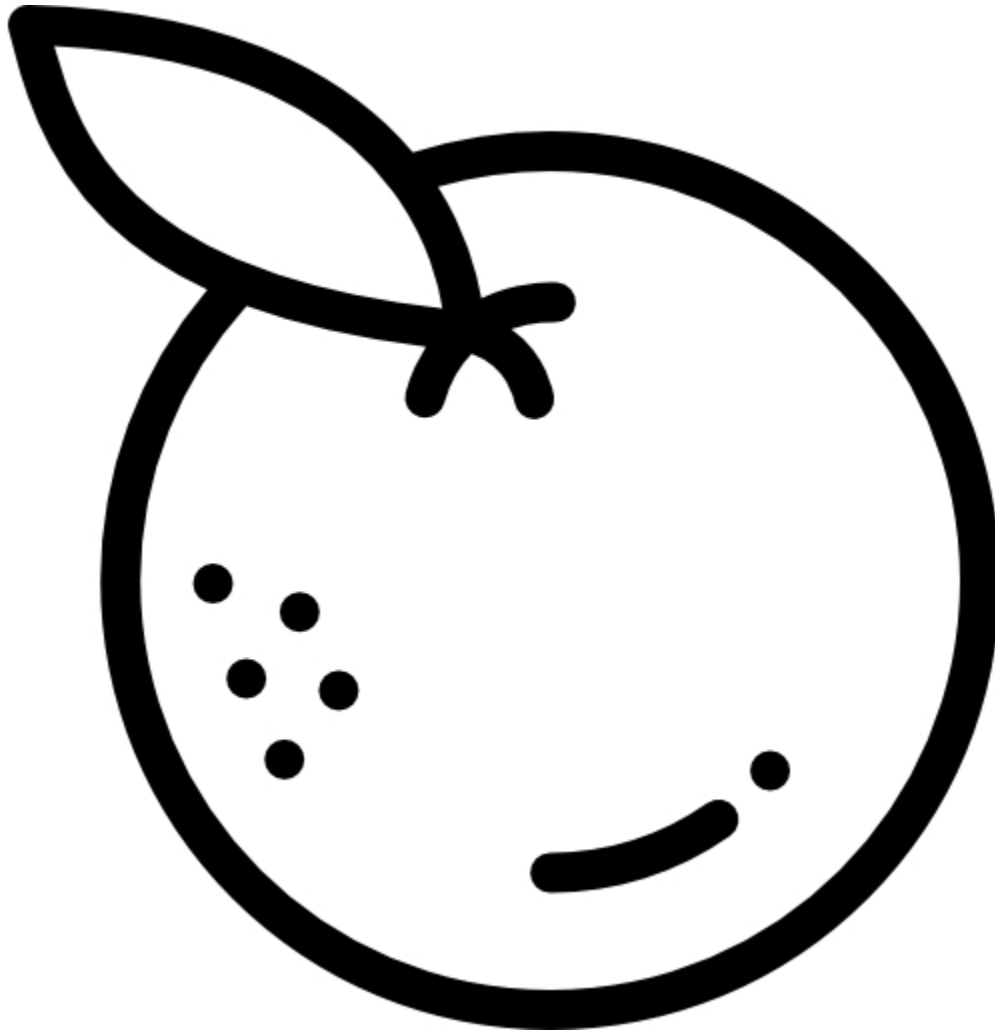


Why is there a pink moon in April, can anyone tell me? Is it something to do with the equinox and Easter?



A: **Why is there** a blue rug in my bedroom?

B: A blue rug? Do you mean the carpet? Surprising what you can find when you hang your clothes in the wardrobe.

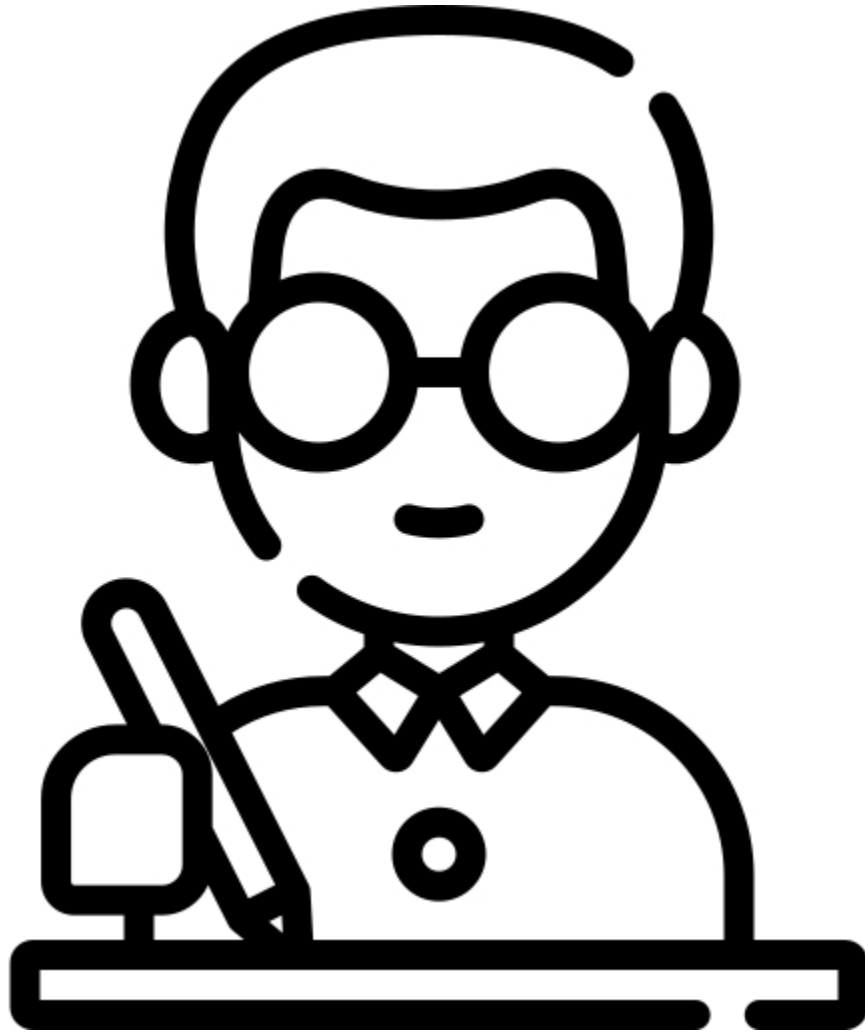


A: **Why is there** a shrivelled orange in the corner of your bathroom?

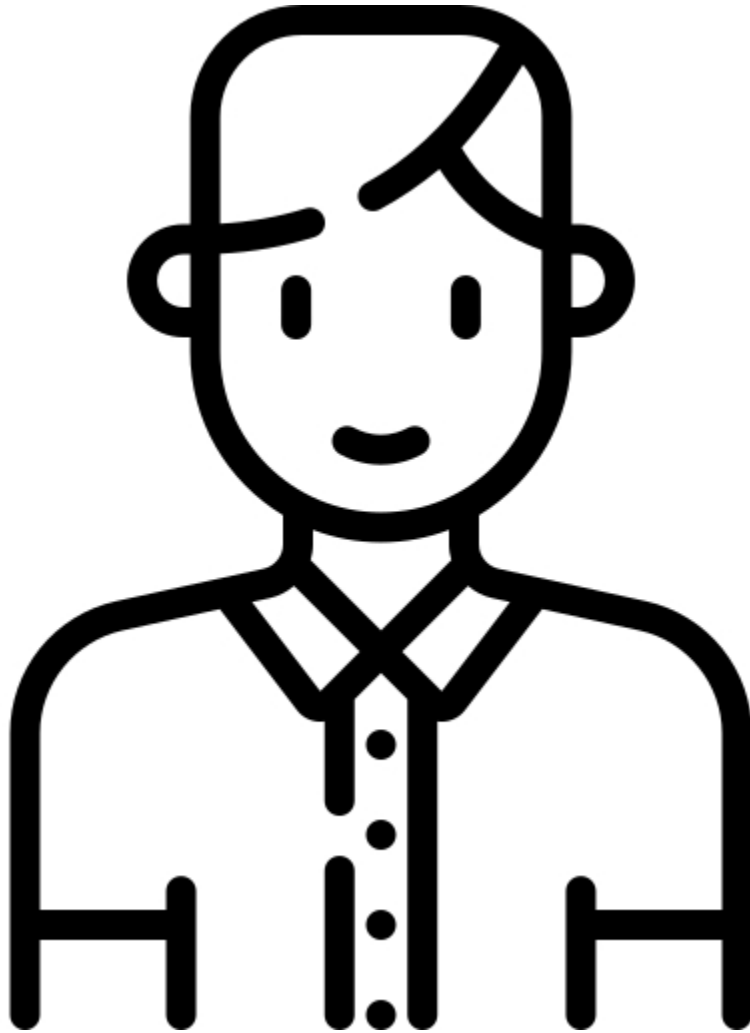
B: My mum says they keep spiders away. I don't think she's noticed the one on the ceiling.

92. Why not...?

~ "Why don't you" for short ~



If you have time later, **why not** pop along to the library – Stephen King will be there talking about the inspiration for his novel *The Shining*.



I was trying to balance our plates and cutlery in my hands, and a bottle of mayo under my arm, when my brother said, “**Why not** come back for the rest?”

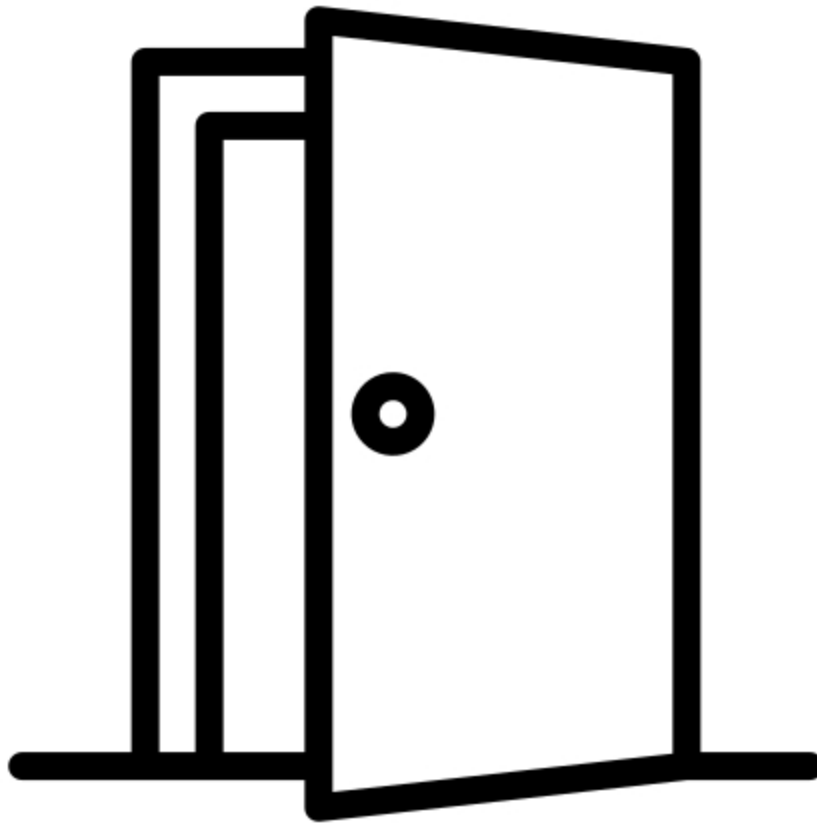


A: Pete wants me to go to the match tonight, but it's so cold and I don't even like football.

B: **Why not** just tell him you support the other team – he won't ask again.

93. Why should I...?

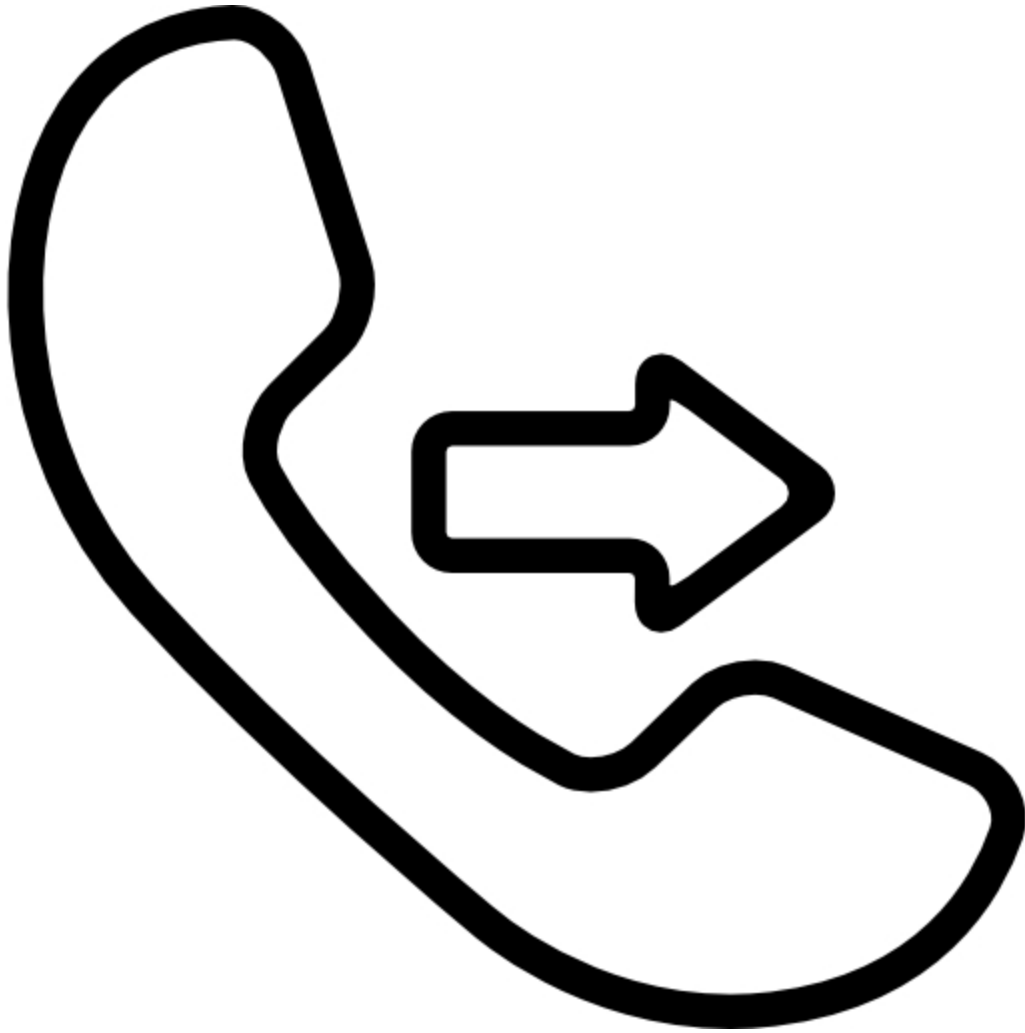
~ Literal meaning ~



Why should I apologise when his black eye wasn't my fault? I didn't know he was standing right behind the door when I pushed it open.



My brother and I always argue over the same thing, but **why should I** tidy up his mess before mum sees it, when my side of the room is immaculate?



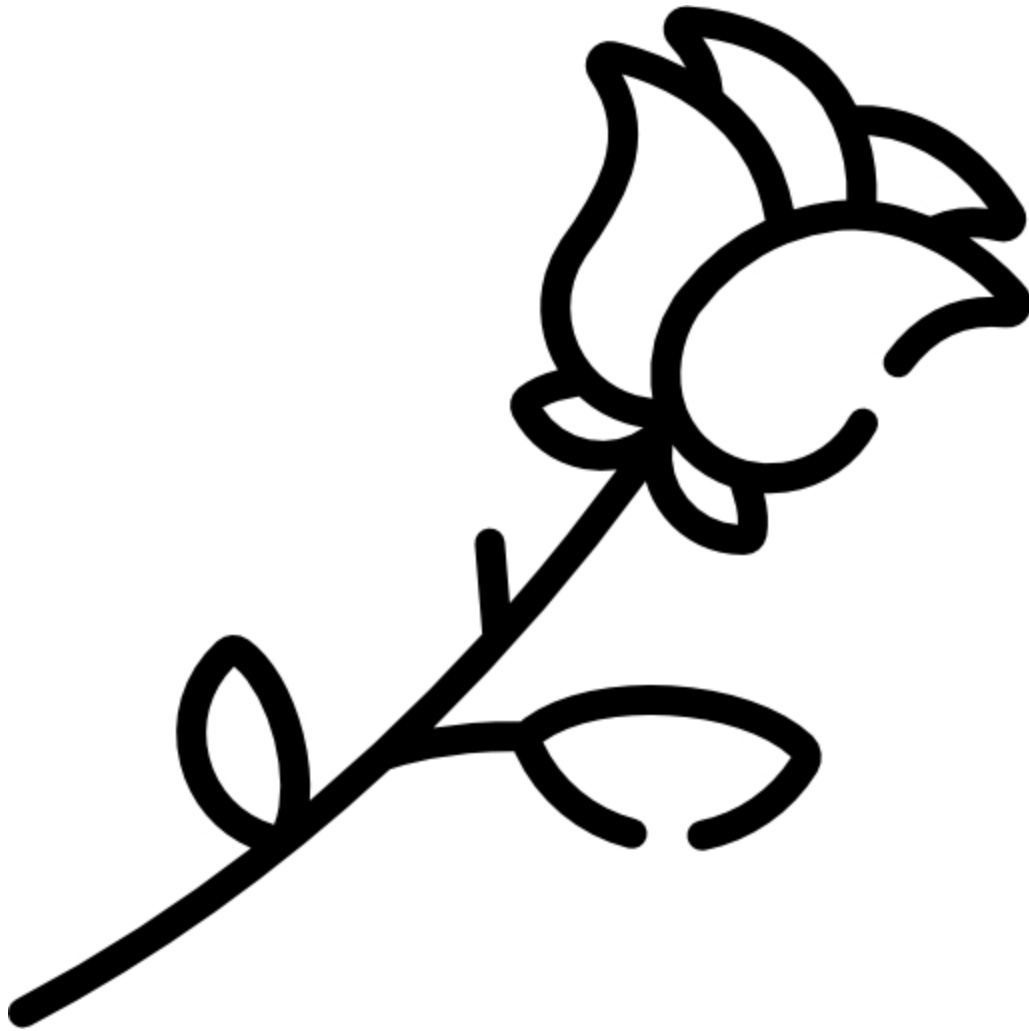
A: You should call Sam, speak to him about last night.

B: **Why should I** be the one to call when he stood me up?

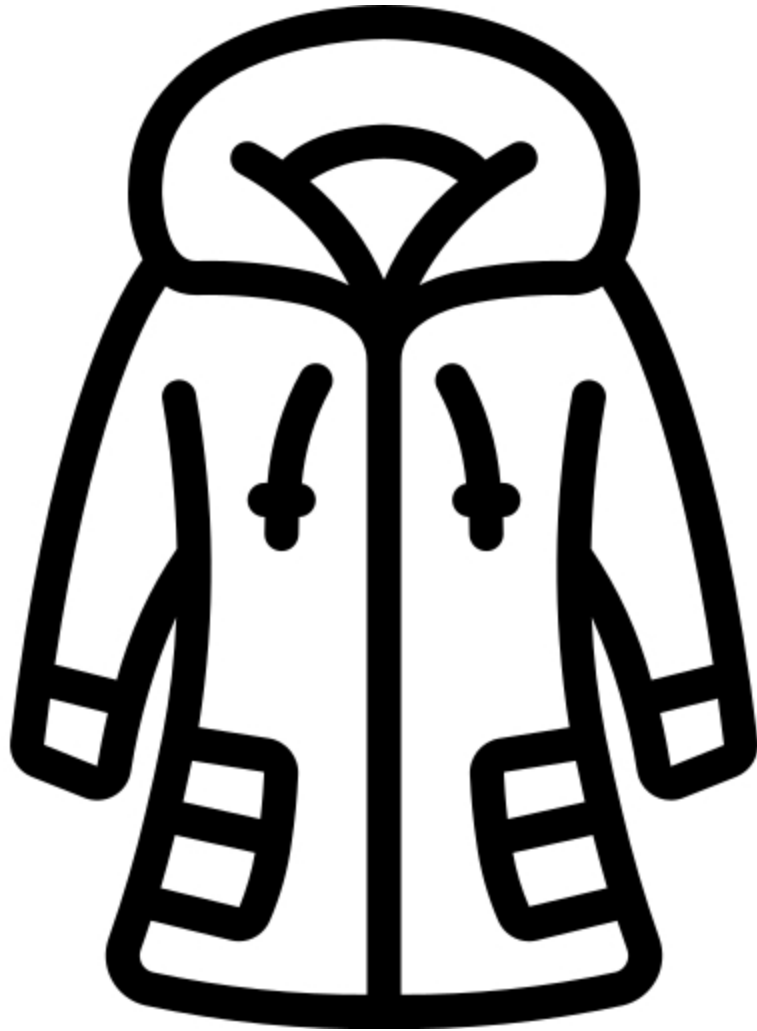
A: Because he was with me, planning your birthday surprise.

94. Why would I...?

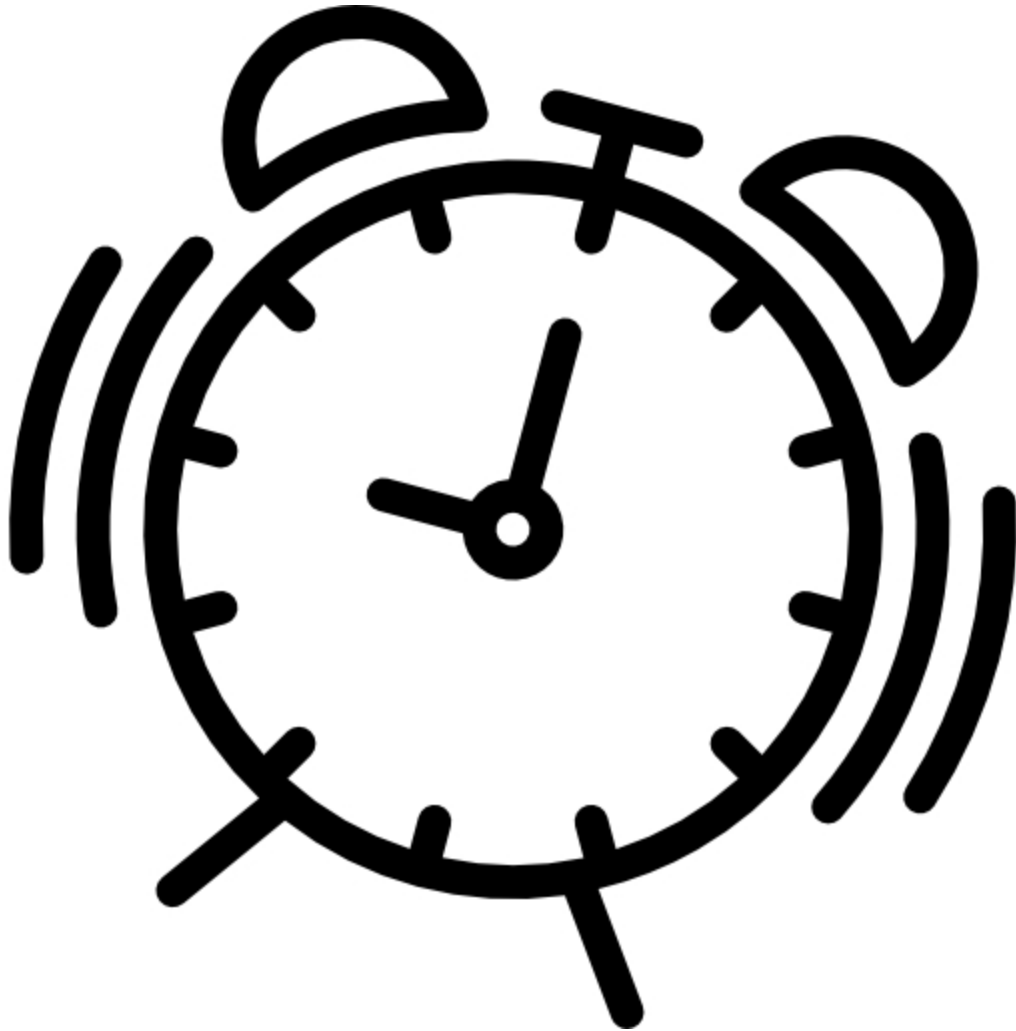
~ Literal meaning ~



Why would I spend a fortune on red roses for Valentine's Day, when I can buy them for less than half the price a week later?



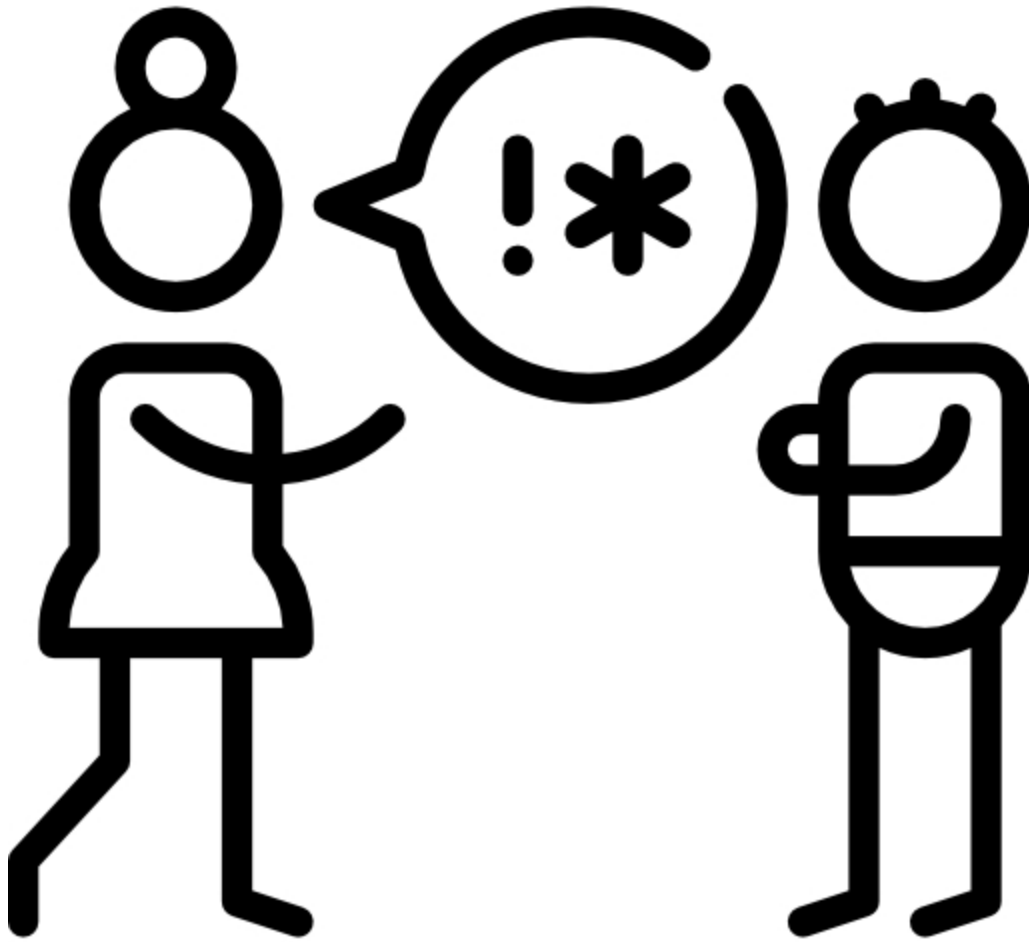
I was going to buy a new coat for the winter, but **why would I** when last year's coat hardly got worn because the weather was so mild.



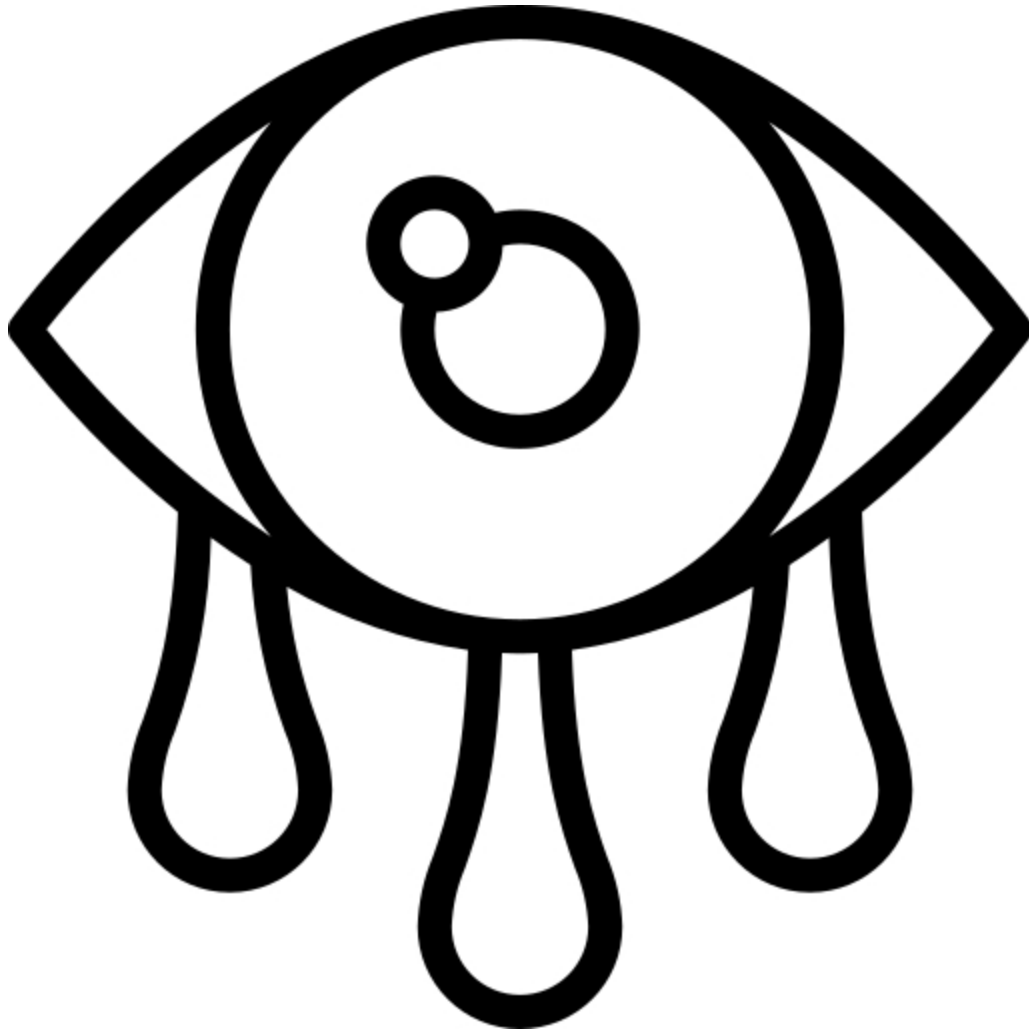
Why would I set my alarm at the weekend when I can wake up to the sun streaming through the window and my neighbour singing in the shower?

95. Would it kill you...?

~ You should do it (complaint) ~



Jesus! Patrick! **Would it kill you** not to be an a**hole? That's the third time today you've been mean to me.



Good God, Kelly, **would it kill you** to write your text messages with good grammar? You're making my eyes bleed.



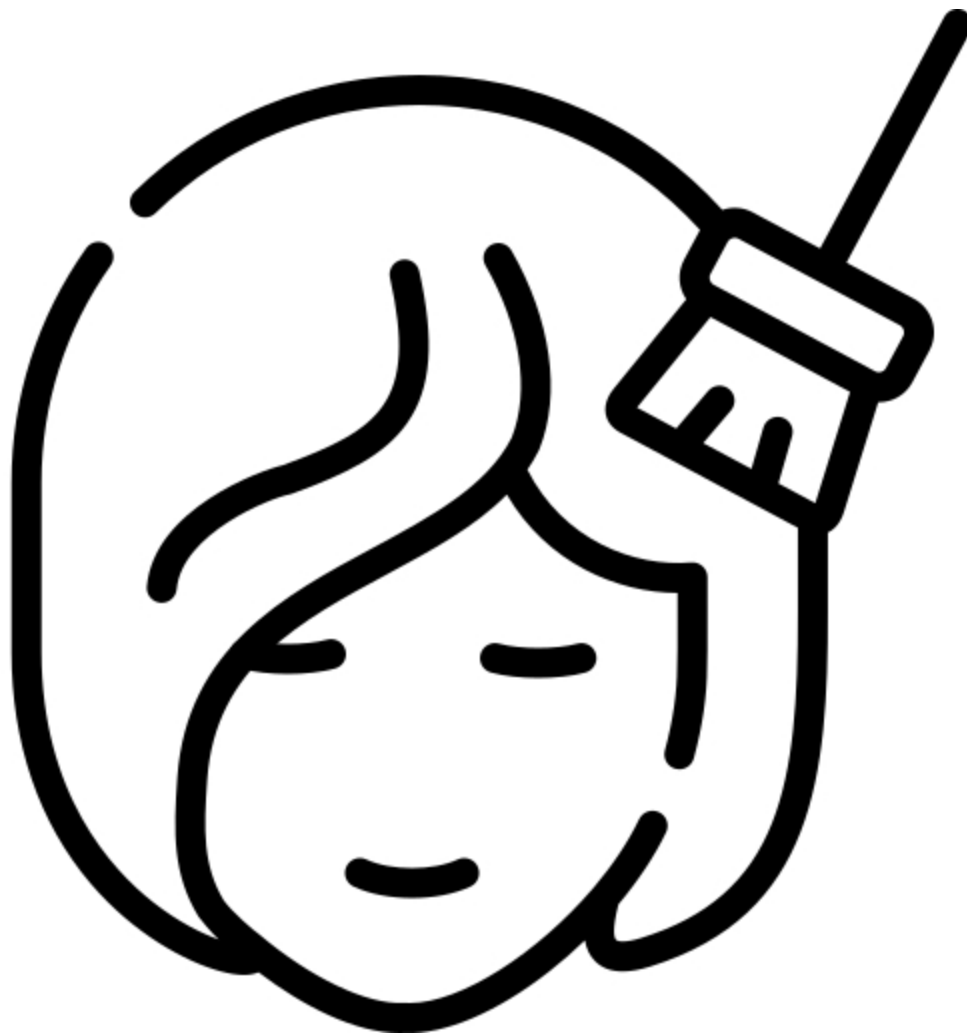
Would it kill you to relax and rest, Anna? I heard you started a master's degree a week after graduating from your bachelor's.

96. Would you care...?

~ Literal meaning ~



If I showed up late for your birthday dinner, **would you care?** Or better yet, if I didn't show up, would you even notice that I wasn't there?



Would you care one way or another if I dyed my hair? I've always wanted to try out a crazy colour like purple and I feel like now is the time to go crazy!



Would you care if I said I wanted to go home early? I know this party is important to you, but my head is really hurting and I think I should lie down.

97. Would you say...?

~ Do you think...? ~



Three times I've tried to catch the waiter's eye to ask him for the bill.
Would you say he's being rude or is he simply rushed off his feet?



Would you say dogs make better pets than cats, or does it depend on the owner? I love my dog, but I've always believed that cats are evil.



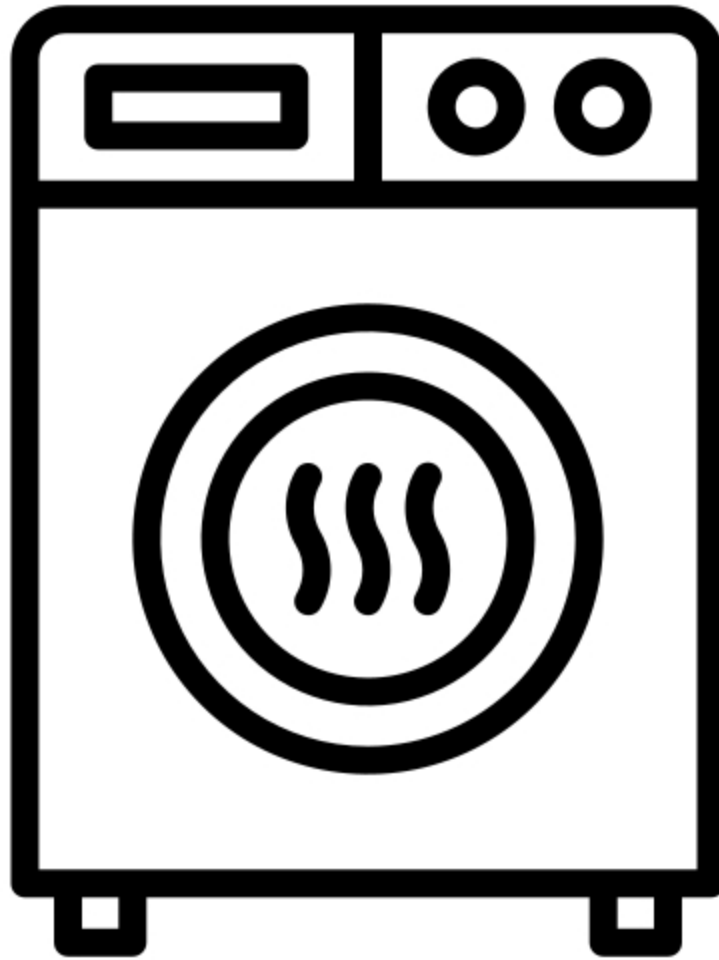
Would you say Ronnie was right agreeing to work late when his boss refused to pay him overtime for the extra hours? I wouldn't work for nothing.

98. Wouldn't it be... if...?

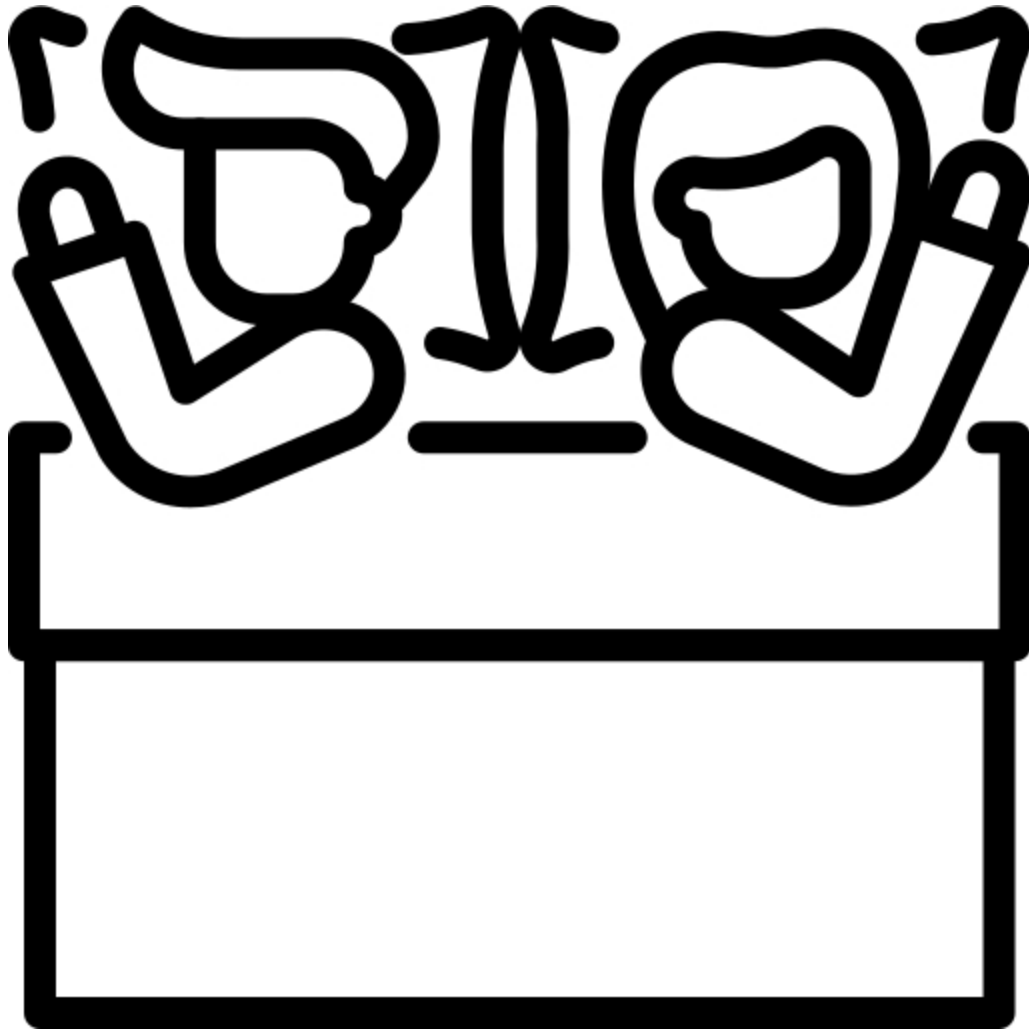
~ Literal meaning ~



Wouldn't it be nice if we could live our lives without damaging the planet? I hope one day we'll get to that point.



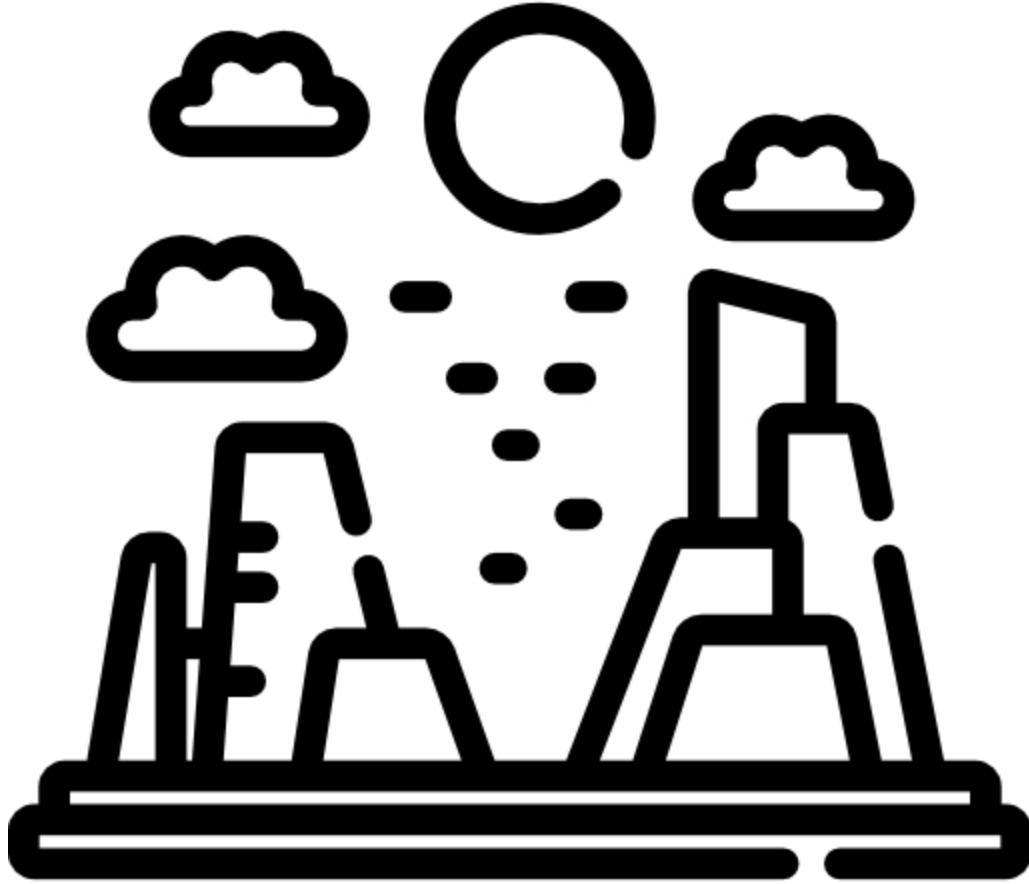
Dad, **wouldn't it be great if** you could just put yourself in the dryer for 10 minutes and come out three sizes smaller?



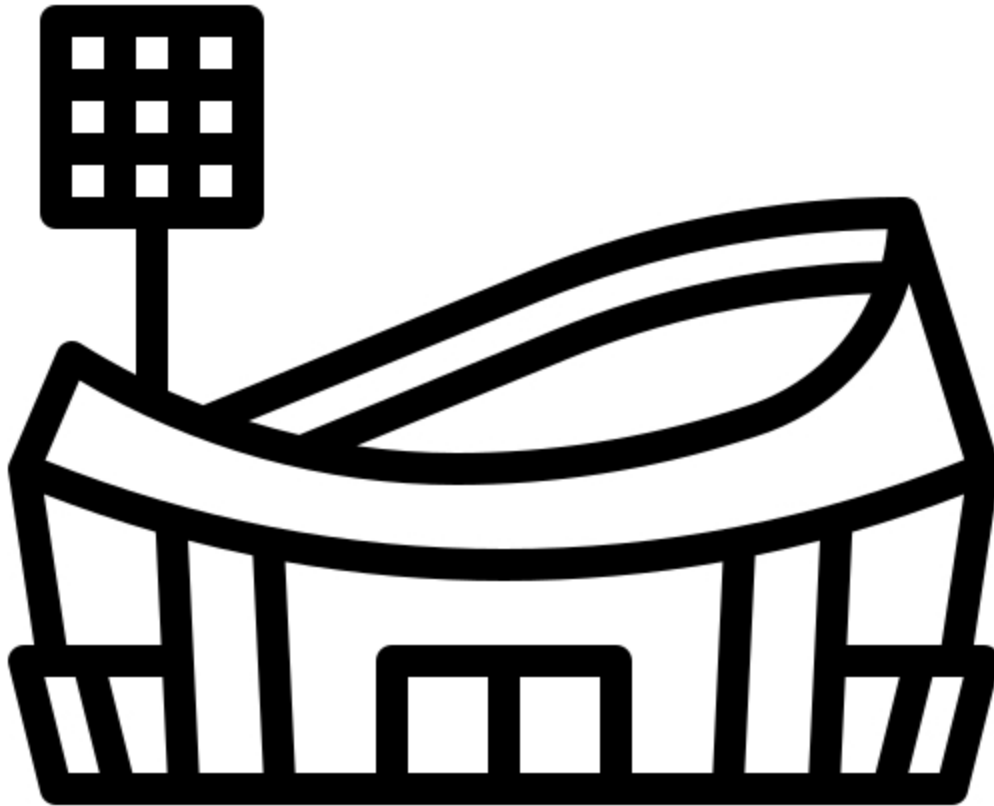
It's so cold in the room, Rosie. **Wouldn't it be better if** we slept together instead of in separate beds? Just kidding, what would your husband think?

99. You can never...

~ It's not possible to... ~



Until you've seen the Grand Canyon for yourself, **you can never** really imagine how immense and beautiful it is, especially at sunrise.



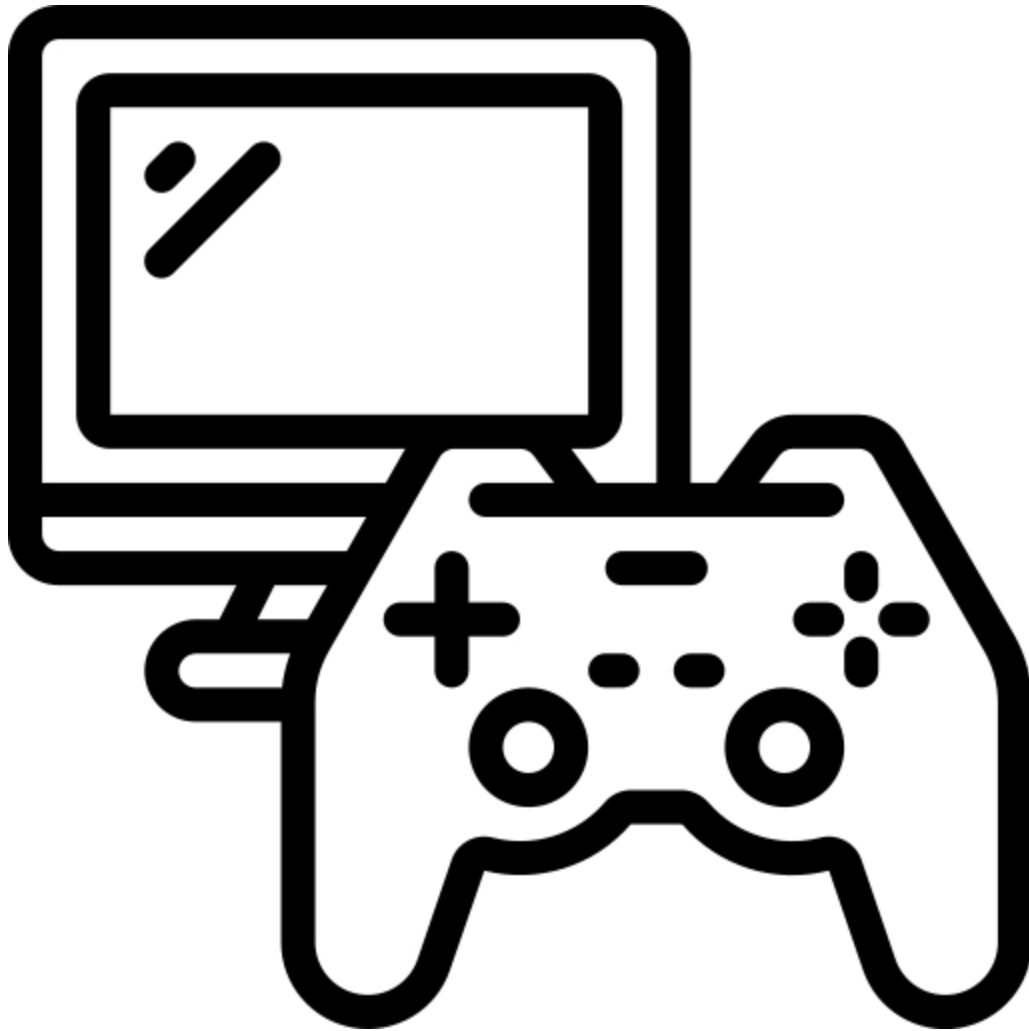
You can never tell who is going to win the game when Real Madrid and Barcelona play. They are at the same level of greatness.



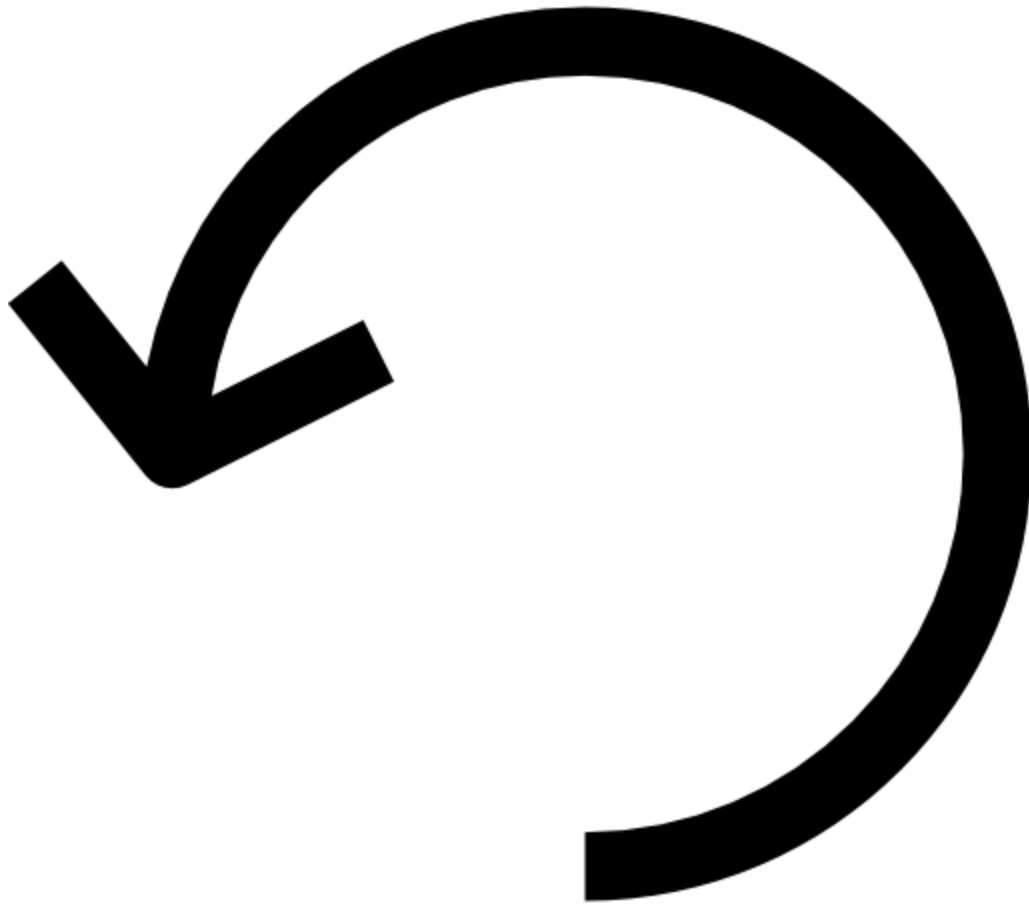
You can never anticipate how much someone will change your life for the better until you are brave enough to let them into your heart.

100. You shouldn't have...

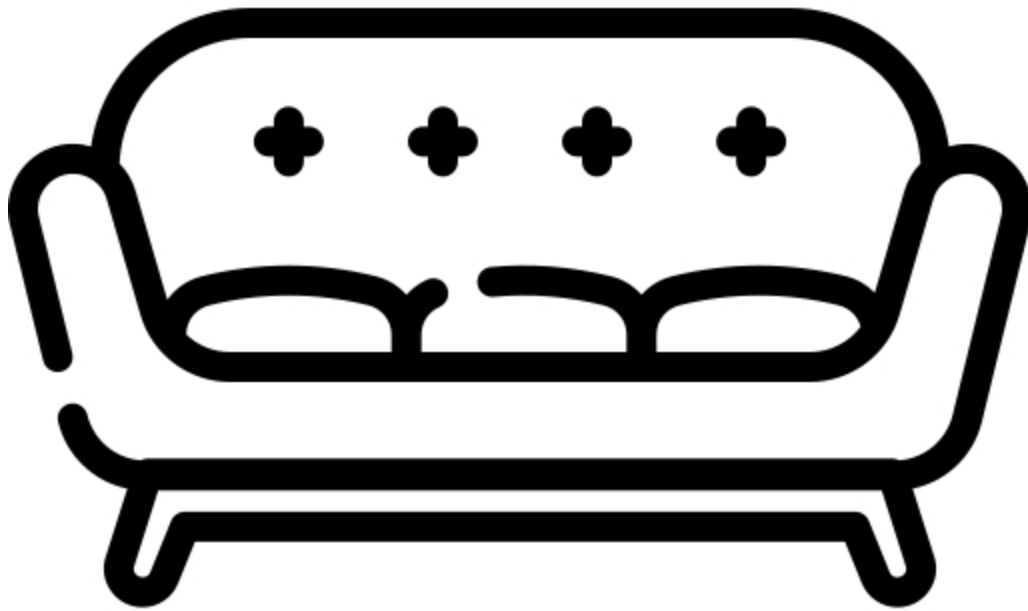
~ Literal meaning ~



You shouldn't have bought the latest *Grand Theft Auto*. I can't stop playing it and I think my girlfriend is going to leave me.



You shouldn't have doubted your ability to land that backflip. You belly-flopped because you doubted yourself. I know you'll do better next time.



You shouldn't have left the dog alone outside of his crate! Now look at how shredded our couch is! There's stuffing everywhere and I'm sure the silly dog has eaten some, too!

Before you go...

Congratulations, you did it! I hope you didn't cheat your way to the end and followed my recommendations for working with the sentence structures.

If you did so, you should now have plenty of sentence structures floating around in your head. And you may even have already **incorporated** many of them into **your speech**.

Inevitably, however, you may have also forgotten sentence structures you studied, or parts of them, or their meanings or even their uses, which can deter you from using them.

And that's totally **expected**.

In fact, the real aim of this book, which I didn't tell you about initially, is simply to **increase** your **awareness** of sentence structures.

Why, you may ask? To be in a position to **reinforce** them in your brain so that they are more likely to **become part** of your **speech**.

Allow me to explain.

In most cases, in order for the sentence structures you learn to make it into your speech, they need to be **reinforced** in your brain. This is in line with research as well as my experience [7].

As you can imagine, it can be difficult to commit things of which you are not aware to memory. Hence you first need to learn or become aware of the existence of sentence structures.

To illustrate, have you ever learnt a new word only to start **seeing** or **hearing** it **everywhere**? — if you haven't, I'm confident that you will. Suddenly, that word you might have never heard or seen before becomes ubiquitous.

The truth is that the word was **always** there. It's just that you were not **aware** of it. It could be compared to a type of background **noise**. Psychologists call this phenomenon the *Baader-Meinhof* effect.

Of course, with language learning, **nothing** is 100% **guaranteed** and some of the structures you have learnt may never make it into your speech even with reinforcement (the brain works in mysterious ways, you know).

And that's OK.

Even if **50%** make it, your spoken English will have **improved** a lot because:

- You will speak more fluently.
- You will have improved the quality of your expressions.
- You will speak more like a native speaker.
- Your English will be more succinct.
- You will speak more accurately.
- You will make fewer mistakes.
- You will speak with more confidence.

So, **how** do you **reinforce** the sentence structures you have learnt to increase the likelihood that they will end up in your spoken discourse?

Simple. By **using the structures** and by being **exposed** to them **repeatedly**.

By **using sentence structures**, I mean just that. The more you force yourself to use the structures that you want to become part of your speech (both in writing and speaking), the more likely it is that this will happen, as research suggests [8].

By **repeated exposure** I mostly mean:

- **Consuming native content** such as TV shows, video games, books, etc.
- Having **conversations** with **native** or proficient **speakers**.

Since the structures in this book are **widely used** by **native** speakers, they should come up quite a lot when doing either of these things, thus giving you repeated exposure to them.

Obviously, the more you do these activities, the more you expose yourself to the structures, likely resulting in greater reinforcement of those structures. Cognitive science research has shown that (in most cases) frequent exposure to language is key to keeping it in our long-term memory [9].

Regarding the **consumption** of native content, I'd like to point something out.

While I believe that when it comes to reinforcing sentence structures all native content is useful, I particularly find **watching media with English subtitles** to be the most beneficial (TV shows, films, etc).

I believe this is beneficial because when you watch media with subtitles you **hear** the sentence structures, you **see** them written down and you also see the **situations** in which they are used (and with which facial expressions, body language, etc.).

That's **three** simultaneous **sources** of **input** (if not more). And evidence suggests that it is easier to reinforce things in our memory when various areas of our brain are involved (e.g. the parts that have to do with reading, listening, or feelings) [10].

Moreover, researchers have found that watching media with English subtitles is effective in improving **grammar**, as well as **vocabulary** and **listening comprehension** [11]. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that watching media with subtitles should be effective in reinforcing sentence structures.

This **isn't to say** that you cannot reinforce sentence structures, for example, just by reading. I think you can and do, but not to the same extent due to the lack of audio-visual input.

Finally, as anecdotal evidence, I have observed on several occasions that students who read a lot and watch little media with subtitles tend to speak English less fluently than those who do the opposite.

So there you have it, **use** the structures in speaking and writing, **watch** lots of English television with subtitles, have **conversations** in English with native or proficient speakers, and you should be well on your way to incorporating most of the sentence structures you learnt in this book into your speech.

I hope that you enjoyed reading *100 English Sentence Structures for Speaking Fluency* as much as I enjoyed writing it. If so, please hop online and post a **review!** Reviews turn sad authors into happy authors. And happy authors make more books!

Don't forget to visit [my website](#) for resources and to see what I'm up to. Also, feel free to follow me on **Instagram** ([@drnickjames](#)). I'm currently posting little graphics illustrating English sentence structures and their usage. Who knows what else you will find when you get there?

Until we meet again!

Nick

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About the author



Dr Nick James is a keen lover of the English language. He's been helping students like you speak and sound like native speakers since 2007. He currently teaches spoken English online privately at drnickjames.com. He has shared his learning strategies and experience with students from over 30 countries; high school students, university students and business professionals alike. Dr James has also trained English teachers in the UK and Spain. He speaks English, Spanish, some Catalan and is currently learning Japanese. He is a published writer with peer-reviewed articles in prestigious international academic journals and handbooks, and has also

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Avian Daly is a researcher who is passionate about helping adults maximize their language learning opportunities. Although her current role at The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago, primarily involves research, she is no stranger to the teaching profession as she has taught English in Martinique, France and Italy, as well as French in her home country, Trinidad at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. She is a firm believer that language learning at all levels should be fun and meaningful. She speaks French, Spanish, and has learned some Chinese, French Creole, Japanese, Italian, Polish and Portuguese.



Alberto Llinares Serra is a language teaching enthusiast with more than a decade of experience in teaching English as a Foreign Language to adults. He has been teaching in *Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas* in Catalonia and València since 2015, and worked as a language consultant for the Valencian Department of Education. He has also taught Spanish both in the UK and Spain and has collaborated in writing and editing textbooks and other classroom materials in English, Spanish and Catalan.