

Ian Gilbert

the
compleat
thunks
book

 Independent Thinking Press

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A small number of Thunks® in this book have been published in *The Little Book of Thunks®* (978-184590062-5), *The Book of Thunks®* (978-184590092-2), *Independent Thinking* (978-178135055-3), on Twitter (@Thatiangilbert, although this account is no longer used by Ian Gilbert) and on www.thunks.co.uk.

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Thunks – A User’s Guide

We live, so they tell us, in a post-fact world. What they omit to tell us is that if we simply accept the fact that there are no facts, we’re all doomed.

It used to be that the truth counted a great deal, but now we have new words for the acceptable lies of influential people – ‘misremembering’ (US news anchor Brian Williams et al.); ‘misspeaking’ (Hillary Clinton et al.); ‘a mistake’ (MEP Nigel Farage); ‘an aspiration’ (MP Chris Grayling); ‘an extrapolation’ (MP Iain Duncan Smith); ‘a rich thesaurus of things that I’ve said that have ... been misconstrued’ (MP Boris Johnson); ‘short-circuited’ (Hillary Clinton again); ‘a series of possibilities’ (MP Iain Duncan Smith again); ‘mischaracterization of the intelligence’ (US government report into the claim that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction); ‘not an accurate description of the intelligence’ (UK’s Chilcot Report on the same); ‘an inverted pyramid of piffle’ (MP Boris Johnson again); ‘alternative facts’ (the Trump administration); ‘we can disagree with the facts ... Our intention is never to lie to you’ (the Trump administration again); ‘a euphemism’ (Trump himself, using a made-up word to explain the difference between his promises and reality).

Most humans are susceptible to believing what they are told by figures of authority such as parents, teachers, politicians and Rupert Murdoch. Indeed, you can argue that this is how we have survived so long and so well as a species. ('Don't eat that berry.' 'Don't stroke that sabre-toothed tiger.' 'Don't wake your father.') Put an actor with pristine white teeth in a pristine white lab coat and we are more likely to buy their toothpaste/moisturiser/life insurance/range of new lab coats. Put a heavily biased interpretation of the truth in large black letters below a masthead and we buy it, literally and metaphorically.

All of which means that now, more than ever, we need to be asking questions, to be looking deeper, to be challenging those figures of authority, to be becoming obstreperously curious. In short, to be thinking for ourselves.

And, if you agree, then think of Thunks as your thinking training ground.

The way a Thunk works is deceptively simple. It is a question that is specifically designed to elicit any one of the following answers:

1. Yes
2. No
3. Neither

4. Both
5. Something else
6. All of the above
7. None of the above

In other words, it's not about the answers at all and, as in life, there are none at the back of the book. After all, an answer is a door closed, a cul-de-sac to further thinking, the end of the cognitive line and, as such, answers are highly overrated. With a Thunk, the answer is quite simply not as important as the thinking, reasoning, logic or panic employed to arrive at it and to justify (or deviate from) it in any conversation that ensues.

Covering as wide a variation of topics as possible, from love and lies to parking a car and molesting robots, there are Thunks here for all ages, tastes and prejudices. Simply dive in anywhere and start thinking for yourself.

The future of the world depends on it.

The Thunks

90. Are we both watching
the same radio play?

91. Are you who you say you are?

92. Is anything not science?

93. Is conscription a form of slavery?

94. Do we all grow old at the same rate?

**95. Are you
responsible for
the actions of your
democratically
elected leaders?**

**96. Is it more of a
romantic gesture to
buy someone flowers
on any day but
Valentine's Day?**

97. Should everything be free?

98. Does water float?

99. Can you miss a train you
didn't know was leaving?

100. Do we grow tomatoes?

101. Does your dog train
you to throw sticks for it?

628. Is this it ...?



Ian Gilbert is one of the UK's leading educational innovators, speakers and writers who has over 20 years' experience working with young people and educationalists around the world. He is the founder of Independent Thinking Ltd, the editor at Independent Thinking Press and the author of a number of titles including *Why Do I Need a Teacher When I've Got Google?*. In 2008 *The Little Book of Thunks* won the Society of Authors' first education book award as 'an outstanding example of traditionally published non-fiction that enhances teaching and learning'.

Some of these Thunks were previously published in *The Book of Thunks*, ISBN 978-184590092-2, *The Little Book of Thunks*, ISBN 978-184590062-5 and *Independent Thinking*, ISBN 978-178135055-3.

A Thunk is a beguiling question about an everyday thing that stops you in your tracks and helps you start to look at the world in a whole new light.

The Compleat Thunks Book might well tell the reader more about themselves than they already knew. I certainly recommend it.

Johnny Ball, TV presenter and science enthusiast

Imagine a world where success isn't getting the answer right, but rather being brave enough to take on the question – allowing a little grapple to develop into a full-on wrestling match before pausing only to laugh out loud at yourself and subsequently find new ground. That's *The Compleat Thunks Book*. It allows, no, actively encourages you to change your mind in the middle of making a point!

Jaz Ampaw-Farr, Director, Why First Ltd, speaker and *The Apprentice* candidate

A fabulously entertaining book. Whether you read it alone or read it with friends, these Thunks will unleash your inner 'why?' and make you think.

Graham Brown-Martin, author and broadcaster

This book is about developing wisdom. The reader is required to pause, think and analyse their thoughts before coming to a conclusion – a skill that will be essential for success in the modern world.

Floyd Woodrow, author of *Elite!* and *The Warrior, the Strategist and You*

If a major educational illness is dry and arid rote learning, then Thunks are a superb antidote. They encourage true independent thinking.

Ben Walden, Director, Contender Charlie

I wholeheartedly recommend *The Compleat Thunks Book* for school-age philosophers and any adult who is looking for a great mind-stretch.

Andy Gilbert, thinking engineer and developer of the Go MAD Thinking system

