

19. Synectics

1. **Which is wiser? a pen or a pencil?**

A pen is wiser than a pencil because it must “think” first, deliberation not speed, dictates its choices. Because it is not erasable, it must think before it writes.

2. **Which is easier to forgive? a street or a sidewalk?**

A sidewalk is easier to forgive than a street because accidents there are not as bad. Anyway, a sidewalk is known, a neighbor; a street can be a complete stranger.

3. **Which is smarter? a clock or a calendar?**

A calendar is smarter than a clock because it has to know more -- national holidays, phases of the moon, seasons of the year, birthdays, how the date moves through the days of the week, even leap year. The clock only needs to know 12 hours and an a.m. or p.m. Just tick tock or rather tick tick tick (See Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending*.)

4. **Which is easier to teach? a question or an answer?**

An answer is much easier to teach than a question; it can be memorized and used over and over. A question is open to possibilities, always changing with new information; many things, not a one thing.

6. **Which is more fearful? new or old?**

New is more fearful than old because new is unknown; even the most fearful old has been faced . . . and survived.

13. **Which is more suspenseful? rain or snow?**

Rain is more suspenseful because you can see it, off in the distance, streaking the sky. You can hear the rain, even in the darkest night. Even when you don't get the rain itself, the rainbow announces how close you've been and what you've missed.

14. **Which has less charm? a signature or an autograph?**

A signature has less charm because it has no sentimental value; it's all about recognition and repetition and can even be “signed” by a machine. An autograph is supposed to be unique, stylish, almost unreadable -- your own mark on the world.

15. **Which is more trustworthy? history or literature?**

History changes with each discovery of new facts, with changing values, with each new historian who writes it. Literature is always universal and yet always an individual truth; something for the ages. The Odyssey is truer now than it was in 800 B.C.E.

17. **Which is sadder? seek or find?**

Seek is sadder than find because it means you lost something.

18. **Which costs more? a home or a house?**

A family living out of their car or in a shelter (no house) can still be at home . . . so a home can cost nothing at all. Yet, at the same time, a home costs more because you invest yourself in it as well as money.