An engaging resource for learning about research in the social sciences and honing critical thinking skills

Sylvia Henel
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In the next **10 minutes** we will...

- **See** what *freakonomics.com* looks like
- **Review** the kinds of *podcast stories* posted
- **Learn** how to **adapt** an *episode* for an *ESL* class
- **Find out** what students can **do** with an episode of *Freakonomics Radio*
Trust Me

Societies where people trust one another are healthier and wealthier. In the U.S. (and the U.K. and elsewhere), social trust has been falling for decades — in part because our populations are more diverse. What can we do to fix it?

November 10, 2016 @ 12:00am
by STEPHEN J. DUBNER
15 COMMENTS

BONUS EPISODE: How Much Does the President Really Matter?

This BONUS Freakonomics Radio episode is an old one we thought you might want to hear in light of our very dramatic and surprising Presidential election. It’s called “How Much Does the President Really Matter?” The U.S. president is often called the “leader of the free world.” But if you ask an economist or a Constitutional scholar how much […]

November 9, 2016 @ 3:43pm
by STEPHEN J. DUBNER
3 COMMENTS

Strange Danger: TMSIDK Episode 1

Did you know there is one particularly dangerous time of day to vote? If not, you’re not alone. Neither did the celebrity panelists on the first episode of Tell Me Something I Don’t Know: Debora Spar, president of Barnard College; Anthony Marx, president of the New York Public Library; and Andy Zaltzman, comedian.

November 6, 2016 @ 11:36pm
by FREAKONOMICS
3 COMMENTS
On the Radio

**Do More Expensive Wines Taste Better?**

Season 6, Episode 10 When you take a sip of Cabernet, what are you tasting? The grape? The tannins? The oak barrel? Or the price? Believe it or not, the most dominant flavor may be the dollars. Thanks to the work of some intrepid and wine-obsessed economists (yes, there is an American Association of Wine [...]  

November 11, 2016 @ 6:30pm  
by FREAKONOMICS  
1 COMMENT

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**Should We Really Behave Like Economists Say We Do?**

Season 6, Episode 9 You have perhaps come across the phrase homo economicus, which describes a model for human behavior as seen through the lens of economics. In this hour, you’ll hear Freakonomics Radio producer Greg Rosalsky embark on a long and tortuous process to live his life like homo economicus. Is this even possible? [...]  

November 4, 2016 @ 6:30pm  
by FREAKONOMICS  
6 COMMENTS

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**Has the U.S. Presidency Become a Dictatorship?**

Season 6, Episode 8 Sure, we all pay lip service to the Madisonian system of checks and balances. But as one legal scholar argues, presidents have been running roughshod over the system for decades. The result? An accumulation of power that’s turned the presidency into a position the founders wouldn’t have recognized. At the same [...]  

October 28, 2016 @ 6:30pm  
by FREAKONOMICS  
2 COMMENTS

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**Think Like A Child (Rebroadcast)**

Season 6, Episode 7 On this week’s episode of Freakonomics Radio: Why would anyone want to think like a child? Aren’t kids just sloppy, incoherent versions of us? Hardly. As Stephen Dubner and Steve Levitt describe in their book Think Like A Freak, it can be very fruitful to think like a child. And then, how can we [...]  

October 21, 2016 @ 6:30pm  
by FREAKONOMICS  
3 COMMENTS
Radio show host

Stephen Dubner

How to Save $1 Billion Without Even Trying

Season 5, Episode 20

On this week’s episode of Freakonomics Radio: Doctors, chefs, and other experts are much more likely than the rest of us to buy store-brand products. What do they know that we don’t? And if we all did like they do, how much fatter might our wallets be?

Then, imagine a fantasy world that’s exactly as the world is today except that two things are missing: alcohol and marijuana. And then imagine that tomorrow, both of them are discovered. What happens now? How are each of them used — and, perhaps more importantly, regulated? How would we weigh the relative benefits and costs of alcohol versus marijuana?
Converting a Research Study to Edutainment

Start by asking the provocative questions Dubner poses to his audience:

"Can you think of a painless way to save $1 billion that would NOT affect how people feel or their quality of life?"
Survey what students think advertising & branding are primarily about:

“Are they...

a) fundamentally about trying to inform consumers?

b) really about trying to confuse people and make consumers pay more money than they should?
Discuss Differences between Name Brands and Generics

Elicit students’ opinions on *premium vs. store brands* with an activity

“How do you choose?”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Which one will you buy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>baking soda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>orange juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Save $1 Billion Without Even Trying

March 4, 2016 @ 6:01pm
by Freakonomics

Season 5, Episode 20

On this week’s episode of Freakonomics Radio: doctors, chefs, and other experts are much more likely to buy cheaper, store-brand products than premium brands. What do they know that the rest of us don’t? And if we followed their lead, how much money could we save?

(photo: Chris Potter)

Then, imagine a world with neither marijuana nor alcohol, and then suddenly both are discovered. What happens next? How would they be regulated? How would we weigh the relative benefits and costs of alcohol versus marijuana?
This is a transcript of the Freakonomics Radio podcast “How to Save $1 Billion Without Even Trying”

[MUSIC: Glenn Crytzer and his Syncopators, “Fumblin’ Around” (from Harlem Mad)]

Stephen J. DUBNER: We recently held a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich taste test here at WNYC, where we record our show.

DUBNER: So guys, this is for an episode about premium brands versus store brands, okay? And so what you see here are two rows of sandwiches, one on a plain white plate there, and one or a bordered plate there. Okay? And the sandwiches were made with either the premium Skippy Creamy and the Smucker’s strawberry preserves. So any nut allergies or verbal waivers, if you die not our problem.
Suzie LECHTENBERG: There’s a lawyer in the room.

DUBNER: Who is the lawyer, you?

Janna FREED: It will be fine.

DUBNER: Good lawyering.

DUBNER: And the store-brand sandwiches are ShopRite peanut butter creamy, they put their adjective last, peanut butter creamy, and strawberry preserves – ShopRite. And the bread is identical. It’s Bimbo.

DUBNER: So really all we want is for you to eat one of each and tell us which one you prefer and why.

Laura MAYER: Patterned plate is the one.

Steven VALENTINO: Tastes nuttier.

John DELORE: More honest stuff in this one.
Identify Each Part of the Research Study Reported on in the Podcast Episode

I. Authors
II. Hypothesis
III. Methodology
IV. Results
V. Discussion

See green handout for specifics
Episodes Students Presented in Class

Some Examples

• Do You Really Want to Know Your Future?
• What is the Best Exercise?
• How to Make People Quit Smoking
• Why Think Like a Child?
• Why Americans Don’t Love Soccer
• What is More Dangerous, Marijuana or Alcohol?
• Is Learning a Foreign Language Really Worth It?
Thank you for your interest!

Good teaching is more a giving of right questions than a giving of right answers.
- Josef Albers