

Life of Fred
Jelly Beans

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Polka Dot Publishing

A Note Before We Begin

Life of Fred: Jelly Beans

In the twinkling of an eye, forty years pass.



What seems like a second ago, my daughter looked out a window of our home. Today she takes her daughter to ballet class.

When I took this picture, there was *film* in the camera. Black-and-white film. I developed the film and printed this picture in a darkroom.

WOULD YOU CARE TO TRY AND PREDICT THE FUTURE?

And yet, every parent must try.

For each parent's job is to prepare their children for their future lives as adults. Two hundred years ago, this was much easier to do. In those days the next twenty years were a lot like the previous twenty years.

Today, the future is almost unknowable.

It is very dangerous, especially in writing, to predict the future but I am a fool and will try. Here are three things I anticipate that won't go out of style for your children: hugs, kisses, and mathematics.

Let's make a deal: You provide the first two, and I'll supply the last one.

All the best to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

Each chapter is about six pages. At the end of each chapter, except the last, is a Your Turn to Play.

Have a paper and pencil handy before you sit down to read.

Each Your Turn to Play consists of about four or five questions. Have your child write out the answers—not just orally answer them.

After all the questions are answered, then take a peek at my answers that are given on the next page. At this point your child has *earned* the right to go on to the next chapter.

Don't just read the questions and look at the answers. Your child won't learn as much taking that shortcut.

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Chapter One

To Fritter

Fred loved speaking to large groups. Over the years that he had taught at KITTENS University, he had classes of all sizes. His beginning algebra classes often had hundreds of students.

It was about one o'clock in the afternoon when he received an invitation from Polka Dot Publishing to be the keynote speaker at the Math and Pizza Conference at 4 p.m.

He had three hours to prepare a 45-minute speech on any math or pizza topic.

Did Fred spend those 180 minutes carefully preparing his presentation? No.

$\begin{array}{r} 60 \text{ minutes/hour} \\ \times 3 \text{ hours} \\ \hline 180 \end{array}$
--

Did he sit down and write an outline of his talk? No.

Instead, Fred spent . . .

* about 25 minutes deciding which bow tie and which pair of shoes to wear.

* some time talking with Betty and Alexander about how clean his sleeping bag was, about the honey cards he had invented, about where bees make their hives, and about the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

- * minutes going crazy about ice cream.
- * about an hour at the shopping mall picking out an ice cream maker.
- * about twenty minutes at the grocery store buying the ingredients for the ice cream maker.
- * ten minutes helping Stanthony determine the perimeter of his restaurant for Christmas lights.

At 3:05 he climbed on top of the ice cream machine and found the instruction manual. After getting the machine started, he wandered over to the Pizza Buttons booth and bought some buttons. By about 3:40 the ice cream had been served. Fred visited the Brass Braces booth and bought some braces. Fred ordered his pizza. At five minutes to four, he stopped in front of a television and watched part of a Marx Brothers' movie.

At four o'clock he walked up to the speaker's platform and greeted Elaine Marie. Polka Dot Publishing had sent her to the Math and Pizza Conference to act as master of ceremonies.


He straightened his pink bow tie and told Elaine Marie that his speech was going to be on ice cream.





She addressed the conference, “It gives me great pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker for our Math and Pizza Conference. Fred Gauss will be speaking on the topic of ice cream.”

Fred was surprised. Usually, introductions of the keynote speakers take five or ten minutes. That would have given him a little time to think about what he was going to say. Instead, he heard polite applause and the room became very quiet.

The spotlight was on him and he felt like he was one inch tall. ⇒ 

Fred had frittered away those three hours that he had to prepare his speech. One by one he had wasted those 180 minutes.

small essay

How to Fritter

Little babies can't fritter away anything. They spend 100% of their time doing exactly what they are supposed to be doing: eating, crawling around, playing with their toes, and sleeping.



When you grow up, there are two things you can fritter away: your money and your time.

Spend your money on little trinkets and bibelots, and suddenly you find you can't pay the rent.

Waste your time—there are a thousand ways to do that—and suddenly you find that your tombstone will read: I just amused myself my whole life.

end of small essay

Fred swallowed hard. He didn't know how to begin.

He thought of just saying, "Hi!" and waving. But that would be very juvenile (kid-like).

He thought of saying the usual thing that many speakers say, "I'm so glad to be here today. I want to thank Polka Dot Publishing for giving me this opportunity to be your keynote speaker." But that would just waste time.

Instead, Fred began boldly with, “Ice cream.”

Your Turn to Play

1. Out of the 800 in the audience, 197 of them had already eaten at least a quart of ice cream. At this point, they were only mildly interested in the topic of ice cream. But for the rest of those 800 people, Fred’s words were the most electrifying beginning of a math-and-pizza speech that they had ever heard. How many of the 800 were in this second category?
2. Babies can’t fritter away their time. Suppose you have 82 years in your life after you stopped being a baby. How many days would that be? (Let’s say that there are 365 days in a year.)
3. Joe spends 62 hours each month watching television. If half of that time is wasted, how many hours has he frittered away each month? (Hint: to find half of something, divide it by 2.)
4. Darlene sleeps about one-third of each 24-hour day. How many hours is that?
5. In the last 17 months, how many months has Darlene slept? (Hint: the answer is going to be $5\frac{2}{3}$ months.)

.....**ANSWERS**.....

1.
$$\begin{array}{r} 800 \\ - 197 \\ \hline 603 \end{array}$$
 in the audience
 who are only mildly interested
 who are really interested

2. 82 years and 365 days in a year—do we add, subtract, multiply, or divide?

We restate the problem with simple numbers. Suppose we have 4 years and there are 3 days in a year. Then 4 years would be 12 days. We multiplied.

$$\begin{array}{r} 365 \\ \times 82 \\ \hline 730 \\ \hline 2920 \\ \hline 29930 \end{array}$$

There are 29,930 days in 82 years.

3. Half of 62.....
$$\begin{array}{r} 31 \\ 2 \overline{) 62} \\ \underline{6} \\ 02 \\ \underline{2} \\ 0 \end{array}$$
- He fritters away
 31 hours each month.

4.
$$\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ 3 \overline{) 24} \\ \underline{24} \end{array}$$
 She sleeps 8 hours each day.

5. One-third of 17.....
$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \frac{2}{3} \\ 3 \overline{) 17} \\ \underline{15} \\ 2 \end{array}$$

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