
# The Science of Luck (B2)

## A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

**1.**Do you believe in lucky charms? Why or why not?
**2.**What's the luckiest thing that ever happened to you?
**3.**Which matters more in success-skill or luck? Explain.
**4.**Do athletes really get a 'hot hand'? What do you think?
**5.**How do you manage risk in daily life?

## B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

**Match up as many words and meanings as you can. (Definitions are shuffled.)**

___ 1. probability
___ 2. bias
___ 3. superstition
___ 4. streak
___ 5. randomness
___ 6. odds
___ 7. prime
___ 8. confirmation
___ 9. placebo
___ 10. ritual
___ 11. serendipity
___ 12. risk

**a.** a belief that certain actions can influence luck
**b.** a run of the same result many times in a row
**c.** a lucky and useful discovery by accident
**d.** the tendency to notice what supports your belief
**e.** a measure of how likely something is
**f.** the possibility of loss or harm
**g.** a set of actions done in the same way each time
**h.** a number divisible only by itself and one
**i.** when you feel a change just because you expect it
**j.** an unfair preference that affects judgment
**k.** the chances that something will happen
**l.** the quality of having no pattern

## Reading

Why Some People Feel Lucky

Patterns, math, and mindset

1. People are natural pattern seekers. We find shapes in clouds and see “hot streaks” in sports even when the results are actually random. A near-miss—just missing a winning goal or almost hitting the jackpot—can feel strangely meaningful, and it often keeps us playing. While chance itself is cold and unfeeling, our attention can make events feel warmer and more personal. The beliefs we hold shape our choices, and our choices can change the outcomes we get. Staying calm under pressure, especially in games or high-stress situations, often leads to better decisions.

2. Mathematically speaking, luck is simply probability—numbers, odds, and chance . Yet psychology plays a powerful role. People who consider themselves lucky tend to notice more opportunities, talk to more strangers, and take small risks that sometimes pay off. In experiments, “lucky” individuals were more likely to spot money on the street or make a useful connection at a social event. Meanwhile, those who expect bad luck often miss these same chances. This shows that what we notice can influence the results we experience.

3. Rituals—like wearing a “lucky” shirt or tapping the dice before rolling—may not actually change the odds, but they can change the player. These small habits create a sense of control and calm, which can lead to clearer thinking. In this way, a ritual works like a placebo: it doesn’t affect the game directly, but it can still improve performance by steadying the mind. The smartest players know that while luck can’t be controlled, focus and preparation can make all the difference.

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## COMPREHENSION

**1.**Why do people see “hot streaks” in sports even when results are random?

2. How can a near-miss affect someone’s behavior?

3. What traits do “lucky” people often show in experiments?

4. Why might pessimists miss opportunities?

5. How can rituals improve a player’s performance even if they don’t change the odds?

## VOCABULARY REVIEW

**1.**The ____ of drawing the winning card is very low.
**2.**A long winning ____ made the team overconfident.
**3.**He relied on a silly ____ before every exam.
**4.**Investors must measure ____ before choosing a project.
**5.**Humans are bad at seeing true ____ in noisy data.
**6.**She searched for ____ that her plan was working.
**7.**Some medicines work partly because of the ____ effect.
**8.**The coach warned the team about ____ in the analysis.
**9.**They made a ____ discovery while testing another idea.
**10.**Is 17 a ____ number?

## GRAMMAR REVIEW – CONDITIONALS & MODALS OF DEDUCTION

**1.**If you ____ (calculate) the odds, you won’t be surprised by losses.
**2.**He ____ (must) be lucky; he prepares and shows up early.
**3.**If they ____ (not/take) small risks, they wouldn’t meet new people. **4.**You _
___ (might) feel calmer if you repeat the same ritual each time.
**5.**Had I ____ (know) the probability, I would have stopped earlier.
**6.**If the result seems too good, it ____ (could) be a coincidence.
**7.**Should the streak ____ (continue), we’ll change our strategy.
**8.**If she were pessimistic, she ____ (miss) those chances.
**9.**They ____ (must have) misread the numbers; the pattern is random. **10.**If gamblers believed in math, they ____ (save) more money.

## DISCUSSION

**1.**What’s a healthy way to think about luck?
**2.**When does superstition become dangerous? **3.**
How should schools teach chance and risk?
**4.**Is ‘being lucky’ mostly about behavior?

## CRITICAL THINKING

Design a small experiment to test a lucky ritual. Define your variables, your measure of ‘success,’ and how you’ll avoid bias.