

Survey Questions: Belief Revision

In each question, you are told what you know - this information trumps your real-world knowledge, is assumed to be true, and is titled "What you know". You are then asked to decide regarding what you would believe when confronted with new information, based on the knowledge provided. Said new information will be titled "New information".

Please note the new information is a package deal i.e. you either decide to believe all the new information or none of it.

Semi-colons (;) are used to list both beliefs and parts of new information. Full stops or periods (.) are used to indicate the end of such a list.

What you know: Linguists speak more than three languages; Sarah is a linguist.
New information: Sarah only speaks two languages.

Question 1.

Does Sarah speak two languages?

Choose Yes or No. Give an explanation for your answer.

Question 2.

Is Sarah a linguist?

Choose:

Yes or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

In the following question, consider both cases described below.

Case 1:

What you know: Alan smokes; Smoking helps a person to live forever; Alan wants to live forever; People with lung damage may live shorter lives than those without lung damage.

New information: Smoking damages a person's lungs.

Case 2:

What you know: Alan smokes; Smoking helps a person to live forever; Alan wants to live forever; People with lung damage may live shorter lives than those without lung damage.

New information: Smoking does not cause no damage to a person's lungs.

Question 3.

Does smoking help a person to live forever?

Choose:

Yes, in Case 1 or

Yes, in Case 2 or

Yes, in both Case 1 and Case 2 or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

The keyword OR is used in the upcoming questions. OR tells you that the information after it has been added to what you know, irrespective of its implications. This means that even if it contradicts the first list of what you know, it is still part of the second list of what you know. You may believe one list or the other, or both lists, when it suits you.

In the following two questions, consider both cases described below.

Case 1:

What you know: Giraffes have stripes; Giraffes eat Oreos.

New information: There is a giraffe called Antonella; Antonella is purple, with black stripes.

Case 2:

What you know: Giraffes have stripes; Giraffes eat Oreos; There is a giraffe called Antonella. OR Antonella is purple, with black stripes.

Question 4.

Does Antonella exist?

Choose:

- Yes, in Case 1 or
- Yes, in Case 2 or
- Yes, in both Case 1 and Case 2 or
- No

Give an explanation for your answer.

Question 5.

Do giraffes have stripes?

Choose:

- Yes, in Case 1 or
- Yes, in Case 2 or
- Yes, in both Case 1 and Case 2 or
- No

Give an explanation for your answer.

In the following two questions, consider both cases described below.

Case 1:

What you know: Giraffes have stripes; Giraffes eat Oreos.

New information: There is a giraffe called Antonella; Antonella has spots, not stripes.

Case 2:

What you know: Giraffes have stripes; Giraffes eat Oreos; There is a giraffe called Antonella. OR Antonella has spots, not stripes.

Question 6.

Does Antonella exist?

Choose:

- Yes, in Case 1 or
- Yes, in Case 2 or
- Yes, in both Case 1 and Case 2 or
- No

Give an explanation for your answer.

Question 7.

Do giraffes have stripes?

Choose:

Yes, in Case 1 or

Yes, in Case 2 or

Yes, in both Case 1 and Case 2 or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

In the following question, consider both cases described below:

Case 1:

What you know: There is a room, in which there is a bag that contains stationery; In the bag, there is a pencil, pen and ruler. New information: There is no pencil in the bag.

Case 2:

What you know: There is a room, in which there is a bag that contains stationery; In the bag, there is a pencil, pen and ruler. OR There is no pencil in the bag.

Question 8.

Does the bag contain a pencil?

Choose:

Yes, in Case 1 or

Yes, in Case 2 or

Yes, in both Case 1 and Case 2 or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

In the following question, consider both cases described below.

Case 1:

What you know: There is a room, in which there is a bag that contains stationery; In the bag, there is a pencil, pen and ruler. New information: There is also a stapler in the bag.

Case 2:

What you know: There is a room, in which there is a bag that contains stationery; In the bag, there is a pencil, pen and ruler. OR There is also a stapler in the bag.

Question 9.

Does the bag contain a stapler?

Choose:

Yes, in Case 1 or

Yes, in Case 2 or

Yes, in both Case 1 and Case 2 or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

What you know: Acrobats are relatively flexible people; Acrobats only work as circus performers. Acrobats have six toes on each foot.
New information: Connor is an acrobat. If Connor is an acrobat, then he (Connor) is not an acrobat. Acrobats have four toes on each foot.

Question 10.

Do acrobats have six toes on each foot?

Choose:

Yes or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

In questions 11-18, "What you know" is represented by K and "New information" received is represented by A.

Question 11.

When revising K with A, do you include the logical consequences or implications of that revision in what you now believe?

Choose:

Yes or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

In the next question, consider both cases described below.

Case 1: *A has a conflict within itself*

Case 2: *A does not have a conflict within itself*

Question 12.

When revising K with A, is A always a part of what you now believe?

Choose:

Yes, in Case 1 or

Yes, in Case 2 or

Yes, in both Case 1 and Case 2 or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

In the next two questions, consider the cases described below.

Case 1: *A conflicts with K*

Case 2: *A does not conflict with K*

Question 13.

In case 1, when revising K with A, do you find that what you now believe is a part of what you would believe had you simply added A to K and drawn conclusions from the resulting beliefs?

Choose:

Yes or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

Question 14.

In case 2, do you find the reverse to be true? i.e. In case 2, do you find that what you would believe had you simply added A to K, and drawn conclusions from the resulting beliefs, forms part of what you would believe had you revised K with A?

Choose:

Yes or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

Question 15.

Do you prioritise having only beliefs in K that do not conflict with one another?

Choose:

Yes or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

Question 16.

Suppose there is other new information, represented by B, that uses different syntax to A but expresses the same idea. Do you find that revising K with A has a different effect on what you believe than when you revise K with B?

Choose:

Yes or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

Suppose there is other new information, represented by B, and that new information comprising both A and B is represented by C.

Case 1: *B does not conflict with what you believe after revising K with A.*

Case 2: *B conflicts with what you believe after revising K with A.*

Question 17.

In case 1, do you find that, when revising K with C, what you now believe is a part of what you would believe if you had revised K with A, and then simply added B to your beliefs, drawing conclusions from the resultant beliefs?

Choose:

Yes or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

Question 18.

In case 2, do you find the reverse to be true? i.e. In case 2, do you find that what you would believe had you revised K with A and then simply added B to your beliefs, and drawn conclusions from the resulting beliefs, forms part of what you would believe had you revised K with C?

Choose:

Yes or

No

Give an explanation for your answer.

Feedback Questions

1. What is your relationship with this survey?

Choose:

- Researcher or
- Student or
- General interest or
- Money or
- Other

Give an explanation for your answer.

2. Is the survey relevant to you, your interests or your work?

Choose:

- Yes or
- No

Give an explanation for your answer.

3. How old are you? Select the most correct option.

Choose:

- <25
- <30
- <35
- <40
- >45
- <50
- <55
- <60
- <65
- <70
- <75
- <80
- 80+

4. Did you find the survey instructions clear and coherent? What is your relationship with the survey?

Choose:

- Yes or
- No

5. Did you find the background information useful?

Choose:

- Yes or
- No

Give an explanation for your answer.

6. Consider only questions 1-10 in the survey. When answering these questions, did you reason in a similar manner to how you reason in your day-to-day life?

Choose:

- Yes or
- No

Give an explanation for your answer.

7. Consider only questions 11-18 in the survey. Do you feel that those questions are understandable?

Choose:

Yes or

No

If you answered "No", identify those questions which, in your opinion, are not understandable and indicate which aspects of those questions are not understandable.

8. Any additional thoughts?