

= Trivia (The Office) =

" Trivia " is the eleventh episode of the eighth season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's 163rd episode overall . The episode originally aired on NBC in the United States on January 12 , 2012 . It was written by Steve Hely and was directed by executive producer B. J. Novak .

In this episode , Oscar Martinez (Oscar Nunez) reveals that he is partaking in a trivia contest in Philadelphia and Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) tries to get the entire office involved . Meanwhile , Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) journeys to Florida and meets with his boss , Robert California (James Spader) , in order to explore other job opportunities .

After airing , the episode sparked a debate among fans , as well as critics , as to whether former leading actor Steve Carell had made an uncredited cameo as a member of an opposing trivia team . NBC later denied that Carell had made an appearance and stated that the situation was just a coincidence . " Trivia " received mostly positive reviews from critics , with many noting that the episode marked an improvement from the first part of the season . Despite this , several reviews were critical of the Dwight sub @-@ plot . According to Nielsen Media Research , " Trivia " drew 5 @.@ 87 million viewers and received a 2 @.@ 9 rating / 7 % share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , staying relatively even with the previous three episodes , " Christmas Wishes " , " Gettysburg " and " Mrs. California " . It ranked third in its timeslot and was the highest @-@ rated NBC series of the night .

= = Plot = =

Andy , who is worried that he will not be able to meet the 8 % quarterly sales growth figures that Robert California (James Spader) asked for by about \$ 800 , starts to think of creative ways to sell more paper . During a conference room meeting , he proposes that everyone in the office buy paper to alleviate some of the burden , but no one is willing . He then decides to ask Oscar to make a rounding mistake in the books , but Oscar tells Andy that he does not have time to make the mistake because he is leaving for a trivia contest in a bar in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania . He tells Andy that the prize is \$ 1 @,@ 000 and his team is determined to win it . Andy , encouraged by Darryl (Craig Robinson) and Jim (John Krasinski) , decides to take the entire office to Philadelphia in an attempt to win the money and make up the sales growth difference . At the bar , which turns out to be a gay bar called the Liberty Well , Andy divides the office into three teams : Dunder Mifflin A @-@ Team (Jim , Darryl , Andy , and Ryan) , Dunder @-@ Mifflin B @-@ Team (Stanley Hudson , Phyllis , Creed , and Cathy) , and the " Just For Fun " team (Kevin , Kelly , Erin , and Meredith) . Oscar refuses to join Andy and stays on his original team . Initially , the Dunder Mifflin A @-@ Team does well until they soon falter . However , much to Andy 's surprise , the " Just For Fun " team (calling themselves The Einsteins) ends up doing much better than expected because of the group 's trivial knowledge on a variety of issues . Humorously , the team misses the answers to a handful of common questions , including one about their namesake . They make it to the final round against Oscar 's team and eventually win thanks to Kevin 's correct answers . However , the Just for Fun team 's luck runs out when they later get demolished while trying to win another bar 's even more lucrative trivia contest .

Meanwhile , Dwight (Rainn Wilson) heads down to Florida to meet with Robert California at the Sabre headquarters to discuss a possible manager position . While sitting in the waiting room , Dwight talks to Gabe , who describes himself as the " toilet of the company " who flushes all the unwanted items away . Robert then tells Dwight that he cannot meet with him but will have him meet with Bill , another executive , much to Dwight 's frustration . However , Robert manipulates the situation by secretly calling Gabe and instructing him to not let Dwight speak with Bill either , but to have Gabe listen to Dwight 's pitch and then reject him . Dwight , after being told by Gabe that he is not wanted as a manager , grabs and twists Gabe 's arm and forces him to be taken to Robert 's Florida condo . Initially , Robert tries to spare Dwight 's feelings , but eventually turns him down by telling him he 's a better salesman and his drive and energy would be wasted in a manager 's

position . Dwight then returns to Scranton .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by supervising producer Steve Hely , at the time , his second writing credit for the series . It was directed by executive producer and cast member B. J. Novak , who portrays Ryan Howard on the show . The episode also marks the fifth appearance of Lindsey Broad , who plays Cathy , Pam 's replacement during her maternity leave . She appeared in a recurring role for the season and she initially appeared in " Pam 's Replacement . " Due to Jenna Fischer 's actual pregnancy , Pam did not appear in the episode . After airing , the episode sparked a debate among fans , as well as critics , as to whether former leading actor Steve Carell had made an uncredited cameo as a member of an opposing trivia team , The Queerstein Bears . NBC later denied that Carell had made an appearance and stated that the situation was just a coincidence . The Season Eight DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes include Andy attempting to get the office to sell \$ 800 worth of paper in a day , and Andy trying to switch team members in order to boost Dunder Mifflin A @-@ Team 's chance of winning .

= = Cultural references = =

Due to the episode largely taking place at a trivia contest , " Trivia " featured a plethora of cultural references . After Ryan uses his smart phone , the trivia reader chides him for checking his Grindr account , a geosocial networking application for gay men . Dwight compares himself to a Spanish conquistador , coming to Florida to " claim what is rightfully [his] . " Several of the trivia teams featured names with culturally related puns . The teams included : The Queerenstein Bears , Joey Triviani , Impish Impresarios , Two Broke Dorks , Jason So @-@ Gay @-@ Kiss , Ladies Gaga , Aesop 's Foibles , and Lawrence O @-@ Trivial .

Many of the references were either the answers to trivia questions , or incorrect guesses . The " Einsteins " erroneously guess " See @-@ atle " when asked what city was on Ray Charles ' mind when he wrote one of his most famous songs . After being asked a question about Albert Einstein , the " Einsteins " answer with Thomas Edison , much to the delight of the sarcastic trivia reader . Kelly is able to correctly guess a basketball question because she cross @-@ referenced her knowledge of Khloe and Lamar and Dancing with the Stars . Kevin knows that the answer to the final trivia question is the 2001 French film Les Jolies Choses , starring Marion Cotillard , because Cotillard " exposes herself a number of times . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Trivia " originally aired on NBC in the United States on January 12 , 2012 . The episode was viewed by an estimated 5 @. @ 87 million viewers and received a 2 @. @ 9 rating / 7 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 2 @. @ 9 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 7 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . The episode remained relatively equal in ratings compared with the previous episode , " Christmas Wishes . " The episode finished third in its time slot , being beaten by Grey 's Anatomy which received a 3 @. @ 8 rating / 9 % share and the CBS drama Person of Interest which received a 3 @. @ 2 rating / 8 % share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . The episode , however , did manage to beat the Fox drama series The Finder and The CW drama series The Secret Circle .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Trivia " received relatively positive reviews , although many critics did not enjoy the Florida sub

@-@ plot . Many television critics agreed that " Trivia " was a marked improvement over many of the episodes in the first part of the season . Craig McQuinn from The Faster Times wrote , " Aside from a few weak moments , ' Trivia ' was a solid episode of The Office and a vast improvement over most of the episodes this season . " Myles McNutt from The A.V. Club awarded the episode a B + rating and wrote positively of the trivia plot , saying , " When The Office reaches its next hiatus , and then its subsequent return , I ? ll find myself hoping for more like the trivia side of ' Trivia ' , storylines that even after contrived introductions can simply sit back and let the character @-@ driven jokes take over the narrative . " Chris Plante from New York magazine explained that " If you plan to continue watching The Office , here ? s my advice . [...] You need to forget the negative energy this show attracts . Start thinking of Season Eight like a reboot . " He concluded that " The Office is not irreparable . It ? s not great either , but there is some marked improvement here over the worst episodes from the first half of the season . " Lizzie Fuhr from BuzzSugar.com wrote positively on both the trivia A @-@ plot and the Dwight and Robert B @-@ plot . TV Fanatic reviewer Dan Forcella called the trivia conceit " quite fun " and awarded the episode 3 @.@ 5 out of 5 stars . The Huffington Post wrote that " The Office continues to find fun and unique ways to spotlight how mundane office life can be by showing ways the gang finds to fill their day . " Alan Sepinwall from HitFix , who was notably critical of the new season , called the episode " charming . " IGN reviewer Cindy White noted that the episode bore stylistic similarities to the third episode of the British version of the show , entitled " The Quiz " , writing that " while ' Trivia ' does loosely allude to that pub quiz with a bar trivia night , that turns out to be the only thing the two have in common . " She did , however , positively write about the humor of the episode , noting that , " the writers squeezed some good laughs out of the idea , and it feels good to be laughing again at The Office . "

While a large majority of critics praised the main trivia storyline , many reviews criticized the Dwight and Robert plot . McNutt wrote that , " As the trivia storyline was building momentum , the Florida storyline was killing that same momentum , a push @-@ and @-@ pull that the trivia ended up winning . " Forcella explained that " the titular storyline of the gang playing " Trivia " in Philadelphia worked really well , but the forced trio in Florida definitely did not . " Jill Mader from InsidePulse.com wrote , " All in all , I thought it was an inconsistent episode ? I liked the trivia storyline , but the Dwight stuff really fell flat for me . "