

Homework 3 - Analogies

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1 ANALOGY SELECTION

In *Forrest Gump*, the famous analogy “Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you’re gonna get” [1] captures the unpredictable nature of life’s experiences. Just as each piece of chocolate in a box holds a different, unknown flavor, life’s events unfold in unexpected ways, often surprising us with outcomes we could not foresee. This comparison reflects the variety and mystery of life, suggesting that each moment offers something new and unique, waiting to be discovered.

2 MODEL DEVELOPMENT

To understand the analogy “Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you’re gonna get,” we can break down the structures of the source (box of chocolates) and the target (life) independently, before any transfer of meaning takes place. The source, a box of chocolates, is composed of individual pieces that vary in flavor, filling, and texture. Each piece is distinct, and the person consuming it has no way of knowing precisely what they will encounter until they taste it, introducing an element of surprise or discovery. Each chocolate can evoke pleasure or disappointment depending on the flavor, creating a diverse array of experiences from a single selection.

In contrast, the target of the analogy, life, is composed of a sequence of events and experiences, each unique in outcome and meaning. Just as each chocolate in a box holds a different flavor, each event in life carries a distinct emotional or situational “flavor” that contributes to a person’s overall journey. Outcomes in life can vary significantly, and people often do not know what to expect from future experiences, making life similarly unpredictable. Both life and a box of chocolates share the core structure of unknown outcomes, variety, and the possibility for mixed reactions, with each element contributing to an overarching sense of surprise and exploration. By modeling both structures individually, we see that the analogy relies on these shared qualities of variety, unknown outcomes, and the mixture of pleasant and challenging experiences.

3 AUTHOR INTENT

In the analogy "Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're gonna get"[1], the author intends to transfer the unpredictability and variety inherent in a box of chocolates to the experience of life. The source (box of chocolates) brings with it the notion that while each chocolate is distinct and contains a unique flavor or filling, it is impossible to know what any specific chocolate contains until it is bitten into. This element of surprise, combined with the diversity of chocolates, mirrors the experience of life, where each event or experience holds its own "flavor" or outcome that cannot be fully anticipated.

Using the concepts from analogical reasoning, we can break down this transfer of meaning through the stages of retrieval, mapping, transfer, and evaluation:

1. Retrieval: The analogy brings forward the familiar experience of selecting chocolates from a box as a way of introducing the target concept of life's unpredictability. This stage leverages our familiarity with chocolates, a common experience, making the concept easily relatable.
2. Mapping: The main concept being mapped from the box of chocolates to life is the element of surprise and variety. In this analogy, each chocolate corresponds to an experience or event in life. The qualities of the chocolates (such as type, filling, and flavor) map to different possible outcomes or events in life. Both systems (life and chocolates) share this structure of containing diverse elements that are selected or encountered with incomplete knowledge of what the outcome will be.
3. Transfer: The analogy transfers the sense of uncertainty and novelty from the chocolates to life. Just as chocolates offer a mix of pleasant, neutral, or surprising tastes, life also holds a mixture of enjoyable, challenging, or unexpected events. This comparison aims to remind readers that life's surprises, like chocolates, should be approached with openness, as they are part of its richness.
4. Evaluation: The success of this analogy lies in its simplicity and familiarity, as it effectively captures the intended message about life's unpredictability through a relatable experience. It evokes a playful but meaningful message: that life, like a box of chocolates, should be appreciated for its variety and embraced for its unpredictability.

The analogy effectively captures the deeper structural similarity (varied, unpredictable experiences) rather than focusing on the superficial characteristics of each domain. This focus on structural mapping rather than surface details (chocolates and life's specific content) allows the analogy to resonate universally, encouraging acceptance of life's uncertain nature.

4 REWRITING THE ANALOGY

An alternative analogy to "Life is like a box of chocolates" could be "Life is like a marathon; you don't know what challenges will come along the way, but you keep moving forward." This shift in the source changes our understanding of life by emphasizing perseverance and endurance rather than surprise and variety. The marathon analogy frames life not as a collection of distinct, unpredictable experiences but as a continuous, demanding journey requiring resilience. Instead of encouraging us to savor each moment for its uniqueness, it highlights the importance of pushing through obstacles with determination, suggesting that fulfillment comes from enduring life's long course rather than from enjoying varied individual moments. Unlike chocolates, which evoke a sense of playful surprise, the marathon analogy creates a more serious and motivational tone, conveying that life's meaning is derived from pressing forward and growing stronger despite hardship. Through this shift, the new analogy transforms life from something to be tasted and experienced into something to be conquered and endured, showing how a change in source can completely alter the focus and impact of the analogy's message.

5 REFERENCES

- [1] Groom, W. (2002). *Forrest Gump*. Simon and Schuster.