

Psychology Explains Why People Are So Easily duped

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The Washington Post:

True or false: “The Eiffel Tower is in France.” Most of us can quickly and accurately answer this question by relying on our general knowledge. But what if you were asked to consider the claim: “The beehive is a building in New Zealand.” Unless you have visited New Zealand or watched a documentary on the country, this is probably a difficult question. So instead of recruiting your general knowledge to answer the claim, you’ll turn to your intuition. Put another way, you’ll rely on what Stephen Colbert calls “truthiness” — truth that comes from the gut, and not books.

As a cognitive psychologist, I study the ways that memory and belief go awry: How do we come to believe that things are true when they are not? How can we remember things that never actually happened? I am especially intrigued by the concept of truthiness — how smart, sophisticated people use unrelated information to decide whether something is true or not.

Read the whole story: [*The Washington Post*](#)