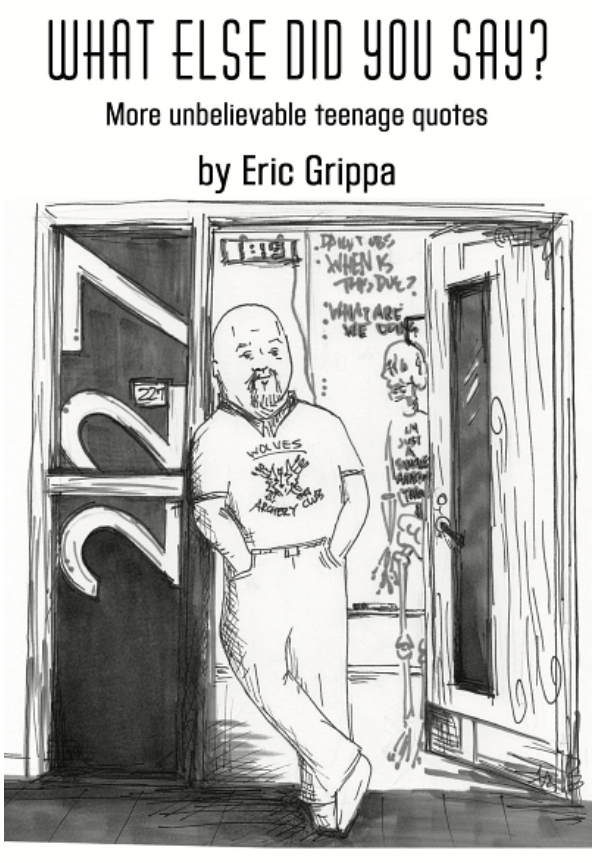

"What Else Did You Say?" is the sequel to my fist book of hilarious things my high school students have said, as well as what I had to say back to them.

What Else Did You Say?

By Eric Grippa

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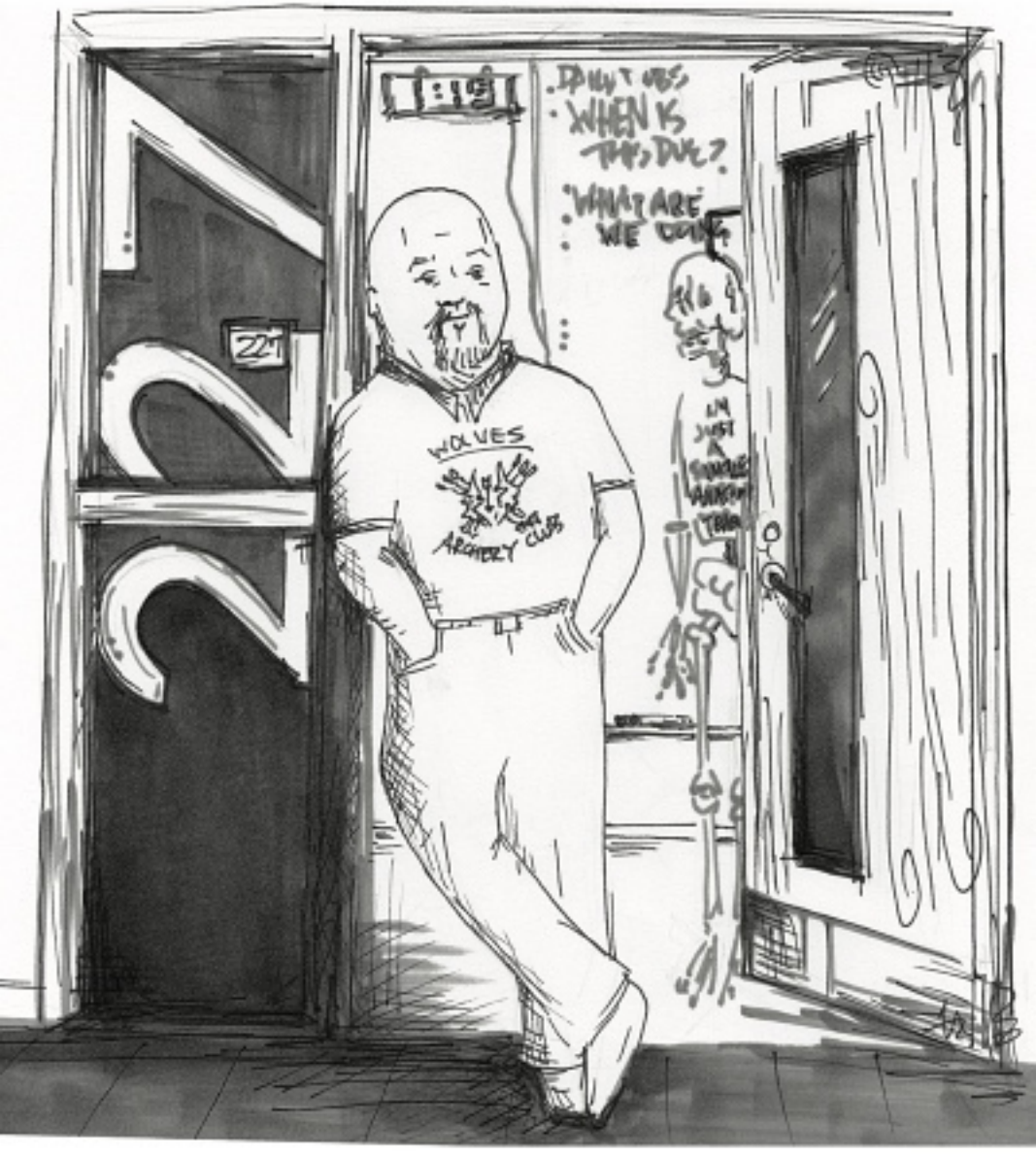
WHAT ELSE DID YOU SAY?

More unbelievable teenage quotes

by Eric Grippa



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Print ISBN: 978-1-961269-64-4
Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88532-779-4

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2026

First Edition

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Grippa, Eric
What Else Did You Say? More Unbelievable Teenage Quotes by Eric Grippa
Library of Congress Control Number: 2026925101

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Chapter 1
Science Woes

This chapter, as its name suggests, is all about science related quotes. I told you, just like book one. Most of these are from our discussions, but a few are answers from tests or quizzes. I hope you enjoy them and happy reading.

==========

One of the topics I covered when I taught the Integumentary system in my anatomy classes were the nails, of the finger and toe variety. I taught my students what the nails are composed of, how fast they grow, and naturally cover what the various parts and sections are called. That was usually when I got the inevitable stories of mashed digits that resulted in damaged or lost nails. That's when Katie gave me this gem.

"I smashed my finger one time and it turned black and blue."

"That happens a lot," I replied. "Did you end up losing it?"

"Oh yeah," she said, "I ripped it off and you could see my guts!"

"So, either your nails grow in strange places on your body or your internal organs are not where they are supposed to be Katie."

Over the course of my career, I have coached football at various grade levels. For a few years I was the head coach of an eighth-grade team. Anyone who has spent time with middle school aged kids can tell you, they are a unique breed. Not only do they have the attention span of a brain damaged gnat, but

they forget EVERYTHING! The most entertaining part about them is how often they are a wealth of misinformation. Here is an example.

One day at practice I noticed one of my players had forgotten to wear his hip pads. This happened almost every day with at least one of them. More than likely, this was the same young man that left his helmet in the locker room the day before.

While explaining the importance of not only bringing all pieces of equipment but remembering to wear said pads, one of his teammates, in an obvious attempt to impress his anatomy teaching football coach, blurted out, “I know what the hip bones are called!”

Always wanting to give young people the benefit of the doubt, as well as gain new book material, I give him a chance.

“Good to know, Jacob, I’ll bite. What are they called?”

Now I anticipated he was probably not going to give the individual names of the bones in the pelvis, but there was a chance he knew that they were collectively known as the pelvic girdle or just the pelvis. That’s when he opened his mouth and removed all doubt.

“It’s called the kelvic verdal!”

“Ummm….. no, but look on the bright side,” I told him. “At least it rhymes with what they are really called.”

The best part was he answered with such confidence and conviction. He just stood there beaming with pride, and within a matter of seconds I was able to wipe that smirk off his face and turn it into one of shock and disbelief.

In my anatomy classes, I would usually end each system I taught with a section on imbalances, diseases, or disorders. The integumentary system is no exception. Since a fair amount

of my female students have spent time in a tanning bed, I always make it a point to discuss the various kinds of skin cancer. The three most common types are basal cell carcinoma, squamosal cell carcinoma, and the very deadly malignant melanoma. While reviewing that material with one of my classes, I asked if anyone could list them. Courtney raised her hand and said; “I don't know all three of them, but I know one of them.”

“Ok”, I replied, “which one?”

“The only one I remember you telling us about is fatal-noma.”

“Ok, I’m not sure how you remember me telling you something that I have never said in my life, but that definitely sounds like a cancer type I don’t want.”

Here is a real head-scratcher. In the middle of biology class, Lesley raised her hand and asked me this age-old question, “Where do we get helium?”

Not a bad question per se, but what happened next was why this was deemed book worthy.

As I was inhaling to make sure I had enough air to answer, she followed it up with what I can only guess was the only possible answer she could imagine.

“I guess an astronaut just goes up and grabs it?”

“Absolutely,” I said. “They go up with titanium lined, triple parallel Helium calipers, and just pluck the Helium atoms right out of the ionosphere.”

To which she naturally replied, “Wow, really?”

“Well, since I just made all of that up, no, not really.”

One of the topics we covered in biology was Taxonomy or sometimes called Classification. It is where living things are

grouped together based on their evolutionary relationships and given a latinized scientific or species name. Some well-known examples: the Gray or timber wolf is *Canis Lupus,* the African Lion is *Panthera leo,* or Humans as *Homo sapien,* just to name a few. On this day in particular, I was rattling off a few other examples of some of the species I knew to help drive the point home. It then, as it sometimes does, turned into a species name quiz bowl. A few kids were asking me the species names of whatever animal popped into their heads. “What's the deer?”

“What’s the giraffe?” So on and so on.

That's when Kelly got caught up in all the excitement. She was looking around the classroom and asking me the names of whatever animals I had pictured around the room in rapid fire succession. So fast that I didn’t have time to answer before she was asking me the next one. That’s when she got a little ahead of herself. As she was frantically looking around the room for animals for me to identify, she blurted out,

“What's the scientific name of a flag?”

Naturally she saw the American flag and didn’t really take the time to ascertain if it was a living thing or not. But that didn’t stop me. Always looking for an opportunity to mess with a teenager, I came back with, “Well, the flag for each country is different, of course, so they are technically all different species. That being said, the American flag is *Flagamis stripeii.*”

“Oh wow, really?” she replied with amazement.

“No, not really, Kelly, it's a flag, not an animal, or a plant, or even a fungus. It’s not alive, therefore not a living thing, so we would not classify it as such,” I told her.

“Oh, well, I wasn't sure,” she replied. There will be more from Kelly.

One of the units I taught in my anatomy class was the special senses unit. It covered our sense of smell, taste, vision, hearing, and balance. One day I was going over the anatomy of the eyeball and its accessory structures. That's when I asked the class what the upper and lower palpebrae were. (For those of you who are unsure, those are the eyelids.) Jessica raised her hand very excitedly. You know, arm fully extended over her head and waving her hand at me. Thinking she may have the answer to my question, I called on her. "Yes, Jessica."

She said, "Oh, oh, oh, they are the eye flappies"

Shockingly, eye flappies was not the answer I was looking for.

During the muscular system unit in my anatomy class, I was explaining to my students that there are three kinds of skeletal muscle tissue in the human body. Without getting too deep into an anatomy lecture I will explain. There are fast twitch white, slow twitch red, and fast twitch red. The fast twitch fibers are lighter in color and are sprint muscles that tire easily, and slow twitch fibers are darker and are the endurance fibers. This is why there is light and dark meat in turkeys and chickens. To give my students a real live hook, and to make a connection, I mention this fact to them.

"Have you ever noticed that turkeys have light meat and dark meat? Why do you think that is?" I asked them.

To which Kristi said "I think it's because they're biracial."

Wow! Where do I start? Skin color versus muscle color, different races of turkeys, what about the feathers? I mean really, you can't make this stuff up.

As many people know I have been teaching Human Anatomy & Physiology for, well at the time of this writing, over

thirty years. Anyone who has had me in class knows we dissect cats in my anatomy class. Some are a little disturbed by this at first, some take right to it, but inevitably someone always asks where I get them.

One day in particular I was explaining how I ordered them from a biological supply company and that's when Brittney asked me, “They didn't kill these cats alive, did they?”

“Umm, I’m gonna go with no, I think. I am pretty sure they did not kill them to life. Or did you mean the other way? That they were alive when they euthanized them? In that case yes, they did not wait for them to die before they were killed either.”

One day in anatomy Class, during the unit on our special senses, I was talking about how we see and the anatomy of the eyeball. That was when I noticed Kelly was crossing her eyes. Knowing Kelly, I thought I had a pretty good idea why her eyes were crossed, so I asked her, “Were you trying to look at your own eyes?”

She said, “Yeah, I forgot you couldn't do that.”

“Yes, Kelly,” I replied. “Your nose kind of makes it tough to look at one of your eyeballs with the other eyeball. You could of course use a mirror, but then technically you would be using both eyeballs to look at one of your eyeballs. Now it goes without saying that if you close one eye, then you could use one eyeball to try to look at the other eyeball, but it would be closed and then of course you couldn’t see it. Naturally your only option would be to look at the eyeball you are using to look with, you know, because it’s the only one open.”

That must’ve been too much because she shook her head and said, “Wow this is really complicated.”

Well, Kelly, for some of us it is.

In my anatomy classes, I usually would close out the school year by teaching the reproductive system. Based on the number and variety of questions I have received during that unit, I have come to the conclusion that teens are very interested in this particular subject, and as you are getting ready to find out, sometimes they are also pretty confused. As memory serves, I was covering the intricacies of a mammalian birth, which naturally involved discussing the placenta and umbilical cord. This inevitably brought me to the point where I discuss how those are what is commonly referred to as afterbirth. After hearing this, Mitch raised his hand.

“Mitch, do you have a question?”

“Yeah.” he replied. “So, the woman has to push that out, too?”

“Yes, after the baby is born, she will have more contractions until she expels them both,” I informed him.

“Humm, I always thought they just put the umbilical cord back in.”

“Well, she is not a gas pump, Mitch. You just don’t replace the hose so it’s there for the next baby. Every baby gets their own; you know, kind of a one-time use deal.”

During the unit on the cardiovascular system, we would do a heart rate/blood pressure lab. The students do a series of activities where they count their heart rate at rest, and after some mild exercise, then do the same with their blood pressures.

During that lab one day, Bailey called me over and told me, “Mr. Grippa, I can't find my pulse I think I'm going dead.”

“Going dead? Is that anything like going blind?” I asked her. And they say teenage girls are overly dramatic.

Also, during the Cardiovascular system in my anatomy class, we go over the structures of the heart. This includes but is not limited to the valves in the heart. There are four valves, and the two that are between the atria and ventricles are collectively known as the atrioventricular valves or AV valves for short. The one on the right side, between the right atrium and right ventricle, is called the tricuspid valve (it has 3 cusps or flaps). When I asked Britney what valve was between the right chambers she answered, “Isn’t it the tri-biscuit valve?”

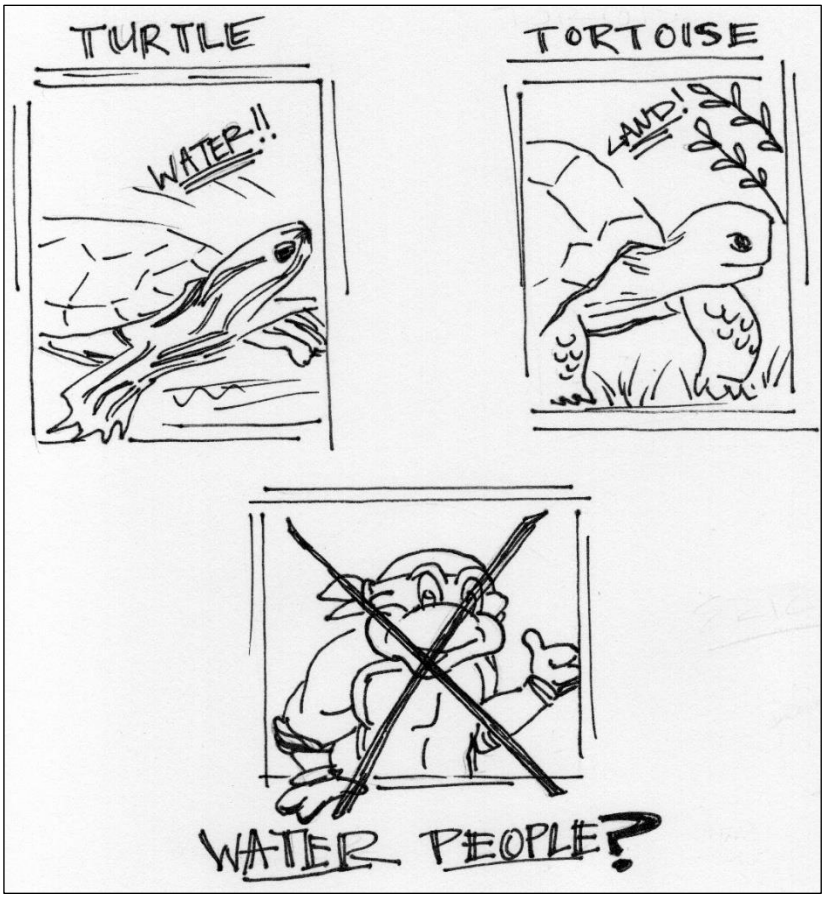
“No, no it’s not the tri-biscuit valve.”

So close. She did get the tri- part right, and of course now I am hungry so thanks for that, Britney.

Not only have I taught biology and anatomy, but since the publication of my first book, I have been teaching zoology on a pretty regular basis. One of the little, commonly made mistakes in the animal kingdom terminology is the difference between a turtle and tortoise. For my readers who are unsure of the difference, a turtle is aquatic and a tortoise is terrestrial.

After I explained this to the class, Becky looked at me and said, “Oh, yeah, I forgot turtles are water people.”

“Hey, Becky, why don’t you stay for a minute after the bell? I think we need to have a little talk.” I’m guessing she was a big Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle fan.



Back when I taught biology, one of the main units I taught was on evolution. I would always start off the topic with a discussion about some if the famous Naturalists through history that are credited with discovering how species change over time. Charles Darwin and his theory of natural selection is obviously where we would end up. One naturalist we talked about was Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and his theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Without getting too

deep down the science rabbit hole, I'll move on to the funny stuff and pump the brakes on the biology lecture. In our comparison of the two different theories, we applied both to explain how the giraffe got its long neck. During that discussion, Becky made the following confession;

"I always thought the giraffe evolved from that one long neck dinosaur, you know, the *Pegasaurus*."

"Before we even start talking about how dinosaurs went extinct millions of years before giraffes showed up in the fossil record, let's focus on the *Pegasaurus*." I told her. "Is that a cross between Pegasus, the mythical winged horse of Greek Mythology, and according to Greek Mythology there was only one, whose name was Pegasus, crossed with a dinosaur? Specifically, a brachiosaur, which is a kind of long-necked dinosaur?"

She paused for a moment, and I could see that she was giving it some serious thought. "Maybe I had it wrong," she said.

"Yes, I think maybe you did."

During the cardiovascular system unit in my anatomy classes, we naturally would talk about blood, and how it carries dissolved gasses, nutrients, hormones etc. We would also discuss the fact that its redness gives our skin a certain color.

"So, when someone dies, they lose that color?" Katie asked.

"Yes, and if you have been to a funeral and have seen a body, you may have noticed they had a pale or grayish appearance to their skin. They have been embalmed, so they don't even have any blood in their bodies, making them look very pale."

To which Kattie added, “I noticed it when I saw my grandma at her funeral. She was like not alive.”

“My condolences to your family, and I was able to put that together since it was her funeral. Also, I believe they call that dead, or deceased.”

In the spirit of always trying to be a good educator, I am constantly attempting to use real life examples and experiences to grab my student’s attention and hopefully get them to understand. One example in particular is when I would teach about lactic acid fermentation in our cells when our bodies need to shift from aerobic to anaerobic respiration. Ok, I promise I won’t get all science teacher on you, but I feel the need to give a brief explanation. Our cells, during cellular respiration break down glucose to make ATP, the energy molecule used by our cells. When they do this with oxygen, it’s called aerobic respiration; when it is done in the absence of oxygen it’s called anaerobic respiration. Our bodies’ version of anaerobic respiration is lactic acid fermentation. After an intense workout, muscles are sore due to a buildup of, you guessed it, lactic acid.

See, I told you I wouldn’t get too crazy with it. So, if you haven’t nodded off yet, I will get to the funny stuff.

As I usually do in this particular lesson, I posed the following question to the class. “Has anyone ever gotten sore after working out?”

Lindsey blurted out, “I worked out yesterday.”

“Ok, great, and are your muscles sore?” I asked her.

While pointing to her thigh she says, “Yeah, my right here muscle is sore.”

“I may not know a lot about the human body but I am fairly certain none of the muscles in the thigh are called the Right

Here muscle. Come to think of it, none of the muscles in the entire human body have that name."

Every few years there seems to be a particular fad that really catches on. Now I am not talking about a fashion fad, I am referring to a simple activity. Bottle flipping for example. There for a while every other teenage boy, and even a few girls, were totally enamored with taking a water bottle that was about one third full, holding by the mouth, and flipping it one rotation in an attempt to get it to stick the landing, leaving it standing up on the table. Flip, after flip, after flipping flip. It really got to be pretty irritating hearing those bottles hitting the table over, and over again, as hard as that is to imagine.

One trend that was pretty popular was to get an empty four-legged chair to balance on just the back two legs. They would spend a surprising amount of time leaning a chair back on those two legs and delicately adjusting its position to get it to that magical balance point. One day Bradley was FINALLY able to get a chair to succumb to his demands and balance on only its back two legs. With his arms held out looking like a major league umpire that had just called the runner SAFE! he proudly exclaimed, "I broke the gravity today."

Yeah, we had a little talk about what Sir Isaac Newton had to say about gravity.

During the digestive system unit, I would always bring up the acidity of the human stomach. As I am sure many of you are aware, the acid content of our stomach is very high, and that is how our food is dissolved so we can absorb as many nutrients from it as possible. My mistake was assuming than since all my anatomy students had taken at least physical

science or even chemistry at this point in their high school careers, they were familiar with the pH scale.

To be clear, the pH scale runs from zero to fourteen with seven being neutral. Anything with a pH lower than seven is considered to be acidic and anything over seven is basic. The average pH of the human stomach is about two. Pretty darn acidic. Anyone with a stomach ulcer or acid reflux would agree. Having covered this on the prior day, I was doing a little review.

"Does anyone remember what I said the pH of the stomach was?"

Courtney raised her hand and said, "Yeah, I think you said it was like fifty."

I guess that answered my question if anyone remembered.

"No, not only is it not fifty, it's not even LIKE fifty. In fact, I can't think of any scenario where I would have said any number even remotely close to fifty. You know, since the pH scale only goes to fourteen. Not to mention that a low pH means high acidity, so LIKE fifty is going in the wrong direction.

"Oh yeah, maybe I was thinking of something else?"

"Well, I certainly hope so."

In my zoology classes one of the first topics we would cover was the classification system. Good ole' binomial nomenclature. I am sure everyone reading this remembers that Mr. Carolus Linnaeus developed a hierarchical system of seven levels to classify animals, ending with them having a Latin *species* name of two words. It starts with the very broad *Kingdom* level working down to the very specific *species* level. Some common examples of the Latin *species* names would be the *Canis lupus* for the Gray Wolf, *Orcinus orca* for the Killer Whale, and of course we humans are known as *Homo sapiens.* To get my students familiar with how animals are classified

within this system, I would give them an assignment where they had to pick any three animals of their choice and look up their complete classification. All seven levels, from *Kingdom* to *species*. Pretty easy assignment. A quick Google search and they would have what they need.

Now, there is one thing that could get them in a tight spot, and I would always give them fair warning. I would explain to them that they needed to be very specific when picking the animals they want to research. For example, don't just say, a snake. There are over 3000 species of snakes, so pick a King Cobra, or Western Diamondback Rattle Snake, etc.

Well, even though I gave them that piece of advice, some students wouldn't listen and were too general in their picks. This day was no different.

Jacob raised his hand and said he was having some trouble. I walked over to him to give him a hand only to discover he was one of the non-listeners.

"I can't find a species name for one of my animals." he said.

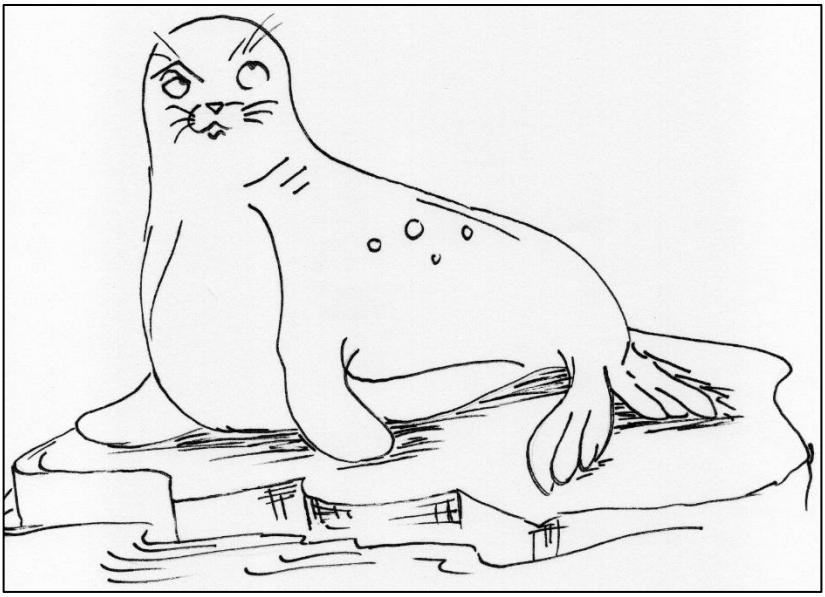
"Which one?" I asked him.

"The seal," he replied. So, I proceed to inform him that there are a lot of different kinds of seals that have been described, thirty-three species to be exact.

"What kind do you mean? There a lot of different species of seals." I told him.

He thought about for a minute, looked at me and said; "I mean the mountain seal."

Ah yes, the beloved Mountain Seal. Everyone knows what great mountain climbers seals are.



In my Zoology classes we would always cover the general characteristics of each main group of animals before we started learning about more specific groups. So, for those of you who remember your levels of the classification system, we talk about the features of the members of a *Phylum* before we learned about the characteristics of the *Classes* of that *Phylum*. For example, body plans, reproductive strategies, location of nerve chord, etc. This usually meant we would have some new vocabulary words to learn. This particular unit was no exception.

The term in question was Cephalization. In case any of my readers have forgotten their zoology lessons, Cephalization means the following; having all of the sensory organs located towards the front end of a body, (Or basically sensory organs

in located in the head). When given that definition Ethan answered with the following.

"It's the anus."

Please insert your own joke here. (That would only be true if you had your head up your ass) Ok; sorry, I couldn't help myself.

In my introductory unit in my anatomy and physiology class, I would always discuss various types of medical imagery: X-rays, CT scans and MRIs for example. When I brought up the MRI, Malissa asked me the following question.

"Can an MRI magnetize the disease out of your body?"

"Well, I'm no orthopedic surgeon," I told her, "But I'm pretty sure it's used to see what's going on inside the body. It's not a cure."

I just love it when a student has what I call a book worthy moment outside my classroom and then come tell me about it afterwards. Kind of tattling on themselves, so to speak. Well, this one was one of those moments. During the unit on the reproductive system, we were getting close to the end and were getting ready for our test. On test day, Kristi came in and said,

"Mr. Grippa listen to what I said to my dad."

"Ok," I replied, "what did you say to your dad?"

"Well, he asked me if I was studying for my anatomy test. I told him that I had studied and I was ready. He didn't believe me, and then he asked me what we were studying. I told him the reproductive system. He said "Ok, I bet you can't even tell me where your scrotum is."

(I like this guy; that sounds like something I would've asked her.)

She then informed me that after HER father asked HER where HER scrotum was, she pointed to her chest and said “It's right here. Everybody has one.”

What a great sport.

I believe this took place during a review session in one of my zoology classes. I asked the following question: what is the largest terrestrial arthropod? On the outside chance that any of you reading this has forgotten what an arthropod is, it is any animal with an exoskeleton. The insects, crustaceans, and arachnids are classic examples of arthropods. If you are fuzzy on the meaning of the word terrestrial, it means, lives on land. So, I am looking for the largest animal with an exoskeleton that lives on land.

Ethan says, “An elephant.”

Well at least he got the large and on land parts right.

Speaking of terrestrial arthropods, now that you know what that means, I was talking about how jumping spiders were my favorite cool little spiders.

That was when Ali asked me, “Why are they called jumping spiders?”

I couldn’t stop myself. “Because of their incredible swimming ability,” I replied.

Even though I would tell my students, and sometimes my colleagues, that I am not a doctor, they still would come to me with their health concerns. This young lady was no exception. She was describing to me how she was regularly light-headed and wanted to know what could be causing it. I listed a few possible reasons, and one was that she may have had low blood pressure.

Upon hearing this she asked, “So does that mean I have diabetes?”

“No, Emily, that is something completely different.”

During the unit on the muscular system, Spencer asked me what happened when you got a cramp. Meaning how and why does one get a muscle cramp. That is not how Becca took it.

She blurted out, “I heard it was your uterus trying to kill itself.”

Not the kind of cramp I think Spence was talking about, but thanks for your input, none the less. Now I’m no OB/GYN, but I am unfamiliar with SUD or suicidal uterus disorder.

In recent years I have come to the realization that teenagers have a very tough time grasping the sheer vastness and emptiness of outer space. I have had many conversations concerning the problems with space travel and the technology needed to travel to other worlds. This of course would mean that other forms of life in other solar systems traveling to our solar system would also need to be incredibly advanced to make that journey. How would they carry enough food, water, air, and fuel to cover such long journey? That’s when Breanna had this wonderful idea concerning the fuel for the spacecraft problem.

“Why can't they just have it run on space air?”

“I’ll tell you why they can’t, THERE IS NO AIR IN SPACE!” Sometimes I worry about our future.

During the cardiovascular system unit in my anatomy classes, we usually would talk about various disorders associated with that system. One in particular is hemophilia. Of course, hemophilia is a condition where an individual’s blood is

unable to clot. So, a simple cut could be life threatening. Breanna, fresh off of her fueling spaceships with space air idea, revealed this gem.

“I always thought that hemophiliacs like, didn't need to take Viagra.”

I’m not sure how she made that connection and I am proud to say I didn’t ask. I believe my response was, “I am pretty sure that is not what a hemophiliac is, but let’s move on.”

But in my head, oh, there were jokes.

During the unit on the cardiovascular system in my anatomy class, we would discuss white blood cells and their role in immunity and fighting illness. Naturally, one of the things that I would bring up was running a fever. I explained that a lot of the viruses we can pick up can’t survive if our internal environment gets too warm. This is why we will fever up when we get certain illnesses. After explaining it, one of my less attentive students naturally immediately asked,

“So why do we run fevers anyway?”

As if I didn’t just explain it. After rolling my eyes, and shaking my head in showing my exasperation at the thought of yet again getting to repeat myself, Jacob says, “I got this one Mr. Grippa.”

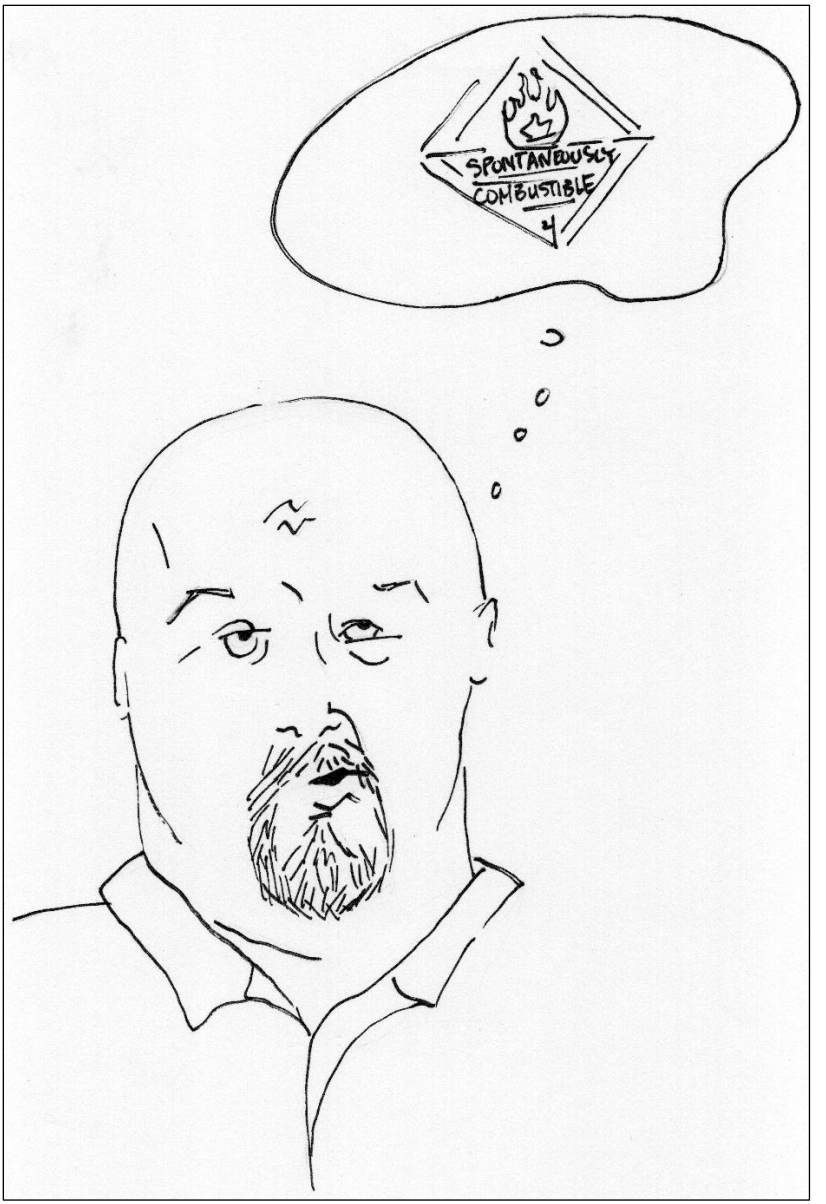
“Thanks, Jacob.” I replied.

Jacob looked at the inattentive teen and said, “We run fevers to kill the virus with fire.”

Well, looks like I am going to have to repeat myself anyway.

“Thanks Jacob, but I think I’ll take it from here.”

Yeah, spontaneous combustion, that’s one way to kill a virus.


SPONTANEOUSLY
COMBUSTIBLE

Piggy-backing off of the previous fever story, Mark asked me the following question.

“So, if they call it a fever when your body temperature goes up, what do they call it when your body temperature goes down, a colder?”

“No, that is a condition called hypothermia,” I informed him. And besides, by that line of thinking wouldn’t a fever then be called a hotter?

And to think, by now Mark is out there somewhere allowed to vote.

Trying to explain to my anatomy students how we have blood vessels basically everywhere in our bodies, nearly 60,000 miles worth, I posed this question. “To prove that there are blood vessels spread out everywhere in your body, how often do you cut yourself and not bleed? If you bleed, then you cut a blood vessel.”

Mark then blurted out, “Uhh, that’s only when you barely cut yourself do you bleed. When you cut yourself really deep you don't bleed all that much.”

“What!?” I asked him, shocked by his claim, “How do you figure?”

“I don’t know, that’s just what I heard.”

“Really? Let me guess, you heard that on Twitter. (This was when it was still Twitter and still popular with young people) Let me ask you this; have you never cut yourself and noticed what really happens? And correct me if I’m wrong here, but don’t you have to barely cut yourself first on your way to cutting yourself deeply? Or do you just somehow magically bypass the skin on your way to cutting the tissue under your skin?” I asked him.

“Oh, I never really thought about it that way.”

You don't say. The key words in that phrase I think are, "I never really thought."

While teaching the unit on the cardiovascular system, I explained to my students about how the conduction system of the heart can keep the heart beating without any direct stimulus from the brain. This is how someone can be considered brain dead, but not legally dead. For that to be, there must be no heartbeat. That's when Breanna raised her hand. (I loved it when she did; you never knew what you were getting ready to hear. This was one of those times.)

"When you're like brain-dead, don't they call that a potato?"

See, I told you. This was one of those times.

During a very rare year where I had to teach good ole' ninth grade science one, I was teaching about outer space, and the universe. I naturally covered the vastness of outer space, no gravity, so on and so on. That's when Taylor raised her hand. She then informed me of the following:

"I think space should have a bottom or a floor; I don't like it that space doesn't have a bottom or a floor."

Umm, ok? Is there a question or are you wanting me to put in a request to NASA?

I don't know what it was about outer space that absolutely confused Breanna, but she seemed to really struggle with wrapping her head around it. There are a couple of examples throughout this book. This is one of them. I was explaining that with no air to slow down a moving object, once it is moving in space, it will keep going forever unless acted on by another force. Demonstrating her lack of comprehension, Breanna said, "What if it lands on a star?"

“Well first of all, that would be an example of acted upon by another force. Secondly, I don’t think one just lands on a star. You might go towards a star, but I am pretty sure you won’t make it.”

“Why not?” she inquired.

“Well, it’s a huge ball of burning gas, with a surface temperature of about 10,000 degrees. I am pretty sure you will burn up long before you reach the surface.

“Ah-ha but not all stars are hot!”

“Oh, you got me! You’re right. Not all gigantic balls of burning gas are hot. So which ones are the cool ones?”

Revisiting the conditions of outer space, I was still trying to get them to understand the concept of zero gravity and no atmosphere. I was struggling to explain it. I said, “Look, if we were on a spacewalk, and I took this book (picking up a science one text book) and threw it, it would head off in that direction indefinitely. The only way it would stop or change direction would be if it hit something or got caught in the gravitational pull of another planet.”

Melissa, demonstrating her total lack of even a whisper of comprehension said, “What if it hits an equator?”

“What!? DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT AN EQUATOR IS!? It is an imaginary line around the center of a planet. Not some loose object randomly floating around in outer space. So, if it “hits an equator,” it would have to land on a planet, which means it would have to have been caught in its gravitational pull. As I said before.”

I am starting to think they are just messing with me at this point, at least I hope so. I don’t like to think about the alternative.

Still failing to understand any of my attempts to explain how outer space works, Breanna asked the following.

“Then why don't we just float away from Earth. What is holding us down?”

Yeah, she was just messing with me. That had to be it.

Ok, one more from Breanna and the space comment. I blame myself for this one. Not only was I having problems getting her and her table mates to grasp the vacuum of space and gravity, I was also having a hard time getting them to understand the incredible distances between us and other planets, stars, and galaxies. I messed up and used the term light year. I should’ve known better. As soon as I said it, I saw that classic, squinting look of confusion come across her face.

“Light year, is that like brighter than any other years?”

Yeah, that one’s on me.

In my biology and zoology classes when we talked about evolution, I regularly discussed vestigial structures. They are left over, ancestral, reduced body parts that serve no useful purpose. Examples in humans are the appendix and the coccyx or tailbone. I asked my students if they knew of a vestigial structure in humans.

Aaron said “The butt cheek.”

Not cheeks, but cheek, singular. “Not only is the Gluteus Maximus still useful, but I’m fairly certain this would be true for both of them, not just one.”

In my biology class, I was trying to explain how immigration and emigration could affect the genetics of a given population. Case in point, removing or adding individuals to an area would change the overall gene pool of that given population.

So, I asked the class, “If six people left the room, would that change the gene pool of the population of people in this room.

Carly said, “What if they're not wearing jeans?”

“Whew, ok, Carly we need to start over.”

The topic I was teaching in my anatomy class was the respiratory system. I always discussed how delicate lung tissue is, and how harmful smoking is. I naturally would bring up “Smoker's Cough.”

Upon hearing this, Mark asked, “So that’s like, a real thing?”

I replied, “Yes, smokers cough is a real thing.”

He then asked this thought-provoking question.

“Where?”

“Umm, anywhere there is smoking. What do you mean where? Do you think there is a place you can move to, be a smoker and avoid getting smoker’s cough? Or maybe it’s illegal in certain countries?”

One day Breanna came into my room, I’m guessing after health class, and made the following statement.

“I like learned something about bronchitis today. Wait! Is bronchitis and tuberculosis like the same thing?”

To which I replied, “Well, I'm not sure what you learned about tuberculosis, but it appears you didn't learn very much.”

During the respiratory system unit in my anatomy classes, I discussed how we are able to breathe by using Boyle’s law. It states that the pressure of a gas in a closed container is inversely proportional to its volume. In short, when the volume goes up, the pressure goes down. When we take a breath, we increase the volume of our chest cavity, decreasing the

pressure below atmospheric pressure, and the weight of atmosphere then pushes air in our lungs.

On the test over the respiratory system, I had the following question: What is Boyle's law? (briefly describe)

Here is how Mark answered the question.

"Boyle's law states that the mass will want to be equal so mass will fill into a difference."

That's right, the mass will fill into a difference. What does that even mean? I really wish I would've said to describe in detail instead of briefly describe. I'm thinking I could've gotten a little more material.

Sticking with the respiratory system, I was discussing various types of lung volumes: tidal volume, inspiratory reserve, expiratory reserve, etc. While going over these and their different parameters, Breanna raised her hand.

"Yes, Bree, do you have a question?"

"Yeah, did you say that the minimum volume is the amount of air in the lungs after defecation?" "Ummm, no I most definitely did not say that."

Why not more with the respiratory system? One of the topics I covered in the unit on the respiratory system is the different kinds of breathing we as humans experience. For example, eupnea is defined as normal quiet breathing. Diaphragmatic breathing is deep abdominal breathing. There is even costal breathing. That is described as short shallow breaths using the intercostal muscles between the ribs, instead of the diaphragm.

When I asked Brooke to define costal breathing she said, "Coastal breathing is also known as swallow breathing."

I have to admit I am not familiar with swallow breathing, or coastal breathing for that matter. Call me crazy, but it sounds a lot like choking. Classic example of how changing one letter can totally derail one's definition.

Mark really seemed to have absolutely no clue with this one, which was pretty much par for the course with him. In the unit on the digestive system, I covered the structures in the mouth: teeth, tongue, salivary glands, etc. I also talked about the lingual frenulum. It is the membrane under the tongue that holds it to the floor of the mouth. Anyone that has ever looked under their tongue is familiar with their lingual frenulum.

On the test I asked the following question.

"What is the membrane under the tongue that holds it to the floor of the mouth?

Mark's answer? "Libya."

I wonder what he would say to the question, "What is the name of the country in North Africa that starts with the letter L?"

I love it when my students think they know something that is so clearly not correct, I mean fully and whole heartedly believe it, and then I get to set them straight. Not in a superiority complex kind of way, just peace of mind knowing that they will no longer carry misinformation with them. This one is a perfect example of what I mean.

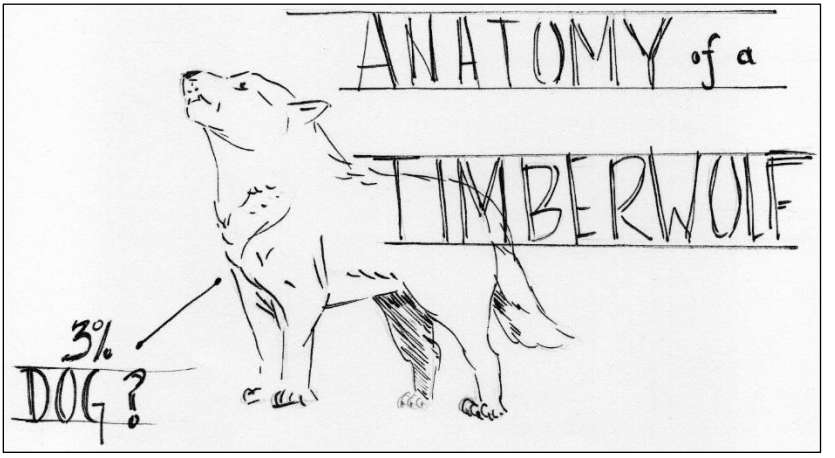
We were discussing classification and taxonomy, and how we can use that to determine how closely animals can be related to each other. The example I was using was comparing members of the Canine family. I was pointing out that coyotes, wolves, and dogs are all canines and are all classified in the same Genus of *Canis.* If you have forgotten your taxonomy lesson from high school, let me give you a brief refresher. Every

animal that has been classified has been given a two-word species name. In this case the timber or gray wolf is *Canis lupus*, the coyote is *Canis latrans*, and the dog is *Canis familiaris*. The first word of their species names, or their *Genus*, is the same. This would indicate all three are very closely related.

That's when Mark, with complete and total confidence in the knowledge he was preparing to share, blurted out; "That's why Timber Wolf means three percent dog."

"Really?" I said, "Here I was thinking it meant a wolf that's found, you know in the timber."

What did he think the word timber meant? Is there a mathematical term out there that sounds like timber and represents a percentage?



I wasn't sure if this one should go in this chapter or the "Lack of Common Knowledge" chapter. Since it has to do with an animal and I am a zoology teacher, I guess this is the place for it. Breanna, who has been featured many times in this book

already, was in my anatomy class. How she got on the subject of an octopus is still a mystery. Anyway, while they were supposed to be working on their anatomy assignment, she asked me the following question:

"Can't you milk an octopus because they have, like, like have a bunch of like little nipples like all over themselves?"

Wow. "An octopus has like a bunch of, like, little nipples like all over themselves." I actually recorded her asking that one on my phone. Don't worry: there will be more from good ole' Breanna.

Anyone who has had a biology course in the last one hundred years or so has undoubtedly studied one Gregor Mendel, and his incredible work with the inheritance of characteristics in pea plants. The biology classes I taught were no different. We would set up Punnett squares, and use them to examine the principals of dominance and recessiveness, segregation, and independent assortment. It was one of my favorite topics to teach, but I digress.

I was setting up a Punnett square on the board and we were listing the different traits of Mendel's pea plants.

"What is a trait for a pea plant that would start with the letter F?" I asked the class. I was thinking fuzzy, or any word that started with the letter F, as I asked.

That's when Lance said, "Soft."

It must be spelled with a silent f

Another genetics question. "If a diploid cell containing twenty-eight chromosomes undergoes meiosis how many chromosomes will each daughter cell have?" As I am sure all my readers remember, meiosis is the process of dividing up the

DNA in cells that will become sex cells, or gametes, cutting the amount of genetic material in half.

As I looked around the room at the blank faces, I realized no one was going to give me an answer.

So, I followed that with, “What's half of twenty-eight?”

Lance came back with, “Twenty-four, its half of twenty-eight, right?”

“Um, no, no it is not.”

During the unit on the reproductive system, I naturally would have to talk about the physical differences between males and females. I, of course, have to use terms such as penis, vagina, scrotum, cervix, testicles and so on. Some years it really pointed a finger at the overall maturity level of the classes. Anyway, while reviewing for an upcoming test, I asked the following question. To be clear for this part of the review, I said, out loud, “The following questions deal with the male anatomy.” (Yeah, you know where this is going.)

I asked, “What is a cutaneous outpouching of the abdomen that supports the testicles?” Mackenzie blurted out, “The uterus!”

While discussing the classification of various living things, Julia wanted to find the classification of the blue tailed dolphin and everyone's favorite plant, the Venice mouth trap.

Ok, let’s take these one at a time. First, there are a lot of dolphins but there is, to my knowledge, no “Blue Tailed” dolphin. Blue fin tuna? Yes, red tailed hawk? Absolutely. Maybe she was meaning bottle nosed dolphin? In reality, not that big of a deal.

But, let’s talk about the second one. The Venice Mouth Trap? So, what I am assuming is a plant, found only in the

Italian city of Venice that traps mouths, or does it trap with its mouth? Either way it makes no sense. First, why would a plant only trap things by grabbing their mouth? Or are you saying the plants trap things with their mouth? I was unaware plants had mouths. “Do you by chance, mean a Venus Fly Trap?”

As I have said before, you can’t make this stuff up.

During the cell unit in biology class, we were talking about the cell organelle known as the mitochondria, aka, the power-house of the cell. It is called that because it is the site of cellular respiration, where it breaks down glucose in the presence of oxygen to make ATP, the energy molecule of the cell. (I’m sure you remember that from your biology class.)

Anyway, while discussing this topic, I happened to write down the chemical composition of glucose on the board. $C_6H_{12}O_6$.

I then asked “What is this?”

Brian looked at it and said, “I think it's H_2O.”

“No, if it were H_2O, I would have written H_2O,” I told him. “Brian, I’m going out on a limb and guess that you have not taken chemistry yet, have you?”

“Yeah, how’d you know?” he replied.

“Oh, just a hunch.”

Brian strikes again. At the end of that same unit on the cell, we were reviewing for the up-coming test. Brian then informed me that my questions were too hard and that I needed some easier ones.

“So, how easy are we talking here, Brian?” I asked.

“I don’t know, not these, these are too tough.” he said.

“Ok then,” I replied, “how about this one? How do you spell DNA?”

In classic Brian form, he glanced at the ceiling, wrinkled his brow, and said, “I don't know how that’s spelled.”

“Well, I don’t what to do for you, Brian. That’s pretty much the easiest I could come up with.”

Let’s talk a little more about good ole’ Brian. I used to have a skull of a bison or American buffalo in my classroom. While comparing common names of living things to their species name, I pointed to my bison skull and said, “What is the other name for the American buffalo?” Hoping someone would say bison, I saw Brian raise his hand. Thinking I had one he could answer, I pointed to him and said, “Yes, Brian hit me.”

He said, “the water horse!”

Hindsight 20/20, that one was on me. I mean the boy thought $C_6H_{12}O_6$ was really a secret code for H_2O, and openly admitted he couldn’t spell DNA. Did I really expect him to know bison? My bad, Brian, my bad.

During the unit on the respiratory system, I discussed a wonderful little component of our pharynx that allows us to eat and drink without choking, called the epiglottis. When we swallow food or beverage, it covers the opening to our larynx, preventing it from obstructing our airway.

When on the test I asked what this object was called, Josh answered “ipicalotis”

I can only assume it would be pronounced, I-pick-a-lotis. It sort-of sounds like epiglottis, but yeah that’s not it. I am happy to report that I simply marked it wrong and moved on. I did resist the overpoweringly strong urge to write, “I think this is Latin for; I constantly have my finger in my nose.”

During the opening unit in my human anatomy & physiology class, I would cover a lot of general terminology and basic medical/anatomical prefixes and suffixes. Any word that starts with *Hemo-* will be about blood, *Myo-* for muscle, or if it ends in *itis-* will mean infection, etc.

I asked the class, "What is the prefix that means bone?"

Well, a bone cell is an osteocyte, the disorder that leads to brittle bones is osteoporosis, so one would think it might be *osteo.*

Not Jake. He answered "bow."

"No, bow is not the prefix that means bone, or is a prefix for any anatomical term at all."

Clearly, he was trying to appeal to the archer and bowhunter in me. It didn't work.

Let's continue with yet another anatomical prefix mix-up. In the middle of the muscular system unit, we were discussing the structural components of a muscle. Without going too far down the anatomical rabbit hole, I was using a lot of terms that began with the prefix *myo-* for example, myofilament, myosin, and myofibril just to name a few. In the intro unit we talked about how *myo-* is the prefix that means muscle. Trying to get my students to connect the dots, so to speak, I asked them where we had seen the prefix myo- before?

Kelly said "Mayonnaise?"

"No Kelly, not mayonnaise. Correct me if I'm wrong, but wouldn't it be mayo and not *myo-?"*

During the reproductive system unit in one of my anatomy classes, I was discussing the procedure known as a vasectomy. I was explaining what little I knew about the procedure.

“The surgeon makes a small incision in the scrotum, isolates, and cuts the Vas Deferens. They used to tie it off, but I think now they might actually cauterize it instead. I’m not a urologist so I can’t be totally sure.”

That’s when Rachael raised her hand. I learned long ago to be prepared for any and all questions during the reproduction system unit, and this time was no different.

“What does it mean, to cauterize it?” She asked.

“Well, they burn it closed,” I informed her.

“Burn it? How, like with a cigarette?”

I just pictured the surgeon and nurses all standing around smoking through the little holes in their masks during surgery, and I lost it. Don’t worry, after I caught my breath and dried my tears, I did my best to explain to her that they don’t use a lit cigarette to cauterize anything, and that I was fairly certain they weren’t allowed to smoke during surgery either.



Circling back to the topic of bones, my students were working on studying for their lab practical on the skeletal system. Simply put, it is a test where they are to identify actual bones and not just pictures of them. You know, hands on science stuff. Ashley was working at her table and she called me over. I could see she had a hand that was missing a few bones.

She informed me, and I quote, “These hand bones are missing a mandible and a pigment.”

Ok, where to begin? “First, let’s start with mandible. It is a bone, but it’s not in the hand or anywhere in the arm for that matter. It is the lower jaw. Second, a pigment is not a bone at all. It is what gives our skin color.”

I asked her why she just didn’t say it’s missing some bones and she confessed,

“I was trying to make it sound like I was smart and knew what I was talking about.”

Well, nothing like speaking up and removing all doubt.

In my biology and my zoology classes we always have a unit on evolution and natural selection. Since Charles Darwin is credited with coming up with the idea of natural selection, or commonly known as “survival of the fittest”, we would talk about him and his journey on the HMS Beagle to the Galapagos Islands.

After that famous voyage, with some prodding by Alfred Russell Wallace, Darwin wrote the book, “*On the Origin of Species*.” To find out if any of my young budding biologists have heard of this book, I would usually ask the question, “What was the name of the book written by Charles Darwin?”

Most of the time I would just get blank stares or total avoidance of eye contact all together. Good ole’ Brian figured he’d help out and he gave me an answer.

He said, “the dictionary?”

“No, Brian, I believe you are thinking of Webster, not Darwin. Common mistake.”

“Really?” he said.

“No, not really.”

So, for anyone who is familiar with normal human blood pressure, you’ll get a kick out of this one. During our

cardiovascular system unit, we would do a lab where we'd find our pulse, take our heart rates, and measure our blood pressure. I first have them check it in the traditional way with a sphygmomanometer (aka blood pressure cuff) and a stethoscope. I would explain how to listen for both the systolic (top) number and the diastolic (bottom) number, normal BP is 120 over 80. After that I have them check their numbers against an automatic device to see if they are close.

Brady grabbed one of the automatic BP machines and asked, "Can I take my blood pressure with this one?"

"Sure." I replied.

After a couple of minutes, I went to check on him and see what his reading was.

"Ok, what did you get?" I asked him.

"It says my blood pressure is 6."

"Umm, six? There is a real good chance you are not reading it correctly."

I am not sure what we were talking about when the question was posed, but I'm going to guess it was during the respiratory system. Anyway, someone asked the following.

"Can you survive with only one lung?"

I said, "Yes."

And before I could go into any more detail, Shayla blurts out, "Yeah, it's just like having one heart."

"Hey Shayla, how many hearts do you think we have?"

Talk about a classic case of not thinking before speaking.

Every now and then my students beg me to let them have a little time to study just before a test. If I know the test is one that they should easily finish with a few minutes to spare, I will indulge them and allow them to study. My only condition is that

they use their time wisely and study. If I think or notice a lack of studying, well, it'll be testing time. Par for the course, I heard a little low decibel chit-chat coming from the table where Jake was seated. He had his textbook open and it was obvious that was just for show.

"Jake, are you studying?"

"Yeah" he said, "I'm reading about the respiratory system."

Suspecting that was a load of bovine fecal matter, I hit him with a follow-up question. "Oh, ok what section are you reading now?"

"Umm….. I'm reading the section on The Lorax."

Check and mate. "Really, are you hiding a Dr Seuss book back there?"

In my anatomy class, I teach a unit called "The Special Senses." In that unit we cover sight, taste, smell, hearing and balance/equilibrium. For anyone who has forgotten their anatomy teachings, the inner ear is not only involved in hearing through the actions of the cochlea, but the semicircular canal is also a component of the inner ear that allows us to maintain balance and /or our equilibrium.

While going over what each part of the inner ear does this for us, Riley said, "So if you're deaf you can't walk?"

"Let me guess, Riley, you have never met a deaf person, have you? Or seen one on TV, for that matter?"

"The average person has anywhere from four to six liters of blood in their bodies, depending on the individual of course. So, to put that in a way that might seem more familiar, we are all waking around with over a gallon of blood." That was the information I gave to my anatomy students.

Ryan said, "That's not very much."

“Really? Imagine if you spilled a gallon of blood on the floor.” I replied, trying to drive home the visualization.

“Oh, well, if you spilled it that would be a lot.”

“So, in containers, not a lot of blood; spilled on the floor, it becomes a lot? Got it.”

Ryan strikes again with more confusion about our blood.

“So, how many times can you donate blood until you can’t donate anymore?” he asked me.

“Do you mean how many pints can you donate at one time?” I replied.

“No,” he said “I thought that once you donate a pint of blood, you’re missing a pint of blood for the rest of your life so you could only donate a few times before it kills you.”

“No, Ryan, that is not how it works.”

During one of my stunning lectures in my anatomy class, I was explaining what hypoxia is. For those of you who are unfamiliar, it is when there is an insufficient level of oxygen at the tissue level to maintain homeostasis. Hopefully you know what homeostasis is because I don’t want to keep defining things and get to the funny stuff. Basically, when your hand or foot “falls asleep”, you’re experiencing hypoxia.

Upon hearing this, Dylan says, “Yeah it's when you don't get enough air to your brain or in your head.”

There is a joke in there somewhere that more than likely will use the term “airhead”, but I’ll just let you piece that one together.

It never ceases to amaze me how little people really know about their bodies and are absolutely floored when they find out the truth. Here is one example. During the unit on special

senses, I was explaining that what we all regularly call our ear is really known as the auricle or pinna, and it is just basically a funnel that focuses sound waves into our ear canal so they can hit our tympanic membrane or eardrum. And that is where the real act of hearing begins.

Totally shocked to hear this, Tre' blurted out, in a tone of disbelief, "So you're telling me if someone gets their ear cut off, they can still hear?"

"Yes," I replied, "that is exactly what I am telling you."

That's when I hit him with this mind boggler. "Think about it Tre'. Why do ear plugs work?"

That one got him. With mouth open, head tilted looking up at the ceiling tiles, I could almost see the proverbially light bulb pop on.

"Oh, yeah, I never thought of it that way."

"NOOOOO, you don't say?"

As anyone who knows anything about my anatomy classes will tell you, as part of the class, we dissect cats. Inevitably, someone will ask where they come from, or where I get them. I explain that I get them from a science supply company and that they are feral cats that are euthanized after being deemed unadoptable. Sad? Yes, but if we humans, as stewards to our pets, were more responsible with them, we wouldn't have this problem, but I digress.

As no surprise, the mention of cats being feral started a discussion between Ryan and his table mates. I heard a few laughs and scoffs at something Ryan said. They decided to ask me in an attempt to settle their disagreement.

"So," Ryan started, "Mr. Grippa, if a house cat is not raised in the house and is raised in the jungle, couldn't it just turn into a tiger?"

"Ok, let me get this straight," I replied. "You are claiming that if someone takes an everyday common house cat and sets it free in the jungle, you think that it will somehow morph into a tiger? Are we talking just size increase or will it change its color to orange with black stripes as well?"

That line of questioning did not sit well with him.

"I don't know. Can't you just answer our question without making things so complicated?"

"No, Ryan, I cannot, It's just the way I am. You know what they say, a leopard can't change his spots" Yeah, he didn't get it.

I don't recall if this happened in a biology or an anatomy class, but I was talking about Escherichia coli bacteria or E-coli for short.

Upon hearing that Julia said "Hey, that reminds me of those salmonella candles."

Wow, salmonella candles? What sicko thought those up? It didn't take me long to make the connection.

I said to her, "I think you mean citronella candles, designed to keep biting insects away as it burns, not a candle that gives you food poisoning when you light it."

During the introduction unit in my anatomy class I always go over the structural levels organization; cells make up tissues, tissues make organs, organs make organ systems, and organ system make up the organism. Of which, the human organism is made up of eleven body systems. To get a preview on how much knowledge my students may have as they begin the course, this leads me to ask them if they can name all eleven of those systems. One year in particular I received some really….. interesting guesses. Here are some of best ones.

Owen said the skin-a-lary system
Justin gave me the hear-an-ary system,
and Ashley went with the swallowing system.

I also, that year had the eyeball system, the dental system and the peeing system. I guess that let me know how much previous knowledge they were bringing with them, answer, not a lot.

One of the units I would teach in my zoology class was the unit on the arthropods, or animals with an exoskeleton. I mean with ten times as many arthropods classified than all other phyla combined, how do you not teach a unit on Phylum *Arthropoda?* Trying to get them to hit on that all arthropods have exoskeletons; I asked the class the following question.

"What distinguishing characteristic makes an arthropod an arthropod?"

Dylan said "A thumb."

Sometimes as a teacher you just have to close your eyes, breathe deeply, shake your head and move on. This, was one of those times.

Sticking with the arthropods and some of their characteristics, the term molting came up. Since their skeleton is on the outside of their bodies, they must shed the old one as they outgrow it. This process is known as molting. I asked Xander if he could tell me what molting was.

He said, and I quote, "Really hot lava."

OK, where do I begin? Clearly, he was thinking about the term molten, as in molten rock. Sure, they sound similar, but… Molting is a verb, molten is more of an adjective describing the state of the rock. Depending on pronunciation or dialect, one might say, that spider is "moltin" instead of molting, but still.

Also, isn't "Really hot lava" a little redundant? I would think all lava, by nature of being lava would be "Really hot?" I can't really recall anyone ever describing lava a cool to the touch.

The main lab activity I would do during the cardiovascular system in my anatomy class was the sheep heart dissection, which, I learned to say very slowly to avoid any confusion. (Yes, I have had students think that I was saying "she parts" instead of sheep hearts.) Anyway, I gave the instructions for the day and directed everyone to the back of the room to obtain all the tools and materials they would need for the sheep heart dissection lab.

I then opened the bucket that contained the hearts and Jenna asked me "What are these?"

"Well, these are the sheep hearts that we are going to dissect today during the sheep heart dissection lab."

To which she replied, "Oh, I thought we were just going to get them out of the cats."

"The sheep hearts out of the cats?" I wanted to make sure I heard her correctly. "Where do you think sheep hearts come from? Don't you think if we took hearts out of the cats, they would be cat hearts?"

Here's a real head scratcher. When I taught the respiratory system in my anatomy class, I discussed how the epiglottis saves our lives every time we eat or drink something. For anyone who has forgotten that lesson from high school, the epiglottis is the small flap of tissue that covers the opening to the larynx during the swallowing of food and drink allowing it to pass into the esophagus and not the trachea or windpipe. After hearing this Aleshia raised her hand.

"Yes Aleshia, do you have a question?" I asked.

“Yes,” she said, “How do you choke on air because it happens to me, like all the time?”

“Umm, choke on air? I don’t know how to answer that question. I honestly can’t figure out how AIR can block your AIR-way.”

Speaking of the respiratory system, the lab I do in that unit is a lung volume lab. I have students breathe into a bag that is demarked with lines so students can easily catch and measure the amount of air they exhale. When finishing up the lung capacity lab Ashley was going to throw the lung volume bag away. These bags were not cheap and were meant to be re-used. I saw her carrying a bag to the trash can, and I stopped her.

“Ashley, don’t throw that away I need them for my other classes.”

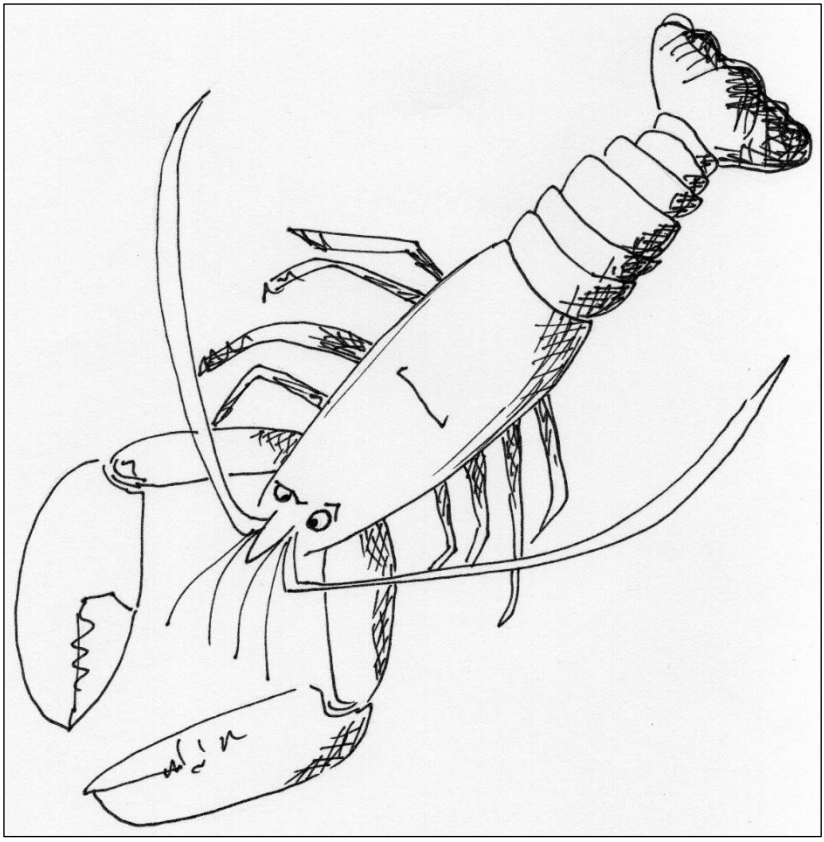
“Really?” she says “You are going use them again, but everyone broethed in them.”

(I’m really am not sure how to spell “broethed” but that was best I could come up with.) “Broethed? I believe the past tense of breathe is breathed.”

One of the units I taught in my zoology class is naturally on the Phylum of Arthropods. At the risk of sounding redundant, it’s the largest and most diverse Phylum in the animal kingdom. Nearly 90% of every animal that has been classified is an arthropod. Again, as I have already mentioned, no zoology class is complete without talking about the Phylum *Arthropoda.* One of the classes we study in the arthropod unit is the class *Crustacea* which are the crabs, lobsters, shrimp and crayfish. While starting to go over the characteristics of the crustaceans, Kaitlin said, “Aren't shrimp just lobster feet?”

"Hold on," I said. "Have you ever had shrimp? Or seen shrimp? Do you seriously think that shrimp are just the severed feet off of lobsters? Have you ever had lobster for that matter?"

I swear, I have no idea where they get their information? As I have said before, you can't make this stuff up.



When I taught the integumentary system in my anatomy classes, I would always talk about the different pigments in our skin that give us our color. Melanin, of course, being the main

skin coloring agent in our bodies, but I would also talk about a pigment called carotene. It is an orangish pigment that, based on its spelling, most people connect with being in carrots. Notice how I said most people. As it happened, Sarah was not one of those people. Here we go.

I was trying to get her and her table mates to make the connection. I said, “What orange vegetable does the word carotene remind you of?”

She looked up at me with a slight tilt to her head and said, “Bananas?”

“Really? I say orange vegetable and you think banana? Correct me if I’m wrong but a banana is considered a fruit, and is also yellow?”

I was trying to get my anatomy students to think back and use some of their prior knowledge from their past science classes and tell me the two parts to a solution. For those of you who cannot recall, the two parts to a solution are the solute and the solvent. The solute dissolves into the solvent.

Abby was sitting there trying to put it together. When I asked for someone to explain to me what a solute was, she said, “Do you mean like,” and then she put her straightened hand to her eyebrow and saluted me.

Bless her heart. “No, Abby, I mean solute, not salute.” Close in sound, but oh, so very different in meaning.

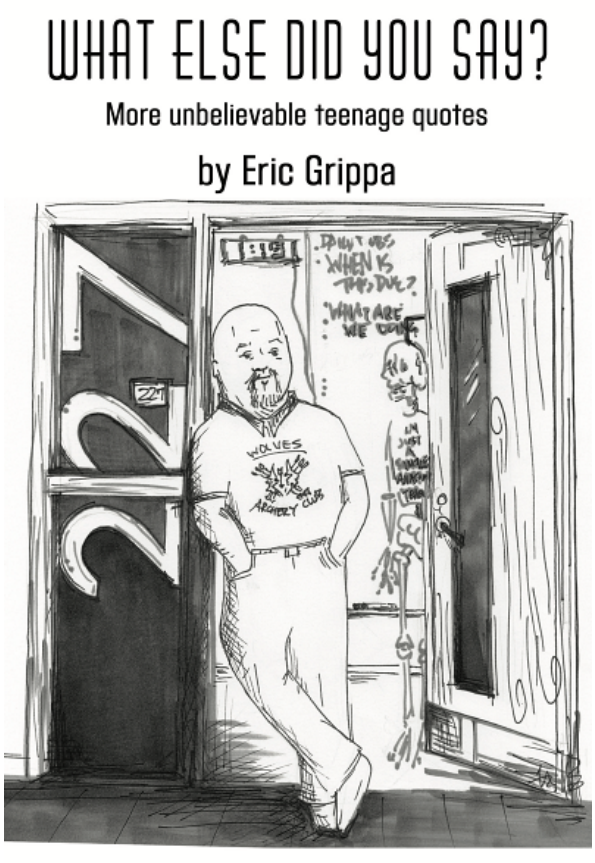
Oh, good ole’ Emma. She is in here a few times. She was in my zoology class and I was teaching about earthworms. I mentioned that earthworms will usually only be found burrowing within the first foot of topsoil.

Upon hearing this, Emma said “Oh, so like a meter then?”

“No,” I replied, “not a meter; only a foot deep, a meter is over three feet.”

Showing her total lack of comprehension of units of length, she then came back with, “Oh, so an inch?”

“A foot, Emma, a foot. What part of A FOOT is confusing you?” So much for dispelling that blonde stereotype.



"What Else Did You Say?" is the sequel to my fist book of hilarious things my high school students have said, as well as what I had to say back to them.

What Else Did You Say?

By Eric Grippa

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