

Basic science

In this second part I have selected more answers given by junior high, high school, and college students in their exams (24 April, p 1153), but this time in the basic sciences.

Science, after all, is the order of the day; for without it how can we ever make any progress as we enter the next millennium?

How indeed can we even hope to spend our summer vacations on the moon, find pen friends on Mars, clone our grandfathers, or examine our patients by moving a cursor on a mouse pad?

It is science that will enable our young people to grow up strong and straight, live well and die well, eat well and email well, move up in the world and get better jobs than flipping hamburgers at \$5.50 an hour.

Physics: "H₂O is hot water, and CO₂ is cold water." "Nitrogen is not found in Ireland because it is not found in a free state." "Water is composed of two gins: oxygen, which is pure gin, and hydrogen, which is gin and water." "When you smell an odorless gas, it is probably carbon monoxide."

Chemistry: "A supersaturated solution is one that holds more than it can hold." "To collect fumes of sulphur, hold a deacon over a flame in a test tube."

Geology: "The tides are a fight between earth and the moon. All water tends towards the moon because there is no water on the moon and nature abhors a vacuum." "The moon is a planet like the earth, only it is even deader."

Botany: "Mushrooms always grow in damp places and so look like umbrellas." "Rhubarb is a kind of celery gone bloodshot." "The pistol of a flower is its only protection against insects." "Dew is formed on leaves when the sun shines down on them and makes them sweat."

Definitions: "Equatora managerie of lions running round the Earth through Africa." "Planeta body of earth surrounded by sky." "Germinateto become a naturalized German." "Litrea nest of young puppies." "Momentumwhat you give a person when they are going away." "Vacuuma large empty space where the pope lives."

Other: "A magnet is something you find crawling over a dead cat." "A fossil is an extinct animal. The older it is, the more extinct it is." And, "To keep milk from turning sour, keep it in the cow."