

Wordplay / Slipperiness of Language / N-tendres

Hi! I'm Lew Goldklang, Director of the **94941** Forensic Language Pathology Laboratory.

[Slide] **Welcome to G4G!**

It's an **honor** & a **pleasure** to be here with you again.

G4G11 = **G4GA**, I think. **A** stands for **Ace**; can be either 1 or **11**, as in Blackjack.

But in hexadecimal notation, A=10, and B=11, so this must be **G4GB**, and two years ago

G4G10 was G4GA (or G4GX), but we're not using Roman numerals anymore.

K is the eleventh letter. By alphabetical ordering, G4G1 = G4GA, and G4G11 = **G4GK**.

The **Rev. level** of G4G we're attending is ambiguous, unless we agree on the correct notation.

[Slide] **Language Roots / Meaning**

Thought is extremely complex. Language is a very rough approximation of thought.

Speaking is thought made audible. Writing is thought made visible.

Clear thinking leads to precise expression.

By using an agreed, uniform, precise language – **mathematics!** – to articulate our thoughts properly, we might be able to communicate clearly among ourselves.

As Humpty Dumpty explained to Alice, words mean whatever I want them to – no more, no less.

[Slide] **Slipperiness**

Much humor springs from the slipperiness of language – puns & phrases that have multiple meanings.

Slipperiness creates misdirection & surprise – **aha!** – producing magic & humor.

Less syntax makes phrases more slippery. With no rigid syntax, words can take on different roles (parts of speech – adjective, noun, verb).

There's a **parallel** with LISP – the least structured programming language; very slippery.

LISP has almost no syntax, just text strings within nested parentheses.

Source code looks just like strings of data sets.

LISP allows recursion & self-referential definitions, like N!

(defun factorial (N) (if (= N 1) 1 (* N (factorial (- N 1)))))

We heard about some squares & rep-tiles earlier this morning. Here are some examples of

[Slide] **Triple entendres**

A Hi-Fi equipment store in Palo Alto named **Sound Goods** once sold fancy audio equipment.

1. Reliable products
2. Turntables / speakers / headphones – gear that conveys & amplifies sound
3. Sounds good to me!

[Slide] There's a bookstore in Marin named **Book Passage**.

1. Important section of text
2. Books are sold (change hands) here
3. Buy a travel ticket.

[Slide] **General Case**

The general case of a phrase with multiple meanings would be an **N-tendre**, which is itself a double entendre! I'm **coining that term** here today.

G4GA Challenge

Find a phrase with 11 nuanced meanings; an N-tendre with **N = 11**.

Listen up in the back! This gets a little . . . subtle.

Explanation

Our company manufactures delicious, healthy, energy-boosting snack wafers.

1. Company name = **Safe Crackers**

2. Product name = **Safe Crackers**

3. We use healthy ingredients. No trans-fats. Low salt. Crackers are **safe** to eat. Safe => edible, not risky, reliable.

[Slide] 4. The crackers are baked into cubes that look like little **safes**. Kids love them. Safe => shape of product.

5. Some crackers are shaped like little cylinders with a fuse. They look like **firecrackers** but they're safe to eat & play with. **Cracker** => shape of product.

6. The crackers are packed in **nano-carbon-fiber** sturdy boxes that keep the crackers **safe** from harm. Safe => protection from damage.

7. The **boxes** are designed to look like **safes**. Safe => shape of container. (Recursion – safes within safes.)

[Slide] 8. Boxes of freshly baked crackers are stored in a warehouse vault (a **safe!**) for extra safety. **Mighty safe** crackers! Safe => extra security. (Recursion – safes within safes.) The safe is, of course, manufactured by the **ACME Safe Co.** for the Always Open Safe & Lock Company in Palm Desert. (**American Company Makes Everything**)

9. Crackers stored in the safe are the **Safe** crackers as opposed to the Shipped or Shelf crackers, or the crackers baking in the kitchen. Safe => location.

10. Carbon-fiber boxes are so strong that packing 'em tightly into the safe causes hairline fractures to appear on its inside walls. Product **boxes themselves** are safe **crackers** – they can crack the container holding them. Cracker => culprit.

11. The vault prevents **cracker-crazed felons** like the Beagle Boys (or Bagel Boys) from breaking into the secure storage bin & stealing them. The crackers are protected against safe-cracking thugs known as **safe crackers** by trade. Our **Safe Crackers are safe from safe crackers** (criminals)!

There are more than 11 meanings. The time limit prevents me from explaining them all. I leave it as an exercise for you to find others. Discard the ones you like least, leaving 11.

[Slide] **Conclusion**

SAFE CRACKERS is a two-word N-tendre with N = 11.

The singular form of the phrase is **SAFE CRACKER**, spelled with 11 letters.

I brought some of our crackers with me today, for you to enjoy. If you eat them at the hotel here, they will be the safe **Ritz** crackers.

Our Finance Expert

We hired a brilliant, serious, Orthodox accountant – who specializes in double-entry bookkeeping – to keep track of our company's finances, calculate our tax returns, & prevent us from drowning in data.

[Slide] His name is **Noah Counting**, CPA.

[Slide] **Cat Race**

Two cats swam a race across a river.

The American cat was named **One-two-three**.

The French cat was named **Un-deux-trois**.

Who won the race?

The American cat won, since the **Un-deux-trois** cat **sank!**

Slides 4] **Coffee-vapor Bubbles**

You may recall our coffee-vapor bubble analysis from G4GX. You'll be pleased to know that my food & drinks still send me important messages occasionally. Here's a **self-referential breakfast** we had recently – a mighty close caricature.

[Slide] **Special Exchange Gift from G4GX**

This project took me a **full year**. I went to the trouble of ripping **three hundred sixty-five** 8" x 8" square sheets of Kirkland Signature stretch-tite® plastic wrap, to include one for each of you in the Gift Exchange bag, so you can analyze coffee-vapor bubble patterns in the privacy of your own kitchen.

[Slide] **Magnet Philosophy**

My refrigerator magnet reads: Any philosophy small enough to fit on a refrigerator magnet is insufficiently powerful to explain anything.

[Slide] **Counterexample**

Of course, there's a powerful contradicting counterexample: $E = MC^2$.

[Slide] **Bumper Sticker Philosophy**

My bumper sticker reads: **FREE TIBET!** *

* With purchase of one regular Tibet of equal or greater value.

[Slide] **Language Philosophy**

"It's impossible to speak in such a way that you cannot be misunderstood."
The philosopher Karl Popper said that, but I don't understand it.

[Slide] **Happiness**

Is everyone happy? Is anyone happy?
Six of the seven dwarves are **not Happy!** Professor Raymond Smullyan told me that.

[Slide] **Pop Music Philosophy**

How Can I Miss You When You Won't Go Away? – One of our favorite tunes.

[Slide] **T-shirt Philosophy**

C D O – I may be accused of having **O**bsessive **C**ompulsive **D**isorder, but at least I arranged the letters in their correct alphabetical sequence.

[Slide] **Atlanta Airport**

The Atlanta airport is huge but very efficient, thanks to an internal train that connects all the terminals. On the train, an automated recording declares, "Next stop is

A as in Alpha, then **B** as in Bravo, then **C** as in Charlie, then **D** as in . . . **David!**

The 1940's military alphabet sequence is altered, since if they announced "D as in **Delta**," all the passengers would disembark, thinking this is the terminal where their flight departs.

[Slide] **G4G Statistical Advantage**

When you're odd, the odds are with you!

Thank you for your attention & patience. Speak clearly!

[Slide] **Good Luckies & Safe Passage!**