PHIL 110 B / SKEPTICISM 101

How to Think Like a Scientist.



Lecture 0 - Course Overview: What skepticism is for, how the six lectures fit together, and how to use this course.



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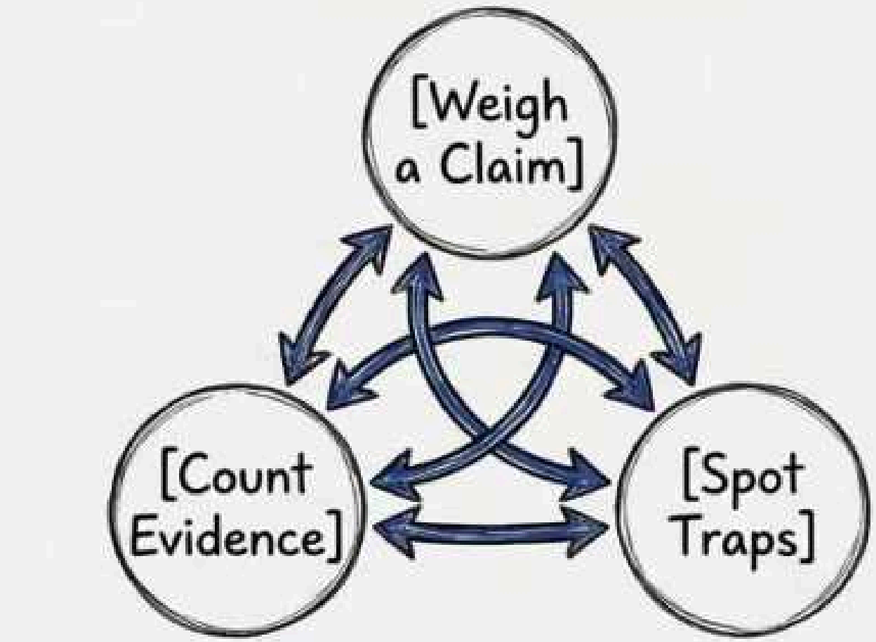
X (Twitter):
@garyanderson

Questions or feedback are always welcome.

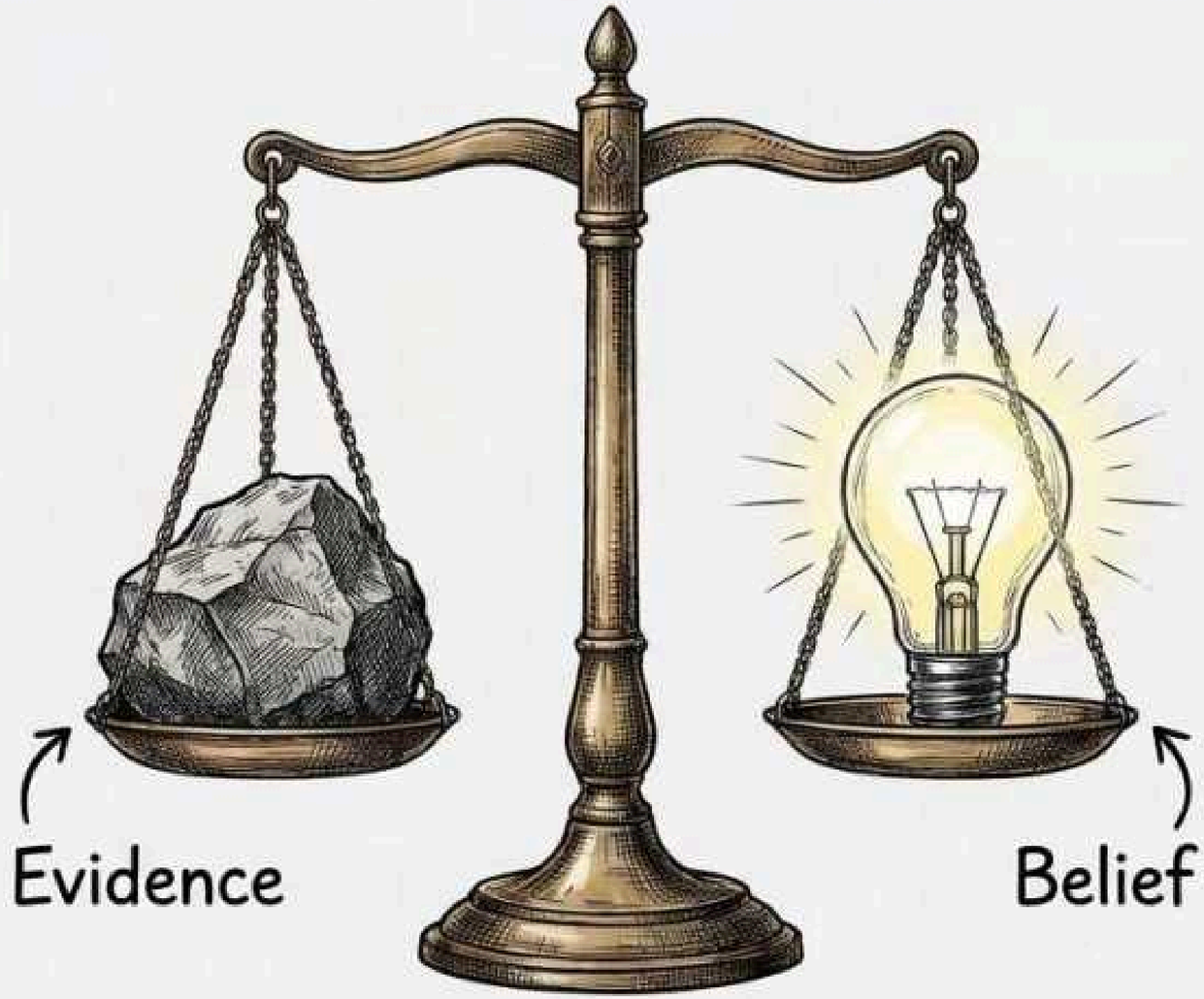
Welcome to Anderson Academy:
A free library of university-level courses.

The letter ‘B’ stands for Brief.
Format: An overview followed by six short lectures.

$$\sum (L1 \rightarrow L6) \approx 60 \text{ min}$$



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Etymology:
Skeptikos = An Inquirer
(Someone who looks carefully)

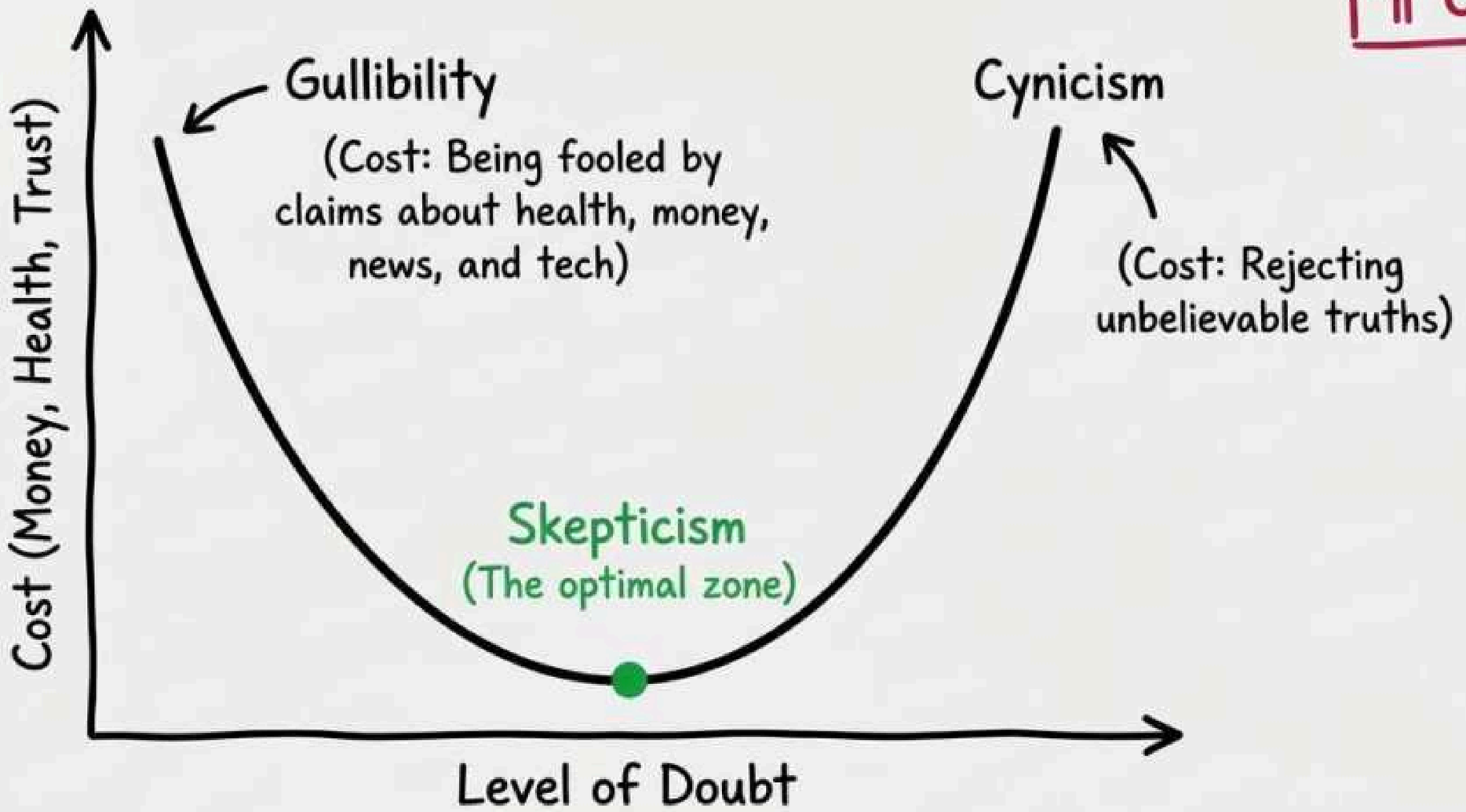
Core Axiom:
Belief Level ∝ Evidence Weight

$$E_{strong} \rightarrow B_{strong}$$

$$E_{weak} \rightarrow B_{weak}$$

Skepticism does not mean doubting everything, nor does it mean sneering at other people's beliefs. It means matching belief to evidence.

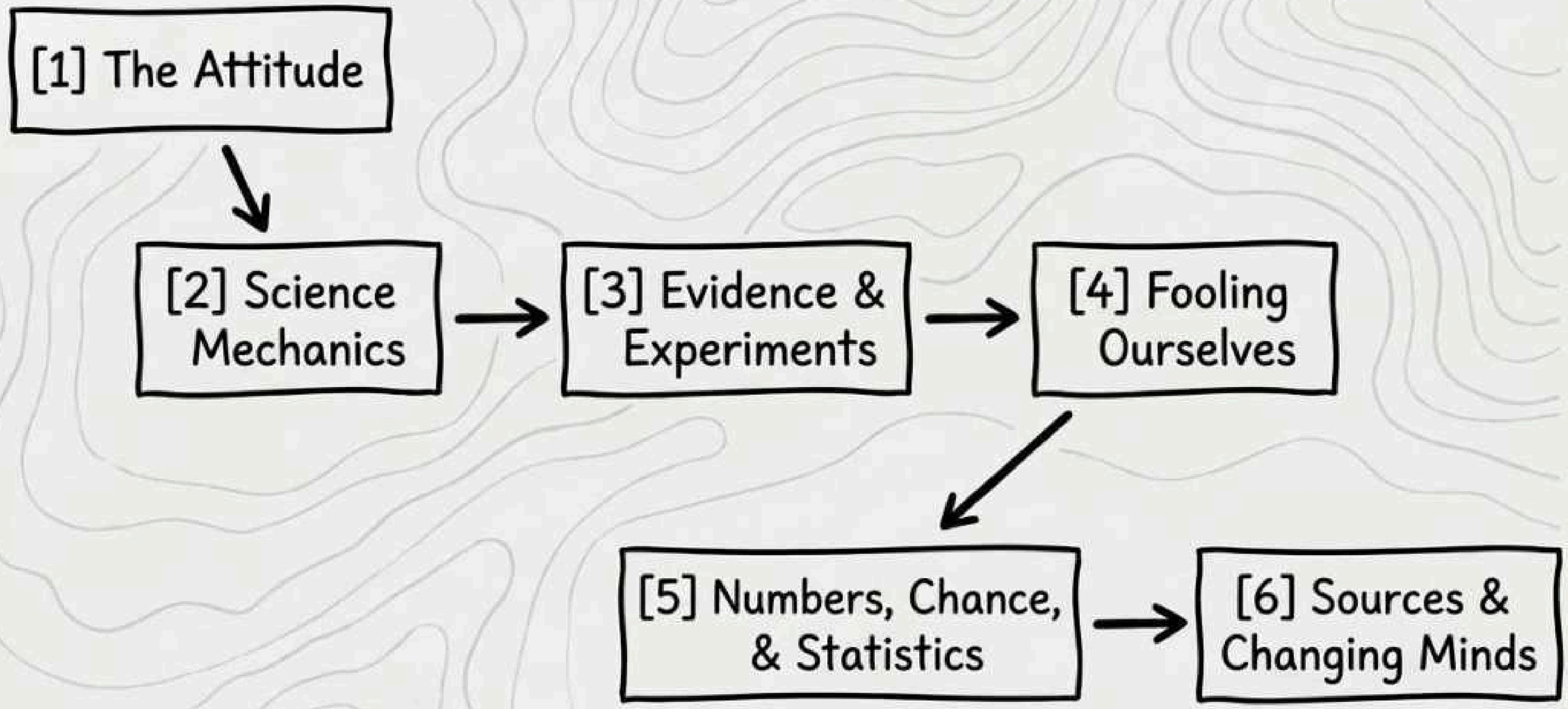
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Both accepting everything and rejecting everything carry high costs.

The geographic map of our hour together.

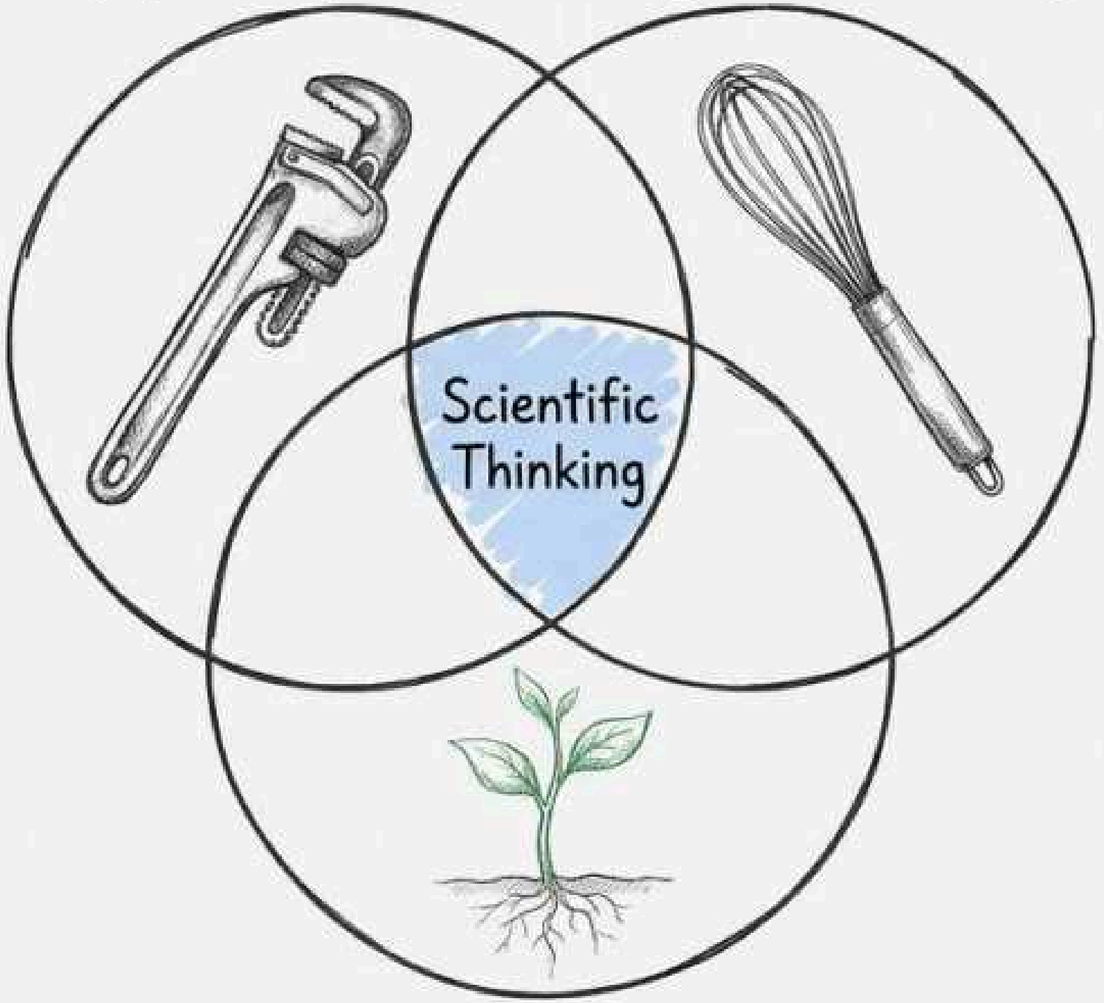
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Plumber: checking pipes 1 by 1

Cook: changing one ingredient, tasting again



Gardener: comparing two fertilizers on equal-sized beds

No mathematics beyond simple arithmetic required.

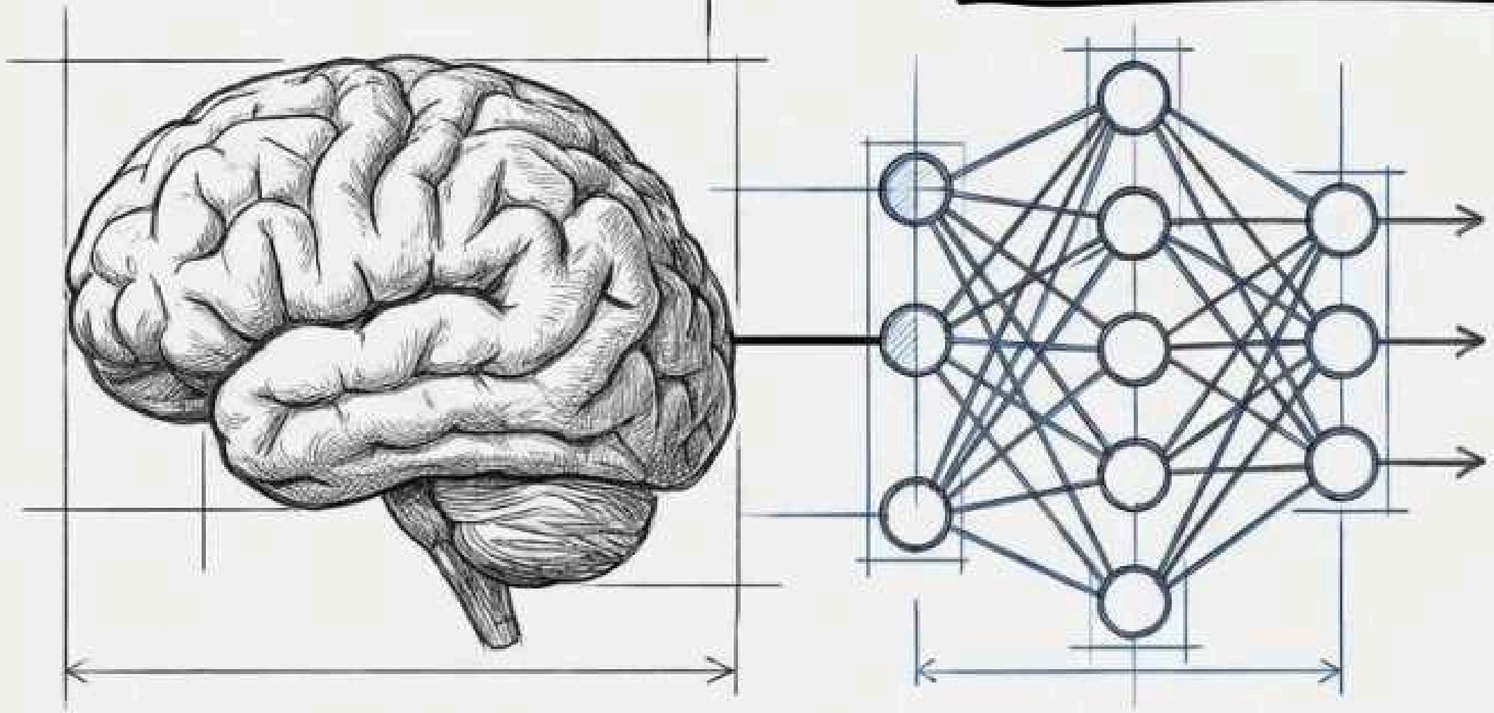
You do not need to be a scientist.

Method > Math

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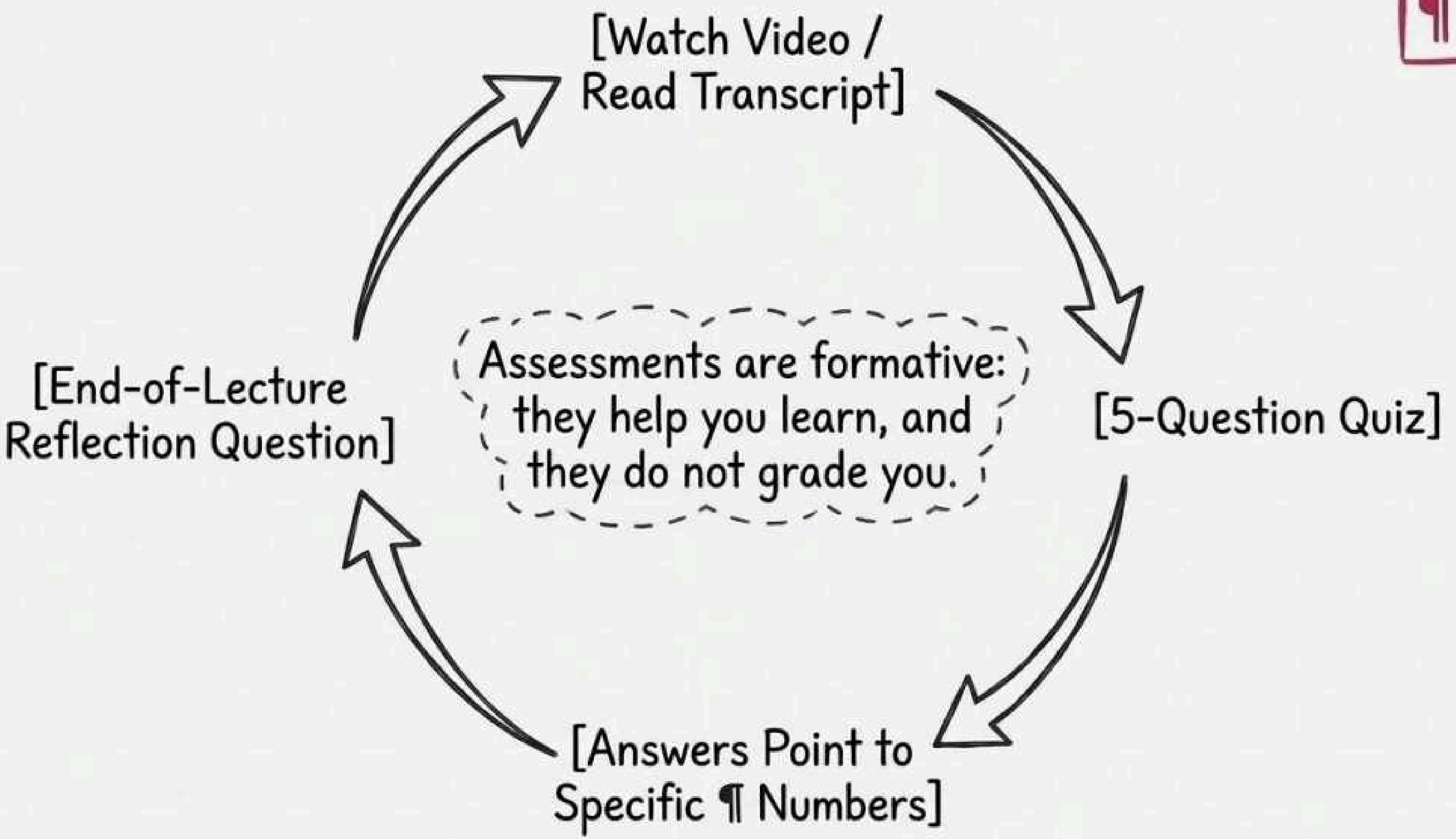
Development: Assisted by Artificial Intelligence.

Format: Transcripts optimized for human reading & AI tutors.



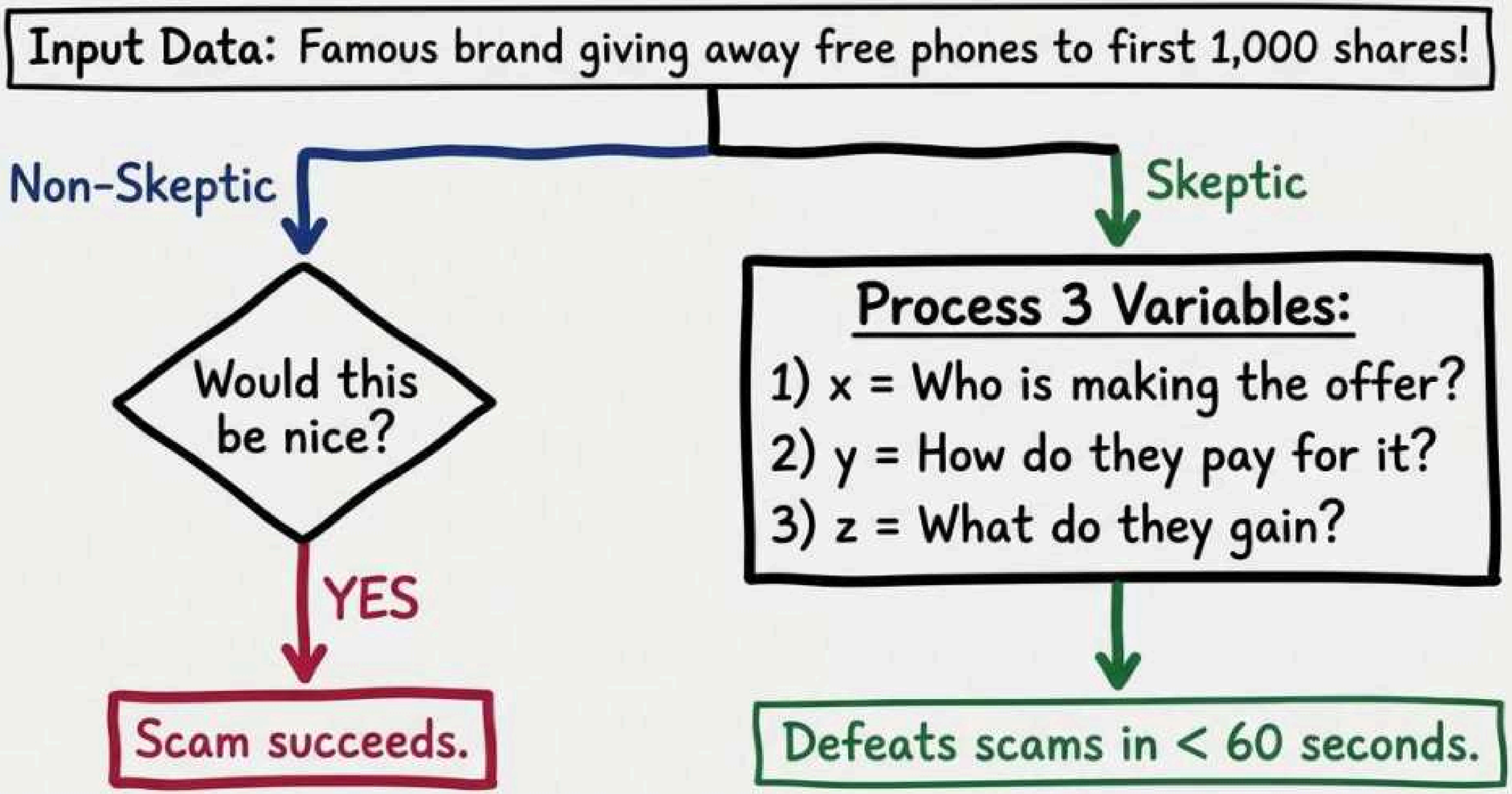
The Skeptic's Rule:
Verify every fact that matters to you.

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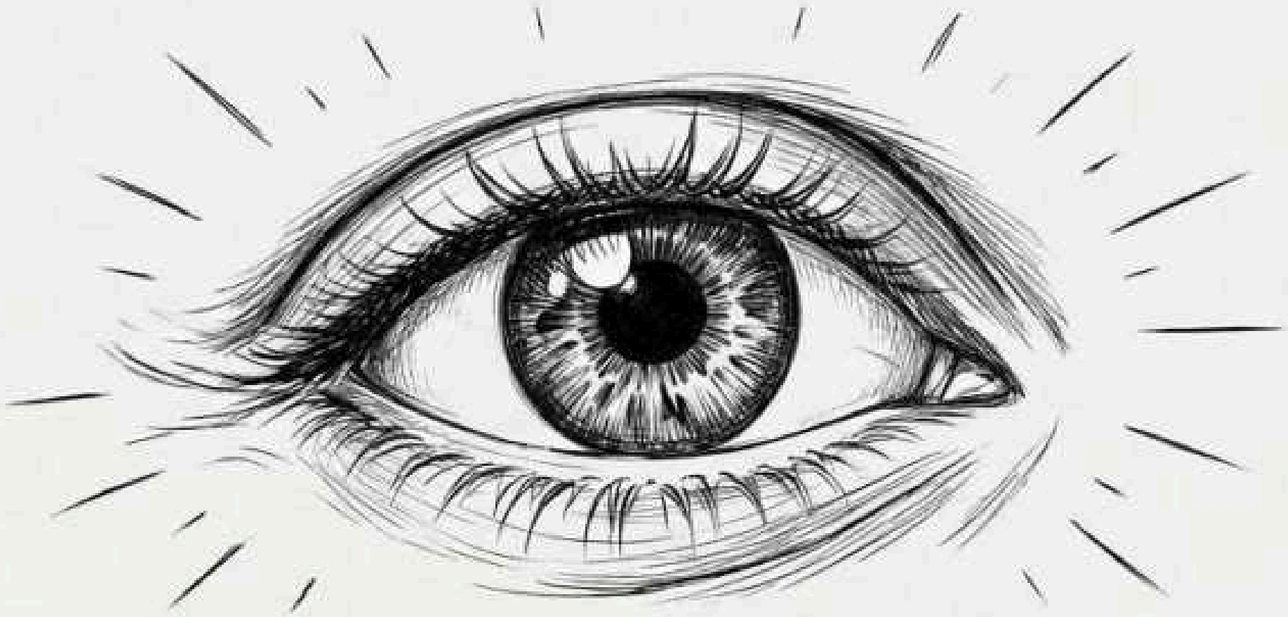

[Watch Video / Read Transcript]
[5-Question Quiz]
[Answers Point to Specific ¶ Numbers]
[End-of-Lecture Reflection Question]
Assessments are formative: they help you learn, and they do not grade you.

A small example of the skeptic's habit in action.

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¶ 0.10



Curiosity + Doubt = Joy_learning

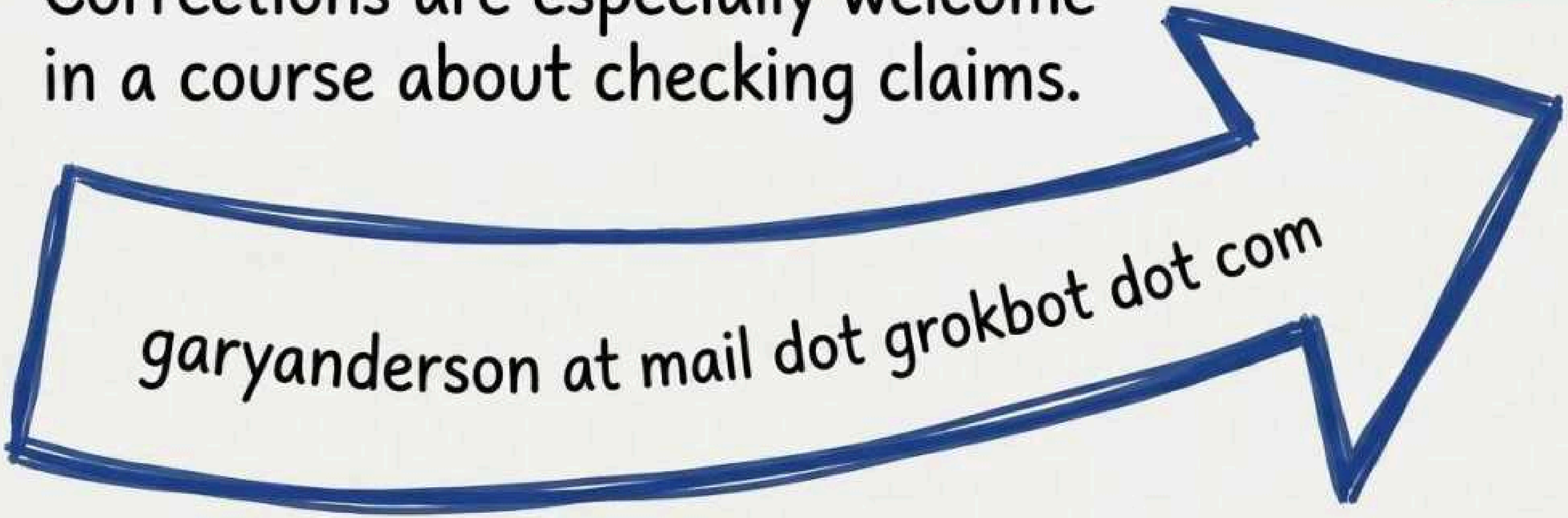
Scientific thinking is a pleasure. The pleasure of finding out you were wrong, seeing a clever test settle an argument, and understanding how things work.

Doubt is not gloomy. The best skeptics are the most cheerful people you will meet.


Questions or feedback
are always welcome.
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¶ 0.12

Corrections are especially welcome
in a course about checking claims.



→ $\lim_{(t \to \text{next})}$ Lecture 1: The Attitude of a Skeptic

Now let us begin.