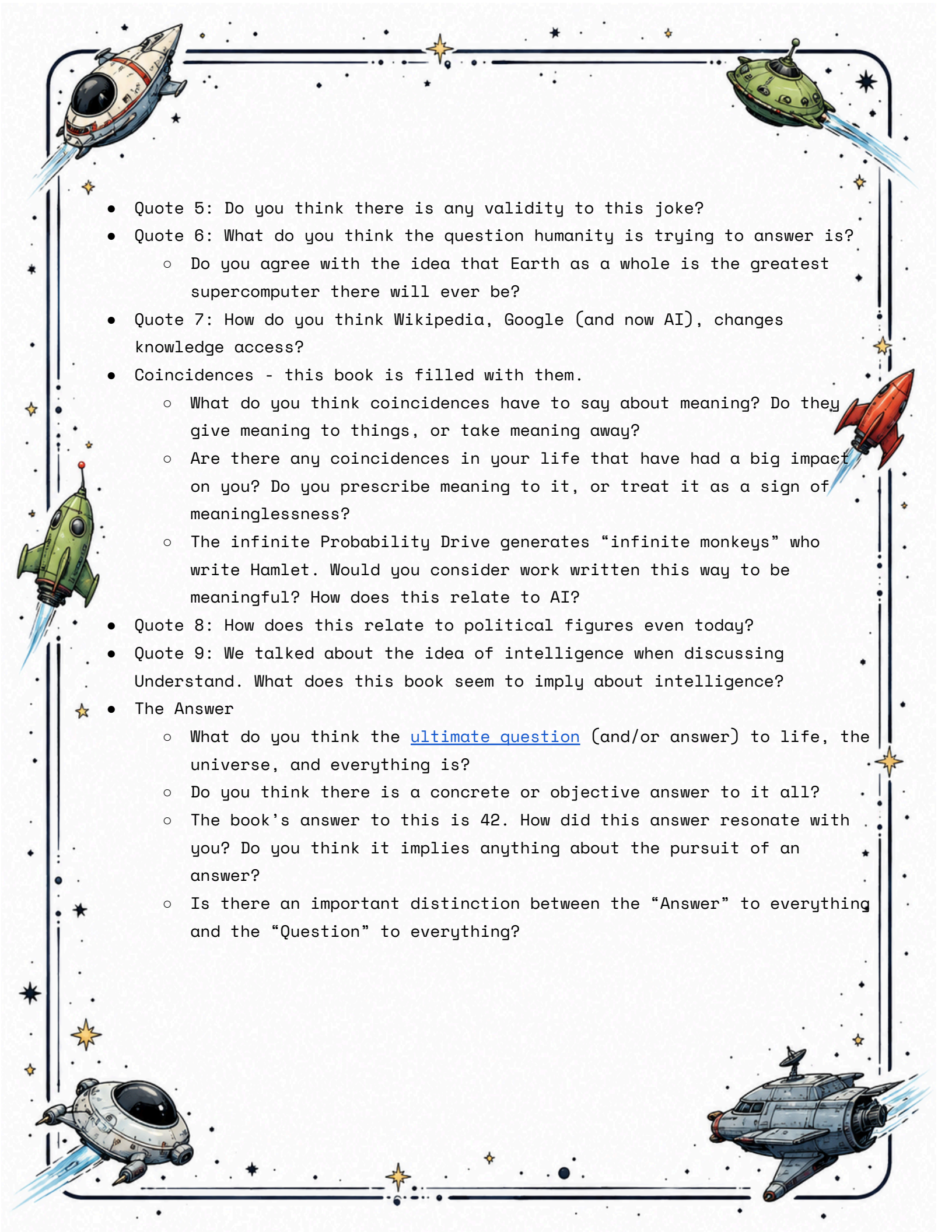


Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Discussion Questions

HGG was originally released in 1979 (UK) and 1980 (US), making it almost 40 years old! Did you find that the humor of this book aged well? Were there any jokes that didn't land? Any jokes that still felt particularly relevant?

- Did the style of Adams' humor resonate with you?
- Quote 1; if you haven't already, you should check out this website called [If the Moon were only 1 Pixel](#)
 - In both Recursion and Stories of Your Life, we talked a lot about the human's mind and its ability to perceive the world around it, and the limitations of that
 - How would you come to terms with the idea that the world was no more?
 - Do you think humans' (in)ability to comprehend infinity limits us from eventually being able to explore the universe like the characters we see here?
 - How does this relate to other things the book has to say about scale and significance?
- Quote 2: Regarding the Babelfish
 - Compare with theories like the [Watchmaker Analogy](#)
 - What are Douglas's thoughts on this? What are your own thoughts?
 - How does this quote relate to some of the stories we read in Stories of Your Life? (Tower of Babylon, Division by Zero)?
 - Do you think communication in this sense would cause more or less conflict?
- Quote 3: We've seen cases in previous books of Robot sentience [Murderbot] and the increased display over time of "human" emotions.
 - Why do you think this is?
 - Is it because humans "wrote" the original code, so of course that would bleed into the program? Is it wishful thinking, that sentience would resemble us? Is it because human nature is so dominating?
 - If robots developed sentience in our current society today, do you think they would also feel "depressed" about their work?
- Quote 4 - Arcane, Viktor: "In the pursuit of Great, we failed to do Good"
 - Is "progress" always good? Can you think of anything in modern day technology that these quotes make you think of?



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- Quote 5: Do you think there is any validity to this joke?
 - Quote 6: What do you think the question humanity is trying to answer is?
 - Do you agree with the idea that Earth as a whole is the greatest supercomputer there will ever be?
 - Quote 7: How do you think Wikipedia, Google (and now AI), changes knowledge access?
 - Coincidences - this book is filled with them.
 - What do you think coincidences have to say about meaning? Do they give meaning to things, or take meaning away?
 - Are there any coincidences in your life that have had a big impact on you? Do you prescribe meaning to it, or treat it as a sign of meaninglessness?
 - The infinite Probability Drive generates “infinite monkeys” who write Hamlet. Would you consider work written this way to be meaningful? How does this relate to AI?
 - Quote 8: How does this relate to political figures even today?
 - Quote 9: We talked about the idea of intelligence when discussing Understand. What does this book seem to imply about intelligence?
 - ★ • The Answer
 - What do you think the [ultimate question](#) (and/or answer) to life, the universe, and everything is?
 - Do you think there is a concrete or objective answer to it all?
 - The book’s answer to this is 42. How did this answer resonate with you? Do you think it implies anything about the pursuit of an answer?
 - Is there an important distinction between the “Answer” to everything and the “Question” to everything?

1. "There was no way his imagination could feel the impact of the whole Earth having gone, it was too big" - Chapter 6
"The simple truth is that interstellar distances will not fit into the human imagination." -Chapter 8
"It wasn't infinity in fact. Infinity itself looks flat and uninteresting. Looking up into the night sky is looking into infinity - distance is incomprehensible and therefore meaningless. The chamber into which the aircar emerged was anything but infinite, it was just very very very big, so big that it gave the impression of infinity far better than infinity itself." - Chapter 24
2. "Now it is such a bizarrely improbable coincidence that anything so mind-bogglingly useful could have evolved purely by chance that some thinkers have chosen to see it as a final and clinching proof of the nonexistence of God." - Chapter 6
"The argument goes something like this: 'I refuse to prove that I exist,' says God, 'for proof denies faith, and without faith, I am nothing.' 'But, says Man, the Babel fish is a dead giveaway, isn't it? It could not have evolved by chance. It proves you exist, and, by your own arguments, you don't. QED.' 'Oh dear,' says God, 'I hadn't thought of that,' and vanishes in a puff of logic. 'Oh, that was easy,' says Man, and for an encore goes on to prove that black is white and gets himself killed on the next zebra crossing." - Chapter 6
"Meanwhile, the poor Babel fish, by effectively removing all barriers to communication between different races and cultures, has caused more and bloodier wars than anything else in the history of creation" - Chapter 6
3. "'I think you ought to know I'm feeling very depressed,' [Martin] said... 'Brain the size of a planet and they ask me to take you down to the bridge.'" - Chapter 11
4. "Then as technology became more sophisticated the controls were made touch-sensitive... Now all you had to do was wave your hand in the general direction of the components and hope. It saved a lot of muscular expenditure, but meant that you had to sit infuriatingly still if you wanted to keep listening to the same program." - Chapter 12
5. "...brought together not of their own volition or by simple coincidence, but by some curious perversion of physics - as if relationships between people were susceptible to the same laws that governed the relationships between atoms and molecules." - Chapter 14
6. "I think the problem, to be quite honest with you, is that you've never actually known what the question is." - Chapter 28
7. I really didn't foresee the Internet. But then, neither did the computer industry. Not that that tells us very much of course - the computer industry didn't even foresee that the century was going to end.
But I did have the inkling of an idea that a collaborative guide, one that was written and kept up to date by the people who used it, in real time, might be a neat idea. I just didn't really realize that such a thing might be possible in my lifetime or how powerful such a thing might be." - Douglas Adams H2G2.com
8. "Trillian had come to suspect that the main reason why he had such a wild and successful life was that he never really understood the significance of anything he did" - Chapter 4
"His job is not to wield power, but to draw attention away from it. On those criteria Zaphod Beeblebrox is one of the most successful Presidents the Galaxy has ever had - he has already spent two of his ten presidential years in prison for fraud." - Chapter 4
9. "For instance, on the planet Earth, man had always assumed that he was more intelligent than dolphins because he had achieved so much - the wheel, New York, wars and so on - whilst all the dolphins had ever done was muck about in the water having a good time. But conversely, the dolphins had always believed that they were far more intelligent than man - for precisely the same reasons." (pg 156)