

# How to use Occam's Razor

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## What it is

When you have a few possible explanations, the one that needs the fewest assumptions is usually the right one.

## When to use it

When something confusing happens and you're tempted to reach for the most complicated explanation.

## Steps

1. **Name what you're explaining.** What happened that needs an explanation?
2. **List each explanation, with its assumptions.** For each one, write it down and count how many things you'd have to assume are true.

## Common mistake

Reaching for the most dramatic explanation instead of the simplest one that fits the facts.

## Pairs with

First Principles Thinking and the 5 Whys.

# Example: the wifi keeps dropping

Date: Thu, Nov 2

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## What happened

The wifi disconnects every evening around 8pm

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## Explanations and assumptions needed e.g. Phone died, 1 assumption.

1 Router overheating in the closed cabinet, 1 assumption

2 Neighbor's new device interfering with the signal, 2 assumptions

3 The internet provider throttling during peak hours, 3 assumptions

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The simplest explanation: Move the router out of the cabinet

# Explanation Comparison Table

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What happened

Explanations and assumptions needed e.g. Phone died, 1 assumption.

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The simplest explanation: \_\_\_\_\_