

Reading: Murphy's Law

Before we start...

1. If you're in a slow queue at the supermarket and you decide to change to a queue that moves faster, what will usually happen?
2. What's the Murphy's Law? Try to explain.

After reading...

1. Who was Murphy? What is his "law"?

2. Now look at the examples of Murphy's Laws in the article. Match them to the endings below.

- a) it will immediately start working.
- b) three will come at the same time.
- c) all the traffic lights will be red.
- d) you'll find the lost one.
- e) your flight will be delayed.
- f) the printer won't have any paper.
- g) there'll be a long queue at security.
- h) you'll be out when they deliver it.

If something can go wrong...

If you're in a queue at the supermarket and you change to another queue which is moving more quickly, what will happen? The queue you were in before will suddenly start moving faster. What will happen if you take your umbrella because you think it's going to rain later? It won't rain, of course. It will only rain if you forget to take your umbrella. These are examples of Murphy's Law, which says, 'If there is something that can go wrong, it will go wrong'.

Murphy's Law took its name from Captain Edward Murphy, an American aerospace engineer from the 1940s. He was trying to improve safety for pilots flying military planes. Not surprisingly, he got a reputation for always thinking of the worst thing that could happen in every situation. Here are some more examples of Murphy's Law.

Shopping

- 1 If you lose a glove and buy a new pair...
- 2 If you order something online...

Transport

- 3 If you stop waiting for a bus and start walking...
- 4 If you're in a taxi and you're late for something important...

Technology

- 5 If a technician comes to fix your computer...
- 6 If you need to print a document urgently...

Air travel

- 7 If you get to the airport early...
- 8 If you're late for your flight...