

If you could choose a superpower (only one), what would it be?

Tap the link and let's talk about superpowers

1. Reading. What do you think means 'to waste superpowers'? Go through the text and decide whether it is a scientific report, a work of fiction, or a humorous essay. Then drag and drop subheadings to their places.



How I'd Waste My Superpowers

By Jason Adam Katzenstein

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_____ **Telepathy**

I would only use it to cut the tags off of new shirts.

_____ **Super Strength**

I live on the second floor. I'd leave my window open. This way, I wouldn't need to remember to bring my keys with me whenever I left my apartment.

_____ **Power to Walk Through Walls**

I'd only talk to dogs. In the same voice that I already talk to dogs, I'd say, "You're such a cute dog, do you know that? Do you? Do you?," and the dog would just respond, "Yes, I know that. Thank you. Can we move on?"

_____ **Communication with Animals**

I'd exclusively use it to see if someone has read my texts if they've turned off read receipts.

_____ **Flight**

I'd use it ironically.

_____ **Having a Cool Robotic Armor Suit**

I'd make dinner plans with someone and then waste time on the Internet, in sweatpants, until about thirty seconds before we were supposed to meet. (I'd still be, like, ten minutes late.)



_____ **Ability to Control the Weather**

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Bye-bye, hangover.



_____ **Super Speed**

Again, no need to remember my apartment keys.

_____ **Time Travel**

I could see what was in the fridge without opening the fridge.

_____ **Ability to Breathe Underwater**

I'd have the best Halloween costume. Every other day of the year it would stay in my closet.

_____ **Healing Factor**

I would make it hail whenever I wanted to cancel plans. It would hail a lot.

_____ **Laser Vision**

I'd go back to 1985, pretend I wrote all of Green Day's songs, and live the rest of my life as the lead singer of Green Day. I'd call my band Green Week, just to mess with butterfly-effect stuff. In 1987, at one of our concerts, I'd cover a Skrillex song for a stunned audience, and then tell them that their kids are going to love it.



_____ **X-Ray Vision**

I'd take a lot more baths.



If you were offered to choose between invisibility and flying, which superpower would you choose?

What would you do with it?

2. Listen to the Intro once _____

Have you recognized the voice? What podcast is this?

Listen again and fill in the gaps.

Act One, The Invisible Man Vs. _____ .

So we now present a kind of super contest for you, _____ super listener,

between two _____ superpowers – two of the superpowers

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which have _____ humans since _____ .

The Rorschach Test is a projective psychological test developed in 1921 by Hermann Rorschach to measure thought disorder for the purpose of identifying mental illness. It was inspired by the observation that schizophrenia patients often interpret the things they see in unusual ways. In the test, the participant is shown a series of ten ink blot cards and directed to respond to each with what they see in the inkblot.

And actually, this is kind of a super Rorschach test. John Hodgman has been conducting an unscientific survey, posing for people a very simple choice.

3. Listen to the clip and do the T/F activity

_____

1) Whichever you pick, you'll be the only person in the world to have that particular superpower. __

2) John Hodgman started wondering about the subject just recently. __

3) He asked this question in the streets, at schools and at hospitals. __

4) Like a magic word, shazam, flight versus invisibility would instantly change an evening's character . __

5) John was surprised how readily people answered the question. __

6) People's plans were always flashy and heroic. __

4. Read out the excerpts. Then listen to the snippet and mark the sentences 1, 2, or 3 depending on the speaker _____



there would definitely be flight groupies __

fly into the bar __

I'd go into Barney's __

I just slept with a flying dude __



I put those five sweaters on __

check out what's going on there __

wonder why there's a tag hanging from the door __

people are just like, oh, score __

fly to a doctor's appointment __

to think of other things to do __

5. Listen to the clip. How does it typically go? _____

Can you come up with any ways that flight and invisibility can be used in to tackle crime?

6. A_Listen to this clip _____. Which three ideas does the author come up with?

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Drag and drop the chunks, the listen again and check.

such as **a little bit** **simply** **after all** **only a little bit**



Going-to-Paris Man is not a superhero. And I have to say this drove me crazy _____ . We are, _____ , talking about superpowers. Why not take down organized crime, bring hope to the hopeless, swear vengeance on the underworld, if _____ ?

I proposed a variety of sample scenarios along these lines, _____, how would you handle a mad genius taking over the Empire State Building or a group of terrorists hijacking an overseas flight? And what I learned is some people should _____ not be fighting crime.

Read out the verbs on the left and the definitions on the right, then try to match them up. The verbs are from parts A and B of this activity, so that you may look up them in the context.

take down	approach someone quietly and without being noticed
swear vengeance on	unlawfully seizing
hijacking	promise to punish
sneak up	remove
shove	engage someone or their assistance or support
be tempted	waiting, or spending time aimlessly
to enlist	having an urge or inclination to do smth
hanging around	push roughly

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B_Order the dialogue between John Hodgman and a woman. What is in the picture =>?



__ Do you think you would be tempted to enlist a teenage helper?

__ There's no others − anybody else with superpowers.

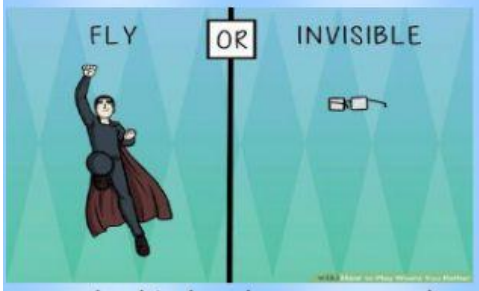
__ Well, the first thing that occurs to me is I'd go sneak up behind them very low and with a knife that they didn't see and slice their Achilles tendon.

__ No, I think a helper would be good, a helper with a complementary power.

__ Oh. It would just be a teenager hanging around me? No.

__ Uh, no. I somehow shove a sock in their mouth, or something like that, and wrap some tape around their mouth so that they can't yell out. It might not be a sock. It might just be some napkins or something. I can't keep all this in my head. I'd have to keep a bag full of stuff with me − knives, socks, tape.

7. Unjumble the questions and fill the gaps with matching word forms



John Hodgman: People who consider invisibility always want to know, / be/have/ do/I/ naked /to/ _____? People who choose flight want to know how fast. Almost all asked, / a fight/ would/ who / win/ in/ _____, Mr. Invisible or Flying Man? And so I had to lay down some rules.

_____ (invisible) means the power to become transparent at will, including your clothing, but anything you may pick up is visible. Flight means the power to fly at any altitude within the Earth's _____ (atmospheric) at speeds up to 1,000 miles per hour. But even then they start looking for loopholes, hidden catches, superpower fine print. They start _____ (negotiation) their dreams with me.

Man 1: Now, when you're flying, if you're flying at 1,000 miles an hour at 100,000 feet, are you comfortable? / cold/ you/ do/ very/ get/ _____ ?



Man 2: Let's say I'm in this room, and I'm invisible. And I'm walking around this apartment, and I'm invisible. And −

Man 3: Yes, you −

Man 2: / I have/ quiet/do/ to be/ completely/ _____

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or you guys will hear my footsteps?

***Man 3*:** Yes.

Man 2: Because that's a pain in the ass. And also someone would have to let you in.

Man 4: / somebody/I / can/ carry / _____?
/somebody/ my back/can/ on/go / _____ ?

John Hodgman: / you/ can/ carry/ back now/ someone/ on your/ _____ ?

Man 4: Little people, yeah.

John Hodgman: Then you can carry little people on your back.

Man 4: Done. Flight, it is.

Listen and check: _____

8_A Listen to the next snippet and number the stages of choosing your superpower (there are two irrelevant extra stages). Can you explain the meanings? _____

stage __ - self-sabotage **stage __ - philosophical reconsideration**

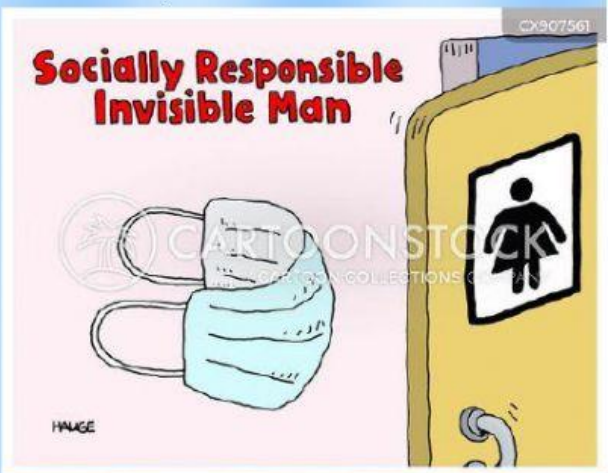
stage __ - gut reaction **stage __ - self-recrimination**

stage __ - practical consideration **stage __ - denial** **stage __ - acceptance**

B_Listen again and fill in the gaps with three words each:

Because you have the ability to _____ , perhaps, show up at one point and perhaps _____ a little while and turn invisible, and then come back and _____ they say about you. You have the power to _____ exes, and that would all be enlightening, and fun, and in fact, a _____ .

That would – I believe it would be – it would _____ a life of complete depression. You wouldn't be able to really



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_____ , you know? And I know there would be some problems with the perversion thing.

_____ , as an invisible person, down a dark path, because you're not gonna miss out when you're invisible on – you know, no matter how many times you've seen a woman naked in a shower, you're gonna wanna see it again because there's always a different woman, right? And there's just like a lifetime of that. And that's not acceptable behavior, _____ you're invisible or not.

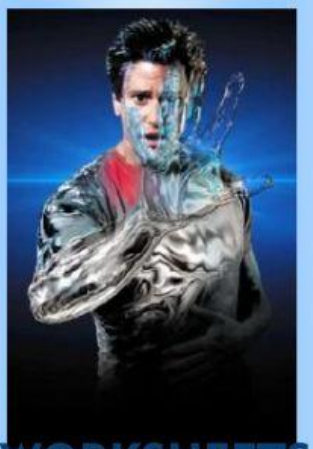
Do you agree with the man?



Who do you think chooses flight and who chooses invisibility? Is there any crucial or defining difference between these two types of people?

9. Listen to the clip, match the parts of the chunks and then retell _____

men lean	into flame
brood anxiously	with uncanny accuracy
switching from	fears
to burst	toward flying
shoot arrows	over their choice
flight and invisibility	primal desires
they touch two	one to the other
very different	different nerves
unconscious	touch a nerve



10. Listen to the snippet and do the T/F task

_____

1. Christine is John's daughter. __
2. Christine chose invisibility. __

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3. Christine said that one superpower was about something obvious, and the other one was about something that was hidden. __

4. She thought that your choice of superpower indicated your level of guilt. __

5. Christine said that a person who'd choose to be invisible clearly didn't want to hide themselves. __

6. Christine felt that she wanted to hide herself. __



11. Shadow the snippets. Do you agree with the woman?

1) _____ It all has to do with guile. Wanting to be invisible means that you're a more guileful person. If you want to fly, it means you're guileless.

2) _____ And I think the reason that I'm so conflicted about flying versus invisibility is that I have guile, but I really wish that I didn't.

John Hodgman

3) _____ Flight is the hero – selfless, and confident, and unashamed. And invisibility – the villain. Almost everyone I talked to called invisibility the sneakier power.

Man

4) _____ Flying is for people who want to let it all hang out. Invisibility is for fearful, crouching masturbators.

Woman

5) _____ First of all, I think that a lot of people are gonna tell you that they would choose flight. And I think they're lying to you.

6) _____ I think they're saying that because they're trying to sound all mythic and heroic, because the better angels of our nature would tell us that the real thing that we should strive for is flight

7) _____ If everybody **were being perfectly honest** with you, they would tell you the truth, which is that they all want to be invisible so that they can shoplift, get into movies for free, go to exotic places on airplanes without paying for airline tickets, and watch celebrities have sex.

12. Listen to the last snippet. _____

What question does John really not want to face?



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