

LUCKY INVENTIONS

1. Listen to the excerpts from the conversation. Tick the inference you can make from what the speaker says.

1. *"He realized that the microwaves had done it. That made him think—wow—maybe microwaves could be useful, not just for his government project but for something else."*
 - a. Spencer realized he was going to make a lot of money.
 - b. Spencer thought microwaves would be useful in cooking.
 - c. Spencer decided to leave the project and work on ovens instead.
2. *"Some people call it serendipity, but it turns out that it's a bit more than just good luck ... First, they notice things that they were not looking for. A lot of us focus so much on our goals that we tune out everything else."*
 - a. Spencer knew the value of serendipity.
 - b. Divergent thinkers are often unsuccessful.
 - c. We lose opportunities when we focus too much on goals.
3. *"Yes, some people are more likely to notice things and make interesting and new connections between ideas. They recognize opportunities. In a way, they create serendipity."*
 - a. It is important to recognize these opportunities when they arise.
 - b. Serendipity is all in the imagination.
 - c. We are not all equally likely to experience serendipity.

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2. Read the excerpts from the podcast. Then listen and complete how the host checked for understanding.

Host: And welcome back to *Conversations*. Today's theme—chance.

Co-host: Actually, the show is really about serendipity.

Host: _____?

Co-host: Right, serendipity.

Cohost: Was this a case of serendipity? Partly, but I think it was also Spencer.

Host: Really? _____?

Co-host: Well, other people had noticed that microwaves could melt things, but Spencer was the one who understood its significance.

Host: What _____ thinking?

Co-host: *Divergent*. Divergent thinkers consider many potential solutions to a problem.

Host: Hmm. _____ I follow.

Can you give us _____?

Co-host: Sure.

Co-host: But a divergent thinker might see lots of other possible functions; for example, to mark a place in a book, or you could unfold it and use it to punch a hole in something.

Host: I see. _____ some people have a special talent for this? It's not serendipity at all?

Co-host: Yes, some people are more likely to notice things and make interesting and new connections between ideas.

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3. Listen to the following excerpts and choose CAN/CAN'T

1. "What was special about Spencer? This **can/can't** be the only example of this. I wondered how often this happens."
2. "Hmm. I am not sure I follow. **Can/Can't** you give us an example?"
3. "So, why **can't/can** I do this? **Can/Can't** we learn to be better at this kind of thinking?"
4. "Absolutely, there are lots of exercises you **can/can't** do to help you notice things and think more creatively. The paperclip example is a good place to start. Try to think of as many new uses as you **can/can't**."
5. "We **can/can't** actually increase the possibility of serendipity by changing the way we think?"