

Murphy's Law

- a If you're in a slow queue at the supermarket and you change to a different queue, what will usually happen?
- b Read the first two paragraphs of the article and check. Who was Murphy? What is his 'Law'?

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,...

- c Now look at the eight examples of Murphy's Law in the article and match them to sentences A–H.

- ☐ 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.

- d Do any of these things (or things like this) often happen to you?

- e Look at the laws again. What tense is the verb after *if*? What form is the other verb?



- f Match 1–6 to a–f to make sentences.

Here are six more examples of

MURPHY'S LAW

- 1 If you lose something,
- 2 If you arrive early at a party,
- 3 If you make an appointment to see a doctor,
- 4 If you don't do your homework,
- 5 If you buy a new carpet,
- 6 If you get into a hot bath,

- a you'll feel better before you see him or her.
- b you'll drop something on it the first day.
- c you'll find it in the last place you look.
- d your phone will ring.
- e all the other people will be late.
- f your teacher will ask you for it.

