

# THE 24/7 LECTURES

*Transcribed by Lester Drazen*

As part of the Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony, four of the world's great thinkers were invited to give 24/7 Lectures.

Each 24/7 Lecture was on an assigned topic. The lecturer was asked to explain that topic twice:

FIRST, a complete technical description in TWENTY-FOUR (24) SECONDS;  
and THEN a clear summary that anyone can understand, in SEVEN (7) WORDS.

The time and word limits were enforced by the Ig Nobel referee, Mr. John Barrett, and by the Ig Nobel V-Chip Monitor, prominent New York attorney William J. Maloney.

Here are the complete transcripts of this year's 24-7 Lectures.



*Dudley Herschbach.*  
Photo: Mike Benveniste.

**Dudley Herschbach,  
Nobel Laureate in  
Chemistry**

**TOPIC: Torque**

**Complete technical description in  
TWENTY-FOUR (24) SECONDS:**

Torque is a force, proportional to the rate of change of angular momentum with time. Applied to any object, torque will accelerate or deaccelerate its rotation. The extent of the acceleration is inversely proportional to the moment of inertia of the object. Among myriad applications are gyrations of ballet dancers, launching of boomerangs, and birthing of elephants—

**Clear summary that anyone can  
understand, in  
SEVEN (7) WORDS:**

To start or stop spinning, apply torque!



*Xiao-Li Meng.*  
Photo: Mike Benveniste.

**Xiao-Li Meng,  
Dean of the Graduate  
School, Harvard**

**TOPIC: Statistics**

**Complete technical description in  
TWENTY-FOUR (24) SECONDS:**

Z-test, T-test, chi-squared test, I can help you to face any test. Bayes, frequentist, fiducial: let me make you feel influential. Regression, correlation, causation: what else can generate more passion? Skewedness, kurtosis, heteroscedasticity: boy, do I feel sexy!

**Clear summary that anyone can  
understand, in  
SEVEN (7) WORDS:**

The only crystal ball approved by God.



*Melissa Franklin.*  
Photo: Mike Benveniste.

**Melissa Franklin,  
Professor of Physics,  
Harvard**

**TOPIC: Force**

**Complete technical description in  
TWENTY-FOUR (24) SECONDS:**

Force keeps me down, spins me round, keeps my atoms bound, keeps my motion Brown, makes my coffee drip, makes my muscles rip, my protons flip, my DNA zip... and unzip. It makes my cells divide, my brain decide, my microtubules grow... and subside. Force makes things go, and not go, and and/or not go and not go.

**Clear summary that anyone can  
understand, in SEVEN (7) WORDS:**

Equal, opposite, attractive, bang, [here Professor Franklin held up a small bell, and smacked it against the microphone stand] ding, crash... OW!!!!!!