

A Short Course in Reality: As Defined by Thirty Random Writers

1. Imagine Calvin digging assiduously in his backyard for treasure. Hobbes asks if he's found any. "A few rocks, a root, and some grubs," says Calvin. "There's treasure everywhere."
2. "One cannot build little white picket fences to keep the nightmares out." Anne Sexton
3. "The jackal rips out the hare's bowels, but the world rolls on." J. M. Coetzee
4. Health is the slowest rate of death. Anonymous
5. When the sitcom *Gilligan's Island* aired in the 1960s, the US Coast Guard received many angry letters demanding to know why the castaways had not been rescued.
6. About 30% of the fan mail received by daytime TV actors is addressed to their characters.
7. "The light at the end of the tunnel is an on-coming train." Robert Lowell
8. CPR on TV works 75% of the time; in reality, it works c.5-12% of the time.
9. "Reality is the leading cause of stress for those in touch with it." Jane Wagner
10. "Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away." Philip K. Dick
11. "[I was going to describe the supple birches of my youth] when Truth broke in with all her matter of fact about the ice storm...." Robert Frost, "Birches"
12. "When it's you against the world, bet on the world." Franz Kafka,
13. If 97% of the universe is dark energy and dark matter, what is reality? Various sources
14. While Disney ranks Disneyland as the happiest place on Earth, 56% of their employees in 2018 worried about being evicted or deported.
15. "We live on a routine planet circling a humdrum star stuck in an obscure corner of an unexceptional galaxy, one of about 100 billion." Carl Sagan, 1980, *Cosmos*
16. New Yorker Don Hewitt, 1922-2009, CBS producer, watched so many Westerns as a boy, he often left the theater walking bow-legged. As a teen, he watched so many war movies, when he saw real combat in WWII, he wondered where the music was. Anon. obit.
17. "The supreme reality of our time is the vulnerability of this planet." J. F. Kennedy, c.1960
18. Love is real where heaven is but a dream. Paraphrase Iris Murdoch
19. "If you cannot mold yourself as you wish, how can you expect others to be entirely to your liking?" Thomas à Kempis
20. When Bishop Berkeley suggested reality was all in our heads, Samuel Johnson kicked a large rock and said to his biographer, "I refute the bishop thus."
21. "Juliet was wrong: parting is not sweet sorrow; it sucks." John Bicknell
22. We love the selective memory of what was and the dream of what might be, but we're obliged to live with what is. SE
23. Too many of us think our car's horn works like the TV remote. SE
24. "America is the only country where a significant proportion of the population believe professional wrestling is real, but the moon landing was faked." David Letterman
25. Doug Marlette told a high-school-graduation class, "You are bidding farewell to Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. Can you say 'reality'?"
26. "Reality: still the best place to get a good steak." Woody Allen
27. "Humans cannot bear very much reality." T.S. Eliot
28. "Start putting all the things you've ever wished for in one hand, and spit in the other, and see which fills up first." Anonymous
29. Despite what you might have learned watching "Roadrunner" cartoons, the top speed of a coyote is 23 mph faster than a flightless roadrunner.
30. In an off-the-rack world, it's futile looking for the perfect suit when the Tailor is not bespoke. SE