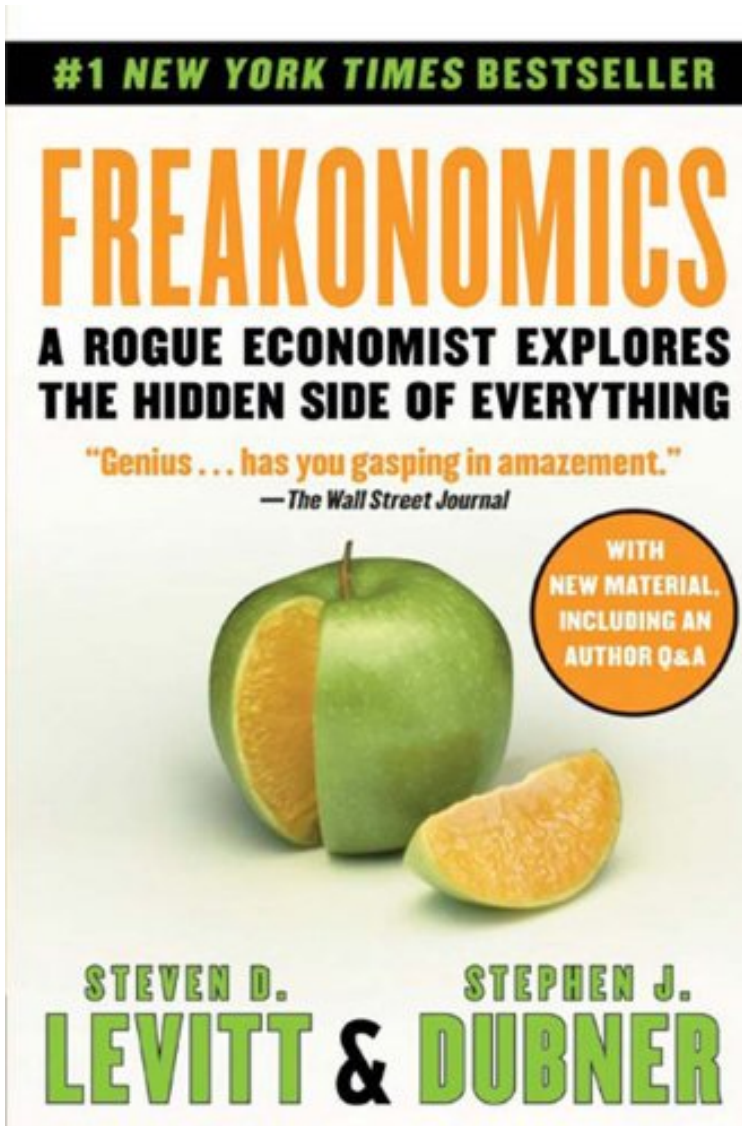


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# Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything



Par Steven D. Levitt, Stephen J. Dubner  
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**Description :** Description du produitAn econ tome for both freaks and geeks. . . . Armed with the attitude of a puzzle solver and the tools of statistical economics, Levitt finds different ways to get answers. . . . In his hands, economics, far from being a dismal science, is a tool for the curious. --Fortune

Prsentation de l'diteurWhich is more dangerous, a gun or a swimming pool? What do schoolteachers and sumo wrestlers have in common? How much do parents really matter? These may not sound like typical questions for an economist to ask. But Steven D. Levitt is not a typical economist. He studies the riddles of everyday life--from cheating and crime to parenting and sports--and reaches conclusions that turn conventional wisdom on its head. Freakonomics is a groundbreaking collaboration between Levitt and

Stephen J. Dubner, an award-winning author and journalist. They set out to explore the inner workings of a crack gang, the truth about real estate agents, the secrets of the Ku Klux Klan, and much more. Through forceful storytelling and wry insight, they show that economics is, at root, the study of incentives--how people get what they want or need, especially when other people want or need the same thing.

Economics is not widely considered to be one of the sexier sciences. The annual Nobel Prize winner in that field never receives as much publicity as his or her compatriots in peace, literature, or physics. But if such slights are based on the notion that economics is dull, or that economists are concerned only with finance itself, Steven D. Levitt will change some minds. In *Freakonomics* (written with Stephen J. Dubner), Levitt argues that many apparent mysteries of everyday life don't need to be so mysterious: they could be illuminated and made even more fascinating by asking the right questions and drawing connections. For example, Levitt traces the drop in violent crime rates to a drop in violent criminals and, digging further, to the *Roe v. Wade* decision that preempted the existence of some people who would be born to poverty and hardship. Elsewhere, by analyzing data gathered from inner-city Chicago drug-dealing gangs, Levitt outlines a corporate structure much like McDonald's, where the top bosses make great money while scores of underlings make something below minimum wage. And in a section that may alarm or relieve worried parents, Levitt argues that parenting methods don't really matter much and that a backyard swimming pool is much more dangerous than a gun. These enlightening chapters are separated by effusive passages from Dubner's 2003 profile of Levitt in *The New York Times Magazine*, which led to the book being written. In a book filled with bold logic, such back-patting veers *Freakonomics*, however briefly, away from what Levitt actually has to say. Although maybe there's a good economic reason for that too, and we're just not getting it yet.

--John Moe  
From *Publishers Weekly*

Though the idea of listening to an economics text may bring to mind nightmarish visions of incomprehensible facts, figures and graphs, this audiobook is refreshingly accessible and engrossing. Journalist Dubner reads with just the right mix of enthusiasm and awe, revealing juicy morsels of wisdom on everything from what sumo wrestlers and teachers have in common (a propensity to cheat) to whether parents can really push their kids to greatness by buying them Baby Einstein toys and enlisting them in numerous before- and after-school activities (not really). The only section that doesn't translate well to the format is the final one on naming conventions. The lists of "White Girl Names" and "Black Girl Names," and "Low-End" names and "High-End" names can be mind-numbing, though the text that breaks up these lists will intrigue. Overall, however, these unusual investigations by Levitt, the "rogue" of the subtitle, make for meaty and entertaining listening. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.