

Dual Process Theory

Psychology

Two systems of thinking, and what each is good and bad at.

System 1

- Fast, automatic, effortless
- Always running
- Pattern-based, associative
- Source of most heuristics and biases
- Cannot be switched off

System 2

- Slow, deliberate, effortful
- Engaged only when needed
- Rule-based, sequential
- Limited by working memory
- Lazy — accepts System 1's answer by default

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Most reasoning errors come from System 2 accepting a System 1 answer without checking it.

Bat and ball: a bat and ball cost £1.10; the bat costs £1 more than the ball. Most people answer 10p. It is 5p.