MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

It is a remarkable fact that it is often possible
to determine a subject's occupation from his answer to a simple
question of mathematical induction. After experimenting with
several such questions, I have found the most promising to be
the simple query: 2,3,5,...? This memorandum diagnoses various
possible responses.

(A41)   2,3,5,7,11,13,17,19,23,... This sequence is the primes.
The subject who suggests this continuation is probably a number
theorist.

(A45)   2,3,5,8,13,21,34,55,... This sequence is the Fibonacci
numbers. Although the subject may be a number theorist, he is
more likely to be a probabilist who revels in the study of 2nd
order Markov processes.

(A257113)   2,3,5,10,20,40,80,... Except for 2 and 3, each term in
this sequence is the sum of all preceding terms. The subject is
a historian, who believes that all of the past is equally important.

(A152948)   2,3,5,8,12,17,23,30,... The sequence has constant
second differences; the subject is probably a physicist or perhaps
an engineer.

2,3,5,6,8,9,10,11,13,14,... The subject is an electrical engineer, whose periodic view of the sinusoidal steady state has caused him to omit every third term.

(A37)
2,3,5,6,7,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,17,... A swinger (no squares). (RLG)

2,3,5,±∞ An optimist or pessimist of some sort.

(A27)
2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,... An experimental physicist, who has chosen to treat the third initial condition as an experimental error. (JS)

1 5/6, 3 1/3, 4 5/6, 6 1/3,... A statistician who believes in linear regression. He has removed the noise from the given initial conditions to obtain the best linear fit. (HSW)

3 1/3, 3 1/3, 3 1/3, 3 1/3,... Another statistician, whose tendency toward simplification is even stronger than his predecessor's. (HOP)

(A 262564)
2,3,5,4,6,7,8,9,10,... A politician. He plans to legislate away the mistakes of the past and return to normalcy. (HOP)

235-9669 This answer can be properly diagnosed only with aid of the Boston telephone directory. When the answer is found to be the phone number of a Wellesley dormitory, we may deduce that the subject is likely to be a student at MIT or Harvard.

$2.35 An accountant.

(A262565)
2,3,5,5,3,2,2,3,5,5,3,2,... A weaver. (HSW)

(A51)   2,3,5,9,17,33,65,... The sequence is 2^n+1; the

subject is likely to be a biologist or economist concerned

with growth rates. (ENG,HOP)

     2,3,5, 35/4, 63/4, 231/8,... Another Malthusian,

who has chosen the ratios 1 1/2, 1 2/3, 1 3/4, 1 4/5,... (JR)

     2,3,5, 55/6, 63/4, 231/8,... Yet another Malthusian, who

has chosen 9/6, 10/6, 11/6, 12/6,... (JR)

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