

# The Fuses

History and provenance

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## The two-rope or two-fuse puzzle

This problem circulates with ropes, fuses, or other objects that burn for a known time but not at a uniform rate. Presh Talwalkar's *Can You Solve the Two Rope Puzzle?* (May 8, 2016) gives a documented modern presentation of the 45-minute question and a variation [1].

## What is distinctive

The puzzle separates length from burning time. A spatial midpoint need not split the time in half, but lighting both ends allows the two fronts to consume the whole burning-time interval together.

The source treats the question as a classic puzzle; it does not establish an inventor. I did not locate a reliable earliest publication or named originator. Describing it as an established two-rope puzzle is safer than attributing it to a company that happens to use it in interviews.

The exact timing assumes an ideal, repeatable burn process. The accompanying solution uses those mathematical assumptions and does not recommend an actual fire-based experiment.

## Sources

- [1] Presh Talwalkar, Can You Solve The Two Rope Puzzle? Classic Problem And Variation (May 8, 2016).  
<https://mindyourdecisions.com/blog/2016/05/08/can-you-solve-the-two-rope-puzzle-classic-problem-and-variation/>

Sources checked September 7, 2026. A documented appearance is not necessarily the earliest appearance.