

Name: _____

Date: _____

Bellringer: Just a Theory?

Suppose you're watching a cop show on TV. The lead character and his partner are enjoying fresh donuts, when he asks, "Any ideas on who robbed the bank?" His partner responds, "Sure. I've got a theory." What do you think his partner means when she says this?



The many meanings of "theory"

You've probably heard and even used the word *theory* many times to mean that something is just a guess or conjecture. But the word *theory* is used in a different way in science. Read the different definitions of the word *theory* given below. Circle the definition you think scientists use when they talk about a theory.

Definitions of *Theory*:

1. a speculation
2. an unproved assumption
3. a belief, policy, or procedure proposed or followed as the basis of action
4. a plausible and thoroughly-tested principle that explains phenomena
5. a hypothesis assumed for the sake of argument or investigation
6. an analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another