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Reaching an Answer by Rough Estimate: Fermi Estimation

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How many piano tuners are there in Chicago? Ask someone to answer without leafing through a phone book or searching the internet, and most people draw a blank. Yet if you chain together a few things you already know, you can arrive at a surprisingly usable number. This approach is called Fermi estimation. It is a way of thinking that splits a problem whose exact value you cannot know into numbers you do know, roughly estimates each piece, and multiplies them to gauge the order of magnitude. The physicist Enrico Fermi was famous for using it often. Such questions are also called Fermi problems.