

The 30-Second Promise Check

A pocket tool to test any economic claim (MTWX)

1) Where do the dollars come from?

From whose pocket, through which pipe, and when? Taxes, prices, borrowing, fees. Trace payer → collector → timing. If you can't trace it quickly, the cost is probably hidden in higher prices or future interest.

2) What gets squeezed to make room?

Every 'free' dollar pushes somewhere: outlays, prices, wages, margins, or deficits. Name the loser explicitly. If nobody loses, you missed someone.

3) Is it net, bilateral, same period?

Net = all accounts, not just one line item. Bilateral = both sides of trade/transactions. Same period = no time-shifting tricks. If benefits arrive 'later' but costs hit 'now', say so.

Quick Use

Quick use: Set a 30-second timer. Read the claim. Answer 1-3 aloud. Any answer that starts with 'growth will' or 'efficiencies will' is a red flag—dig deeper. This is triage, not a full diagnosis.

Arithmetic is undefeated. Promises poll well; ledgers don't care. — so it goes.