B.H. Brown's amazing theorem — in honor of Friday September 13 2019

Question: Pick a random day from a random year. If it turns out to be the 13th of some month, what day of the week is it most likely to be?

B.H. Brown's amazing theorem — in honor of Friday September 13 2019

Question: Pick a random day from a random year. If it turns out to be the 13th of some month, what day of the week is it most likely to be?

Answer: A Friday!

B.H. Brown's amazing theorem — in honor of Friday September 13 2019

Question: Pick a random day from a random year. If it turns out to be the 13th of some month, what day of the week is it most likely to be?

Answer: A Friday!

Source: B.H. Brown & Raphael Robinson, American Mathematical Monthly Volume 40, Number 10 (1933), page 607

Our calendar, the Gregorian, works on a cycle of 400 years

Our calendar, the Gregorian, works on a cycle of 400 years

Every 4th year is a leap year

Our calendar, the Gregorian, works on a cycle of 400 years

- Every 4th year is a leap year
- Only one of every four century years are leap years
 - ▶ 1600, 2000, 2400, ... YES
 - ▶ 1700, 1800, 1900, 2100, 2200, 2300, ... NO

Our calendar, the Gregorian, works on a cycle of 400 years

- Every 4th year is a leap year
- Only one of every four century years are leap years
 - ▶ 1600, 2000, 2400, ... YES
 - ▶ 1700, 1800, 1900, 2100, 2200, 2300, ... NO
- ▶ 400 years is exactly 20,871 weeks
- ▶ September 13 2019 is same day of week as September 13 2419, and September 13 2819, . . .

A brute-force calculation

There are 4800 13th-of-the-months in any span of 400 years:

► **Monday**: 685

► Tuesday: 685

► Wednesday: 687

► Thursday: 684

▶ Friday: 688

► Saturday: 684

► Sunday: 687

A brute-force calculation

There are 4800 13th-of-the-months in any span of 400 years:

► **Monday**: 685

Tuesday: 685Wednesday: 687

► Thursday: 684

▶ Friday: 688

Saturday: 684

► Sunday: 687

So 13th is (slightly) more likely to be Friday than any other day!