

Unbelievable!

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We begin with the widely attested class of sentences exemplified by (1):

1. [I know classes are starting, but] I can't believe that summer is over.

Semantic approaches to *know* and *believe* have generally assumed, in keeping with philosophical tradition, that knowledge entails belief – a view under which (1) should be contradictory. Following the lead of Wolter (2008), we show that the behavior of *believe* in (1) is largely, though not entirely, consistent with its behavior in other contexts and with the behavior of certain related predicates. For example, *accept* and *come to terms with the fact* can be substituted for *believe* in (1) with much the same effect. Furthermore, (2) suggests that *believe* differs from *know* in that achieving belief requires effort, while achieving knowledge lacks this volitional dimension:

2. He tried to believe/*know that all of his employees were honest.

Taking these facts into account, we will reconsider the traditional approach to *believe* and *know* and assess the effects of detaching the two.