Why knot?

Take a piece of string, tie it into a knot, and then glue the ends of the string together. You’ve just created a fascinating mathematical object called, well, a knot. Suppose your friend took their own string and made their own knot. Are the two knots the same or different? How can we know? These simple questions are the focus of knot theory, a broad and active branch of mathematics. In this talk, I will discuss some of the ways mathematicians have tried to answer these questions.