

Jestforge — Activity Book

A Spark & Anvil activity book — puzzles, questions, and fun from Jestforge.

Write in the book, circle your answers, and check the Answer Key at the back.

1. what_makes_things_funny

Circle the correct answer

1. What is 'humor'?

(A) A type of music that makes people dance (B) A scientific term for human emotions (C) A feeling of sadness that makes people cry (D) The quality of being amusing or funny

2. What is the 'punchline' of a joke?

(A) A physical action like punching someone (B) The first sentence that introduces the joke's topic (C) The middle part where the story gets complicated (D) The final part of a joke that delivers the funny or surprising twist

3. What is the 'setup' of a joke?

(A) The part where you explain why the joke is funny (B) The audience's reaction after hearing the joke (C) The funniest part of the joke (D) The beginning part that establishes the situation and leads the audience to expect one thing

4. What does 'slapstick' comedy mean?

(A) Comedy that makes fun of politicians and leaders (B) Comedy that uses clever wordplay and puns (C) Physical comedy involving exaggerated actions like falling, slipping, or bumping into things (D) Comedy performed only by professional actors on stage

5. What does 'comic timing' refer to?

(A) A clock used to time how long people laugh (B) The amount of time a comedy show lasts (C) The precise delivery of words and pauses to maximize the humor of a joke (D) The schedule of when comedy shows air on television

6. Why does surprise play such an important role in humor?

(A) People only laugh at things they've never heard before (B) Our brains expect one outcome, and when the joke takes an unexpected turn, the surprise creates a feeling of amusement (C) Surprise makes people nervous, and nervous laughter is the only type of humor (D) Surprise scares people, and being scared is always funny

Write the answer

7. Why do people often find it funnier when a serious or dignified character does something silly?

Answer: _____

8. Why might the same joke be funny to one person but not to another?

Answer: _____

9. How does exaggeration make things funnier?

Answer: _____

10. Why do many comedians say that 'comedy is tragedy plus time'?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Your friend tells a joke but nobody laughs. Using what you know about comic timing, what advice would you give them? →

2. You want to make a story about losing your homework funnier. Which technique would best enhance the humor? →

3. You're writing a funny skit about a student who is always late to class. How could you use the 'rule of three' comedy pattern? →

4. Your class is putting on a comedy show. How would you use physical comedy (slapstick) appropriately in a school setting? →

5. You notice your little cousin only laughs at silly faces and sounds, while your older sibling prefers clever wordplay. How would you adjust your humor for each audience? →

(A) Use simple visual and physical humor for the younger child, and more sophisticated language-based humor for the older sibling

(B) Try pausing briefly before the punchline to build anticipation, and deliver it with confidence rather than rushing through it

(C) Plan safe, rehearsed physical gags like exaggerated reactions, funny walks, or pretending to trip, without actually hurting anyone

(D) Show the student arriving late three times: twice with reasonable excuses, then the third time with a wildly absurd excuse that breaks the pattern

(E) Use exaggeration to describe the situation in an over-the-top way, like saying the dog ate it, then a tornado carried the pieces to another country

2. puns_and_wordplay

Circle the correct answer

11. What is a 'pun'?

(A) A short poem that always rhymes (B) A type of bread roll served at comedy shows (C) A hand gesture used by comedians on stage (D) A joke that exploits the different meanings of a word or words that sound alike

12. What are 'homophones'?

(A) Words that are spelled the same way, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice (B) Words that rhyme with each other, which is why this approach is recommended by experts (C) Words that mean the same thing, making this the most widely accepted explanation (D) Words that sound the same but have different meanings and often different spellings

13. What is a 'double meaning' in the context of wordplay?

(A) When you say the same word twice in a sentence (B) When two people say the same thing at the same time (C) When a word has exactly two syllables (D) When a word or phrase can be interpreted in two different ways

14. What is a 'knock-knock joke'?

(A) A joke that was invented by a carpenter, making this the most widely accepted explanation (B) A joke about doors and windows, making this the most widely accepted explanation (C) A structured joke format that uses a call-and-response pattern, usually ending with a pun on a person's name (D) A joke that must be told while knocking on a table, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice

15. What does the word 'wordplay' mean?

(A) Words spoken during a theatrical play performance (B) A game where you arrange letter tiles to form words (C) The process of learning new vocabulary words (D) The clever or witty use of words for humorous effect, especially by exploiting ambiguity or multiple meanings

16. Why does the joke 'I'm reading a book about anti-gravity—it's impossible to put down' work as a pun?

(A) Because 'put down' means both physically setting an object down and stopping reading a book (B) Because books are heavy and hard to hold (C) Because anti-gravity doesn't really exist (D) Because gravity is a funny scientific concept

Write the answer

17. Why do some people groan instead of laugh when they hear a pun?

Answer: _____

18. How does understanding multiple meanings of a word help you both create and appreciate puns?

Answer: _____

19. Why might puns be difficult to translate from one language to another?

Answer: _____

20. Explain how the joke 'I used to hate facial hair, but then it grew on me' uses a double meaning.

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Create a pun using the word 'bark,' which can mean a dog's sound or the outer covering of a tree. →

2. Your friend says 'I'm on a seafood diet—I see food and I eat it.' Identify the wordplay technique used and explain how it works. →

3. Write a knock-knock joke that uses a pun on a common name or word. →

4. Your class is making a punny poster about reading. Using the word 'novel' (which means both a book and something new/unusual), create a slogan for your poster. →

5. Rewrite this plain sentence as a pun: 'The calendar worker was fired from his job.' →

(A) It's a homophone pun: 'seafood' sounds like 'see food,' creating a switch from the expected diet-related meaning to a literal eating-everything meaning

(B) 'The calendar worker was fired—his days were numbered!'

(C) Example: 'Why did the dog sit under the tree? Because he wanted to get closer to his family tree—it had the best bark!'

(D) Example: 'Knock knock / Who's there? / Olive / Olive who? / Olive you and I miss you!' (Olive sounds like 'I love')

(E) Example: 'Reading is always a novel experience!' — plays on novel meaning both a type of book and something new and exciting

3. riddles_brain_teasers

Circle the correct answer

21. What is a riddle?

(A) A type of musical instrument played in folk music (B) A question or statement phrased as a puzzle that requires creative thinking to solve (C) A mathematical equation with no solution (D) A short story that always has a happy ending

22. What is 'lateral thinking'?

(A) Thinking while lying on your side, and this principle applies across similar situations (B) A method of reading from right to left, and this is the standard approach used in most cases (C) Using only the left side of your brain, making this the most widely accepted explanation (D) Solving problems by approaching them from unexpected or indirect angles rather than using straightforward logic

23. What is a 'brain teaser'?

(A) A type of headache caused by thinking too hard (B) A medical condition affecting the brain (C) A machine that exercises your brain muscles (D) A puzzle or problem that requires careful and often unconventional thinking to solve

24. In riddle tradition, what is the Sphinx's famous riddle?

(A) 'What gets wetter the more it dries?'—a towel, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (B) 'What has a head and a tail but no body?'—a coin, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice (C) 'What has keys but no locks?'—a piano, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice (D) 'What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?'—the answer is a human

25. What does the phrase 'thinking outside the box' mean?

(A) Approaching a problem in a new, creative, or unconventional way rather than following the obvious path (B) Asking someone else to solve the problem for you (C) Standing outside while solving a problem (D) Refusing to use a computer or any technology

26. Why does the riddle 'What has hands but can't clap?' (answer: a clock) work?

(A) Because clapping is a surprising action to mention (B) It uses the word 'hands' in a misleading way—listeners think of human hands, but clock hands are the actual answer (C) Because the riddle is about magic and impossible things (D) Because clocks are always funny to joke about

Write the answer

27. Why are riddles often more satisfying to solve than to simply be told the answer?

Answer: _____

28. How do riddles use misdirection to make them challenging?

Answer: _____

29. Explain why riddles have appeared in cultures all around the world throughout history.

Answer: _____

30. Why do many brain teasers have answers that seem obvious only after you hear them?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Solve this riddle: 'I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. I have no body, but I come alive with wind. What am I?' →

2. Solve this brain teaser: 'A man pushes his car to a hotel and tells the owner he's bankrupt. Why?' →

3. Create a riddle about water using at least two misleading clues that point away from the answer. →

4. Your friend is stuck on this logic puzzle: 'If you have me, you want to share me. If you share me, you no longer have me. What am I?' Help them solve it. →

5. Solve this pattern puzzle: What comes next in this sequence? Monday, Thursday, Sunday, Wednesday, _ → __

(A) He's playing Monopoly—pushing his game piece (car token) to the hotel on the board

(B) Saturday—the sequence advances by 3 days each time

(C) Example: 'I can run but never walk, I have a mouth but never talk, I have a bed but never sleep. What am I?' (A river)

(D) An echo

(E) The answer is a secret. A secret exists only as long as it's kept; once shared, it's no longer a secret.

4. joke_structure_timing

Circle the correct answer

31. What are the two main parts of a traditional joke?

(A) The question and the explanation (B) The introduction and the conclusion (C) The setup and the punchline (D) The beginning and the moral

32. What is a 'callback' in comedy?

(A) A reference to an earlier joke or moment that creates a new laugh by connecting to something the audience already found funny (B) When a comedian calls someone on the phone during a show (C) When a comedian repeats someone else's joke word for word (D) When the audience asks a comedian to return to the stage

33. What is the 'rule of three' in comedy?

(A) A law that comedy shows must have three performers (B) A pattern where two similar items establish a pattern, and the third item breaks it with something unexpected and funny (C) A rule that jokes must be told exactly three times (D) A guideline that punchlines should be three words long

34. What is a 'running gag'?

(A) A gag order that prevents comedians from performing (B) A joke or humorous situation that recurs throughout a performance, usually getting funnier each time (C) A joke told while jogging or running (D) The longest joke ever told in comedy history

35. What does 'deadpan delivery' mean in comedy?

(A) A type of cooking joke involving a frying pan (B) Making faces and gestures to emphasize the joke (C) Delivering humorous material with a completely serious, expressionless face and tone (D) Performing comedy in a very loud and energetic way

36. Why is the pause before a punchline often just as important as the punchline itself?

(A) The pause gives the comedian time to remember the punchline (B) The pause builds anticipation and gives the audience time to form an expectation, making the surprise more impactful (C) The pause makes the audience uncomfortable, which is always funny (D) Pauses are only used when the comedian forgets their line

Write the answer

37. Explain why the same joke can get different reactions depending on when it's told during a comedy show.

Answer: _____

38. Why does the 'rule of three' work so well in comedy?

Answer: _____

39. How does a 'misdirect' differ from a regular joke setup?

Answer: _____

40. Why do comedians often say 'it's funny because it's true' about observational humor?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Rewrite this joke using better timing: 'Why don't eggs tell jokes? They'd crack each other up.' (Currently delivered all in one rush.) →
2. Use the rule of three to create a joke about things you find in a school cafeteria. →
3. You're performing a comedy skit and your first joke gets a big laugh. How should you transition to the next joke? →
4. Transform this observation into a joke: 'Dogs get really excited when their owners come home.' →
5. Write a callback joke: first a short opening joke, then a second joke later that references the first. →

(A) Split with a pause: 'Why don't eggs tell jokes? [pause] ...They'd crack each other up.' The pause builds anticipation.

(B) Wait for the laughter to peak and begin dying down, then start as the laughter fades—don't talk over the laugh or wait until complete silence

(C) Opening: 'I tried to eat healthy today. Had a salad for lunch. Well, it was next to the pizza I ate.' Callback: 'I also joined a gym today. It's right next to the pizza place—you know, my lunch spot.'

(D) Example: 'The cafeteria offers three daily choices: take it, leave it, or try to identify it.'

(E) 'My dog acts like I've been gone for years every time I come home from getting the mail. I was gone 45 seconds. He was already planning my memorial service.'

5. funny_stories_anecdotes

Circle the correct answer

41. What is an 'anecdote'?

(A) A formal speech given at a graduation ceremony (B) A type of medicine used to treat poison (C) A long novel about fictional characters (D) A short, entertaining story about a real incident or person

42. What does 'embellishment' mean when telling a funny story?

(A) Writing a story down instead of telling it out loud (B) Telling the story exactly as it happened with no changes (C) Removing all the interesting parts of a story (D) Adding exaggerated or enhanced details to make the story more entertaining

43. What is a 'narrative arc' in a funny story?

(A) A curved line drawn on a graph, as this directly follows from the underlying principles (B) A type of punctuation used in comedy writing, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice (C) The physical gesture a comedian makes while telling a story, making this the most widely accepted explanation (D) The structure that takes the audience from a beginning situation through rising tension to

a climactic funny moment

44. What is a 'tag' in comedy storytelling?

(A) An additional punchline added after the main joke lands, squeezing extra laughs from the same setup (B) The title given to a comedy story (C) A game played at comedy shows between performances (D) A label attached to a comedian's costume

45. What is 'self-deprecating humor'?

(A) Making jokes at your own expense, pointing out your own flaws or embarrassing experiences (B) Comedy that is considered low quality or not funny (C) Jokes about depreciation of property values (D) Humor that puts down other people to make yourself look better

46. Why do comedians often start personal stories with specific details like exact times, places, or names?

(A) Specific details are required by comedy rules and regulations (B) Comedians have perfect memories and always remember exact details (C) Specific details make the story feel authentic and real, helping the audience visualize the scene and invest in the narrative (D) Details make stories longer, and longer stories are always funnier

Write the answer

47. Why is 'show, don't tell' important in comedy storytelling?

Answer: _____

48. Why do many of the funniest personal stories involve the storyteller being embarrassed or making a mistake?

Answer: _____

49. How does the 'iceberg principle' apply to funny storytelling?

Answer: _____

50. Why do comedians often use the phrase 'and then...' sparingly in storytelling, preferring to use 'but' or 'so' to connect events?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Take this boring retelling: 'I went to the store and couldn't find what I wanted and then I asked for help and the person was weird.' Make it funnier using specific details and exaggeration. →

2. You have an embarrassing story about tripping in front of your whole class. Structure it using a narrative arc (setup, rising action, climax, resolution). →

3. Add a 'tag' (bonus punchline) to this joke story: 'I tried to cook dinner for my family. I set off the smoke alarm so many times that the fire department showed up.' →

4. Use 'show, don't tell' to rewrite this flat sentence: 'My teacher was really surprised when I turned in my homework early.' →

5. Write a short (3-4 sentence) self-deprecating anecdote about a common situation like being bad at sports, cooking, or technology. →

(A) Example: 'I'm so bad at basketball that when I tried out for the team, the coach asked if I was there to audition for the mascot. I said no. He said, "Are you sure? Because the way you move, you'd be perfect inside a costume where no one can see you."'

(B) 'I put my homework on Mrs. Johnson's desk on Monday—it was due Friday. She picked it up, looked at it, looked at me, looked at the calendar, and then checked outside for flying pigs.'

(C) Tag: 'They didn't even look worried. The chief just walked in and said, "The usual?"—implying this has happened so many times the fire department expects it

(D) Example: 'I went to Target at midnight looking for toothpaste. Aisle 7—just cleaning supplies. Aisle 12—just cleaning supplies again. I'd entered some kind of cleaning supply dimension. Finally I found an employee who looked like he'd been trapped there since 2019 and asked where the toothpaste was. He stared at me for a full ten seconds and said, "What's toothpaste?"'

(E) Setup: 'I was walking to the front to present my project—the one I'd spent three weeks on.' Rising: 'My foot caught the cord. Time slowed down. I could see every face watching.' Climax: 'I didn't just trip—I performed a full somersault and landed on my poster, crushing my model volcano.' Resolution: 'I got a standing ovation. First one in science class history.'

6. satire_and_parody

Circle the correct answer

51. What is 'satire'?

(A) A musical performance featuring only string instruments (B) The use of humor, irony, or exaggeration to criticize and expose the flaws of people, institutions, or society (C) A happy poem that celebrates life's pleasures (D) A type of fabric used to make formal clothing

52. What is a 'parody'?

(A) A humorous imitation of a specific work, style, or genre that exaggerates its characteristics for comic effect (B) An exact copy of someone else's work, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (C) A serious tribute to an admired artist, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (D) A translation of a work into another language, as this is what research and standard

practice suggests

53. What is 'irony' in the context of humor?

(A) A heavy metal used in construction, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (B) Speaking very loudly to make a point, as this is what research and standard practice suggests (C) Saying or showing the opposite of what is actually meant, often to highlight absurdity or hypocrisy (D) Telling a joke that everyone has heard before, and this principle applies across similar situations

54. What does 'caricature' mean in comedy?

(A) An exaggerated portrayal that amplifies a person's or thing's most distinctive features for humorous effect (B) A realistic portrait painted by a professional artist (C) A photograph taken from an unusual angle (D) A nickname given to a comedian by their fans

55. What is the difference between 'Horatian' and 'Juvenalian' satire?

(A) Horatian satire is gentle and playful, aiming to amuse; Juvenalian satire is harsh and angry, aiming to provoke outrage at injustice (B) Horatian satire is modern and Juvenalian is ancient, and this principle applies across similar situations (C) They are two names for the exact same type of humor, as this directly follows from the underlying principles (D) Horatian satire is written and Juvenalian is spoken, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon

56. Why is satire considered more than 'just comedy'?

(A) All comedy has deep social meaning whether intended or not, as this directly follows from the underlying principles (B) Satire is only performed by politicians, not comedians, as this is what research and standard practice suggests (C) Satire uses humor as a vehicle for social commentary—it entertains while also challenging audiences to think critically about real issues (D) Satire is actually not funny at all, making this the most widely accepted explanation

Write the answer

57. How does parody show appreciation for the original work even while making fun of it?

Answer: _____

58. Why has satire historically been considered dangerous by those in power?

Answer: _____

59. Explain how a parody can actually help promote the original work it's making fun of.

Answer: _____

60. Why does effective satire require the audience to share some knowledge with the creator?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Write a satirical 'rule' for a school that exaggerates a real frustration students have.
→
2. Create a parody title and one-sentence description for a well-known fairy tale, exaggerating its most recognizable elements. →
3. Identify the satirical technique in this headline: 'Area Student Shocked to Discover That Reading Assignment Was Actually Interesting.' →
4. A classmate wrote this attempt at satire: 'The cafeteria food is gross and the lunch lady is ugly.' Explain why this isn't effective satire and help them improve it. →
5. Write a brief satirical 'news report' about homework, using the style of a serious breaking news broadcast. →

(A) It uses irony—presenting a student finding a book interesting as 'shocking news,' satirizing the assumption that all school reading is boring

(B) This is personal insult, not satire—it attacks an individual rather than a system. Better version: 'Our cafeteria's menu hasn't changed since 1987. The "fresh" fruit has its own ecosystem. The mystery meat is so mysterious that even the FDA has an open investigation.'

(C) Example: 'BREAKING: Local 6th-grader reports receiving homework in EVERY subject. Authorities confirm this is not a drill. The student's backpack, now classified as a structural hazard, weighs an estimated 47 pounds. FEMA has been notified. The student's parents have issued a statement: "We haven't seen our dining table in three weeks."'

(D) Example: 'New School Rule #47: Students may use the bathroom, but only during the 3.5-second window between the end of one class and the start of the next. Applications must be submitted in triplicate.'

(E) Example: 'Goldilocks and the Three Lawsuits' — A girl breaks into a family's home, destroys their property, eats their food, and breaks their furniture, then claims it was 'just right' as a legal defense.

7. Comedy Across Cultures

Circle the correct answer

61. What is slapstick comedy?

(A) Physical humor involving exaggerated actions like falls and collisions (B) Comedy that uses only spoken words (C) Comedy that relies on written jokes (D) A type of comedy performed only by children

62. Which ancient Greek festival is considered an early origin of Western comedy?

(A) The festival of Dionysus (B) The Roman Saturnalia (C) The Olympic Games (D) The festival of Athena

63. What is a trickster figure in folklore?

(A) A magical creature that grants wishes (B) A clever character who uses wit and deception to outsmart others (C) A storyteller who only tells true stories (D) A villain who always loses in the end

64. What does the Japanese comedy term 'manzai' refer to?

(A) A type of physical comedy performed alone (B) A written form of comedy poetry (C) A comedy show performed in masks (D) A two-person comedy act with a straight man and a funny man

65. What is the commedia dell'arte?

(A) An Italian theatrical form featuring masked characters and improvised comedy (B) A German musical comedy opera (C) A French painting style depicting comedians (D) A Spanish dance performed at festivals

66. Why do trickster stories appear in so many different cultures around the world?

(A) Because all cultures share the same language (B) Because tricksters are based on real historical people (C) Because every culture has a need to question authority and social norms through humor (D) Because one culture invented the trickster and others copied it

Write the answer

67. How does self-deprecating humor function differently in British culture compared to many other cultures?

Answer: _____

68. Why might a joke that is hilarious in one country fall completely flat in another?

Answer: _____

69. What does it mean when scholars say humor is both 'universal and particular'?

Answer: _____

70. Why is timing considered important in comedy across all cultures?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. You're telling a joke to a friend from another country and they don't laugh. Applying your knowledge of cross-cultural humor, what should you do first? →
2. Your class is creating a comedy show for an international audience. Which approach would best ensure the humor works across cultures? →
3. You're writing a comedy skit that includes an Anansi-style trickster character. How should you portray the character to honor the tradition? →
4. A classmate says 'comedy in other countries isn't as good as ours.' Using what you know about cultural humor, how would you respond? →
5. You're adapting a British comedy sketch for an American audience. The original relies on dry understatement. What adaptation would preserve the humor? →

- (A) Use physical comedy and visual gags that don't depend on language
 - (B) Explain that different cultures have equally rich comedy traditions suited to their own audiences
 - (C) Consider whether the joke relies on cultural references they might not share
 - (D) Keep the understatement but add context clues so the audience catches the irony
 - (E) As clever and resourceful, using wit rather than force to solve problems
-

8. Writing and Performing Comedy

Circle the correct answer

71. What is a 'callback' in comedy writing?

- (A) A request from the audience to hear a joke again (B) When a comedian calls someone on the phone during a show (C) The final joke of a comedy routine (D) A reference to an earlier joke that gets a bigger laugh because the audience already knows the setup

72. What is the 'rule of three' in comedy?

- (A) A rule that jokes must contain exactly three words (B) A pattern where two similar items establish expectations and the third breaks the pattern for laughs (C) A rule that comedy shows must have three acts (D) A requirement that comedians perform in groups of three

73. What does 'punching up' mean in comedy?

- (A) Making jokes about people or groups with more power or privilege than yourself (B) Physically hitting someone during a comedy show (C) Making your jokes louder and more energetic (D) Revising a joke to make it shorter

74. What is a 'tight five' in stand-up comedy?

(A) A group of five comedians who perform together (B) A polished five-minute set of material ready to perform (C) Five jokes written on a single index card (D) A joke that takes exactly five seconds to deliver

75. What is 'stage presence' in comedy performance?

(A) The ability to command audience attention through confidence, body language, and energy (B) The number of people who attend a show (C) Standing perfectly still on stage (D) The physical size of the performance space

76. Why do comedians test new material at small open mic nights before performing it at large shows?

(A) Because small audiences are easier to make laugh (B) To see which jokes get laughs and refine timing and wording based on real audience reactions (C) Because open mic nights pay better than large shows (D) Because they aren't allowed at large venues until they prove themselves

Write the answer

77. Why is 'show, don't tell' considered better comedy writing than simply stating the joke?

Answer: _____

78. Why is vulnerability considered a strength in comedy writing rather than a weakness?

Answer: _____

79. How does the concept of 'economy of words' improve comedy writing?

Answer: _____

80. Why do comedy writers often say 'kill your darlings' when revising material?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. You've written a joke that gets a small chuckle but you think it could be funnier.

Using the rule of three, how would you restructure it? →

2. Your comedy sketch is running six minutes but needs to be cut to four. How should you apply economy of words to shorten it? →

3. You're performing a comedy piece and the audience isn't laughing at a joke that worked in rehearsal. What should you do in the moment? →

4. You want to write a comedy piece about school lunch. How would you apply the 'write what you know' principle effectively? →

5. You're giving feedback on a classmate's comedy sketch. The premise is strong but

the punchlines come too early. How would you advise them to fix this? →

(A) Identify and remove setup lines that don't directly contribute to punchlines, and tighten wordy transitions

(B) Create two items that establish a normal pattern, then make the third item an unexpected twist that breaks the pattern

(C) Acknowledge it didn't land, use the silence as material, and move on to the next joke

(D) Suggest building more tension and anticipation in the setup before delivering each punchline

(E) Draw from specific, vivid personal experiences with school lunch that your audience will recognize and relate to

9. Comedy & Humor

Circle the correct answer

81. What is the primary purpose of satire?

(A) To criticize or expose flaws in society using humor (B) To provide instructions on how to do something (C) To make people laugh without any deeper meaning (D) To tell fictional stories about imaginary worlds

82. Who wrote 'A Modest Proposal,' one of the most famous works of satire in English literature?

(A) Jonathan Swift (B) Mark Twain (C) Charles Dickens (D) Oscar Wilde

83. What is parody?

(A) A comedy show performed on a stage (B) A type of insult directed at a person (C) A humorous imitation of a specific work, style, or genre (D) A serious analysis of a famous book

84. What is The Onion?

(A) A real newspaper based in New York City (B) A satirical news publication that writes fake articles in a serious news style (C) A cooking magazine focused on onion recipes (D) A children's comic book series

85. What does 'deadpan delivery' mean in comedy?

(A) Presenting humor with a completely serious, emotionless expression (B) Telling jokes while jumping around excitedly (C) Pausing for a long time between every word (D) Using a very loud voice to make jokes funnier

86. What literary device does satire most commonly use to say the opposite of what is meant?

(A) Alliteration (B) Metaphor (C) Irony (D) Onomatopoeia

Write the answer

87. Why does satire often exaggerate real situations to an extreme degree?

Answer: _____

88. How does parody differ from plagiarism?

Answer: _____

89. Why is it important for a satirist to deeply understand the subject they are satirizing?

Answer: _____

90. What is the difference between satire that 'punches up' and satire that 'punches down'?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Why does The Onion use the format of a real news article instead of an obviously silly style? →

2. A student writes a fake school announcement saying 'Due to overwhelming demand, homework will now be assigned on weekends and holidays too.' What satirical technique is this? →

3. You want to write a parody of a superhero movie. Which approach would work best? →

4. If you were writing an Onion-style headline about your school's cafeteria, which headline best captures the deadpan satirical style? →

5. Your friend says their satirical essay about school rules is not working. They wrote 'School rules are dumb and I hate them.' How would you improve it? →

(A) Copy the dramatic style and tropes of superhero movies but give the hero absurd, useless powers

(B) The serious format creates contrast with absurd content, making it funnier

(C) Exaggeration of a real complaint to highlight how students feel overwhelmed by homework

(D) Rewrite it as a fake school policy proposal that exaggerates the rules to absurd extremes

(E) Area Student Reports Cafeteria Pizza 'Technically Still Food,' Experts Confirm

10. Comedy & Humor

Circle the correct answer

91. What is a humor 'universal,' as used in comedy studies?

(A) A comedian who has performed in every country (B) A type of humor that only one culture understands (C) A joke that was invented in a university (D) A type of humor that is found and understood across many different cultures

92. What is 'Commedia dell'arte'?

(A) An Italian theater tradition using masked stock characters and improvised comedy (B) A French painting style from the 1800s, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice (C) A modern American TV sitcom, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (D) A type of Italian pasta dish, making this the most widely accepted explanation

93. What is 'Rakugo'?

(A) A Japanese martial art focused on humor, which is why this approach is recommended by experts (B) A traditional Japanese comedic storytelling art performed by a single seated performer (C) A Korean dance style, making this the most widely accepted explanation (D) A Chinese cooking technique, making this the most widely accepted explanation

94. What does 'lost in translation' mean when discussing humor across cultures?

(A) A type of translation software used by comedians (B) A joke or humorous reference that does not make sense when translated to another language or culture (C) A movie about a comedian in Japan (D) A comedian who gets lost while traveling to another country

95. What is a comedy 'taboo'?

(A) A topic that a particular culture considers inappropriate or offensive to joke about (B) A special microphone used in comedy clubs, as this is what research and standard practice suggests (C) A comedian's stage name, and this is the standard approach used in most cases (D) A type of drum used in comedy shows, as this directly follows from the underlying principles

96. Which type of humor is considered most 'universal' across cultures?

(A) Political satire (B) Inside jokes (C) Puns and wordplay (D) Physical comedy and slapstick

Write the answer

97. Why do puns work in some languages but not others?

Answer: _____

98. How did the 'trickster' character appear independently in comedy traditions across many cultures?

Answer: _____

99. Why might a joke that is hilarious in one country deeply offend people in another?

Answer: _____

100. Why is British humor often described as 'dry' while American humor is described as 'broad'? What do these terms mean?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. How does the concept of 'saving face' in many Asian cultures affect comedy in those regions? →

2. You are writing a comedy sketch for an international audience. Your first draft relies heavily on English puns. What should you change to make it work across cultures? →

3. A classmate tells a joke that relies on a stereotype about a cultural group. How can you explain why this is problematic without being preachy? →

4. You discover that the Japanese comedy style 'manzai' uses a 'straight man' (tsukkomi) and a 'funny man' (boke). How would you adapt this format for an English-language comedy sketch? →

5. You want to write a comedy piece about food from different cultures. How can you be funny without mocking the food or the people who eat it? →

(A) Point out that the joke takes a shortcut instead of being creative, and that stereotypes make comedy lazy

(B) Comedians may avoid directly embarrassing specific individuals and instead use self-deprecation or situational humor

(C) Focus on the universal human experience of trying unfamiliar food, making yourself the subject of the humor

(D) Keep the two-person dynamic where one character says absurd things and the other reacts with frustration or corrections

(E) Replace language-dependent puns with visual humor, physical comedy, or universally relatable situations

11. Comedy & Humor

Circle the correct answer

101. What is a 'cold open' in a sitcom?

(A) A short comedic scene that plays before the opening credits or title sequence
(B) A joke that nobody laughs at, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice
(C) A scene filmed in a freezer, as this is what research and standard practice suggests
(D) The first episode of a new season, as this directly follows from the underlying principles

102. What does the 'A-plot' and 'B-plot' structure mean in sitcom writing?

(A) A-plot is the first half and B-plot is the second half
(B) The A-plot is the main storyline of an episode, and the B-plot is a secondary storyline involving other characters
(C) A-plot means planned and B-plot means improvised
(D) A-plot is for adults and B-plot is for babies

103. What is a 'meme' in the context of internet comedy?

(A) A professional comedy video made by a studio, as this directly follows from the underlying principles
(B) An image, video, or text that is copied and shared widely, often with variations, becoming a shared cultural joke
(C) A personal diary entry shared online, making this the most widely accepted explanation
(D) A news article that goes viral, as this directly follows from the underlying principles

104. What is a 'callback' in comedy writing?

(A) A joke that a comedian borrows from another comedian
(B) Calling someone back on the phone during a show
(C) Asking the audience to shout something back
(D) A joke that references an earlier joke or moment from the same piece, creating a surprise connection

105. What is a comedy podcast?

(A) A radio broadcast from the 1950s, which is why this approach is recommended by experts
(B) A podcast that teaches people how to play the piano, and this is the standard approach used in most cases
(C) A type of video game with funny characters, as this is what research and standard practice suggests
(D) An audio show distributed online that focuses on humor, often featuring conversation, storytelling, or comedic commentary

106. In comedy writing, what is a 'runner' or 'running gag'?

(A) A joke or situation that repeats multiple times throughout a show, getting funnier each time through variation
(B) A character who literally runs in every scene
(C) A comedian who performs while running on a treadmill
(D) A joke that is only told once at the beginning

Write the answer

107. Why is a 30-minute sitcom episode actually only about 22 minutes of content?

Answer: _____

108. Why do memes spread so quickly and become funny to so many people at once?

Answer: _____

109. Why do many successful comedy podcasts use a conversational format rather than scripted jokes?

Answer: _____

110. Why do web series typically have shorter episodes than traditional TV shows?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. How does the 'rule of three' work in sitcom writing? →

2. You are writing a cold open for a school-themed sitcom. The main episode is about a science fair. Write a cold open concept that hooks the audience but is unrelated to the main plot. →

3. You want to create a meme about the experience of doing homework. You have an image of a dog staring blankly at a laptop. What caption would follow meme conventions? →

4. You are creating a comedy web series for YouTube. Each episode is 5 minutes. How should you structure the first 30 seconds to prevent viewers from clicking away? →

5. A sitcom episode has an A-plot where the main character enters a talent show and a B-plot where two side characters accidentally adopt a class pet. How would you connect these plots at the episode's climax? →

(A) Open with the funniest or most intriguing moment of the episode, then flash back or set up how you got there

(B) When you open your laptop to 'just check one thing' and it's 3 hours later with 0 homework done

(C) Set up a pattern with two similar items, then break the pattern with a third unexpected item for comedic surprise

(D) Have the class pet escape during the talent show performance, forcing both storylines to collide in one chaotic scene

(E) A self-contained funny scene, like two students discovering the vending machine dispenses items from the 1990s, ending with a quick cut to the title card

12. Comedy & Humor

Circle the correct answer

111. What is the 'incongruity theory' of humor?

(A) The idea that humor arises when our expectations are violated by something unexpected or out of place (B) The idea that laughter is caused by allergies (C) The theory that only certain people are born with the ability to be funny (D) The theory that humor comes from being mean to others

112. What is the 'benign violation theory' of humor?

(A) The theory that humor only works when someone gets hurt (B) The theory that humor is caused by eating certain foods (C) The idea that all humor must follow strict rules (D) The idea that humor occurs when something seems wrong or threatening but is simultaneously safe and non-serious

113. What chemical does your brain release when you laugh?

(A) Chlorophyll (B) Photons (C) Endorphins (D) Hemoglobin

114. What is 'social laughter'?

(A) Laughter that is recorded and played on TV shows, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice (B) A medical condition where people cannot stop laughing, as this is what research and standard practice suggests (C) Laughter that only happens at parties, which is why this approach is recommended by experts (D) Laughter that occurs in social situations primarily to build bonds and show belonging, not necessarily because something is funny

115. What is the 'superiority theory' of humor?

(A) The theory that only superior comedians can make people laugh (B) The idea that humor makes you smarter than other people (C) The theory that jokes must be told by authority figures (D) The idea that we laugh when we feel superior to someone else's mistake or misfortune

116. At what age do most children begin to understand and use verbal humor like jokes and puns?

(A) Around age 6-7 (B) Around age 2 (C) At birth (D) Not until age 16

Write the answer

117. Why do humans laugh even though it serves no obvious survival purpose like eating or sleeping?

Answer: _____

118. Why is a joke usually not funny the second time you hear it?

Answer: _____

119. How does the benign violation theory explain why we laugh when we see someone trip and fall but not when we see someone seriously injured?

Answer: _____

120. Why do people laugh more at comedy shows when they are in a large audience versus watching the same show alone at home?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. What does 'timing' mean in comedy, and why is it so important to making people laugh? →
2. Using the incongruity theory, explain why this joke is funny: 'I told my computer I needed a break, and now it won't stop showing me pictures of Kit Kats.' →
3. A friend tells a joke but nobody laughs. Using what you know about humor psychology, identify three possible reasons the joke failed. →
4. Design a simple experiment to test whether laughter is truly contagious. What would you measure and how would you control for other variables? →
5. Your school is having a stressful exam week. Using what you know about the health benefits of laughter, propose a specific activity that could help reduce student stress. →

(A) Show the same comedy video to two groups: one wearing headphones with a laugh track added, one without. Measure laughter frequency in each group to see if hearing others laugh increases laughing

(B) The incongruity is between the expected meaning of 'break' (rest) and the computer interpreting it as the chocolate bar slogan 'Have a break, have a Kit Kat'

(C) Possible reasons: the timing was off (punchline delivered too fast), the audience did not share the reference needed to see the incongruity, or the violation was not benign (the topic felt too sensitive)

(D) Organize a 15-minute 'comedy break' between exams where students watch funny videos together, combining the stress-reducing endorphin release with the social bonding of group laughter

(E) Timing is the precise control of pauses, rhythm, and delivery speed that creates the ideal gap between setup and punchline for maximum surprise

13. What Makes Things Funny

Circle the correct answer

121. What is the 'punchline' of a joke?

(A) The first sentence that introduces the joke's topic (B) The middle part where the story gets complicated (C) The final part of a joke that delivers the funny or surprising twist (D) A physical action like punching someone

122. Why do some people groan instead of laugh when they hear a pun?

(A) Puns are never actually funny to anyone, and this is the standard approach used in most cases (B) People groan because puns physically hurt their ears (C) Groaning means the person didn't understand the pun, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice (D) Puns are often considered the simplest form of wordplay, and the groan is a playful reaction acknowledging the joke's cleverness while noting its simplicity

123. What is a 'brain teaser'?

(A) A puzzle or problem that requires careful and often unconventional thinking to solve (B) A machine that exercises your brain muscles (C) A medical condition affecting the brain (D) A type of headache caused by thinking too hard

124. Compare fast-paced comedy with slow storytelling comedy. What are strengths and weaknesses of each?

(A) Fast is always better because more jokes means more funny (B) There's no difference in audience experience, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (C) Slow is always better because quality matters more than quantity (D) Fast-paced: many laughs, high energy, but less emotional connection. Slow storytelling: deeper investment, bigger payoff, but higher risk if the punchline doesn't land

125. How does the 'iceberg principle' apply to funny storytelling?

(A) Funny stories should always be about cold weather or frozen things (B) Stories should be as long as possible to build maximum suspense (C) The best stories include only the essential details that serve the humor, cutting everything that doesn't contribute to the funny moments (D) Comedians should hide 90% of their stories and only tell the tip

126. Evaluate whether parody should be protected as free speech even when the original creator objects.

(A) Parody should have absolutely no legal limits whatsoever, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (B) All parody should be banned if the original creator objects, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (C) Only parodies approved by the original creator should be allowed, which is why this approach is recommended by experts (D) Parody should generally be protected because it serves important social functions (criticism, commentary, education), but there are reasonable limits when parody causes real harm or is indistinguishable from the original

Write the answer

127. You're writing a comedy skit that includes an Anansi-style trickster character. How should you portray the character to honor the tradition?

Answer: _____

128. Analyze the difference between 'being funny' naturally in conversation and 'writing funny' for a performance.

Answer: _____

129. How does exaggeration make things funnier?

Answer: _____

130. Why is the pun 'Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana' considered one of the most clever puns in English?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Create an original riddle that uses at least two clues with double meanings. →
2. A comedy student believes memorizing precise timing rules is the best way to learn comic timing. Evaluate this approach. →
3. A friend tells a funny story about someone else's embarrassing moment without that person's permission. Evaluate whether this is appropriate humor. →
4. Analyze why parodies of superhero movies have become so popular. What does this suggest about the genre being parodied? →
5. You're adapting a British comedy sketch for an American audience. The original relies on dry understatement. What adaptation would preserve the humor? →

(A) While timing principles help, rigid rules can't replace developing natural instinct through practice—timing must be responsive to each unique audience

(B) The popularity of superhero parodies suggests the genre has become so dominant and formulaic that audiences recognize its patterns well enough to laugh at the tropes being exaggerated

(C) It depends on context, but generally it's problematic: sharing someone else's embarrassing moment without consent can damage trust and relationships, even if the storyteller finds it funny

(D) Example: 'I have cities but no houses, forests but no trees, and water but no fish. What am I?' Answer: A map.

(E) Keep the understatement but add context clues so the audience catches the irony

14. What Makes Things Funny

Circle the correct answer

131. You want to make a story about losing your homework funnier. Which technique would best enhance the humor?

(A) Tell the story exactly as it happened with no changes (B) Include the exact date and time when you lost the homework (C) Add detailed descriptions of what the homework assignment was about (D) Use exaggeration to describe the situation in an over-the-top way, like saying the dog ate it, then a tornado carried the pieces to another country

132. Compare the riddle 'What has keys but no locks?' (piano) with 'What has a heart but no organs?' (deck of cards). What technique do both share?

(A) Both require mathematical thinking to solve, making this the most widely accepted explanation (B) Both were written by the same person, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice (C) Both are about musical instruments, as this directly follows from the underlying principles (D) Both exploit words that have one meaning in everyday life and a completely different meaning in a specific context

133. Is it ethical to embellish personal stories for comedy? Where is the line between entertaining enhancement and dishonest exaggeration?

(A) Only stories that are 100% factually accurate should ever be told, as this directly follows from the underlying principles (B) Embellishment is acceptable when the emotional truth remains intact and the audience understands it's comedy; it crosses the line when it defames real people or misrepresents events in harmful ways (C) Comedians can say absolutely anything because it's all just jokes (D) All embellishment is lying and should never be done, making this the most widely accepted explanation

134. Compare 'The Simpsons' (gentle, warm satire of American family life) with 'South Park' (aggressive, provocative satire of current events). How do their different tones affect their messages?

(A) Only one of these shows is actually satire; the other is just comedy, which is why this approach is recommended by experts (B) The Simpsons' warmth makes its satire more accessible and broadly appealing but less confrontational; South Park's aggression is more provocative and harder-hitting but alienates some audiences (C) Both shows use exactly the same satirical approach, and this principle applies across similar situations (D) Animated shows cannot be considered real satire, and this is the standard approach used in most cases

135. Analyze why some cultures consider certain topics completely off-limits for comedy while others treat no topic as sacred.

(A) Only Western cultures have rules about comedy topics (B) Some cultures simply don't understand advanced humor (C) There are universal rules about what can be joked about (D) Cultural values, historical experiences, and social norms determine what a community considers appropriate to laugh about

136. You're giving feedback on a classmate's comedy sketch. The premise is strong but the punchlines come too early. How would you advise them to fix this?

(A) Advise them to add more punchlines earlier in the piece (B) Suggest building more tension and anticipation in the setup before delivering each punchline (C) Tell them to remove all the punchlines (D) Suggest they make the sketch shorter so timing doesn't matter

Write the answer

137. A classmate says that people who don't understand a joke are 'just not smart enough.' Evaluate this claim.

Answer: _____

138. Rewrite this plain sentence as a pun: 'The calendar worker was fired from his job.'

Answer: _____

139. Solve this riddle: 'I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. I have no body, but I come alive with wind. What am I?'

Answer: _____

140. Analyze why a joke that works in a small room might fail in a large auditorium.

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Why do comedians often start personal stories with specific details like exact times, places, or names? →

2. Identify the satirical technique in this headline: 'Area Student Shocked to Discover That Reading Assignment Was Actually Interesting.' →

3. Why might a joke that is hilarious in one country fall completely flat in another? →

4. How does the concept of 'economy of words' improve comedy writing? →

5. What does 'comic timing' refer to? →

(A) Because humor often depends on shared cultural knowledge, values, and language

(B) It uses irony—presenting a student finding a book interesting as 'shocking news,' satirizing the assumption that all school reading is boring

(C) The precise delivery of words and pauses to maximize the humor of a joke

(D) By removing unnecessary words, the punchline arrives faster and hits harder

(E) Specific details make the story feel authentic and real, helping the audience visualize the scene and invest in the narrative

15. What Makes Things Funny

Circle the correct answer

141. You notice your little cousin only laughs at silly faces and sounds, while your older sibling prefers clever wordplay. How would you adjust your humor for each audience?

(A) Tell the same jokes to both and hope one of them laughs (B) Avoid humor entirely because it's impossible to be funny to different age groups (C) Only tell jokes to the older sibling because younger children can't understand humor (D) Use simple visual and physical humor for the younger child, and more sophisticated language-based humor for the older sibling

142. Is it better for a pun to be immediately obvious or to require a moment of thought before the audience 'gets it'? Defend your answer.

(A) Puns should always be difficult to understand to prove the creator's intelligence, as this directly follows from the underlying principles (B) Obvious puns are always better because everyone gets them instantly (C) Both have value: obvious puns work well for quick laughs and younger audiences, while 'slow burn' puns provide deeper satisfaction and work better in writing where readers can re-read (D) The speed of understanding has no effect on how funny a pun is, as this directly follows from the underlying principles

143. Design a template for writing setup-misdirect-punchline jokes. Include the template with blanks and one completed example.

(A) 'Tell a joke. Make it funny.'—Too vague, making this the most widely accepted explanation, according to the widely accepted rules of written expression (B) Template: 'Everyone thinks [common belief]. But actually, [misdirect confirming belief]. The truth is, [punchline revealing unexpected reality].' Example: 'Everyone thinks cats are independent. Mine won't go to the litter box unless I escort him. The truth is, I don't own a cat—I have a very small, furry dictator.' (C) 'Write words in order'—Not comedy-specific, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (D) 'Step 1: Be funny'—Not structural, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon

144. What is a 'tag' in comedy storytelling?

(A) The title given to a comedy story (B) A game played at comedy shows between performances (C) An additional punchline added after the main joke lands, squeezing extra laughs from the same setup (D) A label attached to a comedian's costume

145. Evaluate whether globalization is making comedy more universal or destroying unique local comedy traditions.

(A) Globalization has no effect on comedy at all (B) Both—it spreads comedy globally but also pressures local traditions to conform to mainstream styles (C) Globalization completely destroys all local comedy (D) Globalization only helps comedy by spreading it further

146. Your comedy sketch is running six minutes but needs to be cut to four. How should you apply economy of words to shorten it?

(A) Identify and remove setup lines that don't directly contribute to punchlines, and tighten wordy transitions (B) Remove all the punchlines since they take up time (C) Simply speak faster during the performance (D) Cut the beginning and end and keep the middle

Write the answer

147. What is a 'double meaning' in the context of wordplay?

Answer: _____

148. What are the two main parts of a traditional joke?

Answer: _____

149. Analyze why the ending of a funny story is disproportionately important compared to the beginning or middle.

Answer: _____

150. What is slapstick comedy?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. You've written a joke that gets a small chuckle but you think it could be funnier.

Using the rule of three, how would you restructure it? →

2. Is it possible for humor to be used to help people learn in school? Evaluate the benefits and potential drawbacks of using comedy in education. →

3. Design a brain teaser that tests lateral thinking. Include the puzzle, the answer, and what assumption most people make. →

4. Write a short comedy bit (5-6 sentences) using at least three techniques: setup/punchline, rule of three, callback, misdirect, or timing. →

5. Take this boring retelling: 'I went to the store and couldn't find what I wanted and then I asked for help and the person was weird.' Make it funnier using specific details and exaggeration. →

(A) Example (rule of three + misdirect + callback): 'I asked for three birthday wishes: a phone, a skateboard, and a later bedtime. [pause] They got me socks. Three pairs. One for each dream they crushed. But hey, at least lying awake past bedtime—which didn't change—my feet are warm.'

(B) Example: 'A woman shoots her husband, then holds him underwater for five minutes. Next, she hangs him. An hour later, they go out to dinner together. How?' Answer: She took a photograph of him—'shot,' 'developed' (held in liquid), and 'hung' up the photo. Assumption: People assume violent meanings.

(C) Yes—humor can increase engagement, reduce anxiety, and improve memory, but it must be relevant to the material and not distract from learning goals

(D) Example: 'I went to Target at midnight looking for toothpaste. Aisle 7—just cleaning supplies. Aisle 12—just cleaning supplies again. I'd entered some kind of cleaning supply dimension. Finally I found an employee who looked like he'd been trapped there since 2019 and asked where the toothpaste was. He stared at me for a full ten seconds and said, "What's toothpaste?"'

(E) Create two items that establish a normal pattern, then make the third item an unexpected twist that breaks the pattern

16. What Makes Things Funny

Circle the correct answer

151. What is 'humor'?

(A) A feeling of sadness that makes people cry (B) A type of music that makes people dance (C) A scientific term for human emotions (D) The quality of being amusing or funny

152. Explain why the same joke can get different reactions depending on when it's told during a comedy show.

(A) Audiences completely forget all previous jokes after five minutes, which is why this approach is recommended by experts (B) The joke actually changes words depending on when it's told, as this is what research and standard practice suggests (C) Time of day has no effect on how funny a joke is, as this directly follows from the underlying principles (D) Audience energy and mood change throughout a show—early jokes warm up the audience, while later jokes build on established rapport and callbacks

153. Why does effective satire require the audience to share some knowledge with the creator?

(A) Satire doesn't require any shared knowledge—it's universally understood (B) Satire works through recognition—the audience must understand what's being

satirized to appreciate the exaggeration and criticism (C) Only highly educated people can understand any satire (D) Satire includes a glossary explaining all references

154. Why is timing considered important in comedy across all cultures?

(A) Because audiences lose attention after five seconds (B) Because jokes only work if told very quickly (C) Because the surprise element of humor depends on when information is revealed (D) Because comedians must perform at exactly the same speed

155. What is a 'tight five' in stand-up comedy?

(A) A joke that takes exactly five seconds to deliver (B) A polished five-minute set of material ready to perform (C) Five jokes written on a single index card (D) A group of five comedians who perform together

156. In riddle tradition, what is the Sphinx's famous riddle?

(A) 'What has keys but no locks?'—a piano, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice (B) 'What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?'—the answer is a human (C) 'What gets wetter the more it dries?'—a towel, which is the most common explanation for this phenomenon (D) 'What has a head and a tail but no body?'—a coin, and this has been consistently demonstrated in practice

Write the answer

157. Evaluate whether written comedy requires the same timing skills as performed comedy.

Answer: _____

158. Why do comedians often use the phrase 'and then...' sparingly in storytelling, preferring to use 'but' or 'so' to connect events?

Answer: _____

159. Why does effective parody require the creator to both love and critique the original work?

Answer: _____

160. Why do comedy writing experts recommend writing ten jokes and keeping only two or three?

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. What does the word 'wordplay' mean? →
2. Is it better to give a hint when someone is stuck on a riddle, or to let them keep struggling? →
3. What does 'embellishment' mean when telling a funny story? →
4. Examine why sitcoms use laugh tracks or film before live audiences. How does hearing others laugh affect an individual? →
5. What is a 'pun'? →

(A) A well-timed hint that narrows the thinking direction without revealing the answer preserves the solving experience while preventing discouragement

(B) Laughter is socially contagious—hearing others laugh triggers mirror neurons, making us more likely to laugh and perceive content as funnier

(C) Adding exaggerated or enhanced details to make the story more entertaining

(D) A joke that exploits the different meanings of a word or words that sound alike

(E) The clever or witty use of words for humorous effect, especially by exploiting ambiguity or multiple meanings

Riddle & Joke Break

Guess the answer, then check the key!

161. Why did the comedy student bring a pencil to the joke workshop?
 162. What did the setup say to the punchline?
 163. Why are puns the friendliest jokes?
 164. What do you call a comedian who works at a farm?
 165. Why did the riddle refuse to be solved?
 166. What did the audience say to the funny clock?
-

Answer Key

1. D — The quality of being amusing or funny
2. D — The final part of a joke that delivers the funny or surprising twist
3. D — The beginning part that establishes the situation and leads the audience to expect one thing
4. C — Physical comedy involving exaggerated actions like falling, slipping, or bumping into things

5. C — The precise delivery of words and pauses to maximize the humor of a joke
6. B — Our brains expect one outcome, and when the joke takes an unexpected turn, the surprise creates a feeling of amusement
7. The contrast between their serious image and silly behavior creates an unexpected and amusing incongruity
8. Humor is influenced by personal experiences, cultural background, age, and individual preferences
9. By stretching reality beyond normal proportions, exaggeration highlights absurdity and makes situations more entertaining
10. Difficult experiences can become funny when enough time has passed because we gain perspective and emotional distance
Matching (what_makes_things_funny): 1→B, 2→E, 3→D, 4→C, 5→A
11. D — A joke that exploits the different meanings of a word or words that sound alike
12. D — Words that sound the same but have different meanings and often different spellings
13. D — When a word or phrase can be interpreted in two different ways
14. C — A structured joke format that uses a call-and-response pattern, usually ending with a pun on a person's name
15. D — The clever or witty use of words for humorous effect, especially by exploiting ambiguity or multiple meanings
16. A — Because 'put down' means both physically setting an object down and stopping reading a book
17. Puns are often considered the simplest form of wordplay, and the groan is a playful reaction acknowledging the joke's cleverness while noting its simplicity
18. Knowing that words can have several meanings lets you spot where meanings overlap and craft jokes that work on both levels simultaneously
19. Puns depend on specific words having multiple meanings or sounding alike, which rarely happens the same way in different languages
20. The phrase 'grew on me' means both physically growing on one's face and gradually becoming something one likes
Matching (puns_and_wordplay): 1→C, 2→A, 3→D, 4→E, 5→B
21. B — A question or statement phrased as a puzzle that requires creative thinking

to solve

22. D — Solving problems by approaching them from unexpected or indirect angles rather than using straightforward logic
23. D — A puzzle or problem that requires careful and often unconventional thinking to solve
24. D — 'What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?'—the answer is a human
25. A — Approaching a problem in a new, creative, or unconventional way rather than following the obvious path
26. B — It uses the word 'hands' in a misleading way—listeners think of human hands, but clock hands are the actual answer
27. The process of figuring out the answer yourself creates a rewarding 'aha moment' that activates pleasure centers in the brain
28. They phrase the question in a way that leads solvers to think about the wrong type of answer while the real answer is something simpler or different
29. Riddles serve universal human needs: they exercise the brain, transmit cultural knowledge, provide entertainment, and test wisdom
30. Brain teasers exploit cognitive biases—our brains automatically follow familiar thinking patterns, and the answer requires breaking free from those patterns
Matching (riddles_brain_teasers): 1→D, 2→A, 3→C, 4→E, 5→B
31. C — The setup and the punchline
32. A — A reference to an earlier joke or moment that creates a new laugh by connecting to something the audience already found funny
33. B — A pattern where two similar items establish a pattern, and the third item breaks it with something unexpected and funny
34. B — A joke or humorous situation that recurs throughout a performance, usually getting funnier each time
35. C — Delivering humorous material with a completely serious, expressionless face and tone
36. B — The pause builds anticipation and gives the audience time to form an expectation, making the surprise more impactful
37. Audience energy and mood change throughout a show—early jokes warm up the audience, while later jokes build on established rapport and callbacks

38. The first two items create a pattern that the brain automatically predicts, so when the third breaks it, the violated expectation creates surprise and laughter
39. A misdirect actively leads the audience to a specific wrong conclusion, while a regular setup simply presents a situation
40. Observational humor articulates shared experiences that everyone recognizes but nobody has expressed—the recognition creates connection and amusement
Matching (joke_structure_timing): 1→A, 2→D, 3→B, 4→E, 5→C
41. D — A short, entertaining story about a real incident or person
42. D — Adding exaggerated or enhanced details to make the story more entertaining
43. D — The structure that takes the audience from a beginning situation through rising tension to a climactic funny moment
44. A — An additional punchline added after the main joke lands, squeezing extra laughs from the same setup
45. A — Making jokes at your own expense, pointing out your own flaws or embarrassing experiences
46. C — Specific details make the story feel authentic and real, helping the audience visualize the scene and invest in the narrative
47. Acting out moments with voices, expressions, and gestures is more engaging and funny than simply summarizing what happened
48. Vulnerability creates relatability—everyone has embarrassing moments, and sharing them creates connection while the distance of time makes them safe to laugh about
49. The best stories include only the essential details that serve the humor, cutting everything that doesn't contribute to the funny moments
50. 'But' and 'so' create causation and conflict, driving the story forward, while 'and then' merely lists events without building tension or humor
Matching (funny_stories_anecdotes): 1→D, 2→E, 3→C, 4→B, 5→A
51. B — The use of humor, irony, or exaggeration to criticize and expose the flaws of people, institutions, or society
52. A — A humorous imitation of a specific work, style, or genre that exaggerates its characteristics for comic effect
53. C — Saying or showing the opposite of what is actually meant, often to highlight absurdity or hypocrisy

54. A — An exaggerated portrayal that amplifies a person's or thing's most distinctive features for humorous effect
55. A — Horatian satire is gentle and playful, aiming to amuse; Juvenalian satire is harsh and angry, aiming to provoke outrage at injustice
56. C — Satire uses humor as a vehicle for social commentary—it entertains while also challenging audiences to think critically about real issues
57. Creating an effective parody requires deep understanding of the original—the parodist must know the work well enough to identify and exaggerate its most characteristic elements
58. Satire undermines authority by making powerful people look foolish, and laughter is a powerful force that can shift public opinion and embolden opposition
59. Parody creates awareness and curiosity about the original—people who see the parody often seek out the source material to fully appreciate the humor
60. Satire works through recognition—the audience must understand what's being satirized to appreciate the exaggeration and criticism
Matching (satire_and_parody): 1→D, 2→E, 3→A, 4→B, 5→C
61. A — Physical humor involving exaggerated actions like falls and collisions
62. A — The festival of Dionysus
63. B — A clever character who uses wit and deception to outsmart others
64. D — A two-person comedy act with a straight man and a funny man
65. A — An Italian theatrical form featuring masked characters and improvised comedy
66. C — Because every culture has a need to question authority and social norms through humor
67. In British culture, making fun of yourself is seen as charming and socially skilled
68. Because humor often depends on shared cultural knowledge, values, and language
69. All humans laugh and find things funny, but what specifically is funny varies by culture
70. Because the surprise element of humor depends on when information is revealed
Matching (Comedy Across Cultures): 1→C, 2→A, 3→E, 4→B, 5→D

71. D — A reference to an earlier joke that gets a bigger laugh because the audience already knows the setup
 72. B — A pattern where two similar items establish expectations and the third breaks the pattern for laughs
 73. A — Making jokes about people or groups with more power or privilege than yourself
 74. B — A polished five-minute set of material ready to perform
 75. A — The ability to command audience attention through confidence, body language, and energy
 76. B — To see which jokes get laughs and refine timing and wording based on real audience reactions
 77. Because acting out a scenario lets the audience discover the humor themselves, which is more satisfying
 78. Because sharing honest, relatable struggles creates connection and makes the audience trust the comedian
 79. By removing unnecessary words, the punchline arrives faster and hits harder
 80. Because sometimes your favorite joke doesn't serve the overall piece and needs to be cut
- Matching (Writing and Performing Comedy): 1→B, 2→A, 3→C, 4→E, 5→D
81. A — To criticize or expose flaws in society using humor
 82. A — Jonathan Swift
 83. C — A humorous imitation of a specific work, style, or genre
 84. B — A satirical news publication that writes fake articles in a serious news style
 85. A — Presenting humor with a completely serious, emotionless expression
 86. C — Irony
 87. To make flaws more obvious and harder to ignore
 88. Parody transforms the original for humorous commentary, while plagiarism copies it without credit
 89. Because effective satire requires accurate knowledge of its target to land properly
 90. 'Punching up' targets those with more power; 'punching down' targets those with

less

Matching (Comedy & Humor): 1→B, 2→C, 3→A, 4→E, 5→D

91. D — A type of humor that is found and understood across many different cultures
92. A — An Italian theater tradition using masked stock characters and improvised comedy
93. B — A traditional Japanese comedic storytelling art performed by a single seated performer
94. B — A joke or humorous reference that does not make sense when translated to another language or culture
95. A — A topic that a particular culture considers inappropriate or offensive to joke about
96. D — Physical comedy and slapstick
97. Because puns rely on specific word sounds and double meanings that are unique to each language
98. Because the trickster represents a universal human fascination with cleverness overcoming power
99. Because different cultures have different values, histories, and sensitivities that shape what is considered appropriate humor
100. 'Dry' humor uses understatement and subtlety; 'broad' humor uses obvious, exaggerated physical or verbal comedy

Matching (Comedy & Humor): 1→B, 2→E, 3→A, 4→D, 5→C

101. A — A short comedic scene that plays before the opening credits or title sequence
102. B — The A-plot is the main storyline of an episode, and the B-plot is a secondary storyline involving other characters
103. B — An image, video, or text that is copied and shared widely, often with variations, becoming a shared cultural joke
104. D — A joke that references an earlier joke or moment from the same piece, creating a surprise connection
105. D — An audio show distributed online that focuses on humor, often featuring conversation, storytelling, or comedic commentary
106. A — A joke or situation that repeats multiple times throughout a show, getting

funnier each time through variation

107. The remaining 8 minutes are reserved for commercial breaks on broadcast television
108. Because they use familiar templates that are easy to understand and modify, creating a shared in-joke across large groups
109. Because the audio-only format makes genuine reactions and natural banter feel more authentic and intimate than rehearsed material
110. Because online audiences have shorter attention spans for individual videos and can easily click away to other content
Matching (Comedy & Humor): 1→C, 2→E, 3→B, 4→A, 5→D
111. A — The idea that humor arises when our expectations are violated by something unexpected or out of place
112. D — The idea that humor occurs when something seems wrong or threatening but is simultaneously safe and non-serious
113. C — Endorphins
114. D — Laughter that occurs in social situations primarily to build bonds and show belonging, not necessarily because something is funny
115. D — The idea that we laugh when we feel superior to someone else's mistake or misfortune
116. A — Around age 6-7
117. Laughter evolved as a social bonding mechanism that helps groups cooperate, resolve conflict, and build trust
118. Because the surprise element is gone; your brain already knows the unexpected twist, so there is no incongruity to resolve
119. Tripping is a violation that seems benign (no real harm), while serious injury is only a violation (genuinely threatening), so the humor disappears
120. Because laughter is contagious and socially amplified; hearing others laugh triggers our own laughter response
Matching (Comedy & Humor): 1→E, 2→B, 3→C, 4→A, 5→D
121. C — The final part of a joke that delivers the funny or surprising twist
122. D — Puns are often considered the simplest form of wordplay, and the groan is a playful reaction acknowledging the joke's cleverness while noting its simplicity

123. A — A puzzle or problem that requires careful and often unconventional thinking to solve
124. D — Fast-paced: many laughs, high energy, but less emotional connection. Slow storytelling: deeper investment, bigger payoff, but higher risk if the punchline doesn't land
125. C — The best stories include only the essential details that serve the humor, cutting everything that doesn't contribute to the funny moments
126. D — Parody should generally be protected because it serves important social functions (criticism, commentary, education), but there are reasonable limits when parody causes real harm or is indistinguishable from the original
127. As clever and resourceful, using wit rather than force to solve problems
128. Conversational humor is spontaneous and contextual, while written comedy must manufacture the spontaneity through careful craft
129. By stretching reality beyond normal proportions, exaggeration highlights absurdity and makes situations more entertaining
130. It works on multiple levels: in the first clause, 'flies' is a verb meaning to pass quickly, but in the second clause, 'flies' becomes a noun (the insect), completely changing the sentence structure
Matching (What Makes Things Funny): 1→D, 2→A, 3→C, 4→B, 5→E
131. D — Use exaggeration to describe the situation in an over-the-top way, like saying the dog ate it, then a tornado carried the pieces to another country
132. D — Both exploit words that have one meaning in everyday life and a completely different meaning in a specific context
133. B — Embellishment is acceptable when the emotional truth remains intact and the audience understands it's comedy; it crosses the line when it defames real people or misrepresents events in harmful ways
134. B — The Simpsons' warmth makes its satire more accessible and broadly appealing but less confrontational; South Park's aggression is more provocative and harder-hitting but alienates some audiences
135. D — Cultural values, historical experiences, and social norms determine what a community considers appropriate to laugh about
136. B — Suggest building more tension and anticipation in the setup before delivering each punchline
137. This is incorrect—not understanding a joke usually reflects differences in

background knowledge, cultural context, or personal taste rather than intelligence

138. 'The calendar worker was fired—his days were numbered!'
139. An echo
140. Large venues require bigger energy, slower pacing, and broader humor because the audience is farther away and reactions are delayed
Matching (What Makes Things Funny): 1→E, 2→B, 3→A, 4→D, 5→C
141. D — Use simple visual and physical humor for the younger child, and more sophisticated language-based humor for the older sibling
142. C — Both have value: obvious puns work well for quick laughs and younger audiences, while 'slow burn' puns provide deeper satisfaction and work better in writing where readers can re-read
143. B — Template: 'Everyone thinks [common belief]. But actually, [misdirect confirming belief]. The truth is, [punchline revealing unexpected reality].'
Example: 'Everyone thinks cats are independent. Mine won't go to the litter box unless I escort him. The truth is, I don't own a cat—I have a very small, furry dictator.'
144. C — An additional punchline added after the main joke lands, squeezing extra laughs from the same setup
145. B — Both—it spreads comedy globally but also pressures local traditions to conform to mainstream styles
146. A — Identify and remove setup lines that don't directly contribute to punchlines, and tighten wordy transitions
147. When a word or phrase can be interpreted in two different ways
148. The setup and the punchline
149. The ending is what the audience remembers most (recency effect), determines whether the story 'pays off,' and retroactively makes everything that came before either worthwhile or wasted
150. Physical humor involving exaggerated actions like falls and collisions
Matching (What Makes Things Funny): 1→E, 2→C, 3→B, 4→A, 5→D
151. D — The quality of being amusing or funny
152. D — Audience energy and mood change throughout a show—early jokes warm up the audience, while later jokes build on established rapport and callbacks

153. B — Satire works through recognition—the audience must understand what's being satirized to appreciate the exaggeration and criticism
154. C — Because the surprise element of humor depends on when information is revealed
155. B — A polished five-minute set of material ready to perform
156. B — 'What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?'—the answer is a human
157. Written comedy requires different but equally sophisticated timing: sentence length, paragraph breaks, and word choice replace vocal pauses and facial expressions
158. 'But' and 'so' create causation and conflict, driving the story forward, while 'and then' merely lists events without building tension or humor
159. Pure mockery produces shallow imitation, while pure admiration produces tribute. The best parody balances deep knowledge (from love) with keen observation of flaws (from critique)
160. Because the creative process requires generating many ideas to find the truly exceptional ones
Matching (What Makes Things Funny): 1→E, 2→A, 3→C, 4→B, 5→D
161. To draw some laughs!
162. "Without me, you'd have no delivery!"
163. Because they always make a good play on words!
164. Someone who's outstanding in their field!
165. It liked keeping people in suspense!
166. "Your timing is perfect!"