

Warmer - types of joke

Work with a partner to match the sentences with the examples your teacher gives you. Then try to define the words in bold.

- 1. It's an old children's joke based on a **pun**. Do you think it's funny?
- 2. Lizzie's got a bit of an earthy sense of humour, hasn't she?
- 3. I was always playing **practical jokes** on my sister when I was a kid.
- 4. Have you seen any of the Mr Bean films? They are so slapstick!
- 5. I do enjoy a bit of witty banter with my colleagues!



Task 1 - Reading: making predictions

You are going to read a student's blog post about Shakespeare's comedies. Tick the things you think you will read about.

- a. witty banter
- b. a policeman
- c. The Simpsons

- d. singing and dancing
- e. puns
- f. an earthy sense of humour

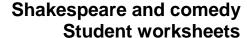
Task 2 – Reading a blog post.

Now read the blog post on the next page. Were your predictions correct?



Shakespeare and comedy Student worksheets

Class clown's latest blog entry	About me	Gallery	Contact		
What's so funny about Shakespeare?					
(1) Mum	says she doesn't kr	now how I'm ev	er going to get my		
degree in English Literature when all I do is sit and watch the comedy channel. She should relax:					
little does she know that most of the comedy	we watch today is i	nspired by Sha	akespeare. Don't		
believe me? Then read on to find out how Sh	akespearean-style	comedy is alive	e and well.		
Fools					
(2) Take	The Simpsons, for	example. For n	ne, the star of the		
show is Homer, Bart Simpson's dad. Homer's	s prototype appear	s in Shakespe	are's comedy <i>Much</i>		
Ado about Nothing where foolish policeman [Dogberry has much	in common wi	th Bart's inadequate		
dad. Like Homer, Dogberry mixes up his words and makes a mess of his police work (just as					
Homer screws up his parental responsibilitie	s). Yet, both charad	cters do good i	n the end without		
ever realising quite how they did it, often speaking words of truth and significance to the audience.					
Singing and dancing					
(3) Think	of your favourite ro	mcom and nir	ne times out of ten a		
song and dance number will come to mind. Take the movie Ten Things I Hate About You, for					
example. Not only was this movie inspired by Shakespeare's comedy The Taming of the Shrew, it					
features a memorable song and dance number where the male lead serenades the girl of his					
dreams on a soccer field.					
Absurdity					
(4) Look	no further than A M	lidsummer Nigl	nt's Dream and you'll		
find a character called Bottom being turned into an ass (yes, really!) and Tom Snout playing the					
part of a wall in a play within a play.					
Happy endings					
(5) Actua	lly, happy endings	define Shakes	pearean comedy		
where it ain't over till the young couples, having overcome their obstacles , end up happily married					
(unlike in tragedy where they end up dead on the floor). In this way, our romantic comedies aren't					
so very different from Shakespeare's. Throw in a few puns, some witty banter and truckloads of					
sexual innuendo and you'll find that what you're laughing at today is pretty similar to what					
Shakespeare's audiences were chuckling at hundreds of years ago. It looks like 450 years later					
Shakespeare continues to have the last laugh	n. That's what I tell	my mum anyw	ay		





Task 3 - Reading: topic sentences

Read the sentences below. Insert them into gaps 1–5 in the text you have just read. What effect does this have on the text as a whole?

- a. Shakespeare's comic fools can be found in all kinds of comedy today.
- **b.** Don't you just love it when it all turns out all right?
- c. Our most wacky and surreal comedy has its roots in Shakespeare.
- **d.** Music was an important part of Shakespearean comedies and this is also true in contemporary romantic comedies.
- e. My parents are always worrying about me.

Task 4 - Writing: topic sentences

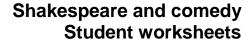
Read an extract from another blog post by the same writer. Write a topic sentence for these paragraphs.

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a.	It all started when my mum took me to see A Midsumm		
	Night's Dream when I was seven years old. The costumes, the humour, the magic: all of these		
	things combined to form me into a diehard fan.		
b.	They think it's boring and old-fashioned, something you		
	have to read in school to keep your teachers happy. I think they should open their eyes.		
	Shakespeare's work is so much more than that.		

Task 5 - Reading: checking your understanding

Read the text again and answer the questions.

- 1. Why does the writer think that his mum should relax about his TV-watching habits?
- 2. Name two things that Homer Simpson and Dogberry have in common.
- 3. What kind of jokes feature in A Midsummer Night's Dream?
- **4.** How do Shakespearean comedies tend to end?





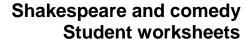
Task 6 - Vocabulary

Match the definitions below with the words in bold in the text.

- a. Shortened form of romantic comedy romcom
- **b.** Sings romantically to someone
- c. Things which get in your way and cause problems
- d. Not good enough
- e. Makes a mess of
- f. Amusing conversation
- **g.** When something someone says has a double meaning (this is earthy humour)
- h. Laughing
- i. The very first version of something

Task 7 - Vocabulary practice

Comp	lete the sentences using the correct forms	of words or phrases from Task 6 .	
a.	The audience couldn't stop	– it was a great comic moment.	
b.	. We were eating our pizza when the handsome waiter took out his guitar and started		
	us.		
C.	. We can't take my grandmother to see that film! There's lots of		
	in it!		
d.	I think I	$_{ m f L}$ my exam yesterday. I was nervous and I couldn't	
	concentrate.		
e.	I'm afraid I must complain about the	service I received at your hotel.	
f.	If we stick together, we'll get past any	in our way!	
g.	I don't think I want to go out tonight – let's stay in and watch a nice		
h.	We have such fun in our office - I love the	ne my colleagues	
	and I have together.		
i.	The scientists had finally produced a	vaccine for the deadly disease.	





Task 8 – Creating a Shakespearean comedy

Work in small groups. Make a list of the main ingredients of Shakespearean comedy. Now create a trailer for your own Shakespearean comedy. Think about the following things:

- Who are your main characters?
- What obstacles are in the way of your main characters?
- Where is your comedy set?
- What type of humour will you use?

Choose one scene from your comedy and act it out to the rest of the class.