

## That's hilarious!

### Topic

Jokes

### Learning outcomes

- Read jokes and identify what makes them funny
- Use a range of verbs to describe ways of speaking
- Tell a joke in English

### Age and level

13-17, Adults (B1+)

### Time

Approximately 50-65 minutes

### Materials

- Presentation OR Student worksheet

### Introduction

The lesson begins by asking the students to read some jokes. These jokes were all selected as part of a research study into what makes us laugh (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2015-11-24-what-makes-us-laugh-its-serious-research>). After discussing the jokes, the lesson moves on to look at a range of verbs that students could use instead of 'say'. Students then look at the typical structure of a joke before practising telling their own jokes in English.

A student worksheet is available for this lesson. Alternatively, teachers can use a presentation for a no-printing option.

## Procedure

<p><b>Task 1: Reading and lead-in</b> (10-15 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that students are going to read some jokes. According to research at Oxford University, they are some of the funniest jokes ever.</li> <li>• Now either refer students to <b>Task 1</b> in the student worksheet or show <b>slides 2-6</b> of the presentation.</li> <li>• Ask students to read each joke in pairs and to try to guess what is said in the gaps (the punchlines). If necessary, students can consult dictionaries, or you can help with unfamiliar vocabulary.</li> <li>• Invite some pairs to share their ideas. Give the answers and explain the punchlines if necessary.</li> </ul> <p><i>Joke A: 'What did you do that for?'</i></p> <p><i>Joke B: 'I'm feeling lonely now, I wish my friends were back here.'</i></p> <p><i>Joke C: 'They're all at the funeral.'</i></p> <p><i>Joke D: 'What happened?'</i></p> <p><i>Joke E: 'I don't need to run faster than the bear'... 'I just need to run faster than you.'</i></p>
<p><b>Task 2: Speaking</b> (10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show <b>slide 7</b> of the presentation or refer students to <b>Task 2</b> in the student worksheet. In pairs or small groups, students discuss the questions, then discuss them as a class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Task 3: Vocabulary</b> (10-15 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show <b>slide 8</b> of the presentation or refer students to <b>Task 3A</b> in the student worksheet. Explain that the verbs describe different ways of speaking.</li> <li>• Ask students to try and match the verbs to the definitions. Let them check in pairs, then check as a class.</li> </ul> <p><b>Answers:</b> 1. <i>whisper</i>, 2. <i>mutter</i>, 3. <i>reply</i>, 4. <i>yell</i>, 5. <i>shriek</i>, 6. <i>blurt out</i>, 7. <i>sigh</i>, 8. <i>whine</i>, 9. <i>snap</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show <b>slide 9</b> of the presentation or refer students to <b>Task 3B</b> in the student worksheet.</li> <li>• Ask them to complete the sentences using the verbs from Task 3A. It is possible to use more than one verb. They can use past or present tenses.</li> <li>• Check answers with the class. Alternative answers are possible depending on context. If students want to use other verbs, get them to explain why.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Suggested answers:</b> 1. <i>snapped / whispered</i>; 2. <i>shrieked, shouted, yelled</i>; 3. <i>blustered out</i>; 4. <i>muttered, sighed / whined</i>; 5. <i>sighed</i></p>
<p><b>Task 4: Focus on genre</b> <b>(10 minutes)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer students to <b>Task 4A</b> in the student worksheet, alternatively show <b>slides 2-6</b> again.</li> <li>Ask students to (1) find verbs from Task 3 in the jokes, and (2) to say which tenses are used. Check <b>answers</b>.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>whine / sigh / reply</i></li> <li><i>present tenses are usually used - this makes the story more immediate</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>Show <b>slide 10</b> of the presentation or refer students to <b>Task 4B</b> in the student worksheet.</li> <li>Ask students to quickly put the structure in the correct order (c, a, b). Explain what 'punchline' means if necessary (the last part of a joke that makes it funny).</li> <li>Then ask them to analyse a joke from Task 1 and explain how it has the typical structure. If you are using the presentation, show slide 2.</li> <li>Ask some students to explain the structure of a joke, for example:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set the scene: This man is at home when he hears a knock at the door.</li> <li>Explain what happens: he opens the door, he looks down etc.</li> <li>Give the punchline: 'What did you do that for?' It's a surprise that the snail talks and has been trying to get back to him for two years.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Task 5: Extended speaking</b> <b>(10-15 minutes)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put students into pairs. Ask them to choose one or two jokes together and to prepare to tell the joke in English. They should use the structure they learned about in Task 4. They should also use present tenses and try to use different verbs for 'say'.</li> <li>Walk around and help students as they prepare. Encourage them to rehearse the joke so they can deliver it well.</li> <li>Pairs join to make groups of four and tell each other their jokes. Ask some pairs to tell their jokes to the class. They could vote for the best joke.</li> </ul>

**Adapted from a lesson contributed by**

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