

That's hilarious!

Task 1: According to research at Oxford University, these are some of the funniest jokes ever. Try to guess what is said.

Joke A

This man is at home when he hears a knock at the door. He opens the door, but there's no one there. Looking down he sees a snail. Disgusting! He picks up the snail and throws it away as far as he can. Two years later there's another knock on the door. The man opens the door, and there's the snail. The snail whines, '_____?'

Joke B

There are three men stranded on a desert island. Buried in the sand they find a magic lamp. The first man rubs the lamp to get the sand off it, and, would you believe it, a genie appears! He offers the men one wish each. The first man wishes to be safely home and, poof, he disappears. The second man wishes the same thing. Poof! The third man sighs, '_____.'

Joke C

It's the football World Cup final. A man sits down and notices that there's an empty seat between him and the next man. He points this out to his neighbour who explains that it was his wife's seat. 'We always used to come and watch football together, but sadly, she died.' 'That's terrible,' says the first man, 'Couldn't you get another relative or a friend to come with you?' 'No,' says the man, '_____.'

Joke D

A woman is late for work. 'You should have been here at 8.45!' yells her boss. 'Why?' answers the woman, '_____?'

Joke E

Two campers are walking through the woods when they suddenly see a huge, angry bear - right in front of them. Mary starts putting on her running shoes. 'What are you doing?', says Steve, 'You won't be able to run faster than that bear.' '_____', she replies, '_____.'

Task 2: Discuss the following questions.

- Which of the jokes do you find funny (if any)?
- What makes a joke funny?
- Do you think that different nationalities have different senses of humour? Why / why not?

Task 3A: Match the verbs describing different ways of speaking with the definitions.

blurt out mutter reply shriek sigh snap whine whisper yell

1. speak quietly using the breath and not the voice.
2. say something quietly that is difficult to hear.
3. answer
4. shout
5. cry out with a loud, high voice in surprise or shock
6. say something suddenly and without thinking.
7. breathe out noisily because you are tired, or sad.
8. complain in an annoying way.
9. suddenly get angry about something.

Task 3B: Complete sentences 1-5 with the verbs above. You can use more than one.

1. 'Shhh! Be quiet in the library,' he _____.
2. 'Ah! A spider!' he _____.
3. 'You look much older than I expected,' she _____.
4. 'It's not fair, you always do this,' he _____.
5. 'I'm exhausted,' she _____.

Task 4A: Look at jokes A-E again and answer the questions in pairs.

1. Which of the verbs in Task 3 can you find in the jokes?
2. What do you notice about the tenses used in telling a joke?

Task 4B: Put the structure of a typical joke in the correct order.

- a. Explain what happened and what people said.
- b. Give the punchline: usually something surprising happens
- c. Set the scene: where, when, who.

Explain how one of the jokes in Task 1 has this structure.