

That's hilarious!

Topic

Jokes

Aims

- Provide reading and speaking practice around the topic of jokes.
- Expand students' range of verbs to describe ways of speaking.
- Enable students to tell a joke in English, speaking for an extended period.

Age / level

Teenagers and adults CEF level B1 and above

Time

50-60 minutes

Materials

Worksheet (3 pages)

Introduction

This lesson was devised to mark World Laughter Day, held on the first Sunday in May each year. However, it could be used at any time of year as this is not specifically mentioned.

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.

Procedure

1. Reading and lead-in (10-15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise 1: Ask students to read the jokes, then discuss with a partner which jokes, if any they found funny. Discuss as a class.
2. Speaking (5-10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise 2: In pairs or small groups, ask students to discuss the questions, then discuss as a class.
3. Vocabulary (10-15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise 3: Ask students to try and match the verbs to the definitions. Let them check in pairs, then check as a class. Answers: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. speak quietly using the breath and not the voice - whisper 2. say something quietly that is difficult to hear - mutter 3. answer - reply 4. shout - yell 5. cry out in surprise or shock - shriek 6. say something suddenly and without thinking - blurt out 7. breathe out noisily because you are tired, or sad - sigh 8. complain in an annoying way - whine 9. suddenly get angry about something - snap Exercise 4: Ask students to complete the sentence using one of the verbs from the previous exercise. They can use present or past tense. Note that more than one answer is possible in many cases. Suggested answers: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. whispers/snaps 2. shrieks/yells 3. blurts out 4. whines/mutters 5. sighs Let students compare answers, and, where their choices are different, explain their choices. Quick feedback as a class.

4. Focus on genre (5-10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise 5: Ask the students to look at the jokes again and answer the questions in pairs. Briefly feedback as a class. Answers: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> whine/offer/sigh/point out/yell/reply present tenses are usually used- this makes the story more immediate. Exercise 6: Ask students to analyse the structure of the poems and see how they relate to the typical structure given, for example: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Set the scene: This man is at home when he hears a knock at the door. Explain what happens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - he opens the door - he looks down etc. 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.
5. Extended speaking (10-15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise 7: Ask students to work in pairs to prepare to tell a joke in English, using the structure and language from the lesson. Letting them work on the same joke will be helpful if one can't think of a joke, but if they finish quickly, they could work on a joke each. Encourage them to rehearse the joke so they can deliver it well. Exercise 8: Change pairs and let them tell each other their jokes. If time, you could let them tell some of the jokes to the class and possibly vote on the best joke.

Contributed by

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