

## That's hilarious!

1. **According to research at Oxford University, these are some of the funniest jokes ever. Which do you find funny (if any)? Discuss with a partner.**

### *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, 'What did you do that for?'

### *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, 'I'm feeling lonely now, I wish my friends were back here.'

### *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, 'they're all at the funeral.'

### *Joke D*

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

### *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.' 'I don't need to run faster than the bear' she replies, 'I just need to run faster than you!'

2. **Discuss the following questions in pairs or small groups.**

What makes a joke funny?

Do you think that different nationalities have different senses of humour? Why/why not

**3. 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 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.

**4. Complete the sentences using an appropriate verb from exercise 3.**

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

**5. Look at the jokes again and answer the questions in pairs.**

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

**6. Look at the following typical structure of a joke and discuss how each joke follows the structure.**

1. Set the scene: where, when, who.
2. Explain what happened and what people said.
3. Give the punchline: usually something surprising happens.

7. In pairs choose a joke and prepare to tell it in English. Use the structure in exercise 5 and some of the verbs from exercise 3. Practise telling the joke until you can do it really well.
  
8. Find another partner and tell them your joke. Can you make them laugh?