

Lesson 3:

USING LANGUAGE FOR LAUGHS

STAND UP
& LEARN

Comedy writing is one of the most joyful ways to play with words. It's how we take everyday moments, twist them just a little, and make people laugh—not just in the room with us, but sometimes around the world. A joke told to a friend is shared in a moment, but a joke written, performed, or published becomes something bigger. It invites others in.



Great comedy writing takes care and intention. Writers choose every word with purpose. They think about rhythm, timing, and surprise. These are real skills, and with continued practice, we gain confidence—not just in our writing, but also in how we express ourselves.

Trying out these techniques helps us stretch our creativity, sharpen our voice, and share stories that connect. When we get it right, we have the opportunity to give someone the gift of laughter, and that's pretty powerful.

Punctuation Fun!

Periods:

A period is just a punctuation mark, right? Yep—but in comedy, it can be super powerful when used to end a sentence in a very short, serious, or unexpected way. Why is it funny? Because when someone says something dramatic or obvious and ends it with a period—no extra words, no smile, just done—it can feel awkward or super dry, which makes people laugh!

EXAMPLE: I tried to make a smoothie without the lid on the blender. Now the ceiling is wearing bananas.

Exclamation Marks:

An exclamation mark shows excitement, yelling, surprise, or drama! In comedy, it can make something sound way more intense or ridiculous, which is exactly what makes it funny. Why is it funny? Because you can take something small or silly and act like it's the BIGGEST. DEAL. EVER. That overreaction is what makes people laugh!

EXAMPLE: I dropped my sandwich on the floor. My life is over!

Ellipsis:

An ellipsis is the three dots you see like this: ... It usually shows a pause, something left unsaid, or a dramatic moment. Why is it funny? Because in comedy, an ellipsis can make a sentence feel awkward, dramatic, or super quiet in a hilarious way. It's like giving the audience time to think about what you just said... and then boom—the laugh hits.

EXAMPLE: I told my little brother not to touch my stuff. He smiled... and touched everything.

Noun/Adjective:

A noun phrase will always get you a bigger laugh when telling your funny story. Was your character dressed in a suit? Or was she wearing a bright yellow sequin-encrusted banana suit? Use adjectives to give your audience those comedy descriptions.

EXAMPLE: The young, pimply-faced teenager at the sandwich shop came out from the back of the store, wearing yellow rubber dishwashing gloves and holding a giant bathroom plunger. He said, "Can I help you?" I said, "Yes, you can start by boiling your hands."

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Commas & Semi-Colons:

Lists are always funny, especially when we use repetition in our work. A comma can help with comic timing—it gives the listener a tiny pause, which helps build suspense, rhythm, or surprise. If we remember to space them out using commas or semi-colons, then we can slowly build a laugh for our audience.

EXAMPLE: My wife bought me a book on getting organized, but I lost it.

Conjunctions:

Conjunctions are great for surprises. If you want your audience to expect one thing and then get another, you'll need a conjunction to link your sentence.

EXAMPLE: Police pulled me over on the road for driving a golf cart. He said, "What are you doing driving a golf cart on the road?" I said, "I'm looking for my ball." He said, "But there isn't a golf course around here for miles." I said, "I know, I'm a really bad golfer."

Homophones:

Homophones are words that sound the same but have different meanings or spellings—like pair and pear, or knight and night. Why are they funny? Because they can cause silly misunderstandings! Comedians use them to make jokes where the meaning gets twisted in a surprising or goofy way.

EXAMPLE: I told my friend I had a job as a baker, and he said, 'That's a sweet gig!' I said, 'Yeah, but I knead the dough.'

Metaphors:

A metaphor is when you say something is something else—even though it isn't—so you can compare two things in a creative or funny way. Why is it funny? Because sometimes comparing something normal to something totally wild or unexpected makes people laugh! Metaphors can make your story feel bigger, sillier, or more dramatic.

EXAMPLE: My little brother is a tornado in sneakers—he walks into a room and destroys everything in under 30 seconds.

Similes:

A simile compares two things using "like" or "as." It helps paint a picture in someone's mind—and if the picture is ridiculous or unexpected, it can be hilarious! Why is it funny? Because you can compare something ordinary to something totally weird, dramatic, or silly, and it surprises the audience!

EXAMPLE: My math homework was like a horror movie—full of screaming and things I didn't understand.

