

MINI-LESSON: FINDING YOUR FUNNY – TYPES OF JOKES

Hey everyone—welcome back! Today, we're diving into one of the coolest aspects of comedy: understanding how jokes work. There are many ways to make people laugh, and the best part? You don't have to be loud or wild to be funny—you just need to know how to tell a good story or create a clever punchline.

Whether you're a word nerd, a drama kid, a quiet observer, or just someone who sees the world a little differently, there's a style of joke for you.

Let's break down a few of the most common types of jokes you'll learn to use:



Wordplay (a.k.a. Language Magic)

This is where we get clever with words—puns, double meanings, and sounds that trip people up in a fun way. Comics like Bo Burnham are masters of this.

EXAMPLE: I'm reading a book on anti-gravity...it's impossible to put down.

The Surprise (Incongruity Theory)

You set people up to expect one thing—and then twist it in a totally unexpected direction. It's quick, clever, and always gets a reaction.

EXAMPLE: My grandfather died peacefully in his sleep...but the kids on his bus were screaming.

The Triple (The Rule of Three)

It's a classic. You say two normal things, and then the third one surprises us. That twist makes it funny.

EXAMPLE: I like video games, I like comic books, and comic books about video games.

The List

Sometimes a long, weird list is the joke. You keep going... and it gets funnier the more unexpected it becomes. Great for those who love to go all-in with details.

EXAMPLE:

My phone's battery levels
100%: I'm unstoppable
50%: Choose your apps wisely
1%: Say your goodbyes

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The Cringe (Superiority & Self-Deprecation)

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.”

Bonus: The SAP Formula – A theory developed by author William Lang.

If you remember nothing else, remember this:

S = Setup (you build the world)

A = Anticipation (the audience leans in)

P = Punchline (you deliver the twist)

Your Turn!

Today you’ll start trying some of these joke styles in your own writing. Think about your voice—what feels natural to you? Which joke type matches your sense of humor? Don’t be afraid to play. There’s no one way to be funny—just your way.

Let’s find your funny.

