



# **OFFICIAL LEARNER'S WORKBOOK**

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# THE COMEDIAN'S CREED

## **I Promise**

**To support my comedy classmates.**

**To laugh at their jokes.**

**To provide positive feedback.**

**To never make fun of them or bully them.**

**To lift them up and encourage them.**

**To assist them with their material.**

**And to cheer them on along their journey.**

**Signed,**

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**Dated,**

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# WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

**Stop me if you've heard this one before. Why did the chicken cross the road? I'm guessing you probably want me to stop?**

**Jokes like this famous one have a one line set-up and a one line punchline. So you probably won't be surprised that a joke like this is called a ONE LINER.**

**One liners are the most simple and famous types of jokes. Every good joke teller has a book full of one liners at home. And now so do you! So congratulations! Consider yourself an official joke teller!**

**Have you ever made up your own one liner? If not, it's easy to do. All good one liners have a great punchline called a BENIGN VIOLATION. The benign violation is the funny part. Think of it as a pleasant surprise.**

**When writing your own one liner first think of your set-up. This will be the setting for the joke. Always phrase your setting as a question that needs a funny answer. Like "Why did the chicken cross the road?" or maybe the title of this lesson, "What's so funny?"**

**After you have your set-up then it's time for your punchline. Remember your punchline is the funny answer and the pleasant surprise. Like "To get to the other side!" Or the answer to the question "What's so funny?" I'll tell you what's so funny. You are! So what kind of one liners can YOU create?**

**What do you call a pig that knows karate?**

**A pork chop!**





# **I'M FEELING FUNNY FROM MY HEAD TO-MA-TOES!**

**So a pretty common question you are probably going to ask yourself is how can you tell if you are funny?**

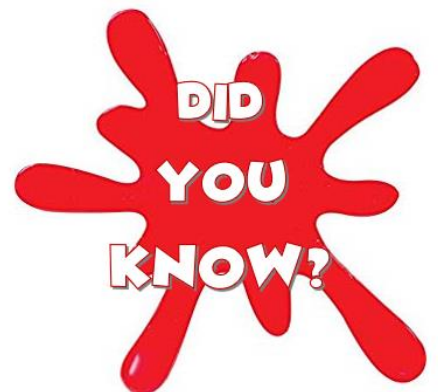
**Good news! There is an easy answer to that question! Being funny is all about being aware. You already know how to write funny one liners. So that means you are also aware of what jokes are funny and what jokes aren't. Seriously. It's that easy!**

**Go ahead and give it a try. Take a look at or listen to some one liners. Did they have a good set-up? Did they have an even better punchline? Pay attention to how the joke made you feel. Did you imagine it playing out in your head? Did you giggle or even laugh out loud?**

**If a joke made you laugh or think then count that joke as funny. If you rolled your eyes or found yourself saying, "Wah-Wah" then throw that joke in the unfunny bin.**

**Try practicing your jokes on your family, your friends or even total strangers. If they laugh, then you are funny. If they throw a tomato at you then hopefully you are AWARE that your jokes still might need a little work.**

**THE FIRST TIME A TOMATO WAS EVER THROWN AT A PERFORMER WAS ON OCTOBER 28, 1883. JOHN RITCHIE WAS HIT "SQUARE BETWEEN THE EYES" WITH A TOMATO WHEN HE WAS TRYING TO PERFORM A TRAPEZE ACT. IT IS THEREFORE DECLARED THAT EVERY OCTOBER 28<sup>TH</sup> WILL FOREVER BE KNOWN AS "THROW A TOMATO DAY"!**





# SCARY CAN BE FUNNY!

Have you ever imagined something scary doing things that it was never supposed to do. Like seeing a ghost falling down the stairs. Or maybe you could watch a monster trying to ride a bike. See! That's funny to think about!

A lot of times the things we are scared of don't have to be scary at all. A lot of times scary things are actually funny!

When you get scared it's usually because of one of two reasons. The first reason is called **INDIRECT ASSOCIATION**. Indirect association means you can get scared by something that you have encountered in your life. Maybe you're afraid of bats because one time you were climbing a tree and you scared a bat, so it attacked you. That is an example of indirect association. Oh. Speaking of bats. What do bats do for fun? They hang out with their friends! Get it?

Anyways. The other reason we get scared is because of something called **FEAR TRANSFERENCE**. Fear transference is when you become scared of something because someone you know is scared of that same thing. Maybe your mom doesn't like spiders so neither do you. And by the way, what do you call two spiders that just got married? Newlywebs! Please. Don't throw your tomato.

What are some things you are scared of? Why are you scared of them? Is it because of indirect association or fear transference? What are some funny jokes you can come up with to make those things not so scary anymore?



**What do you call two witches  
that live in the same house?**

**Broom mates!**





# PIE FACE YOUR FEARS

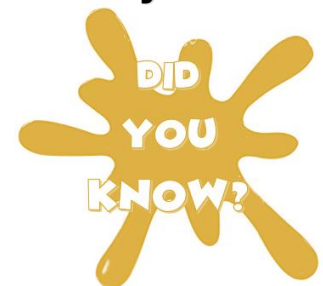
**Did you know that the scary things that happen to you are more memorable than most other stuff that happens in your daily life? This is because scary things trigger a natural response in your brain that makes you want to remember what is happening. Those memories then remind you to be afraid the next time that same scary thing comes back around in your life.**

**But there's good news to scary stuff! Did you also know that when you face your fears successfully your brain feels a high level sense of ACCOMPLISHMENT? When you face your fears the odds are that you'll never be afraid of those things again. And that's the great thing about funny stuff! There's one thing more powerful than fear. And that's laughter! No. Seriously.**

**If you can laugh at something scary that scary thing automatically becomes less scary! The more you find it funny the less scary it becomes until it's not scary at all! If you are afraid of the dark at night because you think there's a monster in your closet instead of imagining that scary monster coming out to get you try imagining throwing a pie in the monster's face and then laughing at him. That monster will be too embarrassed to ever bother you again.**

**What are some scary things you could throw a pie at? Let's try it and see if we can accomplish turning those scary things into funny ones!**

**THE FIRST RECORDED PIE IN THE FACE APPEARED IN THE SILENT MOVIE "MR. FLIP" THAT PREMIERED ON MAY 12<sup>TH</sup>, 1909. IT IS THEREFORE DECLARED THAT EVERY MAY 12<sup>TH</sup> WILL FOREVER BE KNOWN AS "THROW A PIE IN SOMEBODY'S FACE DAY"!**



# WHAT'S THE STORY?

**Did someone ever tell you a story so funny that you still laugh when you think about it? That's actually a pretty normal reaction.**

**When other people tell us a good story they actually transfer their experiences to our brains!**

**When a story is really good then we feel what the storyteller feels. We EMPATHIZE with the storyteller. When you empathize with someone else it means you understand what they are going through.**

**Telling stories is one of the most important things that people do. You know they say that after food, shelter and others, stories are what people need most. And it's really easy to become a great storyteller.**

**All good stories must have something that the main character in the story has a DESIRE for. When you desire something it means that you want it very badly. It could be anything. It could be a treasure or a career in sports or even just to feel important.**

**The funniest stories always make sure that main character comes close to ACHIEVEMENT of that desire. But then at the last minute he or she fails to reach the desire. This is called the STORYTELLING FORMULA. And it's easy to remember. Just remember it like this:  
**A funny story = a desire + that desire in reach + that desire ruined.****

**What's a funny story that happened to you?  
How did you fail to reach your desire?**

**JOKE  
TIME**

**One day my big brother climbed way up our big tree and called for me to come over. I was so happy he included me in something that I ran over as fast as I could. When I looked up, he dropped a water balloon down on me.**



**DID I EVER  
TELL YOU  
ABOUT  
THE TIME...**





# BELLING THE CAT

Let's take a look at an example of a story joke in action. This is the classic Aesop's Fable called "Belling the Cat". Remember the storytelling formula. A funny story has a desire followed by the desire in reach and finishes with that desire being ruined.

## **BELLING THE CAT:**

One day a group of mice called a meeting to decide on a plan to free themselves of their enemy, the Cat.

## **DESIRE:**

They all wished to find some way of knowing when the Cat was coming so they would have time to run away. Many plans were discussed but none of them seemed good enough.

## **DESIRE IN REACH:**

Finally, a very young Mouse got up and said "I have a plan that is very simple, but I know it will be successful. All we have to do is hang a bell about the Cat's neck. When we hear the bell ringing we will know immediately that our enemy is coming!"

## **DESIRE RUINED:**

The mice were very surprised that they had not thought of such a good plan before. But as they were all celebrating the young mouse's idea an older mouse stood up and said, "Let me ask one question. Who is going to bell the Cat?"



# FIRST WORK SHOP.

## WEEKS ONE, TWO AND THREE.

### WEEK ONE: SET-UP AND PUNCHLINE.

#### IMPORTANT TERMS:

- **ONE-LINER:** A simple joke with a one-line set-up and a one-line punchline.
- **BENIGN VIOLATION:** The funny part of a one-liner. The punchline. Also known as the pleasant surprise.
- **AWARE:** Knowing that a joke has a good set-up and a good punchline.

#### YOUR JOKE:

- **THE SET-UP:**

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- **THE PUNCHLINE:**

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### WEEK TWO: FACING YOUR FEARS.

#### IMPORTANT TERMS:

- **INDIRECT ASSOCIATION:** Being afraid of something you have encountered in your life.
- **FEAR TRANSFERENCE:** Being afraid of something because someone that you know is afraid of the same thing.
- **ACCOMPLISHMENT:** When you successfully stand up to something you were afraid of.

#### YOUR JOKE:

- **THE SET-UP:**

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- **THE PUNCHLINE:**

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# STOP THINKING AND THINK ABOUT IT

As you continue to get better and better at comedy you're going to start hearing people say that being funny is about **TIMING**.

Timing is a very special part of comedy that happens when a comedian says something that is so unexpected it makes your brain come to a complete stop and you pause to think about what was just said. That pause, my friend, is called... **timing**.

Remember that **jokes are only funny if your audience is surprised**. Look at it this way. You can't tickle yourself, can you? When the punchline to a joke is unexpected it will make your mind stop in its tracks and cause you to think. The pause between hearing a funny punchline and thinking about the punchline is **timing**.

Every funny person is an expert at comedic timing. As you get better with timing you'll also understand the importance of what is called a **BEAT**. A beat happens when a comedian pauses to give the audience a chance to recognize the punchline or to give them an opportunity to laugh at it. You can also use a beat before you deliver a punchline in order to add more suspense to your joke.

Let's practice timing. Try telling some jokes but pause right after you tell the punchline. Or maybe right before even for suspense. Now try telling the same jokes but don't pause. Or pause at the wrong time. Is the joke better or worse?



**What's the difference between a good joke and a bad joke timing**



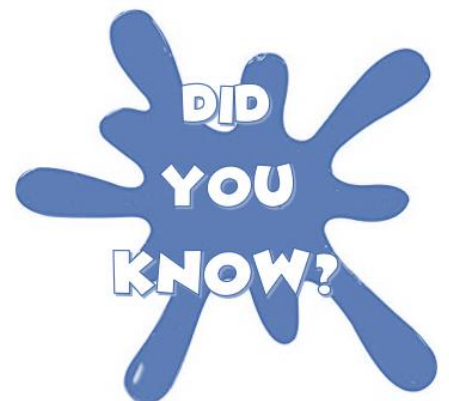


# WHAT DID THE STOOGES SAY TO THE BANANA?

If you ever find yourself getting bored with performing comedy by yourself (yeah right, like that's ever going to happen) you could team up with a friend to form what is known as a **COMEDY DUO**. A comedy duo is when two comedians share the stage instead of just one person performing alone. One comedian plays the role of the straight person or the **STOOGES**. The stooge pretends to not be the funny one and sets up all of the jokes for the comedian who is pretending to be the funny one. The "funny one" is called the **BANANA**. It's the job of the banana to reply to all of the jokes that were set up by the stooge with all of the punchlines.

When performing a comedy duo act it is very important to be aware of what is called **TURN-TAKING**. Just like timing, turn-taking is very important to a comedy act. Turn-taking happens when each one of the comedians speaks one at a time and alternate between turns. Turn-taking is all about teamwork. And teamwork is what comedy is all about. Even if you are performing alone, your audience is on your team. It's your job to tell jokes and when it's their turn then it's their job to laugh at your jokes!

**THE FAMOUS COMEDY ROUTINE "WHO'S ON FIRST?" WAS PERFORMED LIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME BY THE COMEDY DUO ABBOTT & COSTELLO ON MARCH 24TH, 1938. IT IS THEREFORE DECLARED THAT EVERY MARCH 24TH WILL BE KNOWN AS "WHO'S ON FIRST DAY".**





# GO AHEAD AND LAUGH AT ME!

When you perform your comedy act on stage it will be important for you to know that everyone in the audience will expect you to be an expert on all things funny. This is just what you want. And here's how you prove to them that you are funny!

All of the funniest people all over the world always make sure to make fun of themselves. If you can't laugh at yourself then who can you laugh at? This style of comedy is called **DISARMING** and it's the absolute best way to get people to realize just how funny you really are!

When you tell a joke where you are the punchline you're telling the audience that it's okay to laugh. You are truly disarming them from thinking that they shouldn't find your misfortunes or shortcomings absolutely hilarious... because they should!

Remember that when you are on stage you are the leader of that moment. And it's your job to show the audience that you are one of them. So take a jab at yourself and let them know that we are all equals on this comedy stage called life.

Try thinking of something about yourself that you normally don't like. How could you make that funny? Try this great joke about not having any friends: I told my parents that everybody hates me. They said, "Don't be ridiculous. Everybody hasn't met you yet."



**They all laughed when I said I'd become a comedian.  
Well, they're not laughing now.**





**I'M SO  
FUNNY...**

**Has someone ever made fun of you before? I bet it bothered you for a while. That's okay, though. We all have been made fun of sometime in our life. It's not a good feeling and it's not right. But if you can learn to laugh at yourself it definitely won't hurt as much the next time.**

**The ability to make fun of yourself is actually a sign of intelligence. And the faster you are at cracking jokes just shows how smart and funny you really are. When you can make fun of yourself or something you did quickly that is called WIT and it's a skill that all of the best comedians have.**

**Don't focus on the things you don't like about yourself. Learn to love them! Just like telling jokes about things that scare you if you tell a joke about what you may think is a flaw of yours you will actually find out that it becomes your strength! When you laugh at yourself others will laugh WITH you and not AT you. And if they're smart like you then they'll appreciate how funny you are!**

**Love yourself and love all the awesome things that make you YOU. One time a boy was being bullied. The bully called the boy ugly. The boy used his wit and replied, "YOU think I'm ugly? The first time my parents took me to the zoo the zookeeper came over to them and said, 'Thanks for bringing him back!'" The two boys became best friends after that!**

**What's something that you don't like about yourself? How could you use your wit to turn that thing into something positive?**

# WHAT A CHARACTER!

Well, my friend. You've made it this far. Congratulations. You've learned how to write a punchline. You have faced your fears. You can tell great stories. Your timing is just outstanding. And you are the best at poking some fun at yourself. So what's next?

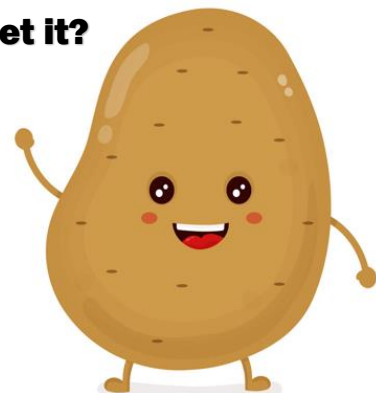
Well, before you go out on that big stage you have to make sure that you have a **PERSONA**. Your persona is your character or what type of comedian you want to be. This is the most fun and creative part of the job. You can be any type of character you want. You don't even have to be yourself. Maybe you have a funny nickname you want to go by? Or maybe you want to dress up in a funny outfit. Go ahead! Do it. After all, being funny is all about having **FUN!**

Practice pretending that you are from another part of the world. Try having a foreign accent. Try telling a joke with that foreign accent. Is the joke funnier that way? Do your grandparents talk funny or say funny things? Maybe try talking like them. I'm sure your family will get a kick out of your **IMPRESSION** of them. An impression is when a comedian pretends they are somebody else who is a real person. They talk like them and act like them. Try doing an impression of a famous person. Find your favorite joke by your favorite comedian and tell it like they would. Maybe re-write your favorite singer's song but with funny words instead!

No matter what persona you choose make sure that you do a lot of **RESEARCH** first. When you are a character on stage you will be at your funniest if your audience believes you. So if you decide to be a funny detective you'd better make sure that you know a lot about potatoes. Why? So you can keep your eyes peeled! Get it?



What is at the end of everything?  
The Letter G!





# YOUR MIC DROP MOMENT

**Let's face it. You're basically a legendary comedian at this point. Now all we have to do is go out there and show the whole world how great you are! If you are going to be remembered for your greatness it is important that you get the audience to EMPATHIZE with you. I'm sure you remember that to empathize with someone is to understand what they are going through. Now's the time to brag to everyone about how hard you worked to get here and how you're not going to quit now!**

**As they say in the comedy business "Always keep them wanting more"! As you complete your professional and HILARIOUS set it's important to end on a high note. This is called your MIC DROP MOMENT. Your mic drop moment is how you close your show. It's best to speak about an obstacle you have faced in your life and it should always follow your best joke. Don't worry, your classmates will help you figure out what your best joke is. That's what teamwork is all about!**

**A good example of a mic drop moment might be "I may not be the most popular kid in school, but I made you all laugh today and that's all that matters! Good night, everybody!" Or maybe you ARE the most popular kid in school (don't worry, we believe you) but you don't have the best grades. A good mic drop moment for you might be "I may not be the smartest kid in school, but I wrote all of these jokes myself and I am very proud of that!"**

**What will be your mic drop moment? Something tells me that it's going to be great and you'll get a standing ovation. Because you deserve it!**



# FINAL WORK SHOP.

## WEEKS FIVE, SIX AND SEVEN.

### WEEK FIVE: TIMING.

#### IMPORTANT TERMS:

- **TIMING:** When a comedian says something that is so unexpected it makes your brain come to a stop and you pause to think about what was just said.
- **BEAT:** When a comedian pauses to give the audience a chance to recognize the punchline or to give them an opportunity to laugh at it.
- **COMEDY DUO:** When two comedians share the stage instead of just one.
- **STOOGES & BANANA:** The serious one and the “funny” one in a comedy act.
- **TURN-TAKING:** when each one of the comedians speaks one at a time and alternate between turns.

### WEEK SIX: WIT & SELF WORTH.

#### IMPORTANT TERMS:

- **DISARMING:** When comedians make fun of themselves to relax the audience.
- **WIT:** The ability to make fun of yourself or something you did quickly.

#### YOUR DISARMING JOKE:

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### WEEK SEVEN: PERSONA.

#### IMPORTANT TERMS:

- **PERSONA:** What kind of character a comedian pretends to be.
- **IMPRESSION:** When a comedian pretends to be somebody else who is real.

#### YOUR IMPRESSION JOKE:

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- **RESEARCH:** Learn about your character so that it will be believable onstage.
  - **MIC DROP MOMENT:** A comedian’s closing statement that is positive and is used to get the audience to empathize with them.

#### YOUR MIC DROP MOMENT:

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# FINAL WORK SHOP.

## YOUR COMEDY ACT.

**JOKE ONE: SET-UP & PUNCHLINE.**

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**JOKE TWO: WIT & SELF WORTH.**

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**JOKE THREE: STORYTELLING.**

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**JOKE FOUR: FACING YOUR FEARS.**

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**JOKE FIVE: YOUR FAVORITE COMEDIAN'S JOKE.**

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**JOKE SIX: YOUR MIC DROP MOMENT.**

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# **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION**

**This Certificate Acknowledges That**



**Has Successfully Completed The  
HA! Stand-Up Comedy Course.**

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

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**Humor Association Course Instructor**