

# Teacher's Guide for FACES

April 2012: Laugh It Up

Teacher's Guide prepared by Heather Bode

Heather Bode has worked in the field of education for over 15 years. She enjoys writing for children. She just completed her first writing workshop at the Highlights Foundation in Pennsylvania. She came away with seven writing projects. She'll be busy.

## Getting Started:

Laughter is the topic of this month's issue. Why is it appropriate for this month?

Preview the issue paying special attention to the *expressions* on the faces of the people/animals/illustrations. Discuss how expression conveys emotion.

## High Five:

Review the five themes of geography: Location, Place, Movement, Human/Environmental Interactions, Regions

Match each number to its theme.

(RL7) Sometimes humor can be found in the ridiculous or crazy things we wear/say/do. What is humorous about this photo illustration? Caption?

## At a Glance:

In the past, before TV, how did people use humor as entertainment? How many forms of this entertainment are still in use today?

(W7) Topics for Research: court jester, Vaudeville

(L1,2,5) Language: Limericks are a common form of poetry. Show examples of limericks and give students the opportunity to compose a limerick about laughter. OR Look at the examples of the Japanese and Irish proverbs. Can you invent an original American proverb? Be able to express your proverb's meaning.

## Hee Haws: For Humans Only?

(W3) Written Expression:

If you have a pet, write about a time when your pet did something funny. Do you think your pet was trying to please you or make you laugh? Why do you think that way?

(RL1) Facts and Details:

Why do scientists study laughter in animals?

Do rats like being tickled? How do you know?

Does animal laughter sound like human laughter?

How does laughter help primates form friendships?

Play the Ha-Ha Game:

Ask for a group of 5-7 volunteers. You will need a large open space. One person lies down on his back. The next person places the back of his/her head on the stomach of the first person. (They will be perpendicular to each other.) The third person lies perpendicular to the second person, back of the head on the second person's stomach. Make this chain as long as you choose. When you're ready, tell the first person to start laughing: ha ha ha. The movement of their stomachs should create laughter that is contagious.

## What's So Funny?

(L5) Understanding Analogies:

The author uses the example of a gallon of milk to explain jokes. Reiterate what the author is communicating. What would you compare jokes to if you were making up your own analogy?

Understanding Culture:

What is funny in one culture might be offensive to another. Give an example. If you travel, why is it important to research the culture of the place you will be visiting?

### **Laughing the Italian Way:**

Art Connection:

The photos in this article may look familiar. They are famous Italian masterpieces/landmarks. Can you name them?

(L4) Vocabulary and Literature:

*battuta, barzioletta, protagonist, vignette, satire, stereotype, sarcasm, cabaret*

(W10) Choose one of the following activities:

1. Pretend you are visiting Italy for the first time. Make a list of battutas you could use on your trip.
2. Write a barzioletta. Choose an American protagonist.
3. Use satire and draw a political cartoon.
4. Write a short script for a cabaret scene choosing one regional stereotype to portray.

Politics:

2012 is an election year in America. Watch political ads. Look for them in various forms of media. Analyze them for sarcasm, satire, and regional stereotypes.

### **Catching the First Laugh:**

(RL1) Exploring Symbolism:

- In the Navajo culture, what does the first laugh symbolize?
- Why is it important to know who caused the first laugh?
- What does the salt symbolize?
- Is there anything in your culture that is symbolic in a baby's first year?

### **Mummer's the Word:**

History:

Construct a flow chart showing the history of mummers.

Theater:

Make up your own mummer's costume. What would you use to disguise yourself and disguise your voice/actions?

(RL3) Pros/Cons:

Three types of mummery are discussed. List the three and then discuss the pros and cons of each. Discuss how/why you think some celebrations turned violent.

(SL1) Community Event Planning:

Pretend you are on a festival planning committee in Newfoundland. What steps will your community take to ensure a safe and fun festival?

### **Dear Tommy:**

(W4) As you read this feature, use highlighters to highlight words that give cultural clues. Then write a response to either Tommy or Wendy. Describe a funny event that happened at home,

school, or with friends. Once you've written your story, highlight terms you used to show cultural differences.

### **South Africa's TN: Fresh Face of Comedy**

(RL/RI 9) Making Connections:

How is Trevor Noah's comedy similar to Italian comedy and the Newfoundland mummers?

(RL/RI 8) Quotable Quotes:

Use Noah's own words to find the following:

1. He used to get in trouble for his jokes. Why?
2. How did he know he wanted to be a comedian?
3. How does he feel about his job?
4. What is his ultimate goal?
5. Why does he use comedy to achieve that goal?

(SL2) Using Multi-Media:

View Trevor Noah's appearance on the Tonight Show. It can be seen at

<http://www.trevornoah.com/?q=node/7> . (Preview the clip to make sure it is appropriate for use in your classroom.)

### **April Fool's Day**

(SL 1&2) Multi-Media:

Go to <http://www.april-fools.us/prank-ideas.htm> for the history behind April Fool's Day. Click on Good Pranks to Play and/or Prank Ideas. Evaluate these ideas. Present your opinions to the class.

### **Is Laughter the Best Medicine?**

Before reading the article, take a class vote: Do you believe laughter can be healing? Record the vote.

(RL/RI 1) Reading for Meaning:

1. Why do clowns who work in hospitals have to attend special training?
2. What makes a hospital a specialized situation?
3. Why is it important for the clowns to individualize what they do for each patient?
4. Why do you think these clowns do what they do?
5. What do you think they mean by the 2 kinds of medicine: quiet and wild?
6. Who might need "quiet" medicine?
7. Who might benefit from "wild" medicine?
8. Interpret the results of the 2005 Italian study. (RL/RI 8)
9. What do the results mean for the future of clown doctors? (RL/RI 8)

Science Connection:

(RST6) What is the author's purpose in discussing the experiment in the article?

(RST3) Design your own experiment to help prove that laughter is the best medicine. Explain what you would do and how you would evaluate the results.

### **Growing Up: Cloning Around**

(RL/RI 3) Compare/Contrast:

Create a Venn Diagram to compare/contrast clowning with stand-up comedy. Feel free to include personal details mentioned by John Stubbs and Trevor Noah.

(W3) Narrative Essay:

If I had the chance to have a career in comedy, I'd be a/an

- Clown
- Stand-up comedian
- Political cartoonist
- Actor

(SL 1&6) (L3) Clowning Around:

If your school does a Spring Carnival or Talent Show, consider being a class of clowns. Invite a local clown to visit the class and give pointers on costumes/make-up/acting. OR Watch videos from Ringling Brothers Circus on how to be a clown at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWwDGFTbm4c> .

### **Acting Funny: Nick Robinson**

(W1) Writing:

Nick mentions movies and TV shows he finds funny. Write an opinion paragraph about a movie/show that is humorous to you. Make sure to:

- Clearly state your opinion in the introduction
- Provide reasons supported by details
- Use appropriate transitional words
- End with a concluding statement

Art Connection:

Look at the big picture! What we see on a TV screen is only a small part of what's happening. The second paragraph of the article mentions other people behind the scenes who keep the show going. Draw the big picture. Show what you think a movie set/TV set looks like. Show how they all work together to create the finished product.

Setting Goals:

Nick seemed to figure out, at an early age, what he wanted to do for a career. Look at his suggestions for acting: What could you do today? Join your drama club. What could you do this month? Attend community theater/look into taking classes. How does this translate to your own career goals?

### **What's So Punny?**

Check out [www.punoftheday.com](http://www.punoftheday.com) . This could be used on a daily basis for an opening discussion.

(L5) Language:

Words that sound the same but have different spellings/meanings are called homonyms. Do the activity suggested on p.36. You might want to speed the process by making and displaying a list of common homonyms. Then illustrate the sentences following the examples on p.37.

(RL/RI 1) Words in Context:

The author gives many examples of Chinese puns. Why would it be important to see the words in the context of the sentence vs. hearing the words individually? Why do you think native speakers of a language find humor in what people new to a language say?

### **Tales of the Mullah**

(L4) Vocabulary:

cadi, diwaniya, dishdasha, ghali, dinar

Use context to define these terms.

(RL2) Determine the central idea of each tale.

Determine which words/phrases contribute to the humorous tone. Which ones give meaning to the stories? What is ironic in the last story?

**Wrap-Up**

(SL4&6) Have a classroom contest for the funniest joke. Participants must present the joke to the class. \*Establish guidelines before contest begins.

(SL1&6) (W4&5) Put on a Cabaret for a younger classroom:

- Schedule/host a planning meeting.
- Write and revise scripts.
- Present show.