

How to...

Write a hilarious joke

Make people laugh with a pun or a one-liner.

Hello, I'm Olaf Falafel. I'm an author, an illustrator and also a stand-up comedian. I have won the much-sought-after "Funniest Joke of The Edinburgh Fringe" award, which goes to the most hilarious one-line joke told at this Scottish arts festival. I also have a new joke book out, called *A Poo On A Pogo Stick*. The title of the book is the punchline to this joke: "What's brown, goes 'boing' and knocks on your bedroom window at night?"

If you like laughing, you'll love this new joke book. To give you an idea of my sense of humour, here's a sample joke: "Where's the best place to find toadstools? In Toad's toolbox." There are lots more silly jokes like that in the book. For example, "where do rainbows go if they've been naughty? Prism, of course". And, "what's lean, green and clean? A runner bean in a washing machine!"

Coming up with your own jokes can be quite tricky, so here are my top four tips to get you started. Above all, have fun and don't be afraid to be silly.

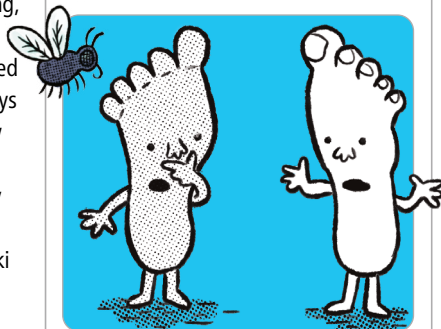


Olaf Falafel's funny new book.



Play with words and meaning

Words can mean more than one thing, or sound the same but are spelled differently. Playing with these is called making a pun. Here's a joke that plays on the words pause and paws: "How do you make a cat stand completely still? Press paws." This one – "For my grandad's funeral we all dressed as Norse gods. He wanted it to be a Loki affair" – uses the Norse god's name "Loki" and the phrase "low-key".



Trick your listener

A great joke doesn't always end the way you think it will. In fact, one method of joke writing is to lead your listener's brain one way... and then flip the meaning at the end. The resulting surprise is what makes people laugh. Here are a couple of jokes that surprise you with a simple twist: "What has five toes but isn't your foot? My foot!" and "what do you get hanging from apple trees? Sore arms."



Joke about popular things

People often know the same books, films and songs, so referencing these is a good way to appeal to people. Know your audience though – you can't tell your dad a joke about a film he hasn't seen. Here are two examples: "Why is Peter Pan always flying? Because he Neverlands" and "I saw a witch and a lion trying to carry a wardrobe next door. I asked what they were up to, and they said 'Narnia business'."

Just be a bit silly

Sometimes the best jokes are just a bit weird or plain nonsense. You don't always need a setup or a punchline – one sentence can be funny on its own. For example: "If you don't like cheese with holes, just eat the cheese and leave the holes on the side of your plate." And for a daft one, ask: "What rhymes with potato?" Then butt in with the answer, "No, it doesn't" – because what and potato don't rhyme at all!



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