

## What's So Funny?

Q: What makes people laugh?

A: People don't always find the same things funny. Different things can make us laugh. Some people find silly jokes very funny. Others laugh at comical stories or books.

Scientists have studied what makes us laugh. They agree that surprise is the key to laughter. That's why people laugh when someone falls over or steps in a puddle. If a play has a funny twist that surprises us we might laugh. However, if we have heard a funny joke too many times, it may not make us laugh.

Q: What is a comedy?

A: A comedy is a TV show, a play, or a movie that is written to make people laugh.

Q: What were the first comedies?

A: The first known comedies were plays written over two thousand years ago by Aristophanes (AR-ih-STOFF-uh-nees) in Ancient Greece. His plays made people laugh. Some plays from Ancient Greece are still popular today.



Q: What are comedy classics?

A: Comedy classics were written years ago, but still make us laugh today. These might be plays, recordings, TV shows or movies. If you see a comedy classic, you may laugh at the things your grandparents laughed at!

The Marx Brothers (pictured below) were successful comedians from 1905 to 1949. Their humour is still popular today. They are true comedy classics!

"I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book." —Groucho Marx

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it." Groucho Marx



## DISCUSS

These questions can be used for paired discussion. Ask students to use the text to support their reasoning. Then ask them to share their conclusions with the group.

- What is the author's purpose or intention for writing this text? How does he or she use questions and answers to achieve that purpose?
- What are the main ideas of this text? What details support those main ideas? How do the photos support those main ideas and details?
- Why do you think comedies are still as popular today as they were in ancient Greece?

## WRITE

Have students choose either one of the following options for writing, or do both.

- Make a word web with "comedy" in the center. In the outer circles, add characteristics of comedy mentioned in the text that make it funny. Include brief descriptions with each characteristic. **(Information/Explanation)**
- Which question and answer pair gives you the most information about comedies? Write a well-developed opinion paragraph in which you state your choice and give details from the text to support your opinion. **(Opinion)**

**Laughter Is Good Medicine** Research shows that laughter can be good for your health! It can help improve resistance to disease and can even temporarily relieve pain.