

So, who's the comedian?

Purpose

A Circle the correct answers.

- What is the purpose of the article?
 - to explain the problems comedians have
 - to make people laugh
 - to advertise the author's comedy act
- How does the author achieve his purpose?
 - by telling a story
 - by giving his opinion
 - by discussing research
- What does the last paragraph mean?
 - The audience doesn't always know how a performer feels.
 - Short comedy acts are usually more successful than long ones.
 - The audience laughs more if they don't understand the joke.

Context clues

B Find the phrases in *italics* in the reading. Check (✓) the meaning of each phrase.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>made up</i> (par. 2) | 3. <i>the morning I went on</i> (par. 6) |
| ___ a. invented | ___ a. the morning I started to practice |
| ___ b. prepared | ___ b. the morning I wrote this article |
| ___ c. researched | ___ c. the morning I performed onstage |
| 2. <i>getting ahead of myself</i> (par. 4) | 4. <i>simply staring forward</i> (par. 7) |
| ___ a. telling my story out of order | ___ a. looking at the audience and talking |
| ___ b. stepping onto the stage | ___ b. looking at the audience and not speaking |
| ___ c. becoming very successful | ___ c. moving toward the audience |

Inferencing

C When the author made these statements, what did he do that made people laugh? Circle the correct answers.

- "LEAVE ME ALONE, MA!" (par. 9)
 - He shouted very loudly.
 - He joked about his mother's control.
 - He joked about his stage debut.
- "I'm pretty insecure . . . really lousy stage presence . . ." (par. 11)
 - He joked about his strange appearance.
 - He joked about his lack of confidence.
 - He joked about his lack of experience.
- "I've been working on the problem. . . . you can learn to . . ." (par. 13)
 - He joked about how great orators talk.
 - He joked about how foreign people talk.
 - He looked funny with beads in his mouth.

Taking humor seriously in the workplace

Context clues

A Find the words in *italics* in the reading. Then complete the sentences.

<i>asset</i> (par. 2)	<i>frazzled</i> (par. 3)	<i>simultaneously</i> (par. 5)
<i>competence</i> (par. 1)	<i>perspective</i> (par. 6)	<i>strain</i> (par. 3)

- After a long, stressful day, Ted often feels _____ *frazzled* _____.
- I have a very supportive boss. She thinks the employees are the company's biggest _____.
- Evan has never worked in an office, so he has a different _____ of office work than we do.
- The receptionist at our school has a busy job. She often has to answer phones, help students, and do other tasks _____.
- The person who gets this job must show _____ in several areas, including language skills and computer skills.
- Working at two full-time jobs must be a big _____. How do you manage it?

Details

B Mark each statement true (T) or false (F).

- T 1. You can send co-workers messages by using humorous signs.
2. We can feel good and stressed at the same time.
3. A humorous workplace is a less stressful workplace.
4. Most people are fired because they have poor abilities.
5. A few moments of humor at work can decrease productivity.
6. Humor is a safe way for co-workers to communicate.

Compound nouns

C Complete these compound nouns from the reading with the words from the box.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> boards	<input type="checkbox"/> cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/> environments	<input type="checkbox"/> mail
<input type="checkbox"/> burnout	<input type="checkbox"/> effort	<input type="checkbox"/> jokes	<input type="checkbox"/> memos

- bulletin *board* _____
- electronic _____
- intra-office _____
- office _____
- employee _____
- working _____
- staff _____
- team _____

CHALLENGE

D Correct the false statements in Exercise B.

Three comedians

Comprehension

A Circle the correct answers.

1. What is Seinfeld’s main point?
 - a. He wishes he had his own baby.
 - b. People without children don’t think babies are exciting.**
 - c. Raising a baby is more difficult than most people think.
2. What is Cosby’s main point?
 - a. Children don’t communicate with their parents.
 - b. Teenage boys don’t like to get haircuts.
 - c. The boy in the story didn’t know very much.
3. What is Romano’s main point?
 - a. He and his wife argue about children.
 - b. He doesn’t love his nephew.
 - c. He thinks young children are like wild animals.

Context clues

B Find the words in *italics* in the reading. Circle the meaning of each word.

1. If someone says you *gotta* do something, they think you **want to** / **used to** / **(must)** do it. (Jerry Seinfeld, par. 2)
2. If somebody *goes*, “Look at the baby!” it means he or she is **saying something** / **thinking something** / **not saying what he or she thinks**. (Jerry Seinfeld, par. 4)
3. If you *blow* something, you **don’t care about** / **succeed at** / **fail at** it. (Bill Cosby, par. 1)
4. If people are *raising* children, they are **educating them** / **taking care of them** / **moving them to a higher position**. (Bill Cosby, par. 1)
5. If you *love (someone) from afar*, that person **is near you** / **isn’t close to you** / **doesn’t love you**. (Ray Romano, par. 7)

Vocabulary

C Find the words in the readings that match each definition.

1. excitement (reading 1) e n t h u s i a s m
2. home for fish (reading 1)
3. way of thinking (reading 2)
4. looking at (reading 2)
5. a meeting (reading 3)
6. a hunt for wild animals (reading 3)