

Description

Stand-up comedy can be defined as a comedic performance addressing a live audience in the goals of making them laugh. It usually is a rhetorical performance but many comedians employ crowd interaction as part of their set or routine.

Types of humor

Physical comedy, from clowns to slapstick, engages through expressive antics. **Self-deprecating** humor adds a personal touch, while **surreal** and **observational** genres explore the absurdities of life. **Improvisation** showcases spontaneity, and **wit-wordplay** entertains through linguistic cleverness. **Topical** comedy critiques current events, and **anecdotal** humor shares relatable life narratives. **Satiric** comedy exaggerates societal norms, while **dark** humor navigates taboo subjects. **Slapstick** revels in physical antics, **character-based** humor involves impersonation, and **deadpan** comedy employs emotionless delivery for comedic effect..

Relevance

<p>Purpose: Stand-up comedy entertains, informs and connects with audiences through humor, often addressing societal issues, cultural nuances, and personal experiences in a lighthearted and relatable way.</p>	<p>Cultural importance: Stand-up comedy is a window into language, cultural subtleties and societal norms. The genre reflects and comments on cultural diversity, social issues and everyday life, which allows language learners to understand the cultural intricacies of the language they are studying.</p>
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Pedagogical relevance

- **Authentic Language Use:** Offers authentic and colloquial language use, exposing learners to informal language, idioms, and slang commonly used in everyday conversation.
- **Cultural Fluency:** Through comedic narratives, learners gain insights into cultural references, humor, and societal norms, enhancing their understanding of the target language community.
- **Listening and Pronunciation Practice:** Through listening practice, it allows learners to tune their ears to different accents, intonations, and pacing, thus improving their pronunciation and comprehension skills.
- **Expressive Communication:** Encourages learners to express themselves creatively, using humor and wit, fostering confidence in their language proficiency.

Audience

- Comedians and TV-show hosts usually produce this genre.
- Everyone reads or listens to this genre.
- Comedy can be different between cultures, countries, social contexts (with family/friends/coworkers...). Cultural nuances, interpersonal relationships and societal dynamics play a role in shaping comedic preferences, making humor context-dependent and diverse. Thus, the content of stand-ups will change depending on contexts.

Special considerations

Encourage individuality, constructive feedback, performance techniques, writing workshops, handling nerves, and studying successful comedians.

Features

Visual

Facial Expressions, gestures, body Language, use of stage space, prop usage and interaction with the audience

Textual

Jokes, punchlines, setup, callbacks, storytelling, observational humor, wordplay and cultural references

Three-part joke formula

Part 1

The set up - setting the scene, establishing the context; should grab audience's attention

Part 2

The build - developing the joke, adding layers and giving details; should be funny and engaging to keep the audience interested and invested in the joke

Part 3

The punchline - delivering the punchline, the final, surprising and humorous part of the joke; should be clever, unexpected and satisfy the audience



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Teaching strategies

Relevant themes

Often drawing inspiration from everyday life, relationships, societal norms, and personal experiences.

Comedians use humor to shed light on the absurdities and contradictions in these themes.

Common topics include family dynamics, social issues, technology, and the human condition. The effectiveness of stand-up often lies in the relatability of the themes to the audience.

Modalities

Stand-up comedy is primarily a spoken and performative genre.. It is presented live on stage, with the comedian delivering jokes, anecdotes, and commentary directly to the audience.

However, stand-up can also be presented through recorded performances, such as comedy specials on television or online platforms.

The visual aspect is essential, as facial expressions, body language, and timing contribute significantly to the comedic delivery.

However, before the advent of online video streaming, audio-recordings of stand up performances were popular in the form of comedy albums.

Linguistic analysis

Voice

- Energetic
- Conversational
- Varied pitch and tone

Linguistic features

- Verb Tenses: Present, Past, Future
- Pronouns: First-person, Second-person
- Sentence Structure: Simple, Complex, Compound

Punctuation

- Use of ellipses for pauses
- Exclamation for emphasis
- Rhetorical questions for engagement

Vocabulary

- Everyday language mixed with impactful vocabulary
- Varied to suit different comedic styles
- High-frequency words for accessibility

Linguistic teachable elements

- Sarcasm, irony, slang, colloquialisms, rhetorical devices, jargon, niche language, parody, imitation, incongruity, self-deprecation, word repetition

Linguistic elements

- Wordplay: Incorporate puns, double entendre, and clever word choices.
- Vocabulary: Use a range of vocabulary suitable for the target audience.
- Cultural Sensitivity: Be mindful of cultural references and language nuances.
- Syntax: Play with sentence structure for comedic effect.

Linguistic elements (cont)

- Repetition: Employ repetition strategically for emphasis and humor.
- Alliteration: Use repetition of initial consonant sounds for comedic impact.
- Incongruity: Highlight linguistic incongruities for comedic surprise.

Teaching ideas

- Have students create their own stand-up routines, adding elements of humor and personal experiences. This activity can involve collaboration with drama teachers for guidance on performance skills and comedic techniques.
- Collaborate with language teachers from other countries to organize a storytelling exchange. Students share humorous anecdotes from their culture, fostering cross-cultural understanding and language practice.
- Invite local comedians for a live session or arrange virtual sessions with comedians from diverse cultural backgrounds. Students can analyze different comedic styles, gain insights into cultural humor, and interact with comedians in Q&A sessions.

Performance techniques

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Facial Expressions | Use of Space Props |
| Body Language | Acting Skills |
| Voice Variation | Timing |
| Pauses | Impersonation |
| Pacing | Interactive |
| Rhythm | Engagement |
| Eye Contact | Cohesive Set |
| | Structure |
| | Adaptability |

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Practical elements

Audience (reading the room, eye contact, relatability)

Format (opening, bits, punchlines, call-backs, transitions, closing and courtesy)

Delivery (voice, facial expressions, body language)

Pace (timing, rhythm)

Performance techniques

Facial Expressions	Use of Space Props
Body Language	Acting Skills
Voice Variation	Timing
Pauses	Impersonation
Pacing	Interactive
Rhythm	Engagement
Eye Contact	Cohesive Set
	Structure
	Adaptability

Educational links

How to write Stand up: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-stand-up-comedy-in-6-easy-steps>

Good Stand up to watch: <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/feb/22/streaming-with-laughter-the-50-best-standup-comedy-shows>

Explaining comedic timing: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/guide-to-comedic-timing>

One liners: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saoZjwf7Mfo>

Joke Formula : <https://www.thegag.club/comedianknowledgebase/3-Part-Joke-Structure>

Types of Comedy/ Joke: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/types-of-comedy> & <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/the-10-most-popular-types-of-jokes>

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