

“NO KIDDING: THE SEARCH FOR THE WORLD’S FUNNIEST JOKE”

Script: International Version

01:00:00

Man in V-neck American tourist in Spain and he goes into this restaurant. And he’s in this restaurant trying to decide what to have to eat

01:00:07

Costumed woman And the gay man has a patch on his penis

01:00:10

Man with kangaroo They go ahead with the operation, and sure enough, it’s a great success

01:00:14

Man in white shirt And the old guy says, “Oh, now I know where I put my hearing aid.”

01:00:26

Richard Wiseman So last week it was so cold I saw a lawyer with his hands in his own pockets.

01:00:32

And the man says, “Well I can’t make Tuesdays.”

01:00:42

Boy in black “Boy that’s some piece of cheese!”

01:00:47

Man in blue Now the trouble starts, now the trouble starts.

01:01:21

Richard Wiseman I wanted to come up with an experiment that would get the whole world taking part. And the more I thought about it, the more I thought the one topic which science for the most part has left alone yet that the public find very engaging is about humor and laughter and jokes.

01:01:38

I teamed up with the British Association for the Advancement of Science and we decided to conduct a huge experiment. In fact, one of the largest psychology experiments ever carried out. It was called

Laugh Lab and involved people logging onto an Internet site to either tell us their favourite joke or rate the funniness of jokes that had been submitted by others.

01:01:58 The initial response from the public was absolutely amazing. Within the first day we had over a thousand jokes. We had millions of people attempting to get onto the site. It became one of the most popular sites on the Internet.

01:02:13 I decided to test our results on a field trip that would take my crew and me around the world.

01:02:17 The doctor goes, "Nine, eight, seven, six,"

01:02:23
White-haired man A guy goes to the doctor he said, "I've got some bad news and some good news." "What's the bad news?" "You've got an incurable disease." "Well what's the good news?" "They're going to name it after you."

01:02:32
Man in glasses So these old guys get together and decide to get a birthday present for their friend who's an old widower. He's been alone for quite a few years. And they pool their money together and they get a hooker; they send the hooker over to the old guy's place. She knocks on the door; he answers the door. And she says, "I'm here to give you super sex." And old guy thinks for a minute and says, "I'll take the soup please."

01:03:01
Richard Wiseman At Laugh Lab, what we were able to do was actually to see how people from different countries liked different types of jokes. And early on it became fairly clear that the Americans actually preferred jokes involving superiority, jokes in which somebody essentially looked fairly stupid. And the British preferred wordplays, you know the simple word puns.

01:03:25 So we thought it would be fun to really sort of road test the finding, to take the British jokes over to America and see how they played.

01:03:39

Richard Wiseman Hi there, how you doing? I've got some jokes here and we're just going to tell you the jokes we just need a genuine reaction whether you find it funny, whether you think they stink, whatever, okay? So here's Joke #1. There's a guy who goes to the doctor and he has like a check-up, and he says to the doctor, "How bad is it?" And the doctor says, "Ten." And he goes, "What, am I going to live ten months or ten weeks?"

01:03:57 And the doctor goes, "Nine, eight, seven, six." It's not a funny joke. Right, okay. Thank you for that honest reaction. When I said be honest...

01:04:09
Bald man I can't understand what you're saying.

01:04:10
Richard Wiseman That would be part of the problem.

01:04:11
Bald man That's it

01:04:13
Richard Wiseman That's great. Okay. Right. Here we go, I'm sorry about that. I'll take it slower; I'll take it slower. Okay. A woman, have we got that?

01:04:27 I wondered if it was just a Hollywood Boulevard problem and so I decided to try out the pier at Santa Monica.

01:04:36 The doctor says, "I've got some bad news and some very bad news. The bad news is you've only got twenty-four hours to live." The guy goes, "Well what's the very bad news?" He says, "I've been trying to contact you since yesterday."

01:04:51
Man in cap Can we go on to joke number two?

01:04:53

Richard Wiseman Okay, joke number two. Right. A termite walks into a cocktail lounge and asks a barman, "Is the bar tender here?" Bartender. That's really no good is it?

01:05:03

Man in shades That was horrible. That was the worst, yeah, yeah.

01:05:08

The British jokes weren't going down at all well with the average American. And so I was really nervous when I went to try out the material at an L.A. comedy club.

01:05:19

Woman in red A woman goes into the male pharmacist and she says, "Do you have that Viagra drug?" And the pharmacist says, "Yes." And the woman says, "Can you get it over the counter?" And he says, "Well only if I take two of them." Now we didn't write these jokes; these are jokes that were submitted, okay? All right. From people on the Internet who have nothing to do but to be on the Internet. You know the type. They're home right now, okay.

01:05:53

Richard Wiseman Right okay. I don't know whether you'll get this one or not but I presume I have a language thing but here we go. There's a guy who goes to the doctor and he's got a lettuce, a piece of a lettuce just sticking out of his, we'd say backside, what would you say?

01:06:07

Male Voice Bum.

01:06:08

Richard Wiseman Your bum

01:06:09

Woman in red Your butt.

01:06:10

Richard Wiseman Butt

01:06:11

Woman in red Your crack, your crack.

01:06:12

Richard Wiseman Your crack.

01:06:14

Woman in red We're so going to get edited. This is all going to be seen in the documentary.

01:06:19

Richard Wiseman Right okay. The guy's at the doctor, he's got just a little bit of lettuce sticking out of his ass and the doctor has a look and the guy goes to the doctor, "How bad is it?" And the doctor says, "Well I don't know how to tell you this but that's just the tip of the iceberg."

01:06:40

Woman in red Yeah, you Brits are dirty.

01:06:43

Richard Wiseman If British humor didn't work in the United States, I wondered whether jokes from a completely different culture could appeal to us. Well it seems that no matter where you go, you keep running into the same types of jokes.

01:06:55

Boy in white They wanted to put three guys to the test. An American, a Frenchman and a peasant from Upper Egypt. So they prepared three rooms full of farts. The American jumped out of his room at once. The Frenchman fainted after five minutes. After a week they checked on the peasant. When they opened his room, the peasant said, "Is anything wrong?"

01:07:16

Boy in blue Why did the camel cross the desert? To get to the other side.

01:07:27

Man in plaid

A couple had been married for 15 years. When the woman died, everybody was sad, but her husband was happy. When he was asked why he was happy, he answered, "This is the first time in 15 years that I know where my wife is going."

01:07:47

Boy in black

A peasant from Upper Egypt sees the pyramids for the first time and says, "Boy, that's some piece of cheese!"

01:07:55

Man in tie

You know after the American military campaign against Afghanistan. So the Mullah Omar, the leader of Taliban, he said to Bin-Laden, he give him a sign like that and asked him, "Are we winning the war?" He said, "No, Goddamn, only me and you still alive." See you later man.

01:08:20

Richard Wiseman

When we went to Australia, we discovered that the people there have a rather special liking for jokes that are somewhat sick.

01:08:30

Michael

You could buy one of these for 'round about two hundred and fifty Australian dollars and they really do make magnificent pets. They eat one mouse a week that's about it. They drink once a week; they go to the toilet once a week; there's no noise just an occasional hiss. And that's very easy to clean up.

01:08:49

Hi! I'm Michael and we're at the Australian Reptile Park, one of Australia's premier tourist locations.

01:08:55

What's the difference between snot and broccoli? You can't get your kids to eat broccoli. That's good isn't it? Eh, what's the hardest thing about cooking vegetables, hm? Getting those wheel chairs into the microwave.

01:09:10

Man with board A one-armed Aussie sitting up a tree; how do you get him down? Throw a beer at him!

01:09:17
Man in cap Why did the koala fall out of the tree? Because it didn't have any arms.
Ha!

01:09:22
Captain Three blokes; all right they're in the jungle. One's Australian, one's Irish all right, the other one's Canadian, right, see this tiger. "What are we going to do now? We got no weapons, we got no nothing," he says. The Australian bloke says, "I don't know." The other bloke, the Canadian says, "I don't know."

01:09:47 The Irish bloke says, "I know, I know!" He says, "What?" He picks up this dirty big rock, throws it at this tiger, absolutely throws it at the tiger and he says, "Quick, run, run!" And the Aussie bloke says, "Why should I run? I didn't throw the rock!"

01:10:15
Man in costume A man rings up the fire department and yells out, "Help, help my house is on fire." "Calm down," says the operator, "how do we get there?" The man says, "Haven't you got one of those big red trucks?"

01:10:33
Queen in black Why do drag queens wear make up and perfume?

01:10:36
Other queen I don't know.

01:10:36
Queen in black Because they're ugly and they smell.

01:10:43
Woman in pub Two vomits were walking down the street and one vomit started to get incredibly emotional. And the other vomit said to the emotional vomit,

“What’s wrong? What’s happening?” He said, “You don’t understand. This is where I was brought up.”

01:11:00

Richard Wiseman We wanted to know if there were real differences between the nationalities. And so in Laugh Lab what we were able to do is rank order countries in terms of how funny the people from those countries found the jokes. The results were really surprising.

01:11:27

We decided to investigate why Canadians didn’t find the jokes at all funny. We wondered whether in fact Canadians have got a wonderful sense of humour but we just happen to attract all of those with a lousy sense of humour.

01:11:41

Richard Wiseman How do you get Pikachu, do you know Pikachu?

01:11:43

Group Yeah

01:11:44

Richard Wiseman Yeah? How do you get Pikachu.

01:11:45

Boy in grey Pokemon!

01:11:47

Richard Wiseman Sorry?

01:11:48

Boy in grey Pokemon

01:11:48

Richard Wiseman I haven’t finished the joke yet, give me a chance! All right, here we go. How do you get Pikachu onto a bus?

01:11:54

Group You Pokemon!

01:11:55
Richard Wiseman That's correct. Why is the number eight afraid of the number seven?

01:12:00
Group 'Cause seven ate nine.

01:12:02
Richard Wiseman Is there anyone who didn't know that joke?

01:12:04
Group No.

01:12:05
Richard Wiseman No-one. Okay. Brilliant. Okay is it a good joke Josh before we start?

01:12:10
Josh Yeah, I already tested with my other teachers and they thought it was really cool.

01:12:13
Richard Wiseman They thought it was a good joke. Okay, right, here we go, Josh's joke. Go ahead Josh.

01:12:17
Josh Okay so it's the end of the year and the teachers are collecting presents. The daughter whose mother owns a bakery hands a box to the teacher. The teacher shakes it once, twice, and guesses, "Is it cookies?"

01:12:27
 And the student says, "Yes it is. How did you guess? And then she says, "Just a lucky guess." And then a son who's Dad owns a candy store comes and hands the teacher a box. The teacher shakes the box and guesses, "Is it candy?" And he said, "Yes, how did you know?" And she says, "Just a lucky guess."

01:12:42 And then the son who's Dad owns a juice store comes and brings a box. The teacher notices the box is leaking through one corner and she catches a drop on her hand and tries it. And she goes, "Hmm is it apple juice?" And he's like, "No."

01:12:55 She tries a few drops and says, "Is it orange juice?" And he says, "No," his grin getting very large. And she's like, "Fine, I give up. What is it?" And he's like, "It's a puppy!"

01:13:08
Richard Wiseman Josh, that's a very rude joke.

01:13:15 And it is showed that children and seniors have quite different sense of humour. What they share is a liking for rude jokes.

01:13:23
Woman in blue hat There was a young fellow from Leeds, who swallowed a packet of seeds. And the blades of grass that grewed out of his ass covered his balls with weeds.

01:13:35
Woman in glasses This was a married couple and the husband was an avid golfer. And in the mornings he says, "Well my tee time's eight o'clock, I'm in an awful hurry to get out of here." And the wife said, "Before you go do you think you can fix that drippy tap in the kitchen?" He says, "Do you see 'plumber' on top of my forehead?" He says, "I'll fix it when I come back."

01:13:54 She says, "Well before you go then, can you fix that light over the table in the kitchen?" He says, "Do you see 'electrician' on my forehead?" She says, "No." "Well," he says, "I'll fix it all when I come back." So he came back in the afternoon after playing golf and everything's all fixed. He said, "I suppose you had a handyman here?"

01:14:12 She says, "Well as a matter of fact a man came to the door and he said he would do anything for sex or cookies?" He said, "Well I suppose you made him a dozen cookies." She says, "Do you see 'Betty Crocker' on my forehead?"

01:14:29 The Canadians that I met seemed to have a pretty good sense of humour. And so I thought it would be a good idea to ask some local comics why they thought the Canadians weren't the Laugh Lab jokes at all funny.

01:14:40
Man in green If I understand this, us Canadians have found the jokes the least funny, right?

01:14:43
Richard Wiseman That's right.

01:14:44
Man in green So I think what it is is Canadians are the hardest to please, right? We're, our sense of humour is so above the global bar, that's why it's good to become, that's why stand-up comics from Canada notoriously do well when they head other places; it's because we're swinging a heavy bat here in Canada, we're, this is a tough room to play.

01:15:04
Richard Wiseman I'm not quite certain what to make of it because I mean a lot of the jokes on the website are not very good. I mean, they're really sort of poor puns and so on.

01:15:12 So in some sense you could say, "Well if you don't find these things funny, you've got a great sense of humour." And also what's really interesting is that people I see leading a league table as it were of humour, is the Germans, which you know, traditionally aren't seen as the funniest people in the world. So that's one possibility.

01:15:27
Man in red & white Leading it how, meaning that they...

01:15:29
Richard Wiseman They find the jokes funniest.

01:15:31
Man in red & white They find the jokes funny.

01:15:32
Richard Wiseman They find them hilarious.

01:15:33
Man in red & white But correct me if I'm mistaken but what you just said is, if you don't laugh at this crap you have an elevated sense of humour. If you're laughing at this crap you're a bit of a dolt.

01:15:44
Richard Wiseman That's one way of looking at it.

01:15:47
Man in red & white What you're saying is, the Germans are laughing at everything.

01:15:49
Richard Wiseman That's one possibility. You could look at it that way.

01:15:53
Man in green Okay. This is a country that makes bad decisions, Germany.

01:16:01
Man in red & white Okay now listen, I'm not belittling the German people whatsoever. I don't want any of the German, I don't want any Germans phoning me up, start barking in my ear about how we're kicking them around. We're just; all we're doing is explaining the truth of the matter. Yeah okay, good.

01:16:19
Man in red & white I went to Berlin to experience German humor first hand and arrived in the middle of the city's annual Love Parade. My guide is Marcus von Wollank who I'm told is a respected writer on the cultural life of Berlin.

01:16:36
Richard Wiseman How many people are here roughly?

01:16:39

Marcus von Wollank Maybe one point five million ____.

01:16:41

Richard Wiseman One and a half million people?

01:16:43

Marcus von Wollank Yeah, one and a half million fun people.

01:16:55

Dark-haired girl It's better to have a dove in bed than a blind man on the roof!

01:16:58

Marcus von Wollank She's tell like a dove on the bed is better than a blind girl on the sky.

01:17:05

Richard Wiseman It's a very bad joke.

01:17:06

Marcus von Wollank Yeah, it's a bad joke.

01:17:16

Girl in black & white A dove in bed is better than a blind man on the roof!

01:17:19

Richard Wiseman Great! Yeah! Thank you.

01:17:24

Marcus von Wollank That was a popular, but that's a popular joke, right?

01:17:26

Richard Wiseman What was the joke?

01:17:27

Marcus von Wollank A dove in the bed is better than a blind man in a house.

01:17:32

Richard Wiseman Very good, that's a funny joke.

01:17:45
Green man Little Red Riding Hood meets the wolf and asks him, "Why are your eyes so big?" And Little Red Riding Hood replies, I mean the wolf answers, shit; I've lost my thread!

01:18:03
Richard Wiseman Away from the party crowd at the love parade normal Berliners started to make some sense. Well sort of.

01:18:11
Man in glasses Yeah. I tell the joke about the two lorry drivers and they had a crash against a bridge. And the partner of the driver said, "I told to you the bridge is only four meters and our lorry is four meter forty." And the driver said, "Did you see any police? Did you see the police anywhere?" Do you know what I mean? You can't understand? Shall I repeat it?

01:18:38
Richard Wiseman Yeah, try it again.

01:18:41
Man in glasses I'll try it again. Which part you didn't understand?

01:18:45
Richard Wiseman The funny part.

01:18:58
Woman by the bear Two men are walking in the woods and they see a bear approaching them very fast. So the one guy, he takes off his hiking shoes and he puts on his running shoes. So the other guy laughs and he says,

01:19:12
Woman in navy Okay, a joke about blondes. A blonde is having a haircut. She's wearing large headphones.

01:19:21 The hairdresser cuts and cuts and keeps saying, "I'm sorry, you'll have to take your headphones off. I can't keep cutting around them." She replies, "No, that's impossible. He carries on and then says again, "This won't work. You have to take your headphones off." "No, that's impossible." Finally, he just grabs the headphones and hears, "...breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out."

01:19:43
Woman by the bear Two guys are walking in the woods and they see a bear approaching them very fast. So the one guy, he takes off his hiking shoes and he puts on his running shoes. And the other guy laughs and he says, "What are you doing that for? You can't outrun the bear." So the other guy says, "It doesn't matter, I just need to outrun you."

01:20:08
Man by car Came the man to a bar and he said to that man behind, "Ten beers, ten brandies before the trouble starts." Drinks ten brandies, needs about thirty minutes then he says, "Ten beers, ten brandies before the trouble starts.

01:20:38 Needs forty-five minutes, then the man says, "Please, I order one more again, ten beers, ten brandies before the trouble starts." Says the man, "What about the money, man?" "Now the trouble starts, now the trouble starts!"

01:21:00
Richard Wiseman Eventually half a million people from seventy different countries visited our site. And Laugh Lab was able to collect information on their sex, their nationality and their age.

01:21:10 As part of the experiment, we asked everyone logging on to tell us how happy they were. And there was a fascinating relationship between a country's happiness and how funny they found the jokes. It was an inverse relationship. So the Germans were actually the least happy country but found the jokes funniest. The Canadians, a very happy country, find them not so funny.

01:21:28 So what we think is happening, people are logging on, if they're not feeling so good about themselves, the jokes really elevate their sense of positive mood and they find them much funnier than people who are logging on in a good mood. From the very beginning it was clear that men and women liked different types of jokes.

01:21:49
Blonde woman A white horse came into a typically British pub

01:21:53
Richard Wiseman Yeah

01:21:54
Blonde woman And the landlord says to him, "Do you know there's a whiskey named after you?" And he says, "What, Eric?"

01:22:00
Richard Wiseman Hey, ha, ha ha

01:22:01 Women, that tend to prefer word plays, sophisticated linguistic word plays. And again that probably relates to what's going on with the brain. We, we know that women are more linguistically skilled than men.

01:22:13
Woman with ponytail Did you hear about the old butcher that sat in the meat grinder? He got a little behind in his orders.

01:22:21
Woman in green He said to Betty, "When you die on your headstone I'm having, "Here lies one of the most beautiful women ever God put breath into." So she said, "Oh that's nice Frank. You know what I'm going to put on yours? Here lies Frank Spencer, stiff at last."

01:22:39
Richard Wiseman Men and women love to tell jokes about each other but in the battle of the sexes, it was obvious that men proved to be far more aggressive than women.

01:21:48

Man in cap

A guy's driving in his car and he gets pulled over by a policeman and the policeman comes in and says, "Do you realize that your wife and kids fell out of the car?" And he goes, "Oh thank God. I thought I was going deaf."

01:23:00

Woman in blue

Okay so there's this guy; he has six children. He's very proud of the fact and he's taken to calling his wife "mother of six" much to her dismay. One evening they're out at a party and he yells across the room, "Okay, mother of six, it's time to go!" And she replies, "Coming father of four."

01:23:20

Man in white cap

A guy has a fight with his wife, he's a doctor. He goes off to work very angry. He yells out through the door as he's leaving, "You're no good in bloody bed either!" And he slams the door and off he goes, and round about the middle of the day he's feeling a little bit upset that he was angry with her and what he'd said.

01:23:37

And he phoned up and he says, it's about twelve o'clock, he said, "Hi love, how are you? What are you doing?" She said, "Oh I'm in bed." He said, "It' twelve o'clock, you're in bed! What are you doing in bed at twelve o'clock?" She said, "I'm just getting a second opinion."

01:23:54

Man in glasses

A woman walks into a bar with a duck under her arm. Sits the duck down on a stool, sits down. Waiter comes over and says, "That's the worst looking pig I've ever seen."

01:24:01

The woman says, "That's not a pig, that's a duck." The waiter says, "Yeah I know I was talking to the duck."

01:24:08

Richard Wiseman

So that sort of joke is clearly fairly offensive. But what's really interesting is it illustrates what Sigmund Freud thought was the purpose behind humor. It's a joke, which allows us to release pent up aggression

in a socially acceptable way. And to him, that's the whole point. Humour allows us to cope with life's anxieties. Anxieties about sex, about marriage, about mortality.

01:24:29

Man in white

The old man that went to the doctor and he said, "Doctor, I've got, there's something wrong with my ears, could you have a look? So the doctor looked and he said, "Guess what? I found a suppository in one of your ears." And the old guy says, "Oh, now I know where I put my hearing aid."

01:24:53

Lawyer

And elderly Jewish professor is married to a much younger woman, she's twenty years his junior. They're having real problems with their sex life and so they go to a radical sex therapist. The therapist says, "I have a treatment, it's very successful."

01:25:07

"Find a very muscular, good-looking young stud, someone you don't know, get him to stand in the room with you as you're making love, get him to take all his clothes off and stand there naked, fanning you as you're making love."

01:25:20

"Try and make sure that his genitals are fairly near your wife's face so that she can see him and introduce the element of fantasy. Sounds radical but it works."

01:25:30

The old man does that and he finds a very muscular young man; he stands there in the bedroom; he strips naked; and as they're making love he's fanning them both as instructed. At the end of it the old man turned to his wife and said, "Well did you notice any improvement?" She said, "Frankly, nothing, I still felt nothing."

01:25:52

They went back to the therapist and the therapist said, "Right. Don't worry, there's a way 'round this. It's going to have to get more radical still. Get the stud back in, reverse roles. Get him to make love to your wife, you stand there naked with a towel, believe me that's going to work."

01:26:09 They do that, the old man is naked and fanning his wife as the young stud is making love to her. It's an amazing event. The stud makes love to her for about three hours; the lady is screaming the house down and the old man's never seen her so animated. At the end of it, the wife said, "That's just the best sex I've ever had. I didn't know sex could be like that."

01:26:38 The old man turns to the stud and says, "See, that's how to wave a towel."

01:26:45
Richard Wiseman We obviously couldn't allow any rude or offensive jokes onto the Laugh Lab site, so each and every entry had to be vetted. And that was carried out by Laugh Lab team members Emma and Helen.

01:26:58 One here on the borderline. Did you hear about the man who got a job circumcising elephants at the zoo? The pay wasn't good but the tips were enormous. Emma? The vote on that one – thumbs up or thumbs down?

01:27:08
Emma What, for the humour or if whether it should go?

01:27:11
Richard Wiseman No no no, whether we...

01:27:12
Emma Uh, I don't see why not.

01:27:13
Richard Wiseman Really?

01:27:14
Emma Yeah. What do you think?

01:27:16

Richard Wiseman It's thumbs down. I think I agree with Helen.

01:27:21
Richard Wiseman Nevertheless, it was a losing battle. Everywhere we went people couldn't resist telling us a dirty joke.

01:27:27
Man in hat Okay. My wife told me this joke this morning so it should be all right. These two ladies were talking to each other and one of them said to the other, "Do you smoke after you have sex?" And the other one said, "I haven't looked."

01:27:43
Oriental woman A Buddhist nun goes for a check-up. By mistake, she's given the test results of a pregnant woman. The nun sees the results and says, "This year, you can't even trust a carrot."

01:28:03
Man in glasses A ship captain, a priest and a politician are on the Titanic, and a crewmember walks up, or runs up to the captain and says, "The ship is sinking!" And the captain says, "Hurry, get all the women and children in safety boats first!" And the politician says, "Fuck the children!" And the priest says, "Do we have time?"

01:28:20
Richard Wiseman Won't be using that one then.

01:28:26
Richard Wiseman Research shows that people who laugh more are healthier than others. And in India, groups of people have organized what are called laughter clubs. One or two of them start the group off by laughing.

01:28:37
Richard Wiseman And then the effects become contagious and quickly spread to other members of the group. Soon everyone is engaged in full on hearty laughter. The original group was formed in Bombay in 1995 since then over eight hundred clubs have sprung up all over India. Now according to its practitioners laughter clubs help people lower their inhibitions, boost

their self-confidence, helps their breathing and helps them alleviate hypertension, arthritis and migraines.

01: 29:24

Red haired girl

Why was the Egyptian boy scared? Because his Daddy was a mummy.

01:29:28

Boy in blue

Why do we close the 'fridge door? Because it's open!

01:29:36

Girl with Dad

What do you call two burglars?

01:29:38

Richard Wiseman

I don't know

01:29:40

Girl with Dad

A pair of knickers.

01: 29:43

Boy with pack

What should you do if you find a bra on the road? Leave it alone it might be a booby-trap.

01:29:49

Brown-haired girl

What's grey?

01:29:50

Richard Wiseman

What?

01:29:52

Brown-haired girl

A melted penguin

01:29:54

Boy in blue

Knock, knock.

01:29:55

Richard Wiseman

Who's there?

01:29:56	Boy in blue	Annette
01:29:57	Richard Wiseman	Annette who?
01:29:58	Boy in blue	Annette curtain.
01:30:00	Girl in navy	Knock knock
01:30:01	Richard Wiseman	Who's there?
01:30:02	Girl in navy	Denise
01:30:03	Richard Wiseman	Denise who?
01:30:04	Girl in navy	Denise knickers belong to you?
01:30:06	Girl in red & white	Knock knock
01:30:07	Richard Wiseman	Who's there?
01:30:08	Girl in red & white	Althea
01:30:09	Richard Wiseman	Althea who?

01:30:10
 Girl in red & white Althea later.

01:30:11
 Boy in yellow Knock knock. Who's there? Banana. Knock knock. Who's there?
 Orange you happy I didn't say 'banana'?

01:30:19
 Woman in black Knock knock

01:30:20
 Richard Wiseman Who's there?

01:30:21
 Woman in black Interrupting cow

01:30:22
 Richard Wiseman Interrupting cow who?

01:30:23
 Woman in black Mooooo!

01:30:25
 Man in shades There's a convention for Knock Knock jokes. The super computer, the
 Knock Knock computer will be there. Knock Knock experts will be there.
 It's a family affair. The hall's full of people. They start the convention.
 Does anybody have any Knock Knock jokes? A drunk stands up, "Yeah,
 I've got one. "Knock Knock." "Who's there?" "Agate" "Agate who?"
 "Agate (beep)" Everyone's shocked and offended.

01:30:49
 They stop the meeting, they decide, "We've got to change the rules." So
 an expert decides that anyone who has a joke, we'll get half of it, make
 sure it's clean, we'll put it through the Knock Knock computer to make
 sure there's no filth in it and then we'll start up again. So they explained
 this to the crowd and they say, "Now does anybody have a Knock Knock
 joke?"

01:31:08 Same drunk stands up. He goes, "Knock Knock." "Who's there?"
"Caterpillar." "Stop."

01:31:16 They run 'caterpillar' through the computer, all the experts check it out,
it's clean, there's nothing dirty about 'caterpillar'. They commence the
meeting again and the drunk goes, "Knock Knock." They go, "Who's
there?" He says, "Caterpillar." "Caterpillar who?" "Ah, get (beep)"

01:31:35
Richard Wiseman When we think about jokes actually it's very, very complex. The set up
line normally takes us in one direction then the punch line means that we
have to completely reorder how we, we've seen the world and then
suddenly we, we get the joke.

01:31:51 The brain scan was designed to find out what was going on in people's
brains when they were reading the type of material that we had on the
Laugh Lab site. We saw two main areas of activation. The major area
was towards the front of the brain; what's called the pre-frontal cortex;
and that's all to do with resolving ambiguities. And that's essential to
understanding a joke.

01:32:12 So if we have a joke like two fish in a tank, one turns to the other and
says, "Can you drive this?" That's funny because tank has two
meanings and we realize that. If people have damage to that area of
the brain, they actually lose their ability to resolve those types of
ambiguities and actually lose their sense of humour.

01:32:31 Now what's really interesting about these studies is that it's showing that
our brains are wired for humour. So when we look at these brain scans,
we're looking at a brain that has evolved to find life funny. Without a
brain scanner, how do you tell whether somebody finds your jokes
funny? Well it's all to do with their facial expression. In a genuine smile
the muscles around the side of the face pull up the lips into a smile.

01:32:57 But far more importantly muscles around the side of the eyes pull the
cheek up causing a crinkling of the skin around the edge of the eyes.
Now a fake smile is nothing like this there's movement of the lips but

none of that important crinkling. Not only that, fake smiles tend to last much longer than genuine smiles and disappear more rapidly.

01:33:19

In Japanese cultures, smiles are discouraged. And so some foreign corporations have their Japanese employees take lessons in smiling.

01:33:30

Teacher

We Japanese like smiles, but when we are asked to make a smile, many people are not good at smiling. Because older people say that we shouldn't show our teeth or they cover their mouth with their hand. Don't you agree?

01:33:49

Then the question is, how do you make a smile? First, lift up the ends of your lips silently. OK? Secondly, let's move your face. For example, let's say the word like "Lucky" or "Whiskey"! Try : "Kimchie!" "Steak-y!"

01:34:15

By using these chopsticks you can remember the shape of your lips when you smile. While keeping your lips lifted, pull out the chopsticks smoothly. Did you look at the shape of our lips in the mirror? When you feel uncomfortable, you have wrinkles between your eyebrows. When you're happy, your eyebrows lift up.

01:34:41

Make a smile. And the biggest smile! Good, very good! Make a serious face. Make a smile. Look at me! Smile! And the biggest smile! Good! Everybody clap!

01:35:08

Richard Wiseman

A country where people took classes in smiling didn't seem to be a promising place to find the world's funniest joke. A lot of people in Tokyo seemed too busy and too serious to tell jokes so we decided to try a couple of elderly Geisha girls whose profession, after all, is entertaining people.

01:35:34

Woman in white

Talk between a man and a woman often becomes erotic, especially when they're drinking sake.

01:35:50
Woman in navy But even for that kind of talk, you need timing.

01:35:55
Woman in white A client said to me, "I am a telegraph pole." And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I erect outside the house, not at home." After thinking for a few minutes, I laughed. We sometimes have very witty customers and that makes working easier.

01:36:17
Woman in navy Some people wouldn't understand his story.

01:36:20
Woman in white ...and ask, "Why is he a telegraph pole?" Some would point out that telegraph lines are underground nowadays.

01:36:29
Richard Wiseman The Geisha girls were amusing but I was completely mystified when a Japanese shopkeeper started telling us his jokes.

01:36:36
Man in apron There are ten ants, and thank you!

01:36:41
Richard Wiseman It's a joke?

01:36:43
Man in apron It's a joke. It's a very famous joke in Japan, yeah.

01:36:48
Richard Wiseman Our interpreter explained the Japanese loved puns. Unfortunately, they obviously lost a lot in translation.

01:36:57
Girl with scarf A person has an appendix and removes it. If he doesn't have an appendix, there is nothing you can do about it.

01:37:07

Richard Wiseman And even when we encountered some English speaking Japanese their love for puns in any language at all proved unrelenting.

01:37:16

Man in glasses Where were the first French fries made?

01:37:18

Richard Wiseman I don't know

01:37:20

Man in glasses You don't know? In Greece. You want another one?

01:37:25

Richard Wiseman Yeah

01:37:26

Man in glasses Okay. Why is your nose in the middle of your face?

01:37:29

Richard Wiseman I give up.

01:37:32

Man in glasses You give up? You always give up. Okay, it's because it's your centre.

01:37:43

Man in grey shirt You know, six is afraid of seven, you know why? Because seven ate nine. Ate nine, ate nine, ate nine.

01:37:58

Woman in suit Today we have eight countries' people and I asked each of them and they told me that talking about a chicken for instance. Russian people said theirs say, "kucuricoo". And then the Spanish, "keekereekee", French, "kokoriko" and Japanese "kokekoko", Americans, "Coca-cola please."

01:38:26 Did you notice that in Japan dogs can wag his tail only vertically because he realizes that there is no more space for us to wag it horizontally.

01:38:37
Richard Wiseman There were two dogs in a garden and one turns to the other and says, "Woof." And the other one says, "I was going to say that!"

01:38:45
Richard Wiseman Now that joke allowed us to conduct a kind of a mini Laugh Lab experiment. We resubmitted the joke again and again into the database but each time used a different animal noise.

01:38:56
Richard Wiseman So there are two cats in a garden and one turns to the other and

01:39:01 ...one turns to the other and says, "Moo." And the other one says, "I was going to say that."

01:39:06 Once people had rated the jokes lots and lots of times we were able to look back and find out which is the world's funniest animal. And here are the results.

01:39:35
Richard Wiseman (With duck) And so it's official. Ducks are the world's funniest animal. Now maybe it's their beaks or their odd shape or their webbed feet. It doesn't really matter; the implications are clear. If you're going to tell a joke with an animal make it a duck.

01:39:48
Oriental woman A duck walks into a drugstore and asks the cashier if he has any beer. The man says, "No we don't sell beer here this is a drugstore." The duck leaves and goes home. The next day the duck comes back and asked the cashier again. The man says, "I told you yesterday this is a drugstore, we don't sell beer here. And if you ask me again, I'm going to nail your feet to the floor."

01:40:09 The duck leaves and goes home. The next day the duck comes back again. He asks the man, "Do you have any nails?" The man says, "No." So the duck says, "Do you have any beer?"

01:40:28
Man in grey Two drunks are sitting in a car. The one in the driver's seat asks his friend, "Can you see if the indicator is working?" His friend looks and says, "It's working....not working...working..."

01:40:48
Richard Wiseman So why do we find jokes like these funny? Well I think the answer is because they make us feel superior to other people and this isn't a new idea. In fact about two thousand years ago, Plato proposed the superiority theory of humour. To him, jokes were funny because we're laughing at somebody else's misfortune.

01:41:06
Blonde woman So George W. Bush knocks on the door and Peter opens the door and he goes, "Who are you, what?" "I'm George W. Bush." And Peter says, "Well prove it." And George W. says, "Why should I do that? I'm George W. Bush." And he says, "Well, Einstein had to do it, Picasso had to do it." So he goes, "Well who's Einstein, who's Picasso?" And Peter says, "You can come in."

01:41:32
Man in red vest So this guy applies for a visa to get into Australia and the guy on the counter says, "Look I'm going to ask you a few questions before I issue you this visa." He says, "Yeah that's fine." "Look, have you had any previous convictions?" And the African says, "Look, do you still need those to get into Australia?"

01:41:51
Woman in black An Aussie farmer's doing a coach tour of New Zealand and he's on the bus and he sees this Kiwi farmer being rather intimate with a sheep.

01:42:00

Boy in cap

So he gets out of his car and he goes across to him and says, "Mate in Australia we shear our sheep." And the New Zealander goes, "I'm not sharing this sheep with anyone."

01:42:10

Man in green

A Chinaman and a Jew sitting in a bar in a hotel; total strangers; never met before. And they're minding their own business, enjoying their own drinks when all of a sudden the Jew leaps over the bar stool, hits the Chinaman on the nose, Bang! "Gotcha!" The Chinaman picks himself up after wiping up the blood off his nose, says to the Jew, "What was that for?"

01:42:31

"That was for Pearl Harbour." "Pearl Harbour? I'm Chinese. That was the Japanese. What do you mean?" He says, "Ah Chinese, Japanese, all the same." So he sits there and thinks, the Chinaman suddenly leaps off his barstool, hits the Jew on the nose Whump! Can't miss it, "Gotcha!" The Jew picks himself up and dusts himself down and looks at the Chinaman and says, "What was that for?"

01:42:54

He says, "That's for the Titanic." He says, "Titanic?" He says, "Yeah, iceberg, Goldberg, it's all the same."

01:43:00

Richard Wiseman

Plato thought that it was morally wrong to laugh at jokes like these. But for 2000 years his advice has been completely ignored and in Laugh Lab we had lots of superiority jokes. In fact it seems no nation, no authority figure, no religion can escape being the butt of someone's joke.

01:43:18

See what you think of this one. It's a little bit longer. A truck driver is going along and he sees a priest hitch-hiking so he thinks he'll do him a good turn and he pulls over and he gets the priest to come up into his truck and sit in the passenger seat. And he's driving along with the priest and he sees a lawyer as he's walking along the pavement.

01:43:35

And so the truck driver sort of swerves to hit the lawyer. This is what it says in the joke, obviously nothing personal, so he drives; he swerves to

hit the lawyer. Then he remembers there's a priest next to him so he swerves to go back again. And even though he misses the lawyer, he hears a kind of dull thud.

01:43:53
And so he turns to the priest and says, "I'm really sorry about that. I nearly hit the lawyer." And the priest says, "Don't worry, I got him with the door." What do you think?

01:44:04
Lawyer
I think it's good. It's one I haven't heard before for a start.

01:44:07
Richard Wiseman
Oh right, okay, that's something. Do you hear quite a lot of lawyer jokes then?

01:44:11
Lawyer
Yes, I'm, three or four a day.

01:44:14
Man in suit
A mother and son were walking through a cemetery and they saw a headstone inscribed, "Here lies a good lawyer and an honest man." The little boy looked up to his mother and said, "Hey Mommy, why did they bury two men there?"

01:44:28
Blonde in wig
This blonde, she walks up to the counter and she says, "Can I have a burger and fries please?" And the lady looks at her and she says, "This is a library." And she says, "Oh I'm sorry, (whispering) can I have a burger and fries please?"

01:44:41
Man in hat
This bishop was about to ordain twelve new priests into the priesthood and they all passed their theology and what have you and just about to go in for the ordination and he takes them and said, "Come into my vestry, I've got one more test for you." And he gets them there and he said, "If anyone fails this test, they're immediately out."

01:45:02 So they say, "Oh all right." So he, "Now, seeing there's a lot of sexual abuse going on in the priesthood, this test will really test you out. So get all your gear off." So they got all their gear off and he got a little bell, and he tied a little bell onto the end of their little fella.

01:45:18 "Now if that bell rings you're definitely out." So they're all waiting there and, "Oh yeah, that'd be right." He opens the door and in walks this beautiful, gorgeous girl and sure enough, ding, ding, ding one bell goes off.

01:45:31 And he goes over, and the bishop says, "Right, you're out. Out the door you're gone." As he's going out the door, his bell falls off and he bends over to pick it up. And nine other bells ring.

01:45:47
Richard Wiseman Looking back on the project, it's been a fairly amazing year. We actually had forty thousand jokes submitted and I've read the vast majority of them. If I never see another joke, I'll be a happy man.

01:46:01 But more importantly, millions of people came to the website. They took part in an experiment, which has found out really interesting lessons about psychology and the science of humour. We still have one final question left. What was the world's funniest joke? Now people shouldn't get too excited about this because in a sense, it's a joke, which appeals to most people.

01:46:28 It makes most people go, "Oh yeah, that's okay, that's an okay joke." But these are not going to make a lot of people laugh a great deal. But one thing we've learned is that humour is very idiosyncratic, and so there are groups of people that will always find other jokes much, much funnier. This is the joke that appeals, to a moderate extent, to most people.

01:46:50 There are two hunters going hunting and they're walking through the woods and suddenly one of them kind of clutches his throat, just falls to the ground.

01:46:59 So the other hunter panics and he picks up his mobile phone and dials emergency services. He says, "My friend's just lying there. I think he's dead." And the woman says, "Okay, calm down, the first thing to do is make certain your friend's actually dead." So she hears this pause and a gunshot. The guy comes back on the line and says, "Okay I've done that, now what?"

01:47:21
Older woman No I didn't see that one coming.

01:47:22
Richard Wiseman You didn't see that, you didn't like that one.

01:47:25
Man in black Very good. Yeah, that's good.

01:47:27
Man in green That's a good one. I like that one.

01:47:39
Man in car I didn't get that one. Am I a bit slow?

01:47:43
Man in shades Oh...Oh, nasty!

01:47:54
Woman in black So he killed his friend?

01:47:58
Japanese man Ohhh! Ahh!

01:48:14
Hairdresser Oh, that's a good one!

01:48:19
Blonde wig So that's the leading joke? Really? How many? Thirty thousand.
That's the leading joke.

01:48:24

Blonde in black

And that's it?

01:48:25

Blonde wig

Yeah

01:48:26

Blonde in black

And where's, what country is that from?

01:48:32

Egyptian man

Yeah! It's funny!