

What's So Funny?

Adults laugh an average of 17 times a day. Kids probably laugh even more often. But why do we laugh? And how does laughter work?

Laughing feels good. People enjoy laughing so much that we create things to make us laugh more, like jokes. Scientists have found that laughter can actually make us healthier. That discovery explains the saying, "laughter is the best medicine."

As wonderful and natural as laughter seems, it is interesting to know that humans are the only species who do it. Laughter feels easy, but it's actually a complicated process. According to scientists, people use the same skills to solve problems as they do to laugh.

Laughter is the physical response to humor. If you find something funny, your body will laugh. A laugh makes sound. A laugh also usually makes movement when muscles in your body contract.

Scientists think that humans first started laughing when they were relieved after danger had passed. It was a way to release stress. It was also a way to bond with other people. Even today, laughter has a bonding effect.

One interesting thing is that we don't all laugh at the same stuff. What one person finds funny, another does not. How old you are is one factor that



might decide what you think is funny. Where you live might also shape your sense of humor.

No matter what you find funny, laughter feels good. And it feels even better when you can laugh with other people who share a similar sense of humor. Happy laughing!



This page has been intentionally left blank.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a reason that people laugh?
 - a. To express relief after danger
 - b. To release stress
 - c. To contract your muscles
 - d. To bond with other people

2. Why is “laughter the best medicine”?
 - a. Because we laugh when we’re sick
 - b. Because it can make us healthier
 - c. Because we don’t find the same things funny
 - d. Because it’s a physical response

3. Why is laughter a complicated process?
 - a. Because humans are the only species to laugh
 - b. Because it requires the same skills as problem solving
 - c. Because it is a physical response
 - d. A and B

4. What does it mean to “share a similar sense of humor”?
 - a. You find the same things funny
 - b. You tell jokes to each other
 - c. You laugh together
 - d. You like each other

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

1. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a reason that people laugh?
 - a. To express relief after danger
 - b. To release stress
 - c. To contract your muscles**
 - d. To bond with other people
2. Why is “laughter the best medicine”?
 - a. Because we laugh when we’re sick
 - b. Because it can make us healthier**
 - c. Because we don’t find the same things funny
 - d. Because it’s a physical response
3. Why is laughter a complicated process?
 - a. Because humans are the only species to laugh
 - b. Because it requires the same skills as problem solving
 - c. Because it is a physical response
 - d. A and B**
4. What does it mean to “share a similar sense of humor”?
 - a. You find the same things funny**
 - b. You tell jokes to each other
 - c. You laugh together
 - d. You like each other