

T E X A S A D U L T E D U C A T I O N S T A N D A R D S
L E S S O N P L A N

Before you begin

Title: Understanding American Humor

Setting: ESL

NRS Level(s): Level 4: Low Intermediate
Level 5: High Intermediate
Level 6: Advanced

Open entry/exit: Yes

Context: Community/Workplace

Standard(s): ESL Read with Understanding

Benchmark(s): 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6

Objective: To read humorous authentic English text and understand the humor

Materials: Several assorted copies *Reader's Digest* (do not have to be current)
(It would be ideal to have dictionaries available, too.)

Estimated time needed to prepare for this lesson plan: 30 minutes or less

Estimated time needed to complete this lesson plan: 2 - 2.5 hours depending on size of class

The Lesson Plan

Introduce the lesson:

Tell the students an “American” joke that you think they will understand. Explain that today’s lesson will be about humor and written jokes.

Teach the lesson:

Explain “why” the joke you told was funny. Next, explain what makes jokes in general funny. (Plays on words, puns, incongruity, idioms, inflection, situational context, etc.)

Practice the lesson:

1. Introduce the *Reader's Digest* magazine. Distribute *Reader's Digests* to small groups/ pairs.
2. Have students select a joke from the magazine, one or more per group depending on level. (Show them how to find jokes and anecdotes; suggest they read a few in order to select a choice they will be comfortable working with.)

3. Have students try to understand/explain why a joke is funny within their group. (Can ask teacher/aide for assistance.)
4. Groups/pairs share jokes with larger class and explain the humor.

Assess the lesson:

1. Student asks self—"Do I understand the joke?" Why or why not? What is involved....vocabulary, usage, situation, cultural difference? What do I have to know in order to understand American humor?
2. Teacher assesses if jokes are truly understood when students share out, comments when necessary.

Apply the lesson to the real world:

Share joke(s) you have learned with family, friends and/or co-workers.

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