

Stand-Up Comedy



- Go to your public, school, and classroom libraries and check your home for any books about stand-up comedy. Collect all the different materials you can on this topic and bring them to school. Read and research all you can about stand-up comedy. Keep a bibliography on all the books you read and record them on your "Creating Comedy" chart.

Define these "humorous" terms in a creative fashion.

- burlesque
- farce
- hyperbole
- impersonation
- irony
- mimicry
- parody
- pun
- sarcasm
- satire
- slapstick
- wit/witticism

- There are many types of comedy. The three most common ones emphasize character, ideas, or situations. Explain each type of comedy and give an example.

- Watch a stand-up comic. This could be an "act" or a talk show monologue. Keep a tally of how many times each type of comedy is used. Graph your results. Try to do this at least two or three times. Compare your results.

"Research focusing on humor as a profession is only a recent phenomenon, and data is very scanty; the unknown greatly outweighs the known."—Avner Ziv

- In his book, *Personality and Sense of Humor*, Avner Ziv compiles generalizations about professional and amateur humorists. Research and/or interview at least five professional humorists and interview at least five



amateur humorists. Write up your findings. Did you find the same characteristics? Do you agree with Ziv?

Write a paper or give a speech that answers the following questions. Keep these questions in mind as you research, read, and view the topic of comedy:

- Why do people create and enjoy humor? What purposes does it serve? What are its psychological functions?
- How is humor made? What are the techniques used in creating and enjoying it?
- What is the subject matter of humor? What topics can it deal with? Are there topics that it cannot (or should not) deal with?

Read *How to be a Stand Up Comic* by Belzer, Charles, and Newman, and other related books, articles, and periodicals. Keep a list of what you have read. Also keep a list of comedy acts that you watch.

Select a comedian you are interested in and research that person. Select another comedian from a totally different era to research as well. Compare and contrast the two in poster form.

Read *Ten Tips for Writing Humor*. Using this and other tips you have gleaned, try to write a comedy piece. Decide on the setting; will it be a monologue for a late-night television show, a television comedy show broadcast live like "Saturday Night Live," a comedy club, etc? Test out your material on the class.

