



12 JOKES FORMULAS

to formulate funny stories

01

Subject Expansion

Definition: A brainstorming framework used to rapidly generate multiple related jokes on a single topic by mapping out associated words and sub-themes.

Steps to Use:

- Write your core topic (e.g., "Weddings") in the center of a page.
- Branch out with direct associations (e.g., cake, godparents, wedding gift, blood tests).
- Expand those words into broader relatable themes (e.g., comparing old traditions to modern trends like candy bars).
- Weave these mapped elements into a funny mini-story or a series of connected jokes.

02

The Pattern Disrupter

Definition: Misleading the audience by creating a specific expectation, then shattering it with an unexpected, double-meaning interpretation or a twisted cliché.

Steps to Use:

- Start with a common expression, cliché, or a recognizable setup (e.g., "The 3rd time is a charm").
- Introduce a play on words or alter the standard phrase to create a completely different meaning.
- Deliver the punchline by shifting the context abruptly (e.g., "My husband had a few girlfriends before me... they say the 75th time is a charm").

03

Reverse Storytelling

Definition: A sitcom-style writing technique where you reverse-engineer a narrative by starting with the final laugh and working backward to build the setup.

Steps to Use:

- a. Determine your ultimate punchline first—the exact line that will make people burst into laughter (e.g., "My mother used to do that much better").
- b. Identify a highly inappropriate, high-stakes situation where that line would cause maximum awkwardness (e.g., in the bedroom with a partner).
- c. Write a fast first draft from finish to start to fill in the contextual blanks.
- d. Read it out loud to test the rhythm and clarity, then edit out the fluff.

04

Self-Deprecation

Definition: Making yourself the target of the joke to build an instant, safe, and highly empathetic connection with the audience without hurting anyone else.

Steps to Use:

- Identify a personal flaw, failure, or embarrassing trait about yourself.
- Exaggerate this vulnerability or highlight the ridiculousness of how you handled a situation.
- Deliver the story transparently, taking full ownership of the punchline.

05

The Rule of Three

Definition: A structural formula that establishes a logical pattern using two normal items, only to completely subvert it with a chaotic or surprising third item.

Steps to Use:

- List two regular, expected, or boring items/activities to build a pattern in the audience's mind.
- Add a third item that completely shatters the established pattern.
- Ensure this final element either reveals you were actually talking about something else or exposes a funny truth.

06

The Comic Definition

Definition: Introducing a well-known object, public personality, or concept, and replacing its standard dictionary description with a satirical, highly opinionated definition.

Steps to Use:

- Select a recognizable subject (e.g., a political figure or a mundane everyday object).
- Strip away its literal meaning.
- Reframe it by describing its hidden absurdities, flaws, or true nature in a single, witty definition sentence.

07

The False Assumption

Definition: Intentionally withholding crucial details of a story (Who, What, Where, When, Why) so the audience's brain automatically fills the gaps with standard logic, right before you reveal a completely different reality.

Steps to Use:

- Set up a scenario but hide one key detail (e.g., hiding that "the first girlfriend" is a body part).
- Let the audience naturally assume the most logical scenario based on your phrasing ("I'm glad my husband's first girlfriend is here tonight...").
- Deliver the punchline by exposing the hidden detail to prove their assumption entirely wrong ("...give it up for his right hand!").

08

Incongruity

Definition: Creating comedic tension by forcing two completely incompatible ideas, behaviors, or environments together, or by making your physical actions contradict your words.

Steps to Use:

- Pair two contrasting concepts that do not belong together.
- Alternatively, promise the audience one behavior (e.g., "I am going to be on my best behavior tonight").
- Immediately do the exact opposite (e.g., launching into brutal roasts of the people in the room).

09

Character Acting

Definition: Elevating a mild joke into a massive laugh by physically embodying the distinct voices, facial expressions, and emotional states of the people in your story.

Steps to Use:

- Identify the dialogue or interactions within your personal story.
- Instead of just narrating what they said, physically shift your posture, facial expressions, and vocal tone to mimic the other person.
- Rapidly switch between playing your past self and playing the other character to build a living, funny dynamic.

10

Gentle Roasting

Definition: Teasing other people by targeting lighthearted quirks, minor flaws, or positive traits that do not harm their reputation, turning the joke into a tool for bonding rather than making enemies.

Steps to Use:

- Pick a specific trait, harmless habit, or positive quality of someone in the room.
- Playfully exaggerate that quirk without attacking their core abilities or character.
- Ensure the delivery remains warm and good-natured, ending the bit on a high note.

11

Hyperbole

Definition: Taking a normal, real-world situation and blowing it out of proportion until it reaches the point of absolute, undeniable ridicule.

Steps to Use:

- Start with a baseline truth (e.g., "The airplane I flew in was quite small").
- Magnify the details to an absurd degree ("The pilot had to keep his feet outside the window and we had to flap our arms to help it fly").
- Drive the situation so deep into the ridiculous that the audience has no choice but to laugh at the mental image.

12

The Callback

Definition: A closing technique used at the end of a show or speech that references a joke told near the beginning, instantly turning it into an "inside joke" with the audience.

Steps to Use:

- Deliver a strong, memorable joke or reference early in your presentation.
- Move on to completely different topics throughout your talk.
- At the very end, tie your closing thought back to that initial joke, bringing the entire experience full circle.

Quick Tips for Using These Joke Frames

- Brainstorm blindly first: Use "Subject Expansion" to dump all your ideas on paper before choosing a frame.
- Write the punchline first: When stuck, use "Reverse Storytelling" to start at the laugh and work backward.
- Keep a strict count: Ensure "The Rule of Three" uses exactly two normal setups and one curveball.
- Never apologize: If a joke lands flat, seamlessly pivot into "Self-Deprecation" to win the room back.

A well-placed joke is where your audience becomes your community.

But knowing the formulas is only one piece of the puzzle. True authority requires a complete narrative system—from presentation structure to a visual strategy that builds unshakeable marketplace trust.

I'm Andreea Laura Amzu, a brand and design strategist. I invite you to turn raw visibility into industry authority.

Subscribe to my newsletter for weekly branding tactics, real-world case studies, and priority access to my upcoming courses for visionary entrepreneurs.

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