

# CLASSROOM COMEDY

Comedy stimulates activity in brain regions associated with social engagement and improves retention of information. If we want to use comedy in the classroom, the first step is to learn how to think and communicate like a comedian. A comedian twists words and phrases in order to design surprising and unexpected narratives. Once learned, teachers and students can use this method of communication to enhance any lesson. The following example provides a glimpse into the mind of a comedian and demonstrates one way of leveraging comedy in the classroom.

## START WITH THE CONTENT: NEWTON'S FIRST LAW

The following narrative is not funny, it's simply the content that we want to deliver and reinforce.

Newton's first law states that if an object is in motion it will stay in motion unless it is acted upon by a force.

## NEXT, PUNCH IT UP

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/OH9BYW0\\_BAK](https://youtu.be/OH9BYW0_BAK)

Now the challenge is to turn the narrative into a comedy routine. We can do this by analyzing each line of the above narrative in order to determine where comedic elements can be added. Below are several types of communication strategies that can be used to punch up a story.

<i>Literary Devices</i>	<i>Use homonyms, sarcasm, double entendre, simile, and hyperbole</i>
<i>Self-Deprecation</i>	<i>Make fun of yourself or your ideas Undermine your perspectives</i>
<i>Incongruence</i>	<i>Use language or an attitude that does not fit with the narrative</i>
<i>Power of Three</i>	<i>Make the third example in a list an unexpected conclusion</i>
<i>Double Standards</i>	<i>Point out hypocrisy and inconsistent applications of ideas</i>
<i>Inappropriate</i>	<i>Be playfully offensive (but never hateful)</i>
<i>Callbacks</i>	<i>Bring back an earlier detail in a different context</i>
<i>Specificity</i>	<i>Explore the look, smell, taste, and feel Determine how a variety of people would react</i>
<i>Logical Pattern</i>	<i>Point out a missing piece or step</i>
<i>Rabbit Hole</i>	<i>Identify a new tangential detail and expand</i>
<i>Put Myself In It</i>	<i>Determine what you would do in the situation</i>

The resulting script for the stand-up routine is below and includes explanations of the comedic elements and thinking. **Listen to the routine**, follow along with the script, and then go back and read the explanations. This will help illustrate how a comedian communicates.

Newton's first law states that

If an object is in motion

It will stay in motion unless it is acted upon by a force

So If you throw a corn dog

It will take an equal and opposite force to make the corn dog stop

Hopefully in my mouth

*When people talk about Newton's first law, they typically talk about objects like balls or cars in motion. Can I put myself in it and come up with an absurd object in motion? Yes. One of my favorite foods is corn dogs. Could a corn dog be in motion? Sure. Someone could throw it. This means that it would require a force to stop it. When it stops, where would I want the corn dog to be? In my mouth, of course.*