

Test
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Level: 2nd Year Bacallaureate
Final Mark / 40

Name:
Class:

Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone

- It might be difficult to explain laughter to a visitor from another planet. To start with, if we look at it objectively there is something rather odd about the activity itself – the repetitive noise, and the strange expressions that accompany it. On top of that, there is something paradoxical about the causes of laughter – because if we catalogue the things that we laugh at, they don't seem to be 'funny' at all.
- What are the commonest themes in jokes, cartoons, funny stories, comic films, and so on? Death, accidents and misfortunes. Madness, stupidity, mistakes and misunderstandings. Getting drunk. Divorce and unhappy marriages. Anger and aggression. Oppressive authorities: presidents, kings, queens, policemen, teachers. Surprises and shocks. Human imperfection; the failure of ambition. Unexpected and incongruous events.
- In an old silent comedy film – with Chaplin or Keaton, say – or in a modern cartoon film about cats and mice, the things that make us laugh would mostly be unpleasant or even tragic if they happened in real life. Perhaps this is the point. Humour, like art and literature, often seems to have the function of helping us to cope with our lives. Since the beginning of history, man has been trying to control his environment, to make it tamer and less threatening. Things we can't control – like death, strong emotions, natural disasters – frighten us. Loss of control over ourselves is disturbing, so are madness and drunkenness; even stupid mistakes make us feel insecure. Jokes are a way of dealing with the things that frighten us; by putting them in stories or pictures and laughing at them, we are able in a sense to dominate them.
- Perhaps this is why so much humour depends on the unexpected. Our main way of controlling the world is with our intellect – by explaining, analysing, putting in categories, and predicting. When – as in dreams – categories break down, things are not what or where we expect, we can get very disturbed and frightened. If laughter is related to fear, it isn't surprising that so many jokes involve incongruity of some sort, or that almost all 'funny stories' depend for their effect on 'the punchline' – an unexpected and funny ending.
- The best humour does is more than just make us feel happy. Humour becomes a weapon: it attacks things that are wrong with us and with society, and perhaps it makes us start thinking about ways to put them right.

I COMPREHENSION (15 POINTS)

BASE ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON THE TEXT

A Rewrite these sentences as suggested. (3pts)

	Sentences	Fact	Detail
1	If we catalogue the things that we laugh at, they don't seem to be at all 'funny'.
2	We can't control such things as death, strong emotions and natural disasters.
3	It isn't surprising that so many jokes involve incongruity of some sort.

B Are the following sentences TRUE or FALSE? JUSTIFY. (3pts)

1 Laughing is easily understandable in itself.
.....

- 2 Some of the themes that humour tackles are really funny.
- 3 The thing that makes a joke humorous is the way it ends.

C Answer the following questions. (3pts)

- 1 What are the two benefits of humour? (2pts)
- 2 How do human beings try to control the world?

D Find in the text words that mean the same as the following. (3 pts)

- 1 absurd, illogical (para 1)
- 2 strange (para 2)
- 3 tackle, deal with (para 3)

E What do these words refer to in the text? (3pts)

- 1 **itself** (para 1)
- 2 **their** (para 4)
- 3 **them** (para 5)

II LANGUAGE (15 POINTS)

A Fill in each blank with the correct form of the word between brackets. (3pts)

- 1 Modern advertising is characterized by a great deal of (invent)
- 2 He was accused of being rather (democracy) He doesn't allow the rest of the group to participate in making decisions.
- 3 He had the (audacious) to say I was too fat.

B Put the verbs between brackets into the correct form. (3pts)

- 1 These days good food (cost) a fortune.
- 2 I'm not used to (eat) so much at lunchtime.
- 3 Teachers recommend students (work) harder if they want to succeed.

C Rewrite the following sentences using the connectors in brackets. (3pts)

- 1 She was good at physics. She found it boring. (despite)
- 2 She has written the text. She also selected the illustrations. (not only but as well)
- 3 Some people want to buy the house. They phoned yesterday. (who)

D Fill in the blanks with the right words. (3pts)

granted reminiscent part outranked sociable

- 1 The way he laughed was strongly of his father.

