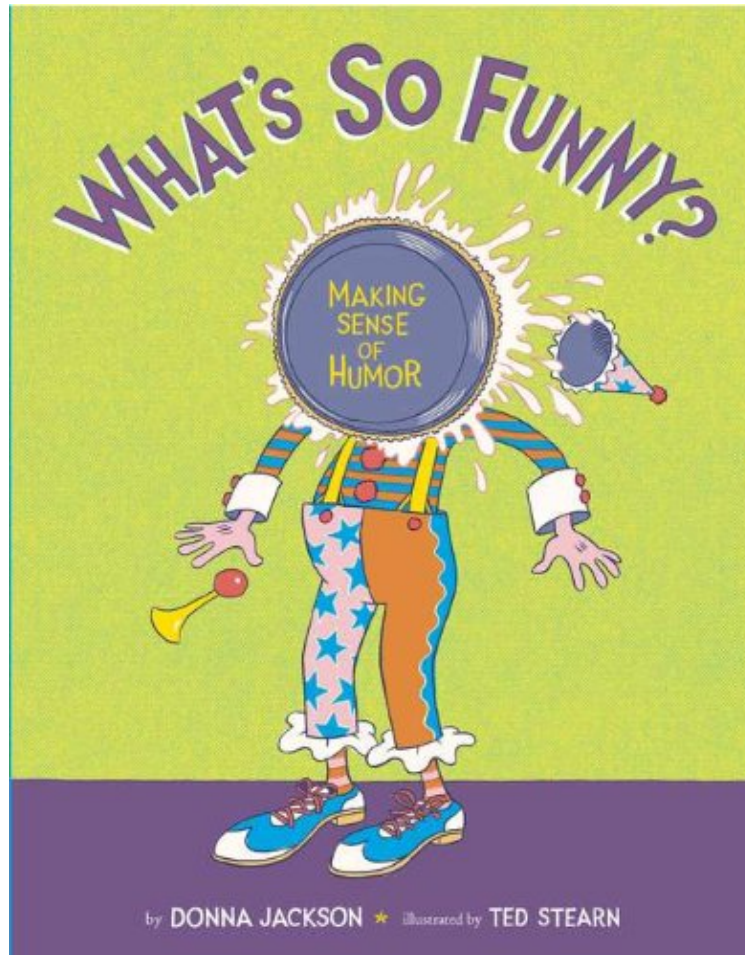


(Download) What's So Funny?: Making Sense of Humor

What's So Funny?: Making Sense of Humor

Donna M. Jackson

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Donna M. Jackson : What's So Funny?: Making Sense of Humor before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What's So Funny?: Making Sense of Humor:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. We can all use a good laugh. By Heidi Grangel found this book rather fascinating. I had no idea that people actually studied humor. It makes sense though, since laughter is such a big part of human existence. The author starts off by defining humor and explaining that, "Humor is highly personal." Which is very true. This made me think about the times when I've been reading to my students and they laugh at something that I don't see as funny, or I am trying to avoid bursting out into loud laughter and the kids are straight-faced. Despite the fact that there is no one way to define what is funny, there are several theories that attempt to explain this phenomenon. First, the superiority theory, jokes that target stupidity and klutziness. When I read this I immediately thought, blond jokes, lawyer jokes, etc. There are many types of jokes that fit into this category. The second theory that Jackson presents is the relief theory. The idea being that we can address topics that scare us or

stress us out through humor. The third theory is the incongruity theory, when one thing is expected but something else happens and surprises us. The book is easy to read and to follow organization wise. The author has clearly kept her audience in mind. The inclusion of jokes throughout is a nice touch. Jackson covers a lot of related topics, theories, anatomy (the physical act of laughing), animal laughter, and even how to tell a joke well. I plan to use this book with my older students as a precursor to storytelling. It would also combine beautifully with any joke book. Recommended.

A Junior Library Guild Selection
Q. What do you call a dinosaur that's scared to tell a joke?
A. A nervous rex
Who doesn't love to laugh, or to hear and see funny things? But what makes something funny in the first place? What exactly is humor? Using fun facts, anecdotes, and more than a few silly puns, Donna M. Jackson explores the wide-ranging world of humor, explaining why our brains think something is funny, why you can tickle a friend, but not yourself, how to tell a joke like a professional comedian, and so much more. Illustrated with Ted Stearn's hilarious drawings, *What's So Funny?* is a behind-the-scenes look at humor that will tickle your brain and your funny bone--after explaining what that is, of course.

"Toss this life raft to a reluctant reader facing a nonfiction book report and make yourself a hero." --The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
"Don't let the colorful, humorous cover and size of this title fool you, for it is chock full of pertinent information . . ." - Ingram Library Services
"Researchers and budding comedians will find plenty of useful material." - School Library Journal
"Donna's lighthearted survey injects plenty of levity into the topic of what makes us laugh . . . This book will prove valuable for readers from youth to adult." - Jeffrey Briar, director, The Laughter Yoga Institute
. . . should appeal to class clowns and bullied kids everywhere. Why bullied kids? . . . In a study of young people, kids who responded with no reaction or anger to bullying were less successful than kids who fired back with a joke." - Children's Literature
About the Author
Donna M. Jackson is an award-winning author of many nonfiction books for young readers. Her work includes *The Bone Detectives*, *The Name Game* and, most recently, *The Elephant Scientist* -- named a 2012 Robert F. Sibert Honor book, a 2012 Boston Globe-Horn Book Nonfiction Honor Book, and an NSTA/CBC Outstanding Science Trade book. She lives and laughs with her husband, Charlie, and their family near the Colorado's Rocky Mountains.
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WITH LOVE to my good-natured aunts and uncles, and to dearest Barb, a joyful, giving spirit
—D.J.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
A WARM NOTE of thanks to all the humor experts who contributed to this fun project: Rod A. Martin, PhD, psychologist and author at the University of Western Ontario; Jaak Panksepp, PhD, neuroscientist and Baily Endowed Chair of Animal Well-Being Science at Washington State University; Steven M. Sultanoff, PhD, mirthologist and clinical psychologist; Jessica Milner Davis, PhD, honorary associate, School of Media, Arts and Letters, University of Sydney, Australia; Robert Thompson, director of the Center for the Study of Popular Television at Syracuse University; Richard Wiseman, PhD, author and psychology professor at the University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom; John Black, owner, Pun of the Day Web site; Yakov Smirnoff, comedian, artist, psychologist; Jami Gong, comedian and founder of the TakeOut Comedy Club in Hong Kong; Judy Carter, comedian, author, and comedy coach; JoAnne Bachorowski, PhD, associate professor of psychology at Vanderbilt University; Jeff Gandy, Youth and Education programs manager, Second City Training Center, Chicago; Mark Gonzalez, comedian; Darren LaCroix, keynote speaker, comedian; Wali Collins, actor and comedian; Paul Kim, comedian and founder of the Asian talent show *Kollaboration*; Paul E. McGhee, humor researcher, author, and speaker; Cathy Strange; and Joni Wilson.
I'm especially grateful to the outstanding editorial team at Viking for their enthusiastic support of this book: publisher Regina Hayes, my editor extraordinaire Catherine Frank, copy editor Janet Pascal, and designer Nancy Brennan; to Ted Stearn for his humorous illustrations; to Susan Cohen and Brianne Johnson at Writers House for their guidance and expertise; and to Charlie Jackson, for a lifetime of love and laughs.
Humor is mankind's greatest blessing.—Mark Twain, American author and humorist (1835–1910)
WHAT'S SOOOOOO FUNNY?
A PIE IN the face.
A slip of the tongue.
A burrrrp at the dinner table.
Humor. We all know it when we see it—and when we hear it. But people have defined it differently for centuries. One reason is because humor varies from person to person, and depends on factors such as age, culture, and even sex. What's funny to a two-year-old is different from what's funny to a ten-year-old or a twenty-year-old. What's funny in Western cultures differs from what's funny in Eastern cultures. What's funny to a boy is not always funny to a girl.
Humor is highly personal. Much like beauty, it's in the heart and mind of the beholder. "We're all born with a sense of humor," says Dr. William Fry, a psychiatrist and pioneer in humor studies. But it develops differently for everyone, based in part on life experiences. "It's like a psychological fingerprint," he says—one that evolves and changes over time.
Humor is a "moment of discovery," a

playful new way of looking at things. Each time you hear something funny, your brain makes new connections, says Fry. Humor has also been described as the thrill of getting it—as in understanding a joke or funny situation—and getting away with it—as in successfully pulling a prank on a favorite cousin. It can come from witnessing the absurd, like your neighbor dancing with her cat; or breaking social rules, like giggling at a funeral. Most often, it's the pairing of two ideas, thoughts, pictures, or situations that don't quite belong together but that fit in a "nonserious," surprising way. You know, like the Florida principal who dressed in a hot-dog suit and let students spray her with ketchup and onions. Now that's funny!