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Men funnier than women, says scientist

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THE ARTICLE

Men are naturally funnier than women. This is the claim of a UK male professor, Sam Shuster. He conducted research on 400 different people as he unicycled around his town. He observed the reaction of onlookers and discovered that men made more jokes about him than women, and that men's jokes were more aggressive. He said three-quarters of male "jokers" mocked him and made nasty comments, while most women tended to tease him with a smile. He said: "The difference between the men and women was absolutely remarkable and consistent." Professor Shuster believes the male hormone testosterone is the cause of men being funnier. He found that teenage boys were aggressive in their humor and this aggression changed with older men into a funnier form of joking.

Earlier research suggests women and men use humor differently. One study said women tend to tell fewer jokes than men and male comedians outnumber female ones. Another showed men look more for a punch line. Men also use people they know as the subject of their jokes, often in a negative way. Married men seem to like hearing and making jokes about mothers-in-law. British comedian John Moloney disagreed with Professor Shuster's findings. He said that in his 21-year career in comedy, he had never noticed that men were funnier than women. He stated: "The difference is that if a group of women were together and the conversation lulls, they don't automatically start telling jokes, which men do. It then becomes a bit of a competition, but that doesn't mean to say men are funnier."

WARM-UPS

1. COMEDY: Walk around the class and talk to other students about comedy. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

being funny / people's reactions / onlookers / aggression / male hormones / comedians / punchlines / mothers-in-law / negativity / comedy / telling jokes

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. MEN AND WOMEN: With your partner(s), decide on whether men or women are better at these things. Try to give real-life examples. Change partners and share your findings.

- telling jokes
- driving
- reading a map
- apologizing
- organizing a party
- tidying
- cooking
- telling lies

4. JOKES: With your partner(s), discuss which of the items below are the subjects of jokes in your country. Can you tell and explain a joke?

- husband or wives
- in-laws
- people from other countries
- royalty or national leaders
- bosses
- members of the opposite sex
- sex
- religion

5. JOKE COMPETITION: Spend one minute thinking about your favourite joke. Tell your joke to the rest of the class. Decide whose joke was funniest. Discuss with your partner(s) the (lack of) humor in each joke.

6. JOKE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'joke'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

7. QUICK ROLE PLAY: Student A **strongly** believes that men are funnier than women; Student B believes women are funnier than men. Change partners often. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A scientist has discovered men have funnier faces than women. | T / F |
| b. The scientist conducted his research while riding a unicycle. | T / F |
| c. The scientist believes male hormones make men funnier. | T / F |
| d. He said men become funnier as they get older. | T / F |
| e. Research shows there are more male than female comedians. | T / F |
| f. Studies suggest men are more interested in a joke's punch line. | T / F |
| g. Men dislike hearing jokes about their wife's mother. | T / F |
| h. Men seem to be more competitive than women at joke telling. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. claim | a. made fun of |
| 2. reaction | b. quietens |
| 3. mocked | c. extraordinary |
| 4. remarkable | d. (be) inclined to |
| 5. aggression | e. topic |
| 6. tend to | f. assertion |
| 7. subject | g. hostility |
| 8. negative | h. conclusions |
| 9. findings | i. response |
| 10. lulls | j. bad |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Men are naturally | a. nasty comments |
| 2. He observed the reaction | b. of joking |
| 3. male "jokers" mocked him and made | c. about mothers-in-law |
| 4. the male hormone testosterone is the cause | d. of onlookers |
| 5. a funnier form | e. differently |
| 6. women and men use humor | f. funnier than women |
| 7. male comedians outnumber | g. a competition |
| 8. men seem to like hearing and making jokes | h. female ones |
| 9. the conversation | i. of men being funnier |
| 10. It then becomes a bit of | j. lulls |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Men are naturally funnier than women. This is the _____ of a UK male professor, Sam Shuster. He _____ research on 400 different people as he unicycled around his town. He observed the reaction of _____ and discovered that men made more jokes about him than women, and that men's jokes were more aggressive. He said three-quarters of male "jokers" _____ him and made nasty _____, while most women tended to tease him with a _____. He said: "The difference between the men and women was absolutely _____ and consistent." Professor Shuster believes the male hormone testosterone is the cause of men being funnier. He found that teenage boys were aggressive in their humor and this aggression changed with older men into a funnier _____ of joking.

remarkable

onlookers

smile

mocked

claim

form

conducted

comments

Earlier research _____ women and men use humor differently. One study said women _____ to tell fewer jokes than men and male comedians outnumber female ones. Another showed men _____ more for a punch line. Men also use people they know as the subject of their jokes, often in a negative _____. Married men seem to like hearing and making jokes about mothers-in-_____. British comedian John Moloney disagreed with Professor Shuster's findings. He said that in his 21-year career in comedy, he had never _____ that men were funnier than women. He stated: "The difference is that if a group of women were together and the conversation _____, they don't automatically start telling jokes, which men do. It then becomes a _____ of a competition, but that doesn't mean to say men are funnier."

law

bit

way

suggests

look

lulls

noticed

tend

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

Men are naturally funnier than women. This _____ UK male professor, Sam Shuster. He conducted research on 400 different people as he unicycled around his town. He observed _____ and discovered that men made more jokes _____, and that men's jokes were more aggressive. He said three-quarters of male "jokers" mocked _____ comments, while most women tended to tease him with a smile. He said: "The difference between the men and women _____ and consistent." Professor Shuster believes the male hormone testosterone _____ being funnier. He found that teenage boys were aggressive in their humor and this aggression changed with older _____ of joking.

Earlier research suggests women and men _____. One study said women _____ jokes than men and male comedians outnumber female ones. Another showed men look more for a punch line. Men also use people they _____ their jokes, often in a negative way. Married men seem to like hearing and making jokes _____. British comedian John Moloney disagreed with Professor Shuster's findings. He said that in his _____, he had never noticed that men were funnier than women. He stated: "The difference is that if a group of women were together _____, they don't automatically start telling jokes, which men do. It then becomes a bit of a competition, but _____ men are funnier."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'punch' and 'line'.

punch	line
--------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • naturally • observed • three-quarters • absolutely • cause • form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differently • outnumber • subject • career • lulls • bit
--	---

STUDENT COMEDY SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about comedy in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
 - b) What kind of comedy do you like?
 - c) Do you think men are funnier than women?
 - d) Are your favourite comedians men or women?
 - e) What do you think of the unicycling scientist's research?
 - f) Do you think humor is genetic and the male hormone testosterone causes men to be funnier?
 - g) What do you think are the differences between male and female humor?
 - h) Do you have a good sense of humor?
 - i) Are you good at telling jokes?
-

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) How do you think men and women use humor differently?
- c) Do you really think women tell fewer jokes than men?
- d) Are the subjects of men and women's jokes different in your country?
- e) Do you understand the humor of other nationalities?
- f) Do you laugh at jokes told in English?
- g) Do you agree that men have a "who can tell the best joke" competition – more so than women?
- h) What questions would you like to ask professor Sam Shuster?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Men are (1) _____ funnier than women. This is the claim of a UK male professor, Sam Shuster. He conducted research (2) _____ 400 different people as he unicycled around his town. He observed the reaction of onlookers and discovered that men (3) _____ more jokes about him than women, and that men's jokes were more aggressive. He said three-quarters of male "jokers" mocked him and made nasty comments, while most women (4) _____ to tease him with a smile. He said: "The difference between the men and women was absolutely remarkable and consistent." Professor Shuster believes the (5) _____ hormone testosterone is the cause of men being funnier. He found that teenage boys were aggressive in their humor and this aggression changed with older men into a funnier (6) _____ of joking.

Earlier research suggests women and men (7) _____ humor differently. One study said women tend to (8) _____ fewer jokes than men and male comedians outnumber female ones. Another showed men look more for a punch line. Men also use people they know as the subject of their jokes, often in a negative (9) _____. Married men seem to like hearing and making jokes about mothers-in-law. British comedian John Moloney disagreed with Professor Shuster's findings. He said that in his 21-year career (10) _____ comedy, he had never noticed that men were funnier than women. He stated: "The difference is that if a group of women were together and the conversation (11) _____, they don't automatically start telling jokes, which men do. It then becomes a (12) _____ of a competition, but that doesn't mean to say men are funnier."

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) nature | (b) natural | (c) naturally | (d) naturals |
| 2. | (a) in | (b) by | (c) over | (d) on |
| 3. | (a) did | (b) made | (c) said | (d) spoke |
| 4. | (a) tended | (b) tending | (c) tends | (d) tender |
| 5. | (a) female | (b) man | (c) male | (d) women's |
| 6. | (a) from | (b) farm | (c) firm | (d) form |
| 7. | (a) use | (b) useful | (c) usefully | (d) usefulness |
| 8. | (a) say | (b) tell | (c) speak | (d) talk |
| 9. | (a) way | (b) ways | (c) weigh | (d) way out |
| 10. | (a) of | (b) by | (c) on | (d) in |
| 11. | (a) lullabies | (b) lull | (c) lulls | (d) lullaby |
| 12. | (a) bite | (b) bit | (c) bitter | (d) bitty |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about different kinds of comedy around the world. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. MEN AND WOMEN: Create your own survey about people's opinions on what they think men and women do better. Make a poster explaining your findings. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. JOKES: Write a magazine article about jokes. Include real interviews with your family, friends and classmates.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

5. LETTER: Write a letter to professor Sam Shuster. Give him three suggestions on what he should do to find out more about whether men or women are funnier. Give him three other research projects that look into differences between men and women. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. T c. T d. T e. T f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. claim | a. assertion |
| 2. reaction | b. response |
| 3. mocked | c. made fun of |
| 4. remarkable | d. extraordinary |
| 5. aggression | e. hostility |
| 6. tend to | f. (be) inclined to |
| 7. subject | g. topic |
| 8. negative | h. bad |
| 9. findings | i. conclusions |
| 10. lulls | j. quietens |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Men are naturally | a. funnier than women |
| 2. He observed the reaction | b. of onlookers |
| 3. male "jokers" mocked him and made | c. nasty comments |
| 4. the male hormone testosterone is the cause | d. of men being funnier |
| 5. a funnier form | e. of joking |
| 6. women and men use humor | f. differently |
| 7. male comedians outnumber | g. female ones |
| 8. men seem to like hearing and making jokes | h. about mothers-in-law |
| 9. the conversation | i. lulls |
| 10. It then becomes a bit of | j. a competition |

GAP FILL:

Men funnier than women, says scientist

Men are naturally funnier than women. This is the **claim** of a UK male professor, Sam Shuster. He **conducted** research on 400 different people as he unicycled around his town. He observed the reaction of **onlookers** and discovered that men made more jokes about him than women, and that men's jokes were more aggressive. He said three-quarters of male "jokers" **mocked** him and made nasty **comments**, while most women tended to tease him with a **smile**. He said: "The difference between the men and women was absolutely **remarkable** and consistent." Professor Shuster believes the male hormone testosterone is the cause of men being funnier. He found that teenage boys were aggressive in their humor and this aggression changed with older men into a funnier **form** of joking.

Earlier research **suggests** women and men use humor differently. One study said women **tend** to tell fewer jokes than men and male comedians outnumber female ones. Another showed men **look** more for a punchline. Men use people they know as the subject of their jokes, often in a negative **way**. Married men seem to like hearing and making jokes about mothers-in-law. British comedian John Moloney disagreed with Professor Shuster's findings. He said that in his 21-year career in comedy, he had never **noticed** that men were funnier than women. He stated: "The difference is that if a group of women were together and the conversation **lulls**, they don't automatically start telling jokes, which men do. It then becomes a **bit** of a competition, but that doesn't mean to say men are funnier."

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - c 2 - d 3 - b 4 - a 5 - c 6 - d 7 - a 8 - b 9 - a 10 - d 11 - c 12 - b