



Teacher's guide

The Science of Laughter - Upper Intermediate (B2-C1)

Canva Presentation Link: [🌐 The Science of Laughter](#)

Video Link: [🌐 The science of laughter - Sasha Winkler](#)

Warm up

Part 1. Students talk about what's happening in the pictures and then discuss questions related to laughter. Answers will vary.

Part 2. Students match the words to their definitions. Encourage students to guess the meaning of any before looking at the options.

Answer Key:

1. Reflexes
2. Endorphins
3. Vocalisation
4. Volitional
5. Inhibit
6. Cortisol
7. Ailment
8. Contagious

Part 3. Students fill in the gaps in the sentences.

Answer Key:

1. Endorphins
2. Cortisol
3. Ailment
4. Contagious
5. Inhibit
6. Volitional
7. Reflexes
8. Vocalisation

Video activity

Part 1. Before watching the video, students discuss how the vocabulary words might be used to describe what happens in our bodies when we laugh. Monitor as necessary.

Part 2. Students watch the video and listen to see if any of their predictions were correct.

Part 3. Students complete the comprehension questions.

Suggested answers:

1. Our abdominal muscles contract rapidly, breathing patterns change, pressure in the chest increases, and air is pushed out, sometimes making sounds like snorts or wheezes. Laughter can also cause muscle weakness and even physical pain in some areas due to exertion.
2. Using ultrasonic recorders, scientists found that rats make giggling-like sounds when being tickled.

3. It's believed that laughter developed to signal friendly, non-aggressive intent during social play in primates. Later, as humans evolved complex language and lived in larger social groups, laughter took on new roles in communication, emotion, and bonding.
4. Hearing laughter activates parts of the brain linked to smiling and laughing. One study showed people laughed more often and for longer when others were present, even if they felt the same level of amusement.
5. Spontaneous laughter is controlled by older brain areas shared with other animals. Volitional laughter uses speech-related parts of the brain and is more controlled.
6. Laughter can release feel-good chemicals like endorphins, reduce stress hormones like cortisol, improve coping with stress, and may even benefit cardiovascular health.

Part 4. Students complete the missing parts of the extract from the video.

Answer Key

1. Universal
2. Speak
3. Medicine
4. Good
5. Matter
6. Up

Video follow-up

Part 1. Students discuss the questions.

Part 2. Students match the idioms to their definitions. Encourage students to guess the meaning of any before looking at the options.

Answer Key:

1. Crack up
2. No laughing matter
3. Laugh something off
4. Be in stitches
5. Laughing stock
6. Have the last laugh

Part 3. Students discuss questions using the idioms. Answers will vary.

Review activity & final thoughts

Part 1. Students use each of the words to talk about laughter and what they have learnt during the lesson.

Part 2. Students discuss questions. Answers will vary.