

# FIRST STORY

## TEACHING RESOURCES



**“I think it’s funny. Will anyone else? Sometimes no. But oh well”**

**PRIYA HALL**  
COMEDIAN



**INSIDE the  
WRITER'S MIND**

## STIMULUS



Find the funny in your relationships! Think about your relationships with friends and family. Which is the funniest relationship – and how might a stand-up comedian talk about that on-stage?

## IDEATION

You are going to write a short comedy set (a couple of jokes or funny stories) about your relationships. First of all, think about your on-stage persona. You could exaggerate your natural personality or be completely different – are you upbeat and friendly, bored and deadpan, superior and condescending?

- 1 Write down some funny, unusual, different, unique aspects of your relationship with one person. These could be stories, routines, habits people have, how people interact.
- 2 Focus on one and get into the mindset of your comedian persona. How do they see this aspect of your relationship? Start to write this down – and don't worry too much about "being funny" here, just get the structure written.
- 3 Now look at your writing and read it out loud to yourself. Does it feel funny to you? One way of creating humour is to create tension with the set-up to the joke before relieving the tension with the punchline, where it's important to subvert expectations. Does your story or joke build up to something unexpected?

# EDITING

Comedy is often a performed medium, so you need to practise your jokes out loud to understand if they work or not. Try walking around the room, imagining the persona of your comedian character. As you encounter other students, deliver your joke. Try emphasising different words as you deliver it. You can also 'riff' – that is, not stick exactly to your script but trying different versions of it. Feel the rhythm as you speak and make it natural!

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# RESOURCE AUTHOR

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This resource is by Dan Simpson, an accomplished writer, performer, producer, educator, and First Story Writer-in-Residence.

Dan has been Poet-in-Residence at Glastonbury Festival, Waterloo Station, National Trust Stowe, Imperial College London, and St Albans Cathedral. His two collections of poetry are *Applied Mathematics* and *Totally Cultured* (Burning Eye Books).

Dan delivers primary and secondary school classes around the UK. He also runs both creative writing and professional development sessions for adults.

Find out more at [dansimpsonpoet.co.uk](http://dansimpsonpoet.co.uk).



## DAN'S RECOMMENDED READING

**The Serious Guide To Joke Writing**  
by Sally Holloway

**The Comedy Bible**  
by Judy Carter

**Be a Great Stand-Up**  
by Logan Murray

**This resource is one of six published in 2022 by First Story, in partnership with BBC Teach.**

**These resources complement a new collection of short films about creative writing, *Inside the Writer's Mind*, produced by BBC Teach.**

**Featuring fantastic contemporary writers and packed with tips and insights, discover all eight of the films among the English Literature resources on the BBC Teach website, [here](#).**

**Explore all six of our accompanying free resources at [firststory.org.uk/bbc-teach](https://firststory.org.uk/bbc-teach).**

# FIRST STORY

England's leading creative writing charity for young people, equipping students with the confidence and skills to tell their own stories.

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