

Spotlight on Humour

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Comedy stories are intended to make you laugh. Sometimes they're intended as just a fun distraction, sometimes they are written to draw attention to a bigger issue.

Humour writing through history

- There are records of human jokes from the earliest civilisations, but the ancient Greeks were the first people to write down humorous stories as literature.
- The word 'humour' comes from the ancient Greeks as well. They taught that the balance of fluids, or humours, in the human body controlled people's health. They believed that if the humours were in balance, someone was 'in good humour', lighthearted and cheerful.
- There is an ancient Roman joke book called the Philogeles (in English, "Laughter Lover") and we know that there were a lot of other joke books written during the Roman period as well.
- Laughter Lover inspired other joke books throughout other periods of history. Some of the jokes are similar to ones still told today.
- Benjamin Franklin, known as a Founding Father of America, was also known for his humorous writing style. He published a very popular yearly almanac (an annual book published on a particular topic, like a magazine) called Poor Richard's Almanac that included jokes and funny stories.

Famous humour authors

Terry Pratchett
Anh Do
Andy Griffiths
Terry Denton
Morris Gleitzman
David Walliams
Jeff Kinney
Michael Gerard Bauer
Oliver Phommavanh
Paul Jennings