There are a variety of ways that your pupils can use the rules they have learned for spelling, punctuation and grammar in their comedy writing. The trick is knowing when to use those rules and then when to subvert them. Here are a few hints and ideas to get you going.

**Full stops**
Perfect for punchlines, the full stop gives you a definite end to your sentence and is hopefully the cue for your audience to laugh.

**Exclamation marks**
Was your funny story a little bit shocking for your audience? It was! Use an exclamation mark to tell them.

**Question marks**
Do you want to ask your audience some rhetorical questions? If you do, you’ll need to remember to add some question marks for them. Won’t you?

**Elipsis**
Does your joke have a natural punchline or do you want to leave your audience hanging so they draw their own funny conclusions? You may wish to use an ellipsis to let them know that you’re leaving them to think for themselves…

**Noun phrases**
A noun phrase will always get you a bigger laugh when telling your funny story. Was your character wearing a suit? Or was she wearing a bright yellow sequin-encrusted banana suit? Get those adjectives in to give your audience those comedy descriptions.

**Commas & semi colons**
Lists are always funny, especially when we are using repetition in our work. If we remember to space them out using commas or semi colons, then we can slowly build a laugh for our audience. We can make boring lists with endless dull descriptions to send them to sleep; dark, brooding sentences which go bump in the night to scare them; or bright, funny and exciting lists to make them laugh. It’s up to you!

**Speech marks & colons**
Beware of the speech mark. They are definitely useful when writing stories but, when we are writing scripts, we replace them with a colon to show who is speaking next. Have a look at the example script in the pack to get the hang of how to use them in your own writing.

**Conjunctions**
Conjunctions are great for surprises. If you want your audience to expect one thing and then get another, you’ll need a conjunction to link your sentence together. They might be expecting a character to walk into a room, but they get a man wearing a walrus outfit juggling oranges instead!

**Call-back**
A call-back is when a comedy writer refers back to an earlier joke to get a second or even third laugh from the same joke.

**Caricature**
This is a character that uses a distorted or exaggerated version of a person’s features or personality to create a comic effect.

**Deadpan**
A type of comic delivery with all the usual emotion taken out. Usually a deadpan comic will also keep their facial expressions to a minimum.

**Dialogue**
A scene which has at least two characters speaking to each other.

**Escalation**
The process of turning a small joke into a bigger and funnier story, usually with an exaggerated and over-the-top conclusion.

**Farce**
A fast-paced piece of set comedy that involves a lot of slapstick and usually contains people entering and exiting quickly or mistaking character identities.

**Homophone**
Words which may have the same pronunciation but different meanings, often used to make a pun or misdirect someone in a joke.

**One-liner**
A joke which is a single sentence but packs the punchline in straightaway. “Hedgehogs – why can’t they just share with everyone else?”

**Pace**
The speed at which a scene or routine is run. Controlling the pace means controlling when the audience laughs.

**Pun**
A homophone that “sounds like” another to try and make a cheesy joke: “Making this omelette is really EGG-citing!”

**Punchline**
The end line or final joke in a funny story or sketch. Sometimes referred to as the “big laugh”.

**Satire**
A type of comedy that pokes fun at a serious issue or tries to undermine people in authority, like the government.

**Simile**
When a comparison is made for comic effect: “Your feet smell worse than a skunk’s underpants!”

**Stereotype**
An instantly recognisable “type” of person which isn’t always based in reality. For example, a doctor is posh and wears a white coat; a school caretaker will be grumpy and jangle keys.

**Suspension of disbelief**
The idea that an audience will always believe in your story, despite it normally being unbelievable.

**Wit**
The idea that words can be played around with verbally to get a funnier meaning. Wit can use twisted logic, puns or double meanings to make things funny.

**Using SPAG for comedy writing**

Alongside the definitions in the Comedy Toolbox, here are some really useful words that you might find helpful for assembling your own pieces of comedy writing.

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