

What's So Funny About Work?

Directions Comic strips make people laugh about all sorts of situations, including work. Read the description of a four-panel comic strip below. Then answer the questions that follow. Explore the ways that humor deals with workplace situations by trying one or more of the Discovery activities.

Panel 1

A male office worker, Luis, is dressed in pants and a sweater and is entering an office building. He is greeted by a coworker wearing a Hawaiian shirt, shorts, and flip-flops.

Coworker: "Morning, Luis."
Luis: "Morning, Bob."

Panel 2

Luis is getting a cup of coffee from the coffeemaker. A female coworker, dressed in a leotard, tights, and short skirt, waves hello.

Coworker: "Morning, Luis."
Luis: "Uh...morning, Doris."

Panel 3

Luis, carrying his coffee, is greeted outside his cubicle by another coworker dressed in a clown suit.

Coworker: "Morning, Luis."
Luis: "Um...."

Panel 4

Luis is standing in the doorway of his boss's office. The boss, dressed in a conservative shirt and jacket, is seated at a desk facing toward the door.

Luis: "I think our new casual dress code needs some clarification."

1. What is the workplace setting for this comic strip? _____

2. What is a "casual dress code"? _____

3. What problem does the cartoon point out? _____

4. How does the character in the comic strip deal with the problem? _____

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CHAPTER 4 Workplace Skills (Continued)

Focus on *Humor*

5. What makes this cartoon funny? How would illustrations support the humor?

6. What point or points does this cartoon make about the workplace? _____

Discovery

A. Newspaper Comic Strips For one week, read all the comic strips in a local newspaper. (If needed, borrow a friend’s or neighbor’s paper when the person is done with it.) Clip out all the cartoons that illustrate workplace situations. Paste each cartoon onto a sheet of notebook paper. Below it, write a paragraph answering the following questions:

- What type of workplace and situation are shown in the cartoon?
- What makes this comic strip funny?
- What point about the workplace does the comic strip make?
- How does humor help the artist make this point?

At the end of the week, bring your cartoon collection to class and compare it with those of classmates. Discuss some of the most common situations that came up in the cartoons. Did some of them make the same point in different ways?

B. Conversations About Humor Talk to an adult friend or family member about funny situations that have come up at work. What made the situations humorous? Did everyone involved find the situation funny, or only some people? Why might only some people see humor in a situation? Would outsiders be amused? Discuss conversations in class.

C. An Original Comic Strip Draw your own comic strip that illustrates a workplace situation. Choose any type of workplace, such as an office, factory, or store. The cartoon should show a real situation that might come up in a workplace, although you may exaggerate to make the situation funnier. Do not worry if you can not draw. Your cartoon will be just as funny with stick figures, as long as it is clear what they are doing. Present your finished cartoon to the class.