



*"My father is looking down on us right now. He's not dead, he's just condescending..."*

# How to Write Comedy Like Stewart Francis



## Background

Stewart Francis is a Canadian stand-up comedian, actor, and writer, renowned for his distinctive style of comedy. He gained popularity with his quick-witted one-liners, deadpan delivery, and clever wordplay. Francis's humor often revolves around puns, misdirection, and concise, sharp jokes that surprise and delight audiences. His ability to craft succinct, memorable punchlines has won him acclaim in the comedy world, making him a favorite on panel shows and comedy circuits. Stewart Francis is now retarded--I mean, retired!



## Course Overview:

In this course we're going to look at Stewart Francis's performances then breakdown the tropes and techniques he uses. This course is designed to get you to open up your comedic mind to think like and write like Stewart Francis so you can add that element to your creative approach.

## Lesson 1: Understanding Stewart Francis's Style

Let's watch some of Stewart Francis's Performances and analyze his humor. Stewart's use of puns and rapid fire delivery is what made him famous for just being a quirky, silly comedian.

 [Stewart Francis on Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson](#)

### [Transcription page](#)

Stewart Francis used multiple wordplay tropes to make his audience laugh. Some of those tropes you'll learn today are:

- Tom Swifties
- Double Entendre
- Puns
- Idiomatic Turns
- Simple Truth Interpretations
- Paraprosdokians

Wordplay jokes, one-liners and puns always give us opportunities for quick non-sequiturs and random silly jokes. So if at any time you get inspired, feel free to drop one into the chat.

### **Exercise: Why did the Chicken Cross the Road Celebrity Swap-out**

This is where you take a cliché joke premise and swap out the connector with a celebrity to create an associative/incongruous/recognition joke. Great Practice!

**TIP:** The connector should be well-known enough for the associations to be relatable.



**Example:**

*Why did Adele cross the road? To say “Hello” from the other side.*

List 2-3 Celebrities to swap into the *Why did the chicken cross the road* joke.

**What this will do for you:** This will give you a relatively simple trope to work with to start creating relatable associations with humorous results.

**PUN:** *Did you hear the one about the NASCAR driver who was sponsored by Turtle Wax? He never won a race, but always had a great finish.*

 **Stewart Francis' BEST One Liners - Michael McIntyre's Comedy Road...**

 **Exercise: Wrong Word Webster's!**

In this wordplay exercise you'll take known words that are not frequently used in conversation and create your own unique meanings using the spelling or what the word sounds like to change meaning.

This will teach you another way to look beyond the linear or literal meaning of words and get you to start thinking like a comedian.

| WORD        | MEANING                                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| PROFILE     | A file cabinet that has been promoted from amateur status |
| BELEAGUERED |                                                           |
| DEBASE      |                                                           |
| DEBUNK      |                                                           |
| INTENSE     |                                                           |



## ▶ Stewart Francis - Comedy At Club 54

In this video we get to hear Stewart Francis using Mondegreens which are misheard or misspoken phrases, commonly found in misunderstood song lyrics, cliches, famous quotes or dialogue. Much like a cliché reformation, but an intentional butchering of the phrase.

### Mondegreen examples.

After reviewing these, see if you can come up with some of your own based on your experience with music.

**"There's a bathroom on the right"** instead of "There's a bad moon on the rise" from Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Bad Moon Rising".

**"Excuse me while I kiss this guy"** instead of "Excuse me while I kiss the sky" from Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze".

**"Hold me closer, Tony Danza"** instead of "Hold me closer, tiny dancer" from Elton John's "Tiny Dancer".

**"The girl with colitis goes by"** instead of "The girl with kaleidoscope eyes" from The Beatles' "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds".

**"I'll never leave your pizza burning"** (Misheard) instead of "I'll never be your beast of burden" from The Rolling Stones' "Beast of Burden".

**"Here we are now, in containers"** (Misheard) instead of "Here we are now, entertain us" from Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit".

**"Saving his life from this warm sausage tea"** (Misheard) instead of "Spare him his life from this monstrosity" from Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody".

**"She's got electric boobs"** (Misheard) instead of "She's got electric boots" from Elton John's "Bennie and the Jets".



## **Exercise: Tom Swifties**

Tom Swifties are a type of word play in which a spoken phrase is linked with an adverb that creates a pun.

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"I might as well be dead," Tom croaked.

"I'll have a martini," said Tom, dryly.

"I dropped the toothpaste," said Tom, crestfallen.

"I'm losing my hair," Tom bawled.

"This is the end," said Tom, conclusively.

### **Write 3-5 of your own Tom Swifties**

"I'll never sleep again,"

"The thermostat is set too high,"

"It's freezing"

Now write them by coming up with the adverb first.

- Bashfully
- Intently
- Radiantly
- Darkly
- Grimly
- Patiently

## **Exercise: Simple Truth Meanings**

Metaphorical Phrases that could be turned into simple truth statements: This is where you take the implied meaning of the phrase and turn it into the comedic or simple truth meaning of the phrase.

Choose 3 or 4 of the following phrases and turn them into simple truth or alternate meaning statements.



**Example:** *I ran across my ex-girlfriend and her new boyfriend in the Best Buy parking lot. I was impressed. I didn't think my car had that kind of ground clearance.*

- Up to something...
- Just hit 50...
- I picked up a prostitute...
- I keep getting stuck...
- I ran across my ex-girlfriend...
- Over the hill...
- He's making a beer run...
- I'm feeling (or being) under the weather...
- I'm overcome...
- I can't put it down...

Collect 25 of your own idiomatic or metaphorical phrases and put them into coincidental statements or situations by focusing on the intended and comedic meanings of the phrase.

## Wordplay:

Write some wordplay jokes using the alternative meanings of these words.

**Outstanding** - Can be used to refer to something that is exceptionally good, or humorously, to someone who is literally standing outside.

**Overwhelmed** - Typically means being inundated or swamped by too much of something, but can be playfully interpreted as being literally "whelmed over."

**Understatement** - Means a statement that makes something seem less important than it actually is. Jokingly, it could refer to a statement made while under something.

**Pineapple** - Has nothing to do with pines or apples, which can lead to amusing confusion or jokes about its naming.

**Deadline** - Commonly refers to a time limit, but can humorously imply a line that is dead or not moving.

**Butterflies** - A term for a group of insects, but can lead to playful imagery or jokes about butter flying.



**Moonlighting** - Means to have a second job, usually at night, but can be whimsically interpreted as literally lighting up the moon.

**Heartbreak** - A term for emotional distress, but can be humorously used to imply that someone's heart is literally broken.

**Fireplace** - Commonly refers to where a fire is located in a home, but can be jokingly used to talk about a place made out of fire.

**Eyewitness** - Means someone who has seen something occur, but could be playfully interpreted as an eye that is also a witness.