



*"With just the right prompts and the right input from you, the genius of ChatGPT will produce jokes that are guaranteed to get you... **sued for plagiarism**"*

All A La Carte Classes are recorded  and you will receive a recording of the course. It's still valuable to take notes of key moments to help as a reminder to find that specific moment later.

New Secrets to Writing the Reverse



Description

Comedy has always been about surprise, and the Reverse takes that concept to new heights. It's like a magic trick, but instead of pulling a rabbit out of a hat, you're pulling the rug out from



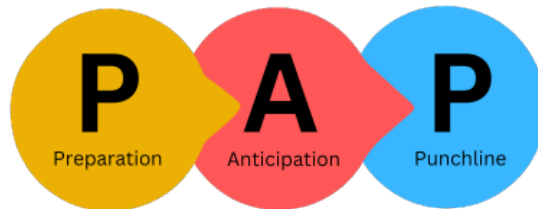
under the listener. With cleverly crafted language and unexpected actions, you'll create a comedic rollercoaster that defies convention and leaves your audience gasping for breath.

What makes the Reverse so special is its ability to upend the anticipated outcome, offering a delightful twist that catches everyone off guard. It's the art of setting up a scenario that seems to follow a predictable path, only to unleash a surprising, often absurd, ending that tickles the funny bone like nothing else. When done right, the Reverse leaves an indelible mark in the hearts of your audience, making them laugh, gasp, and remember your comedic prowess.

Joke Construction:

Most one and two-liner jokes use the PAP formula to go from introduction to resolution:

P.A.P. is an acronym that stands for **P**reparation, **A**nticipation, **P**unchline.



Most jokes and stories are built on a flow of tension and release. If we don't feel the release often we feel disappointed and unfulfilled. Sometimes when your jokes are not getting the laughs that you desire, it's because the jokes are lacking enough tension or that tension never gets resolved.

Let's warm up:

▶ Best of: Anthony Jeselnik | Netflix Is A Joke



*Finding the setups

One of the most frustrating and challenging parts of writing the reverse from scratch is sitting down and coming up with the setups. Setups for a good reverse have to have one major criteria. The setup has to imply some sort of assumption or create an acute expectation.

What sorts of setup lines already do that?

1. Transformational statements.
2. Statements with vivid imagery
3. Critiques or Praises
4. Emotional misdirection
5. Wordplay
6. Pattern building and disruption
7. Physical Misdirection

Transformational Statements

Transformational sentences are sentences that create some anticipation that something is going to happen next. Sentences like these are usually followed by an anticipated or expected action or reaction.

Start Simple

He went into the store. He said he needed to buy a couple of t-shirts... which is weird because it was a liquor store.

I spend the holidays with my family because... [What's the expectation?]

Exercise:

Take the transformational sentences below and write an unexpected ending...

Every day I used to stop in at the liquor store and pick up a bottle...

You know because it would loosen me up before...

Because I was on my way to...



Another Type of Transformational Statement

“Used to be...” statements

“Used-to-be” statements imply that there is going to be some kind of improvement. As a comedian you can write a used-to-be statement and shatter the assumed improvement...

I used to be an alcoholic...

I used to be a smoker...

I used to be a binge drinker, but I’ve improved. Now I’m...

I used to be the fat kid in school...

I used to be a 90-pound weakling...

I used to be happily married...

Another place to find transformational statements is with branding or product descriptions...

Exercise:

Take these customer service statements and create an unexpected ending for each...

We are honored to have you as a customer and hope to serve you for a long time...

We’re honored that when it comes to health, you think of us. There are a lot of options out there, but you chose us, and that means...

Preparation	Anticipation	Punchline
<i>We’re honored that when it comes to health, you think of us. There are a lot of options out there, but you chose us...</i>	And that means...	

What emotion are these statements steering us toward?
Compassion? A sense of being cared for by the company?

Take us the other direction for the punch.



Misleading statements- Imagery

Use the 5 elements of story...

- **Character**
- **Theme**
- **Setting**
- **Plot**
- **Conflict**

... to create some kind of anticipation, assumption or expectation...

Also remember to examine the Maxim of the 5 W's

- **Who?**
- **What?**
- **Where?**
- **Why?**
- **When?**
- **How?**

I remember when my brother announced that he was running for our High School's student body president. People were really surprised, because...

Examine the image then shatter the Image

What's the setting?

Where do we assume my brother is in this story?

How old do we assume my brother is?

If we approach this joke backwards, we can determine that the setting or the age of my brother was the play.

What if you started by deciding first what element you were going to use to misdirect your audience with?

Try to start with a setting or a character idea and write the joke with an intention to misdirect the audience on where we are or who we're talking about

Setting?

Character?



Exercise:

After examining the image that is created by the setup. Write a line that shatters that image

Critiques or Praises using Anticipatory Language

I love the map on the UberEats App. It lets you know exactly what time they're going to show up right to your door... with the wrong order.

What other products or services do we use that have a relatable flaw that we can exploit?

Emotional Misdirection

There are some sentences that are designed to get the audience to experience an emotion:

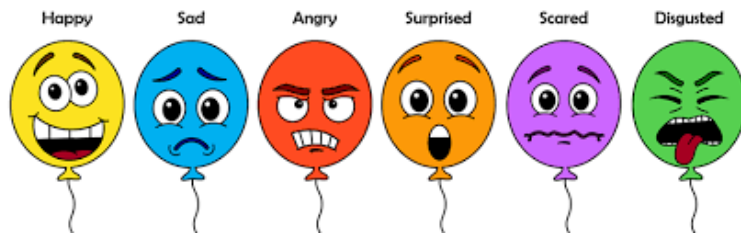
Four people have been killed, dozens were injured in a chaotic night of mass shootings across the country, this weekend...

What emotions does that sentence inspire?

- Sadness
- Concern
- Dread
- Alarm
- Fear
- Shame

Identify those assumed emotional expectations and then shatter them by **going the other way in the punchline.**

Four people have been killed, dozens were injured in a chaotic night of mass shootings across the country over the weekend... in celebration... we are offering 100 free travel vouchers to come visit the United States! Greatest Country in the World! "We're number 1! We're number 1! We're number 1!" Land of the free home of the-- [AO: Sound of a shotgun loading] "What'd you say?!"



6 Major Emotional States:

- Happy
- Sad
- Angry
- Surprised
- Scared
- Disgusted

I would add 'Embarrassed' to this list because it is so often used in comedic situations...

Let's explore some possible situations:

- First Date
- First Kiss
- One-night stand
- Meeting your partner's parents for the first time
- Job interview
- Audition
- Getting called into the principal's office
- Getting a tax audit
- Funeral
- Having a wet dream
- Partner's Parents come home when you're in a compromising situation
- Having your credit card declined during a date.
- Saying the wrong thing in an important moment
 - At the altar
 - Commencement Speech
 - High stakes project pitch
 - Marriage proposal
 - Asking someone for a date



- Bathroom situations
 - Public restroom
 - Party
 - Exclusive Restaurant
 - First time sharing a hotel room with a romantic partner.
- In an Uber or Cab or bus

Exercise:

Take one of the examples above and create a situation that puts you in an embarrassing spot. Then surprise us with where it is or who you're with...

Exercise (for homework):

At home collect 10 embarrassing situations that happened to you in your life. This exercise should continue throughout your life. Anytime a memory pops into your mind, write it down. Keep a journal of embarrassing moments. Everyone of those moments has potential to become a really good joke that can create relatable tension.

Creating Jokes using Ambivalence

Ambivalence is when we are uncompassionate or conflicting about things we should be compassionate about. Death, or someone experiencing an accident or an illness could be one way to lead the audience to create an emotion of concern. Then as a comedian we can create surprise by going the other way with the emotion.

Use Ambivalence to create an expectation

This is where we write a sentence that has an important piece of information that heightens our curiosity, our concern, our intrigue, then add another seemingly insignificant piece of information to that sentence. Then the payoff comes from making that insignificant piece of information, the most important...

My father, who lives in Bakersfield was just diagnosed with stage IV colon cancer...

1. What or Who is the main topic?
2. What are the 2 pieces of information that modify the main topic?



3. Out of the 2 pieces of information, what's the concerning piece of information?
4. Write an ending to make the insignificant piece of information the most important.

My father, who lives in Bakersfield, was just diagnosed with stage IV colon Cancer... It's tragic. I mean, who still lives in Bakersfield?!

What are some issues or situations in our society that are illegal or would cause concern?

Build a story that leads the audience to develop concern for someone in the story. Then flip the script.

"I remember when my mother was diagnosed with early onset dementia. Which was a boon for me on my birthdays. She would give me a birthday card with a \$100 bill in it. Then she'd be like, "Jerry, did I give you your birthday card?" I'd be like, "Ummm... No!" Like, If she was having a really bad day, I could net about a grand!"

Usually when dealing with using ambivalence or irreverence, the sentence or story we are presenting has two ideas playing within the story. In the above example, the two ideas are:

My mother's dementia

Emotion = Concern, sadness

Birthday card with \$100

Emotion = Excitement, greed

Which of the two ideas would we normally have the most concern for?

Dementia

So for the reverse to play out to create surprise, we play into the birthday card and the money being the most important and exciting part for the punchline.

Exercise:

Write a short bit where someone has a condition like

- Dementia
- Cancer
- Head Trauma



- Car Accident
- Asthma
- Suicide
- Stutter
- Murder
- Abortion
- Heart Attack
- Near Death Experience

Then add another condition or modifier, like an event, a location, setting, situation that doesn't trigger an emotion. Then in the punch make the non-triggering condition the important piece of information.

Here's an example:

The other night my brother was coming over with a bag of some of the most potent weed in the world from the Netherlands. But his car was T-boned by a tow truck and it exploded. He's in the hospital right now and we're not sure if he's gonna make it... So if I'm a little out of it, I hope you understand it's because... I never got my damn weed.

Wordplay or Double-Entendre

I was on a first date with this girl I knew from college. We were driving up to Griffith Observatory. She was kinda clingy. We get there and we're looking out over the sunset. And she says, "I love the view." I thought she said something totally different... I was like, "Woah! This is only our first date!"

Because you know, when there's that rare, special moment when love comes knocking at your window... (CARRY THE EMOTION OF ROMANCE FORWARD, THEN) Run like Hell!"

Build, build, build the tension to a predictable and expected emotion, then shatter that emotion.

I was working with this gal on a script that we were getting ready to pitch for a network. When you work closely together with someone on a creative project, oftentimes emotions can get confusing.

The night before our pitch, she says, "I'm really nervous about this pitch."

I said, "You don't have to be nervous. You have ME."

She looked me right in the eyes and said, "What do you mean 'I HAVE YOU', Jerry?"



I was like, "Uh-oh!"

I said, "Look. You have to understand that there's only one woman for me..."

And my wife... is still pissed off about HER..."

Pattern Building and Disruption

I always get a kick out of the names of some of the governmental departments.

Department of Defense - where they take your kids and expertly train them to kill or be killed.

You know my favorite thing to come out of the Department of Defense? Body bags.

- *Attack Helicopters*
- *Assault Rifles*
- *Hydrogen Bombs - specifically designed to kill as many people as possible, but leave the buildings intact. You know, "Defense!"*

The Department of Defense where their innovations and creativity inspired Napalm. Drop it from a plane or helicopter so you can eliminate jungles and burn your enemy alive.

My other favorite department in government is the Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Nickname? The "PARTY" Store. Sounds like they'd be really popular around the 4th of July." Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; "Let's smoke, drink and shoot up the town.

The Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

If only there was a one-stop shop I could go to that had Cigarettes, Guns and Liquor. Cigarettes, Guns and Liquor! Think about it, When you have your cigarettes, guns and liquor, there's only one more stop before the party, the Department of Homeland Security, because they have I.C.E.!

Exercise (At Home)

1. Collect 25 of your favorite reverses from Anthony Jeselnik, Rodney Dangerfield, Stewart Francis, Jimmy Carr, Rita Rudner.
2. Put them on a page.
3. Study the structure.
 - a. What type of set up is it?
 - b. What type of assumption or expectation did the comedian create?
4. See if you can write your own jokes using similar approaches in each of the 25 reverses.



Exercise (At Home)

1. Look at product packaging, online ads, product statements to collect 10 setups that present an expected ending.
2. Determine what the statement is intending to say, then shatter that statement with a different.