

## **What is British Humour?**

In popular culture, British humour is a somewhat general term applied to certain types of comedy and comedic acts from the United Kingdom. Many UK comedy TV shows typical of British humour have become popular all round the world, and, for good or bad, have been a strong avenue for the export and representation of British culture to an international audience, but like many things the "typical" British sense of humour doesn't really exist. There are many different kinds of humour, and often culture and tradition plays a big part in how funny you may find something, or not. A perfect example of this can be found in the comments on a post in the "Have Fun With English" site - [Nine Words Women Use](#).

## **A to Z of Types of Humour**

**Adviser:** the comic adviser gives uncalled for advice in a Punch prototype. For example: Advice to people who want to buy a puppy: Don't. You'll often find this kind of humour in Doctor Doctor jokes.

**Anecdote:** any interesting event, either having to do with a celebrity or something smaller, that helps the humourist make a point.

**Aside:** a thought added as if something the speaker was saying reminded him of it.

**Banter:** good-natured back and forth joking.

**Black (Dark) humour:** taking topics and events that are usually regarded as taboo and treating them in a satirical or humorous manner while retaining their seriousness.

For example: The 1964 Stanley Kubrick film *Dr.*

*Strangelove* was about nuclear warfare and the annihilation of life on Earth, but it was also very, very, funny.

**Blue humour:** humour based on offensive subjects like sex, body parts, and bodily functions.

**Bull:** a humorous statement that is based on an outrageous contradiction. Ex: "The best people have never had kids."

**Burlesque:** a form of satire. Burlesque ridicules any basic style of speech or writing. (Parody makes fun of specific writings.)

**Caricature:** exaggeration of a person's mental, physical, or personality traits, in wisecrack form.

**Clown:** to act stupidly, often to make other people laugh.

Conundrum: a word puzzle that can't be solved because the answer is a pun. For example: Why do cows wear bells? Because their horns don't work.

Epigram: clever, short saying about a general group. Mostly satire about mankind.

Exaggerism: an exaggerated witticism that overstates the features, defects, or the strangeness of someone or something.

Farce: light dramatic work in which highly improbable plot situations, exaggerated characters, and often slapstick elements are used for humorous effect.

Freudian Slip: a funny statement which seems to just pop out, but which actually comes from the person's subconscious thoughts.

Gag: a short joke or quip.

Hyperbole: extreme exaggeration.

Innuendo: "an indirect remark about somebody or something, usually suggesting something bad or rude".

Used a lot in British sitcoms of the 70s like *Are you Being Served*.

Irony: a leading part of humour. Irony is using words to express something completely different from the literal

meaning. Usually, someone says the opposite of what they mean and the listener believes the opposite of what they said.

Joke: short story ending with a funny climactic twist.

Limericks: five-line rhyming poems, which intend to be witty or humorous, and are sometimes obscene with humorous intent.

Nonsensism: inclusive of the epigram and the wisecrack, it is any kind of funny nonsense in speaking form.

Nonsensism includes all kinds of absurdity without realistic logic and makes a general observation of absurd reference, often found in limericks.

Parody: humorous version of any well-known writing.

For example: Weird Al Yankovic's "Pretty Fly for a Rabbi".

Practical Joke: a joke put into action. You hear an oral joke, see a printed joke, and feel the practical joke. The trick is played on another person and the humour comes from what happens. These kinds of jokes are often played on April Fool's Day in the UK.

Quip: a smart, sarcastic retort.

**Recovery:** a combination of blunder and wit, where a person makes an error, and then saves himself with a fast correction.

**Repartee:** includes clever replies and retorts. The most common form is the insult.

**Sarcasm:** using witty language to convey insults or scorn.

**Satire:** wit that is critical humour. Satire is sarcasm that makes fun of something.

**Sitcom:** (short for Situational Comedy) a funny television or radio show in which the same characters appear in each programme in a different story.

**Situational Humour:** this is comedy that comes from your own life. No one in your audience will have heard it and it can get a group used to you. This type of humour is based on a humorous situation that you have experienced. Situational humour is the bread and butter of sitcoms like Friends.

**Slapstick:** a boisterous form of comedy marked by chases, collisions, and crude practical jokes, like slipping on banana skins. It gets its name from a paddle designed to produce a loud whacking sound, which was formerly used by performers in farces.

Switching: a common form of switching is changing the main parts of the story, such as the setup or the punch line, and creating a new joke.

Understatement: making something that is regular or large seem extremely smaller or less. Intentionally downsizing a large object.

Wisecrack: any clever remark about a particular person or thing. Wisecracks are quick wordplays about a person.

Wit: a message whose ingenuity or verbal skill or incongruity has the power to evoke laughter.

Wordplay: a humorous play on words with witty verbal exchanges.



Charles Spencer Chaplin was born on 16 April 1889. There is no official record of his birth, although Chaplin believed he was born at [East Street, Walworth](#), in [South London](#).