

# Using Appropriate Humor to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Don Johnson

**teacher**

*(noun)*

a person who helps  
you solve problems  
you'd never have  
without them.

# Outline

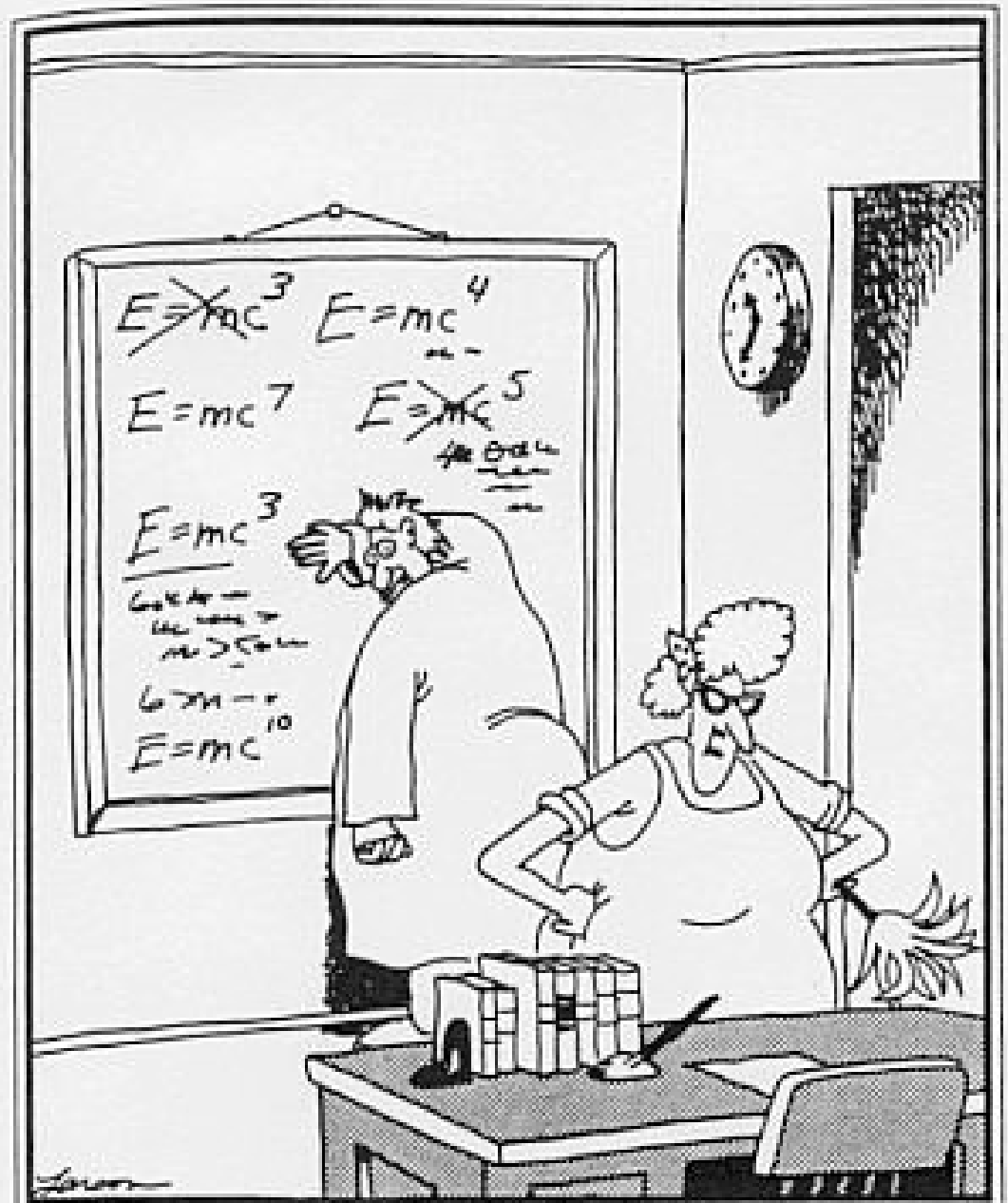
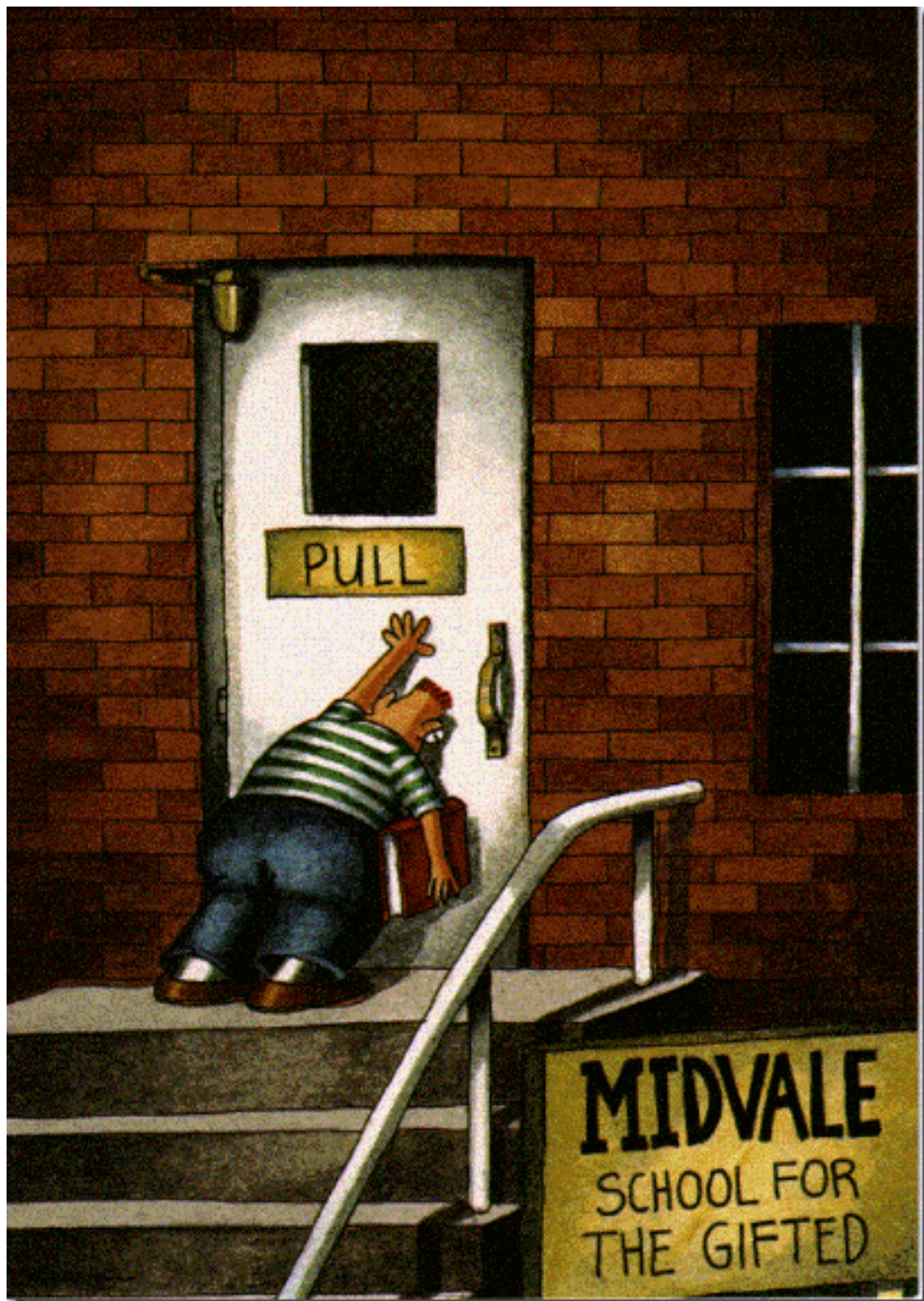
- What **iS** humor anyway?
- **Why use humor** in teaching?
- Do you have any **tips** for using humor effectively?
- Do you have any **examples**?
- Does humor **work**?

So, what is humor anyway?

“Humor is the result of the **expected** running head-long into the **unexpected.**”

- (Me, about a month ago)





"Now that desk looks better. Everything's squared away, yessir, squaaaaaaared away."

# Why use humor in teaching?

WOW! This professor is like a real person!

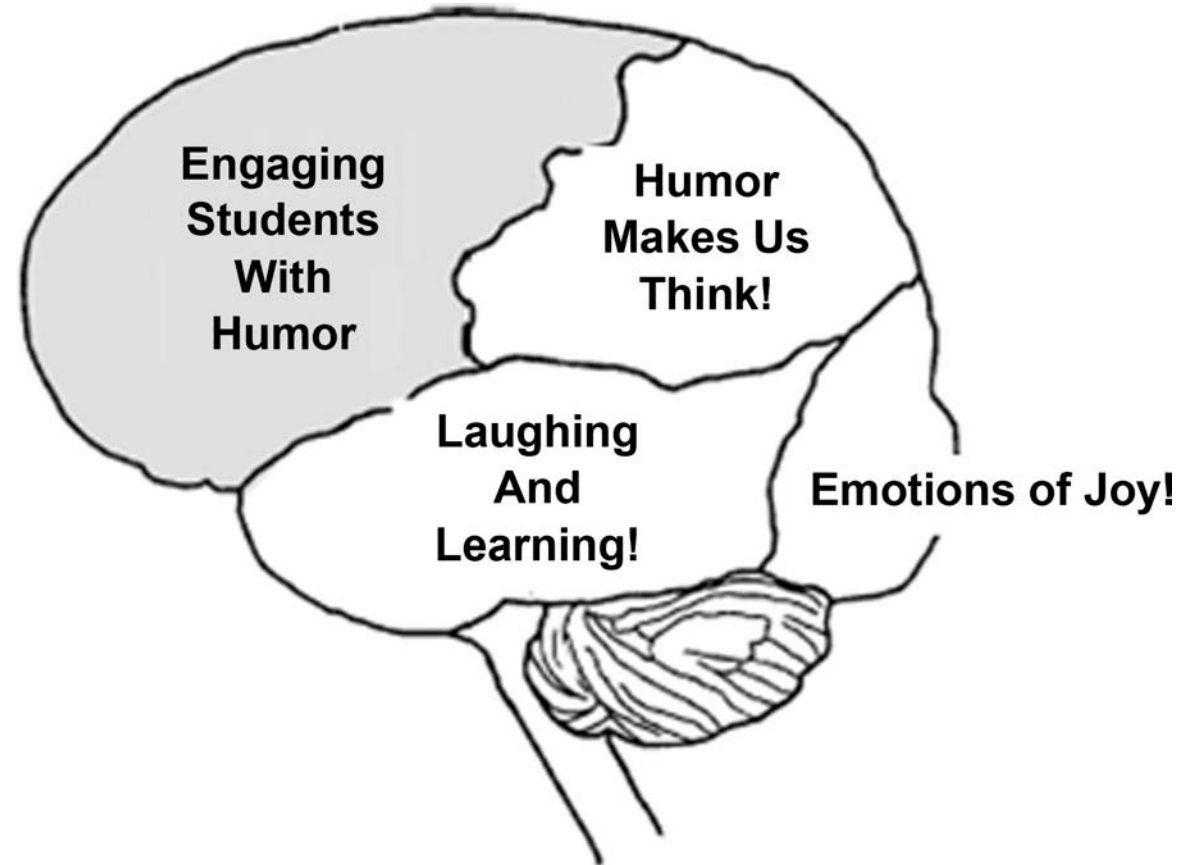
BACON!

I am super engaged right now!!!!

- Interest
- Engagement
- Memorable
- Positive Affect



**The powerful emotion of humor engages students, encourages them [students] to think, promotes learning, and serves as a bridge between educators and students in a joyful manner.**



Heidi L. Lujan, and Stephen E. DiCarlo Advan in Physiol  
Edu 2016;40:433-434

Advances in Physiology Education

# **Additional reasons I use humor**

- **I teach . . .**
  - **Technical** courses
  - **Math** intensive
  - **Required** of all department majors
    - **Agricultural Communications**
    - **Agricultural Leadership**
    - **Agricultural Education**
    - **Agricultural Systems Management**

## Any tips???

- Keep focus on the subject matter
  - Humor is a tool; the subject matter is the thing!

**Avoid** these topics:

- Gender
- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Appearance
- Handicapping conditions
- Religion
- Politics
- Disparaging comments / Sarcasm

When in doubt, leave it out!!!!



# So . . . who can you make fun of?



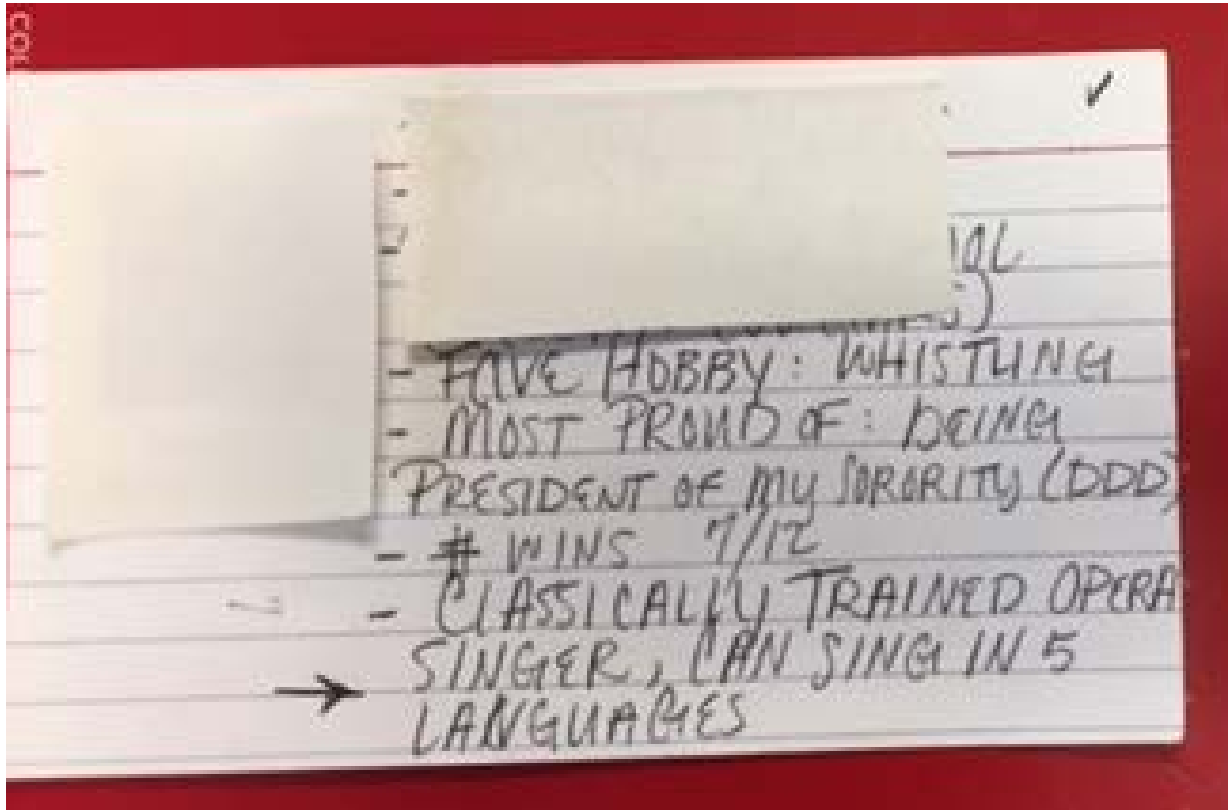
You poor, poor piglet . . .

I can't believe I lost that bet!!!

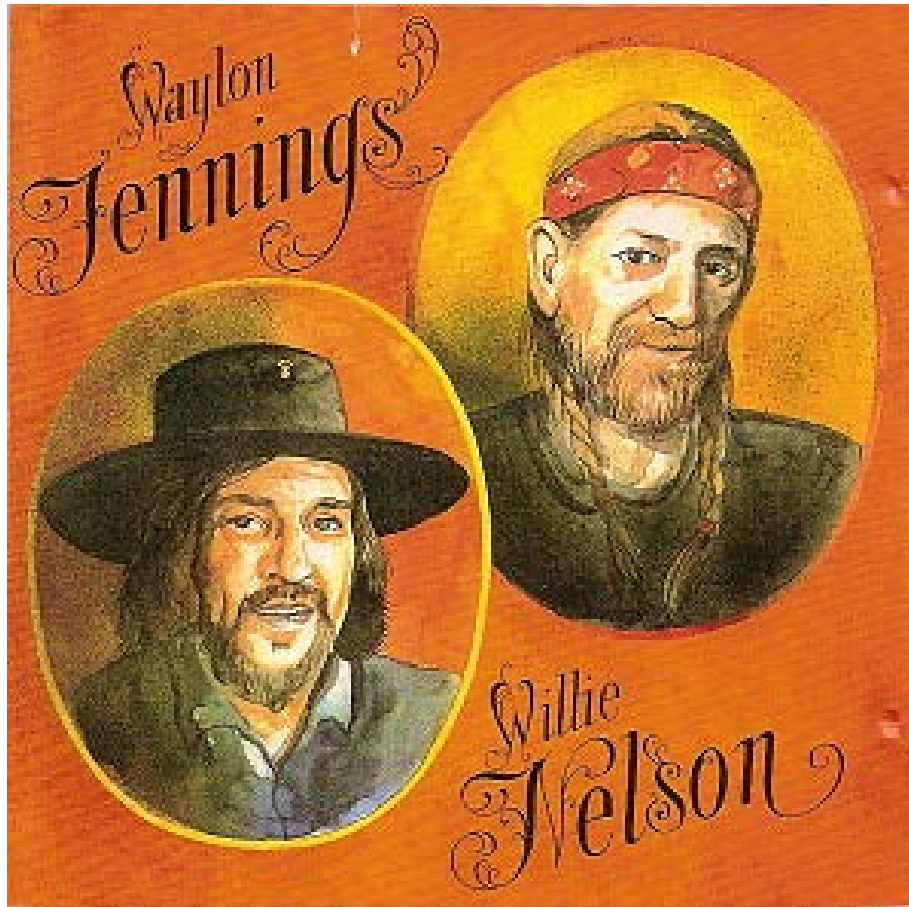
I can't believe I lost that bet!!!

Got any examples?

# Unusual or Interesting (Fun Fact)



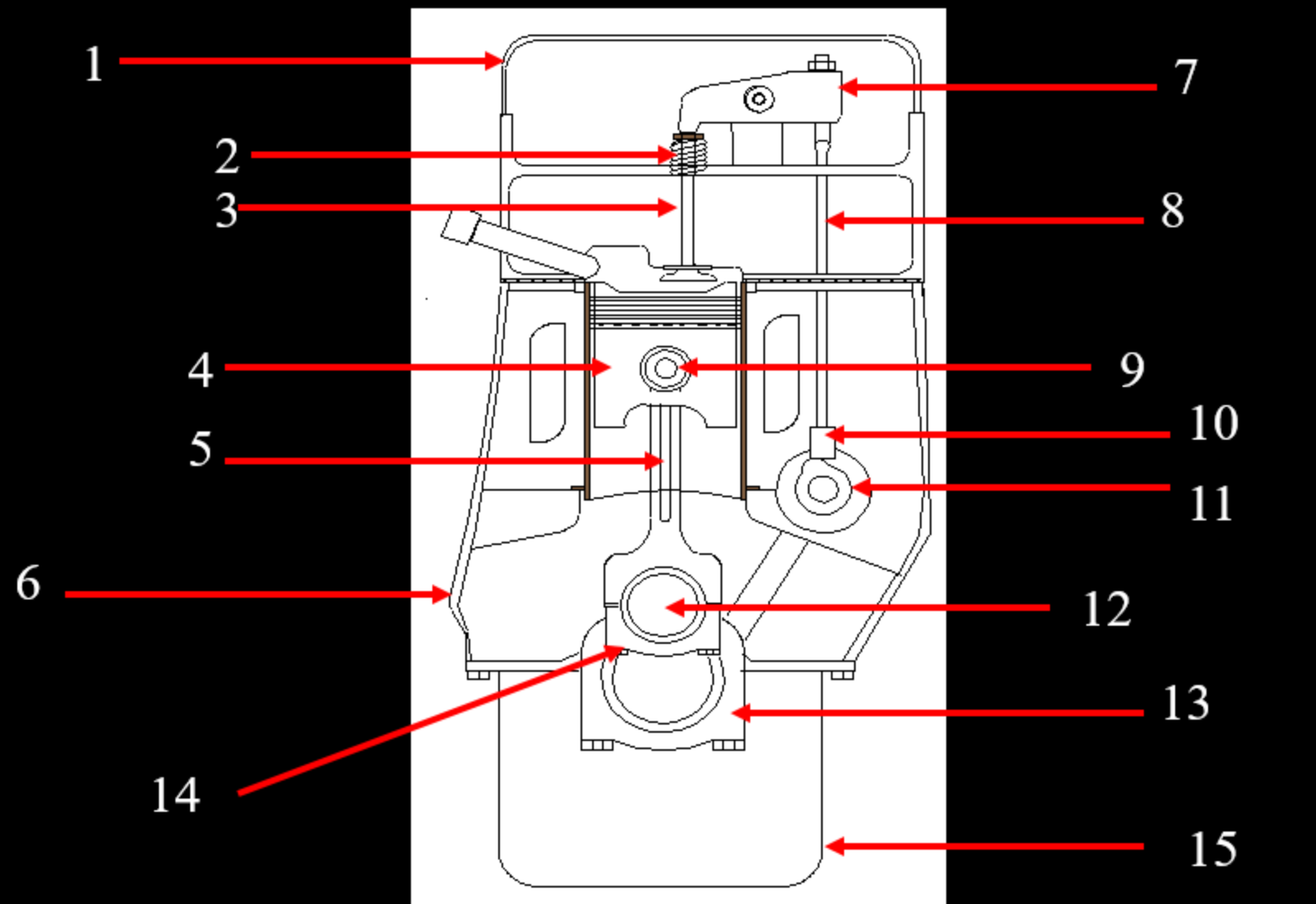
# Naked Numbers



**“Mommas don’t let  
your numbers grow  
up to be naked . . .**

***Let ‘em be gallons  
and bushels and  
such.”***

# Name that Engine Part



# Engine Parts ID Scoring

- 14 - 15 correct = Master Gearhead
- 12-13 = Gearhead
- 10 -11 = Master Mechanic
- 8 - 9 = Apprentice Mechanic
- 6 – 7 = Wrench Turner
- 4 – 5 = Wrench Loser
- 2 -- 3 = Jiffy Lube Customer
- 0 – 1 = Can't Find Jiffy Lube

# Unit-Factor Example Problem

- Water flows from the outlet of an irrigation pipe at a rate of 200 cubic inches per second. What is the flow rate in gallons per hour?

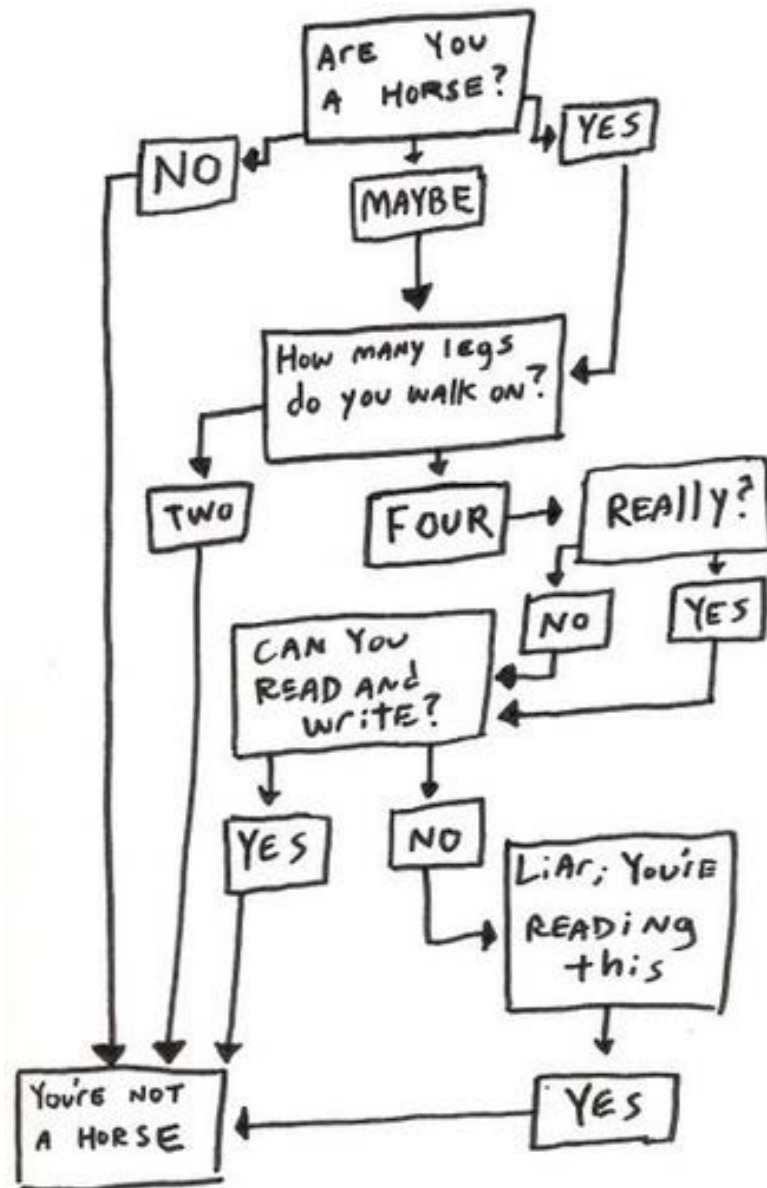
$$\frac{3000}{\text{hour}} \frac{\text{Gal.}}{\text{hour}} = \frac{1 \text{ gal.}}{231 \text{ in}^3} \times \frac{200 \text{ in}^3}{1 \text{ sec.}} \times \frac{60 \text{ sec.}}{1 \text{ min.}} \times \frac{60 \text{ min.}}{1 \text{ hr.}}$$





# AM I A HORSE?

A HELPFUL FLOW CHART

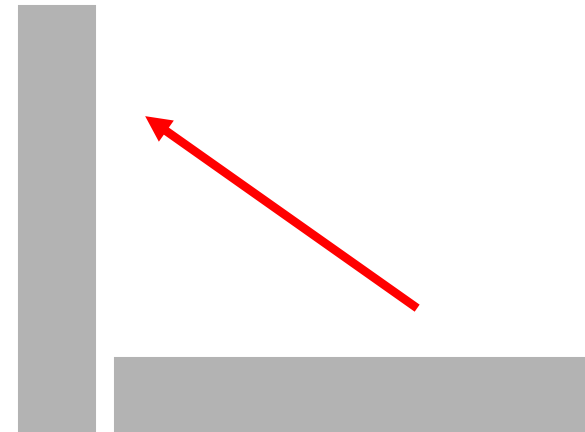




# Masonry Construction

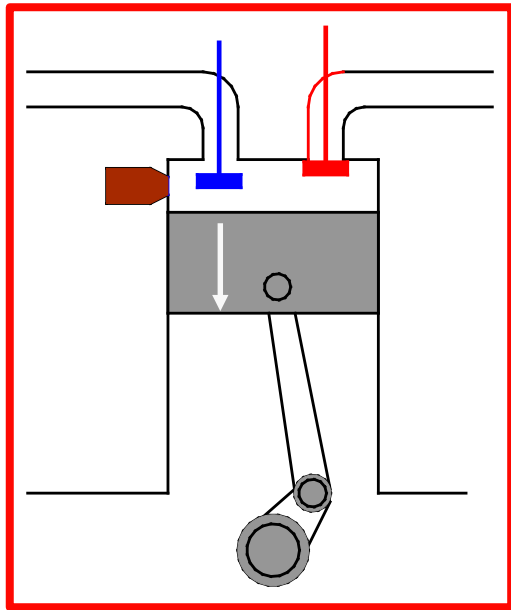


**Block Construction**  
**Poured-in-place Construction**  
**Tilt-up Construction**

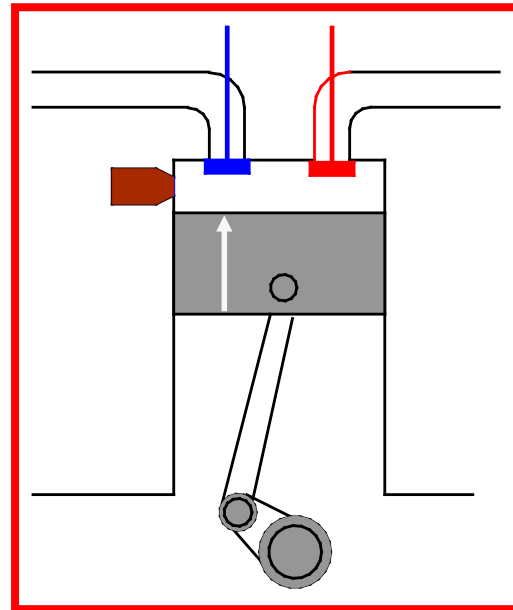


# Are We Really Doing This???

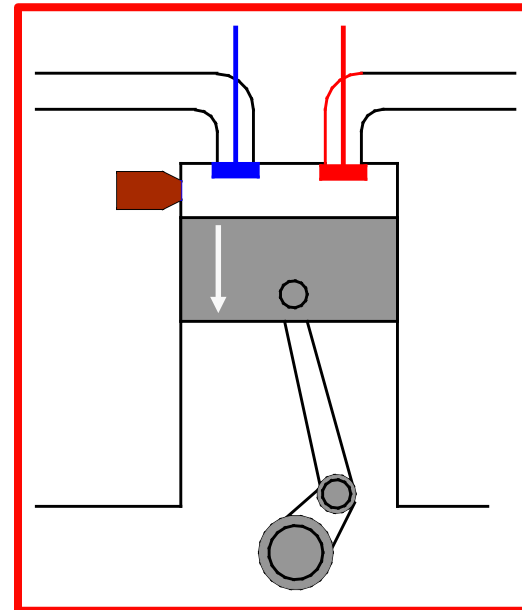
- An Example:
  - Four-stroke cycle engine operation



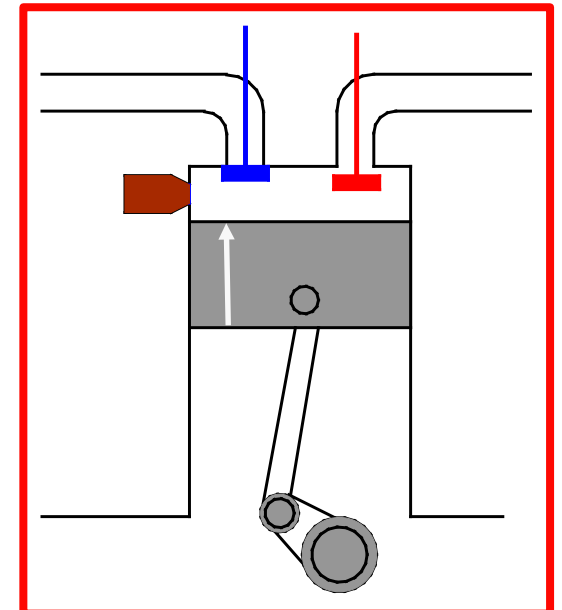
**Intake**



**Compression**

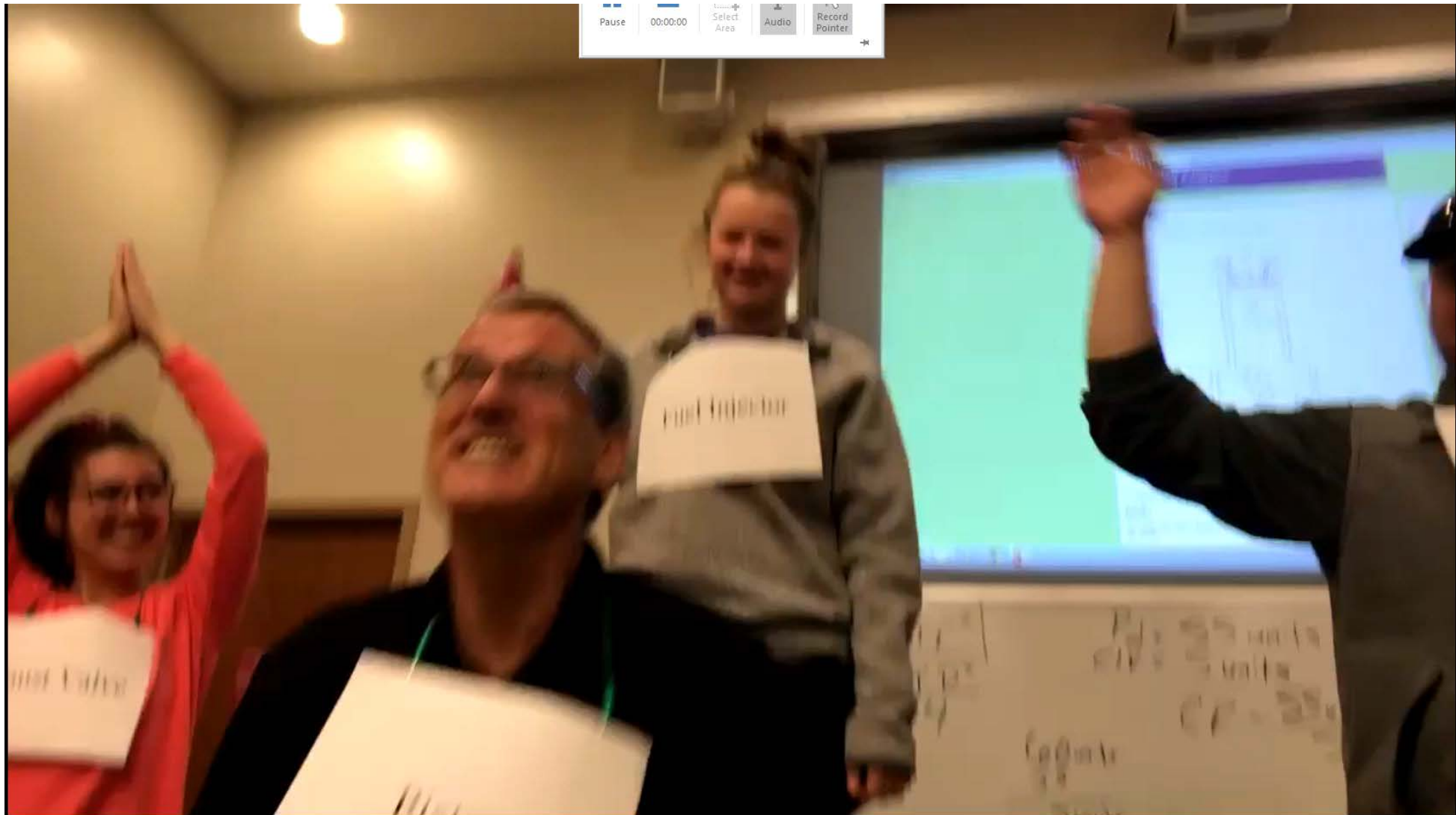


**Power**



**Exhaust**

# Are We Really Doing This???



# Does humor work?

- Makes class fun even when the topic isn't
- Most difficult course . . . not mathematically inclined . . .  
joy to attend
- I didn't want to miss . . . interactive and entertaining .  
. . . felt engaged
- Takes his job seriously, but make class fun
- Funny and knows how to get the class involved
- Made a class I expected to hate one of the best I have  
EVER taken!

Questions . . .

Comments . . .

Complaints . . .

Anybody know a good joke?