

# THE FUNNY ONES



## TEACHING TOOLKIT

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# ABOUT THE FILM

In every home, classroom and workplace, there's always that someone who makes people laugh. You know, the funny one. They have their own unique way of cracking jokes and bringing the LOLs. So, what would happen if we searched Australia to find four funny girls and brought them into the same room?

We could team them up with four hilarious comedians and invite them to write and rehearse a comedy show and perform it live. Will they get along? Will they make each other laugh? What does a room full of funny girls look like? Does 4 x funny = The Funny Ones?

*The Funny Ones* follows Julia, Emily, Soraya and Audrey – four vivacious girls with a passion for

making people laugh. They come together for the first time to make friends and work alongside four of Australia's most successful young female comedians – Veronica Milsom and the Skit Box troupe – to put on a fun-filled show for their nearest and dearest. They dress up, get silly and work together to turn ideas from their own lives into material for the show. The result is a colourful and energetic performance, filled with characters, songs and life observations that has everyone laughing.

From diverse backgrounds, these girls share a desire to bring humour and laughter to the lives of others. They waste no time striking up a friendship and finding ways to help each other get the biggest laughs.

Julia, a quirky and mature 10-year-old, understands that it's important to be kind and true to yourself. She creates surprising character-based performances and witty songs full of wry social commentary.

Emily is a bright and empathetic girl from a Zimbabwean-Australian family. She has an amazing singing voice and likes to poke fun at herself and her family in her catchy songs. At 14, she's the oldest of the girls.

Soraya, a cheeky 10-year-old Aboriginal girl loves sport, rapping and doesn't conform to girlish stereotypes. She creates funny sketches and roleplays the exchange between a boy and a girl on their first date.

Audrey is an effervescent and expressive 11-year-old who lives to dance, rap and entertain. An animal lover, "Pawdrey" creates a sketch full of cat puns and surprises her brother on stage with a rap about him.

Together they are *The Funny Ones*.





## USING THIS RESOURCE

In *The Funny Ones*, four young comics keen to develop their skills team up with experienced comedians to create their first comedy show. The discussion starters and learning tasks suggested in *The Funny Ones* Teaching Toolkit provide additional ideas for Years 3 – 6 students to engage with the film.

Tasks relate to collaboration, audiences, performance and feedback, with relevant curriculum links noted for Drama, English, Critical and Creative Thinking, and Personal and Social Capability.



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## LEARNING TASKS

### TASK 1 (CLIP: 00:54 – 02:12)

'I think everyone has a sense of humour, and they just need to find that one thing that makes their humour explode,' says Julia.

In an independent writing task, have students reflect on their own sense of humour. What makes you laugh? And how do you make others laugh?

Responses could be shared in a whole class reflection to learn about each other and appreciate the diverse perspectives in the group.



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**TASK 2** (CLIP: 03:56 – 05:21)

Julia and Soraya both refer to stereotypes, with Soraya listing several common gender stereotypes. In small group discussions, have students consider and respond to the following three questions:

1. What is a stereotype?
2. Give an example of a gender stereotype that you have personally heard or inferred before.
3. Give an example of a stereotype about girls that was challenged in this film.



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**TASK 3** (CLIP: 02:12 – 03:53)

Emily says her friends would probably describe her as being empathetic.

As a class, discuss how this empathy will help Emily in her comedy.  
For example, it may inform the jokes she writes or her connection with the audience.

Is empathy equally as important for authors / creators across all genres?





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#### **TASK 4** (CLIP: 06:31 – 08:22)

Ahead of their first meeting, comedian Greta Lee Jackson says that the girls will teach the adult comedians a lot. She believes it will be a 'full on collaboration'.

In a class discussion, ask students if they have ever been involved in a mentoring relationship. For example, a Buddies program at school. Do students agree that both the mentor and mentee benefit from these arrangements? Why / why not?



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**TASK 5** (CLIP: 08:23 – 09:09)

The above clip shows some of the warm-up games the group played while getting to know each other. The first game combines movement and alliteration, while 'Funny Go Past' uses props and physical comedy to entertain. Veronica and Greta explain that movement and exaggeration are powerful tools in comedy.

Try one of these games as a warm-up activity in your class. Which game would students prefer to try and why?





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**TASK 6** (CLIP: 10:22 – 10:55)

Adele supports Emily in workshopping her skit idea, 'Life's 10 Little Awkies'. This skit centres on the socially awkward moments that we have all experienced.

In pairs, have students brainstorm other awkward moments that could be added to Emily's list. Students could then choose one scenario to perform to the class in a 30-60 second skit.

In a class reflection, have pairs share their collaborative planning and performing processes. Did you use any visual organisers or other planning tools? How did you reach agreements in this task?

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**TASK 7** (CLIP: 11:53 – 13:45)

The girls all perform their ‘work in progress’ and receive feedback on their performances. Why is audience feedback important in comedy? How would students describe the feedback the audience provided? What makes feedback ‘constructive’?

Has the class established shared expectations for giving and receiving feedback? If not, what should these entail? For example, feedback to peers should be specific, helpful and kind. Students’ suggestions could be recorded on an anchor chart and this could guide students when they next provide feedback.





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**TASK 8** (CLIP: 13:46 – 15:00)

After rehearsing in front of each other and their mentors, the girls are ready to perform for friends and family. Audrey says she is nervous, but she knows the audience will be supportive even if they make mistakes.

As a class, discuss the importance of sharing work with an authentic audience – whether for performances, writing or speaking. How do different audiences shape your work? Did this film teach you anything about audiences? Following this discussion, have students independently respond to the following question:

Why is it important to understand your audience?



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## TASK 9

In her Personal Statement, Director Genevieve Bailey says, 'It is really important for kids in Australia to see themselves on screen, and in documentaries especially. I love when kids can be who they are, not just perform as fictional scripted characters.'

In a class discussion, ask students if they can think of any other TV shows or films where kids play themselves rather than acting. Do you watch documentaries? Would you agree that most children's shows involve kids playing characters rather than themselves? Why do you think this is? What purposes do the different examples have, and what effects do you think they have on audiences?





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## TASK 10

The self-introductions, workshops, rehearsals and performances in *The Funny Ones* depict many different types of comedy. These include character comedy, physical comedy, satire, funny songs and raps, puns and more.

In small groups, ask students to discuss their favourite types of comedy. These might include options that were not explored in the film.

After discussing their personal preferences, explain that groups will now plan and write a short comedy routine, just as the girls did in *The Funny Ones*. They could adapt an idea from the film or another known comedy or create something entirely new. If individual students would be uncomfortable performing a comedy routine, groups could plan for this when allocating roles.

In a class reflection, have groups discuss both their planned routines and their collaborative processes.

If time permits, these routines could be rehearsed and performed in subsequent classes.

# AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM LINKS

	Year 3 / 4	Year 5 / 6
Critical and Creative Thinking	<p>Expand on known ideas to create new and imaginative combinations</p> <p>Experiment with a range of options when seeking solutions and putting ideas into action</p>	<p>Combine ideas in a variety of ways and from a range of sources to create new possibilities</p> <p>Assess and test options to identify the most effective solution and to put ideas into action</p>
Drama	<p>Explore ideas and narrative structures through roles and situations and use empathy in their own improvisations and devised drama (ACADRM031)</p> <p>Identify intended purposes and meaning of drama, starting with Australian drama, including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, using the elements of drama to make comparisons (ACADRR034)</p>	<p>Explore dramatic action, empathy and space in improvisations, playbuilding and scripted drama to develop characters and situations (ACADRM035)</p> <p>Explain how the elements of drama and production elements communicate meaning by comparing drama from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama (ACADRR038)</p>
English	<p>Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596)</p> <p>Discuss the nature and effects of some language devices used to enhance meaning and shape the reader's reaction, including rhythm and onomatopoeia in poetry and prose (ACELT1600)</p>	<p>Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view (ACELT1603)</p> <p>Understand, interpret and experiment with a range of devices and deliberate word play in poetry and other literary texts, for example nonsense words, spoonerisms, neologisms and puns (ACELT1606)</p>
Personal and Social Capability	<p>Identify communication skills that enhance relationships for particular groups and purposes</p> <p>Describe characteristics of cooperative behaviour and identify evidence of these in group activities</p>	<p>Identify and explain factors that influence effective communication in a variety of situations</p> <p>Contribute to groups and teams, suggesting improvements in methods used for group investigations and projects</p>

# BEHIND THE SCENES

## PERSONAL STATEMENT BY PRODUCER BELINDA DEAN

It's been such rewarding and fun filled experience making *The Funny Ones*. From the outset, there was so much support for the film, because everyone understands the need to encourage young girls towards a career in comedy if that's where their passion lies. When I was a kid, I remember so clearly being told that girls can't be funny. And even though I was 'the funny one' in my circle of friends, it never presented as a viable career path.

But I think the tide is changing. We live in a time of trailblazing female comedians and the world has awakened to the fact that women are funny! It surprised us to learn that none of our girls have ever heard that girls aren't as funny as boys. Which is great! So, they each have this incredible freedom and enthusiasm to explore their ideas with confidence.

What was also great, is that even though the four are individually very different, they immediately bonded as a group and were so excited by the collaboration. They all share such a positive outlook on life and love the feeling of making others laugh. And coming together with like-minded girls, in a neutral space away from family or friend groups, meant they could explore their passion fully and learn from each other and the comedians. We're so happy to have been a part of their journey and we hope that this film inspires all the funny ones out there to keep generating the LOLs.

## PERSONAL STATEMENT BY DIRECTOR GENEVIEVE BAILEY

If I could go back in time and tell primary school aged Genevieve that one day, she would be wearing giant orange clawed foot slippers and a Boston terrier mask while shooting a kids' comedy documentary for the ABC, well, I am certain she would approve!

We put the call out for funny girls across Australia to send in videos and expressions of interest to take part in this film and wow did the memories come flooding back. I started shooting strange skits, special effects videos and music video spoofs with my siblings when I was 8. I treasure those early memories as they definitely influenced my decision to become a filmmaker. After touring with my documentary, I AM ELEVEN, it has been a real joy to be working with kids again.

It is really important for kids in Australia to see themselves on screen, and in documentaries especially. I love when kids can be who they are, not just perform as fictional scripted characters. They say truth is stranger than fiction and I think sometimes truth is funnier too. Soraya, Julia, Emily and Audrey – *The Funny Ones* – certainly reminded me of that.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Directed and Narrated by GENEVIEVE BAILEY

Created and Produced by BELINDA DEAN

Produced by unko

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