



# TEACHERS' GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION:

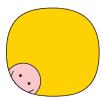
Motivating and engaging your students in the receptive and the productive modes of the Australian Curriculum has never been so entertaining! The **You're Skitting Me: Sketch-O-Matic**, a digital sketch comedy writing tool – is an exciting resource that supports students in learning the craft of writing sketch comedy.

**Sketch-O-Matic** is a student centred, educational, web-based project tool that introduces the comedy genre. It directly supports the Australian Curriculum by providing opportunities for students to: further their understanding of how the selection of a variety of language features can influence an audience; create imaginative, informative and persuasive scripts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions; and use deliberate language and textual choices in their scripts.

**Sketch-O-Matic** features video clips from the *You're Skitting Me* TV series, and these provide students with contemporary, Australian examples from which they can learn to identify the different types of comedy, can model their own work, and, as a multimodal text, can deconstruct in order to make meaning and further their understanding.

Each of the stages also feature raw behind the scenes footage of the writers, cast and crew offering advice to young writers and filmmakers as they talk about their knowledge of sketch comedy, and how they work collaboratively to entertain and engage an audience in order to make them laugh.

This Guide has been developed for teachers to assist them in their curriculum development, by explaining, step by step, how students are to engage with **Sketch-O-Matic**. Together with this, the Guide outlines the learning objectives of each stage of the website and makes explicit the links to the Australian Curriculum: English.



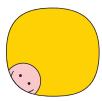
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## » STAGE 1: INTRODUCTION TO COMEDY

### WHAT IS COMEDY?

Stage 1 provides a concise definition of comedy and how comedy is created and used. This section of the website provides students with a definition of what sketch comedy is, the impact it can have on an audience and how it is developed. Students are provided with raw behind the scenes video that captures the cast and crew of the successful *You're Skitting Me* TV series talking about sketch comedy.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

*(Reading, viewing, listening)*

Students interact with peers and teachers as well as working independently in the **Sketch-O-Matic** online environment. They experience an independent learning environment where they begin to deconstruct their own knowledge of sketch comedy and build an understanding of its purpose. Students engage with digital text and a multimodal text for enjoyment as well as to inform them.

### SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

After students have viewed the content on the **Sketch-O-Matic** website:

- As a class, watch an episode or the trailer of *You're Skitting Me*.
- Ask students to note down the cultural/social references made throughout the episode/ trailer.
- Ask students to write a short paragraph explaining how sketch comedy is a literary text that draws on and communicates individuals experiences, opinions, and values.
- Ask students to list the differences between: current affairs, popular culture, popular opinion and news.

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

#### Literature and context

##### Year 5

Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts. (ACELT1608)

##### Year 6

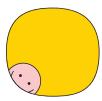
Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts. (ACELT1613)

##### Year 7

Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts. (ACELT1619)

##### Year 8

Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups. (ACELT1626)



## » STAGE 2: TYPES OF COMEDY

### DEFINITIONS

Stage 2 outlines the different types of sketch comedy using video examples from *You're Skitting Me* to demonstrate the nuances of each type.

Students are provided with written definitions of the different comedy types and each type of comedy is also demonstrated through multimodal text examples. The types of comedy explored are:

- Parody
- Surreal
- Fish out of Water
- Tension and Release
- Inappropriate Response
- Character

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

*(Reading, viewing, listening)*

The definitions and multimodal texts support students to develop an understanding of how events, situations and people can be represented from different viewpoints to persuade the viewer to think and feel a certain way. Students also start to understand the role these multimodal texts play in introducing or reinforcing awareness in the viewer of certain issues, popular culture, and current affairs. Students listen for and identify different emphases in the multimodal texts, using that understanding to elaborate upon in discussions about what they have viewed and the opinions they have formed.

### SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

After students have viewed the content on the Sketch-O-Matic website:

- Ask students to, in their own words, define 'surreal'.
- Ask students to share examples of the themes, topics and issues that could be explored in the different types of comedy.
- Explore with students the popular culture, current affairs, TV formats and youth issues that have been explored in the multimodal texts. How do these link to other digital and print sources?

**AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM:  
ENGLISH CONTENT DESCRIPTORS**

***Interpreting, analysing, evaluating***

**Year 5**  
Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources. (ACELY1703)

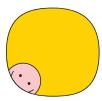
**Year 6**  
Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text. (ACELY1711)

**Year 7**  
Compare the text structures and language features of multimodal texts, explaining how they combine to influence audiences (ACELY1721)

**Year 8**  
Explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener. (ACELY1735)

**Source:** Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), downloaded from the Australian Curriculum website on (November 2014) <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10?layout=1#level6>

- Discuss the language features, e.g. sentence structure, noun group/phrase, vocabulary, punctuation, figurative language that has been used in the writing of the sketches. How does this impact on the audience and the purpose of the text?
- Ask students to write a short paragraph explaining how the text structures and language features of the multimodal texts combine to influence the audience.



## » STAGE 3: IDEAS LAB

### WHERE DO I START?

Comedy comes from chaos! In Stage 3 students are encouraged to use their own experiences, observations and interactions as inspiration for their comedic ideas, and write them down using their digital scrapbook that is inbuilt into the website, 'My Scrapbook'.

Students press the 'ADD NOTE' button in 'MY SCRAPBOOK' to begin. Encourage students to enter anything they think is funny, or has the potential to be funny, knowing they can throw away the ideas they don't like later. Students can also press the random button to mix up all of their ideas. Sometimes they'll find ideas that they can combine. Students can edit an idea or press 'Use It' to take it to the next stage and develop it into a script!

The raw behind the scenes videos used in Stage 3, provide students with advice from the cast and crew of the popular *You're Skitting Me* TV series as to how to get started writing in their very own sketch comedy, and it all starts with an idea!

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

(Writing, creating)

The Ideas Lab supports students to continue to develop their understanding of the importance of grammar, select vocabulary for effect, and the use of accurate spelling and punctuation. They begin creating and editing text in their 'My Scrapbook'. These specific ideas have been created for effect; students express the intended purpose of their ideas and demonstrate an understanding of the needs and interests of the audience (their peers).

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

#### **Expressing and developing ideas**

##### **Year 5**

Understand the use of vocabulary to express greater precision of meaning, and know that words can have different meanings in different contexts. (ACELA1512)

##### **Year 6**

Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of verbs, elaborated tenses, and a range of adverb groups/phrases. (ACELA1523)

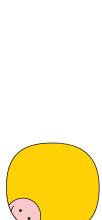
##### **Year 7**

Analyse how a point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, e.g. gaze, angle and social distance. (ACELA1764)

##### **Year 8**

Identify how vocabulary choices contribute to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness. (ACELA1561)

**Source:** Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), downloaded from the Australian Curriculum website on (November 2014) <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10?layout=1#level6>

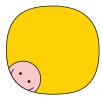
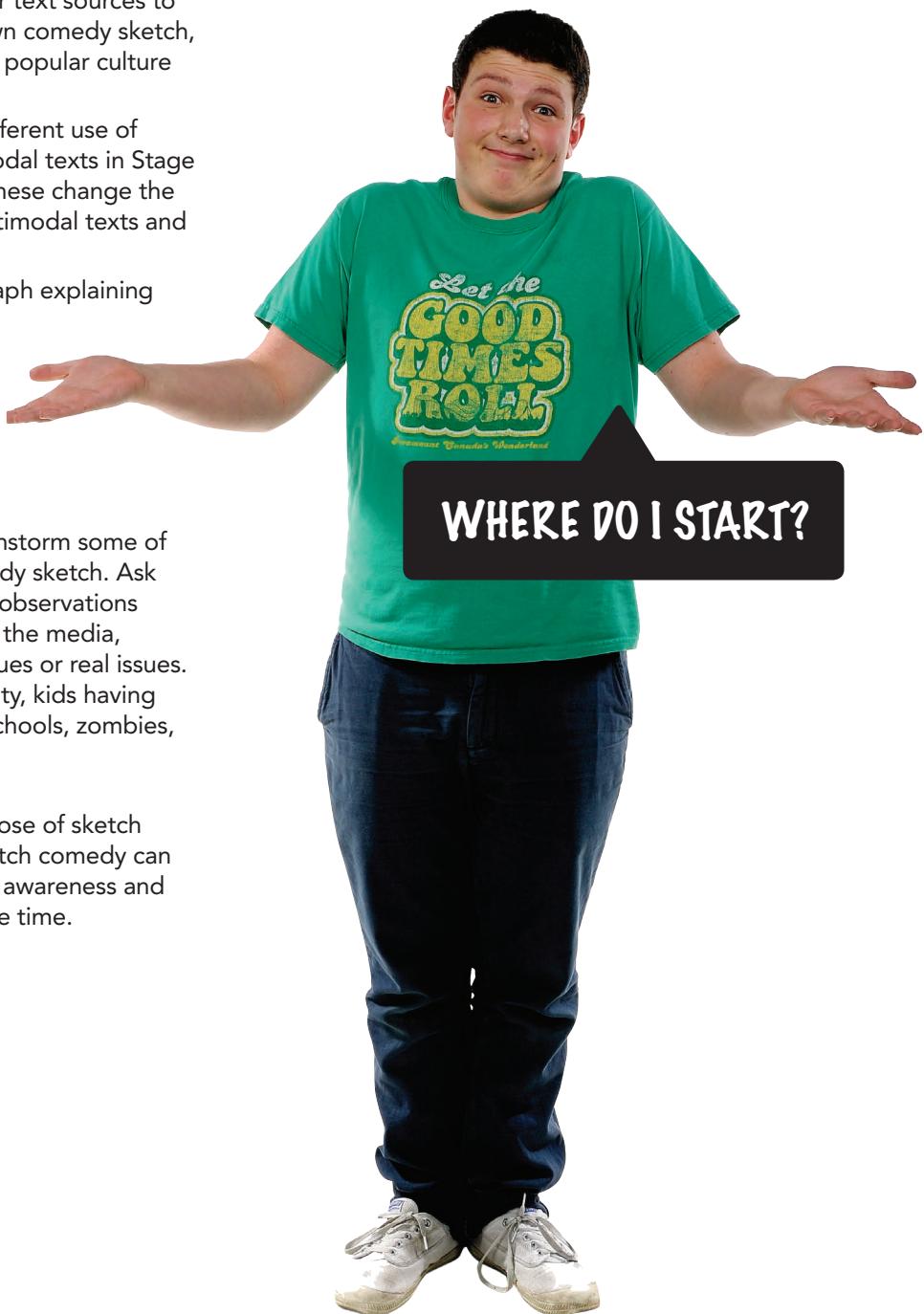


## » STAGE 3: IDEAS LAB

### SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

After students have viewed the content on the Sketch-O-Matic website:

- Guide students to look at other text sources to gather ideas to inspire their own comedy sketch, e.g. look at news sites, analyse popular culture and discuss the youth issues.
- Ask students to explore the different use of vocabulary used in the multimodal texts in Stage 2: Types of Comedy. How do these change the effect and intention of the multimodal texts and the impact on the audience?
- Ask students to write a paragraph explaining whether they agree or disagree with the following statement: Sketch comedy is a good literary device to communicate a person's point of view and their life experiences.
- As a class, ask students to brainstorm some of the ideas they have for a comedy sketch. Ask students to draw on their own observations and issues they are aware of in the media, whether they are perceived issues or real issues. (e.g. Environmental sustainability, kids having cosmetic surgery, violence in schools, zombies, not enough chocolate in the world.)
- Discuss with students the purpose of sketch comedy. Ask students how sketch comedy can be used to raise issues, spread awareness and entertain people all at the same time.



## » STAGE 4: THE SCRIPT

### START WRITING!

Stage 4 presents students with an online scriptwriting tool in which they can take an idea and develop it into an organised text by adding characters, dialogue and directions.

- To start this process, students press the Add Character button and enter a character's name 
- Do this again to add another character. They add more characters as they go
- Click on a character's name to add their dialogue
- Press the 'Tick' when you're happy with what they're saying
- There's even a button to add direction (an action, image, or event).

The raw, never seen before, behind the scenes footage in Stage 4, gives students an insight into how the writers of *You're Skitting Me*, Mark O'Toole and Ray Matsen, begin the process of writing sketch comedy for TV. Students also hear from the Supervising Producer, Toni Malone, as to what she considers to be important when writing sketch comedy.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

*(creating, writing, reading, speaking)*

Students use the scriptwriting tool to start combining ideas, images and language features to express their ideas, experiences and observations. Students create a scripted text for the purposes of communicating to a broad audience and select language to influence audience response. They contribute actively to class and group discussions.

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

#### **Creating texts**

##### **Year 5**

Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience. (ACELY1714)

##### **Year 6**

Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual, and audio features to convey information and ideas. (ACELY1725)

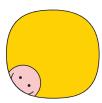
##### **Year 7**

Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate. (ACELY1736)

##### **Year 8**

Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that present a point of view and advance or illustrate arguments, including texts that integrate visual, print and/or audio features. (ACELY1746)

**Source:** Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), downloaded from the Australian Curriculum website on (November 2014) <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10?layout=1#level6>

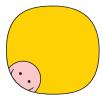


## » STAGE 4: THE SCRIPT

### SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

After students have viewed the content on the **Sketch-O-Matic** website:

- As a class, ask students to share their thoughts on the notion that sketch comedy can be a persuasive text. Is it or isn't it and why?
- View an episode from *You're Skitting Me* and ask students to note down any directions they believe the actors would have been given by the director.
- After viewing an episode from *You're Skitting Me*, ask students to identify certain sketches that are potentially persuading the audience to think, feel or act in a certain way.
- Ask students to discuss why writers often might write certain directions into a script.
- Ask students to write a short paragraph on how a sketch comedy script can actually be developed to communicate and inform both the actors and the audience.



## » STAGE 5: THE SKETCH

### SO NOW WHAT?

In the final stage, students are prompted to print their script, collaborate with their friends and read it out loud to a discerning audience. Was it funny? Did the audience laugh? If 'no', encourage students to go back to the Stage 3 drawing board! If 'yes'... then it's time for students to perform the script to an audience, or even better to perform in front of a camera. At this stage students also print their personalised **Sketch-O-Matic** certificate, for a job well done!

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

*(Reading, speaking, listening)*

Students create an imaginative, informative and persuasive script for which the primary purpose is to entertain, humour, as well as to inform and persuade the audience. Students work collaboratively to perform and refine their work. They listen to, read, view, interpret, evaluate and perform each other's written scripts and multimodal texts.

### SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

After students have viewed the content on the **Sketch-O-Matic** website:

- As a class, discuss how language features, vocab and sentence structures help to refine one's script.
- As a class, develop an assessment matrix to guide students in evaluating one another's finished scripts.
- Ask students why it's important to be positive when giving constructive feedback to one another.
- Encourage students to perform their scripts in front of an audience or in front of a camera.

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

*Interpreting, analysing, evaluating*

#### Year 5

Reread and edit students' own and others work using agreed criteria for text structures and language features. (ACELY1705)

#### Year 6

Reread and edit students' own and others work using agreed criteria and explaining editing choices. (ACELY1715)

#### Year 7

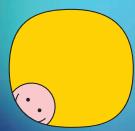
Edit for meaning by removing repetition, refining ideas, reordering sentences and adding or substituting words for impact. (ACELY1726)

#### Year 8

Experiment with text structures and language features to refine and clarify ideas to improve the effectiveness of students' own texts. (ACELY1810)

Create literary texts that adapt stylistic features encountered in other texts, e.g. narrative viewpoint, structure of stanzas, contrast and juxtaposition. (ACELT1625)

**Source:** Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), downloaded from the Australian Curriculum website on (November 2014) <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10?layout=1#level6> <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10?layout=1#level6>



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