

1. At the pharmacy

- M: Hi, how may I help you?
- F: I'm here to pick up a prescription. The last name is Fuller: F – U – L – L – E – R. My first name is Marie.
- M: Okay...hmm...I'm sorry, ma'am, but I don't see any record by that name in our system. Now, if you like—oh, my mistake—now I see it. I had you with one 'L' instead of two. (pause) Here you go. You can pay for this at the register. Do you have any questions about your prescription?
- F: No, this is a refill. Thank you, and have a nice day.

2. Calling a restaurant

- F: Good afternoon, Jimmy's Buffet. The restaurant where no one goes home hungry!
- M: Hi. I coach a local youth soccer team and our championship game is coming up next month. We're celebrating our season on the field after the game and I'm wondering if you could provide food and drinks.
- F: Sure thing. How many people are you expecting?
- M: Probably 40, 50...
- F: Okay. That would 35 dollars per person, for food and drinks.
- M: 35? That seems a little steep. Is there any way we can negotiate that down?
- F: If you're able to provide your own beverages, I can drop it down to \$29.50.
- M: Well, okay. I guess we'll go with that then.

3. Making plans with a friend

- M: Are you going to the movie with Mike and Jamie tonight?
- F: Oh, that new Louie Erickson movie? Nah, I think I'm going to skip it. He doesn't really do it for me, if you know what I mean. I just can't see buying a ten-dollar ticket for a movie I have no real interest in seeing.
- M: I know what you mean. I've seen a few of his other movies, and they're all pretty dumb. My sister and I are going to stay in and watch some old comedies on DVD. Want to join us?
- F: That sounds a lot better, actually! What time?

4. At the bank

- M: Hi. I'd like to open up a new savings account today.
- F: Okay. For a new account, you'll need two pieces of identification, and something else with your address on it, like a utility bill.
- M: Umm, I've got my ID, but I don't have anything with my home address on it right now. But I do have a checking account here already. Isn't that enough?
- F: Oh, absolutely. I didn't realize you were already a customer here. Since we have your information and signature on file, I'll just need your driver's license to set it up for you.

5. Grandparents on duty

- M: Honey, do you know when Steve is going to drop the grandkids off?
- F: After work, he said. Probably around 5:30. Why?
- M: Well, I wanted to go to the gym for an hour before they come, and I don't want to leave you stranded with a three-year-old and a one-year-old while I'm gone. They're great kids, but they can be exhausting for two people, let alone for one!

F: Hank, have you forgotten that I raised three children? I handled our own kids just fine while you were at work during those twelve-hour days, so I don't think one hour with our grandkids will be too tough. I'll be fine. Go swim your laps and enjoy yourself. We'll do dinner when you get back.

6. A busy Saturday

F: Greg, do you think you could get one of your friends to drive you to soccer practice tomorrow?

M: Probably. I'll see Jim later and I can ask him. But why? Tomorrow's Saturday, and you're usually home to take me.

F: Well, we have a big project at work and we're running behind schedule, so I'm afraid I'll have to spend most of the day in the office. I'll be home for dinner, though.

7. Car problems

M: I noticed you were late for class this morning. What happened?

F: My car broke down on the way to school. Again. I think it might be time to get one I can actually depend on.

M: Not a bad idea. It sounds like that thing is always having problems. What was it this time?

F: I'm not really sure. The mechanic said it sounded like an electrical problem. They're still working on it, though.

8. New headphones

F: Check it out. I just got these new headphones and I love them. They sound great! I can hear all the low bass parts so much better than with my little ear buds.

M: Cool. I thought about getting bigger headphones like that for the sound quality, but I still prefer the smaller kind. I like being able to put them in my pocket, and they don't take up much room in my backpack either.

F: I know what you mean. But hopefully I won't lose these like I was always losing my ear buds!

Part 2: Longer Conversations

9-11 Discussing a movie

F: Wow, that was long!

M: Yeah, it was. But it needed to be. I mean, it seems like everything was important and couldn't have been cut out.

F: Yeah, I know what you mean.

M: I suppose it did drag a little at first, but then after the guy became a cop, I got pulled in pretty fast. Didn't you like it?

F: Yeah, I thought it was pretty good. Actually I thought the beginning was really interesting because it showed everything that happened in the main character's family before he started working for the police. So then we knew why catching Maladono was so important to him—since he saw what happened to his parents when he was young. It was personal for him, not just his day job. He HAD to get even.

M: Yeah, I love movies where the character refuses to give up.

- F: I did think it was a little unrealistic, though. I mean, from what I know of the police, they have a lot of work to do and not always a lot of resources. Why is it that this one officer could take weeks and weeks to travel all around the world just to find one guy? And in the process, he has to jump off a waterfall, fly a helicopter—which I don't think is part of standard police training—he even gets shot at a hundred times and never gets hurt? I mean, come on.
- M: Well, you know, movies are just entertainment. It's not like it's a true story.

12-15 At a company luncheon

- F: Hi, Peter. Pretty nice spread, isn't it?
- M: Yeah, it's fantastic. I knew this luncheon was going to be catered, but the choices are much fancier than I thought they'd be: smoked salmon, flank steak, shrimp cocktail—there's even sushi! Seems like usually it's just been cheese and crackers lately. Do you think it's because the bigwigs from Infotech are here? I heard we might be close to signing a major contract with them.
- F: No, I think it's because this last quarter has been absolutely phenomenal for the company. Jeff Johnson over in sales told me revenue has gone through the roof, apparently. The boss is giving some remarks after lunch, and I'm sure she'll tell us all about it.
- M: Well, that's great, right? I mean, it means job security for all of us. And I never turn down sushi!
- F: Yeah. So, anyways, what are you doing this weekend? Do you and Kim still have plans to go to the mountains?
- M: We were going to until our youngest got sick. He was feeling tired all day yesterday and by the time he went to bed he had a temperature of 101. It's only a low-grade fever, but still—he would be in no mood to sit in the car for two hours.
- F: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. What are you going to do instead?
- M: Oh, yard work, probably. The whole back yard is covered in leaves from the windstorm we had on Wednesday. I'll be spending most of Saturday raking. How 'bout you?
- F: Saturday Jack and I made reservations at Charlie's Crab House. Jack's birthday is on Sunday, but we're getting together with his family that day.
- M: Oh, Charlie's is a great place! The crab cakes there are my favorite. Enjoy it!
- F: Oh, I'm sure we will.

16-19 Airport transportation

- M: Ground Transportation Services. This is Greg. How can I help you?
- F: Hi, Greg. I have seven guests coming to visit for the holidays, and I'm trying to figure out the fastest and most cost-effective way to get them from the airport to my house.
- M: Okay. Are you familiar with our door-to-door shuttle service?
- F: I am and, actually, I've used it myself. The thing is, at \$50 a person, the service becomes expensive, and since each person on the shuttle gets dropped off at their house, it could take a while for my guests to arrive. I want to spare them the waiting if I can.
- M: It sounds like you might want to consider hiring one of our private vans. They cost \$150 and can drive straight from the airport to your house.
- F: Oh, that sounds like a great option. Can I make a reservation right now?
- M: Sure, but I'll need the airline and flight numbers for your guests. Do you have that information available?

- F: Oh. No, I don't have everyone's flight information yet. I can call you back. What other information will you need?
- M: We'll need to know the number of bags your guests are bringing as well as what time the van should be available to pick them up.
- F: Okay. One more thing. What's your cancellation policy?
- M: We need 24 hours' advance notice of any changes or a cancellation. After that, we cannot refund the cost.
- F: Understood. Okay, thank you for all of your help and I'll call you back soon.

20-23 Interviewing a scientist

- M: Melissa, can I ask you something? You think your dad would be able to help me out with the report that we have to do for Mrs. Palmer's class? I want to interview a few experts, but your dad is the only scientist I know.
- F: Sure! He'd love to help. My dad will talk forever if you get him going! You know, he's doing some really cool work right now—he would love to tell you about it. What specifically were you thinking of asking him?
- M: Well, my report is on wetland habitats. I don't know much about them though. In fact, I don't think I've even been to one.
- F: You were in Florida last year for vacation, weren't you?
- M: I went to Disney World with my family. I don't think that really counts!
- F: Yeah, you're right—that wouldn't count. But I think a lot of areas in Florida are classified as wetlands. I mean, they have crocodiles and alligators and all kinds of wading birds like egrets and herons—it's the swampiest place in the country!
- M: Well, I can certainly check into that, but I also need to talk to someone in person who actually knows something about how wetland environments are changing and what's being done about it.
- F: Well, my dad's a botanist, so he can tell you way more than you would want to know about trees and grass and flowers. I don't know if he knows much about swamps specifically. I mean, he works in a lab, and not in Florida.
- M: That's all right. This project is due in a week, and I have to interview *somebody*.
- F: Well, okay. I'll tell you what: I'll talk to my dad at dinner tonight and ask what his schedule is over the next couple of days. You can call him one night when he isn't busy. Sound good?
- M: That sounds great, Melissa. Thanks!

Part 3: Extended Discourse

24-32 The psychology of laughter

Hello, and welcome to the Psychology Department's public lecture series on "Why We Do What We Do." Today, I'll be talking to you about laughter.

We all recognize laughter by its two parts: there's a set of physical gestures, including smiling wide and tensing abdominal muscles, and there's the expected sound, like "ha ha!" But take a deeper look, and see how much more is going on.

The human brain consists of many parts, each with specific jobs to do. The occipital lobe, for example, handles visual processing, and the temporal lobe deals with auditory processing and speech. Laughter is such a complicated response that it lights up structures all across the brain. One part is used to hear a joke, another part to comprehend it, another part to make the laughing sound, another part to produce the physical gestures, and so on.

It's interesting to note, given the processing of laughter deep within the brain, that we find it so contagious. Have you ever wondered why? Behavioral neurobiologist Robert Adams believes that we have a sort of mechanism in the brain that detects and recognizes laughter in other people, and this mechanism then signals other circuits in the brain to produce laughter. This cycle repeats itself again and again, effectively rendering the laughter "contagious."

Besides the laughs of other people, what else makes us laugh? When we asked volunteers in a survey, the most common response we got was "jokes make us laugh." But what's interesting is that research shows the most common cause of laughter is simple communication. Another psychologist from the University of Maryland recently published a paper saying we are most likely to laugh during a conversation, as a way of communicating our feelings or convincing the person we're talking to to feel a certain way. In fact, according to this research, we're actually thirty times more likely to laugh if we're in the company of other people than if we're alone, even if we see something funny, say, on television.

One last thing I want to be sure to mention is the benefit of laughter. Some people mistakenly believe that it's a good calorie-burner—really, the calories burned are minimal and nowhere near as effective as actual exercise—but what is great is laughter's role in handling negative emotions. Anger, for example, can be an overwhelming emotion that feels impossible to control. If you can introduce some humor, though, it gets easier. The theory is that anger and humor are so different, they can't be experienced simultaneously. So pausing to laugh at something funny effectively puts a pause on the anger, allowing the person to shift away from growing negative emotions. Sometimes just that break is enough to let them get a better perspective and begin to calm down.

So, as you go about your week, whether it be in a classroom, at work, or around town, pay attention to people around you. Let your ears perk up when you hear laughing, and see what you can observe about the laughter you encounter and how you react to it.

33-40 Discussing the company's new website

- F: Jonathan, thanks for coming in early to meet with me. I knew that once the workday started we would be too busy to have this conversation.
- M: Oh, I don't mind at all, Karen. I agree with you that having a new website is important, and I'm happy to work on it with you. Where should we start?
- F: Well, as I told you the other day, my *biggest* concern is about the look of the site. I think our current website is too—how would I put it?—*blah*. Everything about it is plain: a white background, black text, there aren't very many images...and the images we do have are stock photos we purchased online. I mean, the picture on our homepage shows a corporate boardroom with twelve people all wearing suits! But the reality is that there are only two of us—and we never wear suits!

- M: I see what you mean. I also agree that our website right now is much too bland. But I also think the site needs to be more user-friendly. Several of our international customers have told me they had a hard time finding what they needed while on the site.
- F: What do you mean?
- M: Well, you know Armando from LinkBridge? He said it took him five minutes just to find a contact email address. We're lucky that he didn't just leave the site...and to that end, I wonder how many potential customers do just that—leave our website out of frustration because they can't navigate it easily.
- F: Good point. What about how the site actually functions in comparison to the websites of our competitors? Do you know if we even rank in the search engines? I once read that over 75% of all Internet users click on only the first three results on a search page. If that's true, then if our company shows up on the second or third page of search results, it's as if we're invisible.
- M: True enough. If customers can't find us, they can't buy from us—that's for sure. Would you mind if I gave Larissa Wilkins a call? I think you met her at the TechStar conference in April?
- F: I think so.
- M: Yeah. She runs a small company that provides the kind of service we're talking about.
- F: Great! So right there it seems like there are three major elements to the website redesign: how it looks, how easy it is to navigate, and how well it ranks in the search engines.
- M: Agreed. We've definitely got our work cut out for us. Do you think we'll be able to pull this together in, say, twelve weeks? I'd love to have the new site up and running by the fall.
- F: Well, we'll certainly try! One last thing—in fact, it's probably the *most* important consideration, at least in practical terms: cost. What's our budget for this new website?
- M: Yeah, I was just looking at our financial statements last night, and quite frankly, I don't think we can afford to pay for it all at once. I suggest we hire a vendor that can do things in a piecemeal approach—you know, a little bit every week. That way, we'll be able to afford a certain amount every month as opposed to paying for it all up front. From what I've gathered, most programming vendors don't mind that at all.
- F: I think that's a great idea. It could easily cost several thousand dollars, so I'm fine if we pay in installments. Also, if we do it in stages, we can keep a closer eye on the preliminary testing before the site goes live, and make any revisions that might come up.
- M: Good point. Well, I'm going to make a few calls before my 11:00am meeting, and I'll let you know what I find out.