



*Why did the boy fall off his bike? Humour, creativity and bridge-building.*

*Everybody loves to laugh, but is there any more to it than the simple pleasure of laughter? Peter Ustinov said that comedy was simply a funny way of being serious. Edward De Bono went so far as to declare humour to be by far the most significant function of the human brain, allowing us not only to work on problems more creatively, but offering us the ability to completely shift the perspective from which we are viewing the problem ... sometimes so radically that the problem no longer even exists. Despite this, humour is still a vastly underrated, misunderstood and under-utilised ingredient in the literacy classroom. In this keynote Andy Griffiths will consider how humour works and offer a variety of practical strategies for using it as an effective way of bridging divides between students, teachers, and even different parts of ourselves. He will also reveal why the boy fell off his bike.*

When I was writing *The Bad Book* with Terry Denton we stumbled onto the idea of including 'bad' jokes and I remembered one of my all time favourite bad jokes from primary school.

*Q: Why did the boy fall off his bike?*

*A: Because his mother threw a fridge at him.*

This joke never failed to amuse us then, and after we published it in *The Bad Book* discovered that it still amuses kids today. But it is a very mysterious joke. It involves a boy getting crushed by a refrigerator thrown for no apparent reason. Why is it funny?

There are, of course, many explanations for humour. There is the theory that we laugh at jokes that elicit a sense of superiority in the listener through the subject of the joke being revealed as stupid or pompous, which helps to shore up our own self image. The Freudian approach proposes that we laugh hardest at jokes that provide a release for sublimated aggressive urges that we can't express in civilised society. Yet a third theory— incongruity— suggests that we laugh at things that surprise us because they seem out of place or run against our expectations (e.g. a bear walks into a bar, animals and plants talk).

I think the 'Why did the boy fall off his bike' riddle is unique because it utilises elements from all three perspectives. Clearly someone who has just fallen off their bike is somebody we can feel superior to, or at the very least, relieved and thankful that it's not happening to us. (There is an old saying that the difference between comedy and tragedy

can be summed up in the phrase, ‘if *you* fall down an open manhole, that’s comedy. But if *I* fall down the same hole, that’s tragedy.’)

And what mother hasn’t occasionally been so frustrated with her children that she wouldn’t have thrown a fridge at them if she’d had one in her hands at the right moment, even though she would rarely admit this in polite society?

And of course, the sheer ludicrous surprise of the image of a mother throwing a fridge at her son (while he’s riding a bike) tends to suggest the humour of incongruity.

But I think there’s a fourth, and potentially more profound reason why we laugh at this joke. I think the riddle is funny because when we hear the punchline we realise, with a shock, that we’ve been searching for a logical explanation (e.g. the brakes failed, the tyre blew, he wasn’t a very good rider) whereas, in fact, the true cause is a completely random event that we couldn’t possibly have been expected to be able to predict. It violates the hidden expectations of riddle conventions (i.e. That the answer will make sense and not be a completely random arbitrary concoction of the riddle-teller.) In doing so it dramatically reveals to us the limitations of our everyday cause & effect logic. It plays with our expectations-of-the-way-things-are, and that takes us into some potentially very creative territory. It helps us to rediscover the sense of wonder that we all experienced as children but gradually forgot as we put childish toys aside in the relentless quest to become adults.

*Philosophy and jokes proceed from the same impulse: to confound our sense of the way things are, to flip our worlds upside down, and to ferret out hidden, often uncomfortable, truths about life. What the philosopher calls an insight, the gagster calls a zinger.*

—Plato and a Platypus Walk into a Bar: Understanding Philosophy Through Jokes  
by Thomas Cathcart & Daniel Klein, p. 2

Using this idea, my first instinct after re-discovering the-boy-who-fell-off-the-bike riddle was to create a second joke based along the lines of the first.

*Riddle #2:*

*Q: Why did the boy fail his maths test?*

*A: Because his mother threw another fridge at him.*

Whenever I ask this question to a group of children, the most likely response is a range of answers along the lines of ‘because he didn’t study, because he was dumb, because the teacher didn’t tell him they were going to have a test ... etc.’ All good reasons, of course, but they are invariably surprised—and amused all over again—when they discover that the answer reveals that the true cause is *another* fridge thrown by his mother. They realise for a second time that they’ve been tricked. We don’t expect the answer to a new riddle to be exactly the same as the first. Only very rarely will a child suggest a thrown fridge as their first answer. Our dependence on cause and effect logic dies hard.

And then, you can do it again:

*Riddle #3*

*Why did the boy suffer multiple fractures, internal bleeding, crushed vertebrae, ruptured organs, brain damage, massive bruising AND a sore thumb?*

*A: Because he was hit by a truck.*

We know that a pattern has been set up from the preceding two jokes and so we are now predicting a fridge to be involved. Our prediction is further confirmed from the nature of the injuries which seem perfectly suited to those that might be sustained were one to be crushed by a fridge, so 100% of kids can now be relied on to answer, 'because his mother threw another fridge at him,' but laugh when they realise that their predictive logic has led them into yet another trap. Logic is a useful tool, but the joke teaches us that in a world of randomness logic has its limitations. We are again thrown into a more uncertain, but more open-ended way of viewing the world.

*We need creativity in order to break free from the temporary structures that have been set up by a particular sequence of experience.*

—Edward de Bono

Another example of this principle is the very popular 'list stories' in the Just Series. I discovered that you can hold a reader's attention simply by using a couple of items to create an expectation and then break it with an unexpected third item. For example, from the '101 Dangerous things' list in *Just Shocking!*:

1. *Running with scissors.*
2. *Running while eating.*
3. *Running while eating a pair of scissors.*

Following closely on the heels of items 1 and 2, item 3 sounds reasonable, at least for a moment, but a further moment's thought reveals it as incongruous, and the resultant surprise evokes a guffaw of amusement.

Further humour is created by taking the danger of scissors to the point of absurdity:

4. *Asking somebody on the other side of the room to throw you a pair of scissors.*
5. *Running screaming out of the room and across a busy road without looking because you've got a pair of scissors stuck in your eye.*

When writing the books that form the 'bum' trilogy, I discovered early on that it's funnier to imply the word 'fart' rather than state it explicitly. For instance, when Zack is hiding from a group of enemy bums, the text states: 'Zack couldn't understand what they were saying, but he could smell it all right.' This produces a smile in the reader because of the momentary confusion created as they work out that the bums are speaking in farts which can't be understood but can be smelled.

So there's more going on in a joke than necessarily meets the eye ... or nose as the case may be. Jokes can teach us a great deal about how we know what we know. They teach us to check the validity of our sources for knowing what we know very carefully:

*An American with a very sick horse went to his Australian neighbour's place and asked him what he gave his horse when it got sick. The neighbour said turpentine. So off went the American. He came back several days later and said, 'My horse died.' 'That's funny,' said the Aussie neighbour, 'so did mine!'*

They also teach us not to rely on respect for authority as the sole confirmation of the validity of our conclusions.

*Ted meets his friend Al and exclaims, 'Al, I heard you died!' 'Hardly,' says Al, laughing. 'As you can see, I'm very much alive. 'Impossible,' says Ted. 'The man who told me is much more reliable than you.'*

One of my favourite moments from the list of '101 Dangerous things' in *Just Shocking!* is where Andy confidently and seriously states that: 'Girl germs have been scientifically proven—by me and my best friend Danny—to be the most dangerous germs on the planet.' Children are completely capable of realising, and delighting in, the shaky ground that Andy is standing on here, even if he doesn't realise it himself.

*Jokes revel in paradox, the definition of which is "a seemingly sound piece of reasoning based on seemingly true assumptions that leads to a contradiction or another obviously false conclusion. This could also be the definition of a joke. There's something absurd about true stuff that leads ever so logically to false stuff, and absurd is funny. Holding two mutually contradictory ideas in our heads at the same time makes us giddy."*

—Plato and a Platypus Walk into a Bar

*Salesman: Ma'am, this vacuum cleaner will cut your work in half.  
Customer: Terrific. Give me two of them!*

In addition, jokes teach us that it's possible to see a situation from two completely different, but two completely valid perspectives at the same time. The men in the following joke are both right ... it just depends whether you value social etiquette over seeing the end of a movie or vice versa.

*A man is a movie theatre when he smells a terrible stench. It appears to be coming from the seat in front of him. He leans over to the bloke in front of him and says, 'Hey mate, did you just shit your pants?' 'Yes,' says the man. 'Well, hadn't you better go outside then?' says the first man. 'Why?' says the other man. 'The movie hasn't finished yet.'*

In a story called 'Busting' in *Just Stupid!* in which my character, Andy, is desperately searching for a toilet in a multilevel shopping centre, he asks a hippy for help deciphering a complicated multilevel shopping centre map.

*Andy: Which Level are we on?*

*Hippy: Level 2. No, level 1. No, level 4...*

*Andy: Level 4? There's no such level!*

*Hippy: Open your mind, man, There are many levels!*

*Andy: Can you please help me? I've got to find a toilet! I'm busting!*

*Hippy: Relax man, it's not the destination that counts...it's the journey that's important!*

*Andy: Not when you're busting it's not!*

— 'Busting' from Just Stupid!

Once again, they are both right. It just depends on what perspective you look at it from. In his quest for a toilet Andy comes to understand that there are indeed many realities. After being prevented from finding a toilet because the shopping centre is on fire (due to his shoelace becoming entangled in an escalator) he finds himself herded outside by firemen who confess they are powerless against the blaze...my character seizes his chance to both relieve himself AND be a hero at the same time...he is heroically putting out the fire when he slowly comes to realise that there is no fire and no shopping centre, and that he is in fact in his bed...but to his horror, still actively engaged in putting out a fire.

At the very least I hope my outlandish fantasies might make people laugh...and in laughter, apart from the sheer pleasure of it, there is great potential for liberation as John Cleese and Robyn Skynner point out in their book *Life and how to survive it*. Skynner suggests the existence of two modes of consciousness ... open and closed. The open mode is that state of being in which you are open and present to whatever is going on around you and inside you. Those moments when your breath is taken away by wonder and awe. In this state you are flexible, able to roll with whatever is happening. In contrast, the closed mode refers to the mode of consciousness we are in when we are active, directed and getting things done.

It is important to note that open mode is not 'better' than closed mode, and closed mode is not 'better' than open mode. If the room catches on fire, we don't want to sit there in open mode contemplating the beauty of the flames, we need to go into closed mode and get to the phone—or fire extinguisher—as fast as we can. Anything that stands in the way of our putting out the fire is going to have to be overcome with whatever means are at our disposal. In this sense we become inflexible—inflexibly committed to achieving our aim.

The problem is that once we get in the active getting-things-done mode we find it very hard to get out of it—to step back and look at the bigger picture, even when this might help us to act more efficiently.

It is then perhaps no accident that the hallmark of a comic character is 'the blind obsession'. Comic characters are almost always blindly obsessed with their goals/desires and will pursue them, no matter what. Whether it's wealth, social status, pleasure or mint cake, it's the inflexible pursuit of this goal that makes them so funny.

This is illustrated by an old Barry Humphries joke involving a man, a pig and a dog. A man gets shipwrecked on a desert island and the only other survivors are a pig and a dog.

After a few weeks his libido is building up and of course there's nowhere for it to go. And then the man starts noticing that the pig is better looking than he'd realised. So he decides to get on friendlier terms with it. But each time he tries to get closer to the pig, the dog leaps out of the undergrowth at him and barks and the pig runs away. This goes on for several weeks until one evening he decides to make a particular effort to get to know the pig. And he's sitting there figuring out how to do it and the most beautiful woman suddenly wades ashore. She's stunning. And, of course, she doesn't have a stitch on. She walks up the beach towards him, smiles and says: 'Hello. Is there anything at all that I can do for you?' And he says: 'Yes. Could you hold this dog for a few minutes?'

When our thinking becomes stuck along a particular line, we are unable to respond flexibly to changing circumstances and we become locked into ineffective, often laughable behaviour.

In contrast to the comic character, dramatic characters *are* capable of stepping back and realising that their desire for the object could get them killed. They are often defined by conflicting desires... The inner conflict between what they want and what's in their best interests. For example, Macbeth is a great and memorable character not because he has too much ambition, but because of the contradiction between this ambition and the guilt he feels for being unable to resist pursuing it. If the comic character sees through their blind obsession, it is no longer blind and they are no longer funny. We are not interested in the inner life of the comic character. If you have true inner conflict it kills the laughs. (If, like my wife, you start empathising with Curly from the Three Stooges, Moe's eye-pokes and wrench-attacks no longer seem quite so funny.) Not only do we need to remember that comic characters learn nothing, we also need to remember that comic characters don't really get hurt. This is not to say that we can't—and don't—have genuine affection for comic characters. In fact, the more we like them, the more we can relate to them and see in their struggles, whether realistic or exaggerated, mirrors of our own struggles.

A very common form of inflexibility is the tendency to take ourselves too seriously.

*People who take themselves seriously are funny...and there is no shortage of people who take themselves seriously.*

—Greg Pickhaver

While there is, of course, a time and place for taking oneself seriously, taking yourself seriously all the time is a form of inflexibility because you can't take advantage of a range of non-serious perspectives from which to view yourself and assess the efficacy of your actions.

The good news is that one of the fastest ways out of closed, inflexible modes of behaviour, however, is laughter. It immediately puts us back into the open state. Back into the present moment where we can take a deep breath and consider many possibilities.

*At the height of laughter, the universe is flung into a kaleidoscope of possibilities.*

—Jean Houston

Humour offers us the possibility of stepping back and looking at a situation in a whole new way. The setup of a joke encourages us to see a situation from one point of view. The punchline gives us a new and vital piece of information that forces us to reinterpret the preceding situation. In fact, Edward De Bono claims that because of this, humour is the most important feature of the human brain. It's the one thing that computers, with their linear logic, can't do: they can't completely switch the frames of reference with which they can view a situation.

*Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way... Sometimes the situation is only a problem because it is looked at in a certain way. Looked at in another way, the right course of action may be so obvious that the problem no longer exists.*

—Edward de Bono

Humour allows us a glimpse of the way in which we make meaning. It offers us a chance to catch our brains in action.

For example, the questioner in the mummy-mummy joke genre sets up one way of viewing a situation: the reply immediately causes us to reinterpret what we thought was going on.

*Boy: Mummy, mummy, daddy's on fire!*

*Mother: Shut up and get the marshmallows!*

*Boy: Mummy, mummy, I don't want to go to England!*

*Mother: Shut up and keep swimming!*

*Boy: Mummy, mummy, can I lick the bowl?*

*Mother: Shut up and flush it like everybody else!*

We can see the same principle at work in the 'problem-joke' genre:

*John and Better are lying dead on the kitchen floor surrounded by broken glass and water. Who killed them? A: The cat: it knocked their goldfish bowl off the table.*

I like to think of my stories and books as little pranks that work in much the same way. Outlandish stories and titles that refuse to fit neatly into everyday reality, the purpose of which is to hopefully interfere momentarily with people's reality construction systems. The title, 'The day my bum went psycho' doesn't make sense in our ordinary everyday way of processing the world around us. It creates a momentary glitch—a gap—and it's in those gaps that there's a chance for us to become conscious of our own participation in the creation of reality and as a result perhaps be able to gain more control over it...to use it...direct it...to begin to free ourselves from the subconscious scripts, past experiences,

beliefs, opinions, fears, fantasies—or whatever it is that might be shaping your life and not only what happens to you, but how you interpret and respond to what happens.

In everyday life we often get upset, usually because something didn't go the way we expected it to. If we can catch ourselves in the act and realise that we are getting upset because of a 'thought-about-the-way-things-should-be', we may be in a much better position to accept and use our energy to respond intelligently and appropriately to the way things actually are in that moment. (NB: The work of Byron Katie is particularly enlightening in this regard. I recommend her book, *Loving What Is*.)

## **USING HUMOUR TO ENHANCE CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

Aside from potentially bringing you greater peace of mind, recognising how the power of our expectations about the-way-things-should-be shapes and limits our perception can also be the potential to access increased creativity in both yourself and your students.

### **a) Baby & Godzilla**

I like to demonstrate the creative power of recognising and thwarting a reader's expectations by showing students two toys: a small baby doll and a giant Godzilla. When I ask them what they would expect to happen if the two were to meet, pretty much all the students will answer that they expect the Godzilla would eat the baby. Then I ask them what would be the last—or opposite—thing that they might expect. They are very quick to realise, with delight, that it would be a situation in which the baby ate Godzilla. This instantly creates a much more interesting story for the reader, and a greater creative challenge for the writer as they attempt to explain how a baby might actually set about killing and eating a Godzilla. After we've explored various options I then invite them to think about a range of completely different possibilities for when Godzilla and baby meet.

- a) Godzilla adopts the baby.
- b) The baby adopts Godzilla.
- c) Godzilla and the baby fall in love, get married and have children ... half baby/half monster.

NB: It's much easier to demonstrate this than it is to explain it, and you can see a video posting of me with Godzilla and the baby on youtube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pc7ejCIbkcY>

### **b) Breaking the rules**

I've discovered one of the fastest ways to evoke lively, humorous writing from students is to go to the heart of what comedy and humour do best: break the rules of civilised society.

Step 1: Invite students to make a random list of as many rules about what they are and are not allowed to do in their lives as they can think of: e.g. safety, hygiene, etiquette. As they progress, invite them to become increasingly adventurous in what they list, for example, ‘I’m not allowed to come to school without clothes on.’

Step 2: Invite students to read and share their lists. (This can be a lot of fun in itself.)

Step 3: Invite students to choose the rule that they would most like to break and then to write a first-person, present-moment paragraph of themselves in the act of breaking that rule. E.g. Their piece might be headed, ‘The day I ...’

Step 4: After they have shared these with each other, invite them to do another draft in which they layer in even more detail: sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, dialogue etc.

### **c) Dropping the mask — Timed Writing Practice**

While one of my favourite forms of humour involves wild exaggeration and ridiculous plotlines, it doesn’t necessarily have to employ these techniques. Sometimes some of the most powerful humour simply involves the shared recognition of our common humanity. The best humour deals with pain and suffering by emphasising the similarities between people, not the differences. The way it can remind us day after day of the limitations we all have simply because we’re human beings—and of how easily we forget that—and of the dangers of doing so. By dropping the carefully constructed role of ‘teacher’ and letting your students in on some of the hopes/dreams/fears of the real person underneath the mask—and offering your students the opportunity to do the same with you—you can build a much more vital and ‘real’ relationship. (NB: Obviously this is a gradual process that relies on mutual trust built up over time.)

One of my favourite ways of doing this in the classroom is to set up a ‘timed writing’ session in which you challenge your students to write for five minutes without stopping on a topic chosen at random by you. I highly recommend *Writing Down the Bones* by Natalie Goldberg as an invaluable writing resource. There are four rules in timed writing practice.

1. Keep your hand moving.
2. Don’t think.
3. Be specific.
4. Lose control.

#### **1. KEEP YOUR HAND MOVING**

Be aware that when you put pen to paper you are coming up against a very powerful adversary—your left brain. Your left brain likes to keep order, control, make sure everything is ‘just so’, make sure you’re not about to make a fool of yourself or— heaven forbid—make a ‘mistake’. It is the editor, teacher, parent part of us...and while it can be an important ally, it is completely useless when you start to write.

Because real writing—at least to begin with—is messy, out-of-control, uncertain and definitely not ‘nice’. It’s a right brain, free-associative, dreamy activity in which there are no boundaries and all things are possible. When you try to write the left brain will try to take control...so the idea is to write so fast that the left brain simply can’t catch the pen...it simply gives up and says, ‘I’ll come back later’, which is exactly when you want it—later. You need somebody to fix up the spelling. So set a time limit, set it on your countdown timer (a feature of most mobile phones) select a topic and just go. Don’t stop until the timer rings. Even if the room catches on fire, you have to finish.

Carmel Bird likens the process as going into a warm dark cave:

*Inside every writer is a warm dark cave full of ideas. I think of it as Aladdin’s cave. New ideas are forever being added to the store, and the writer goes into the internal cave and decides which ones to use. But how to decide? Some ideas insist on being used. But sometimes the writer has trouble choosing. Try meditating on a single word, an image, a thought and up come the right ideas from the cave. Concentrate on one image, and write from the focus of that image. It seems to me that we all have inside us important, personal stories about certain things such as trees, houses and water. Somewhere in your memory is a story about a tree. If you start to write your tree story you will have no shortage of ideas. If you write freely and courageously, this tree story will seem to write itself. Write a story about water and one about a house. Try writing about 300 words on each of the topics on the following list, writing on one topic a day: dark, fire, flower, rock, chair, Journey, river, school, sun, moon, sky, wedding, funeral, Christmas, apple, toy, hands, mountain, sea. When you have explored all these topics (and no doubt others will suggest themselves to you) you will find that many of them will become longer stories, will develop a life of their own. They will suggest their own form, their own tone, tense, point of view. Listen to the stories inside you and find out what they have to say. Listen and learn and write the stories down.*

—Dear Writer by Carmel Bird

## 2. DON’T THINK

Don’t censor yourself. Don’t try to make yourself look good. Don’t use your ‘telephone voice’. John Marsden gives the following examples of people not being themselves:

*‘I hope she fulfils all her expectations in her chosen field of study’ (part of a speech heard in a country high school when the school vice-captain was farewelling the captain who was leaving for America)*

*‘...we must all make the little effort that is needed to keep our uniforms neat and tidy and behave in a manner that will surely give the school a reputation of fostering responsible, well disciplined and courteous young members of society.’ (a year 12 boy in Sydney writing in his school magazine. That was written in 1993, not 1893. It’s the voice of a parent or a teacher, not of a seventeen year old.)*

Everything I Know about Writing by John Marsden

These pieces are examples of left-brain dominated writing. Cut loose. Let yourself have a little adventure. Write fast. You can always tear it up and throw it away later.

### 3. BE SPECIFIC

*'Not the whole tree, just one leaf...'*

*Don't tell, show... What does this actually mean? It means don't tell us about anger (or any of those big words like honesty, truth, hate, love, sorrow, life, justice etc.) show us what made you angry. We will read it and feel angry. Don't tell readers what to feel. Show them the situation and that feeling will awaken in them... When you are present at the birth of a child you may find yourself weeping and singing. Describe what you see: the mother's face, the rush of energy when the baby finally enters the world after many attempts, the husband breathing with his wife, applying a wet washcloth to her forehead. The reader will understand without your ever having to discuss the nature of life. When you write, stay in direct connection with the senses and what you are writing about. If you are writing from first thoughts—the way your mind first flashes on something before second and third thoughts take over and comment, criticise, and evaluate—you won't have to worry. First thoughts are the mind reflecting experiences—as close as a human being can get in words to the sunset, the birth, the bobby pin, the crocus. We can't always stay with first thoughts, but it is good to know about them. They can easily teach us how to step out of the way and use words like a mirror to reflect the pictures.*

Writing Down the Bones by Natalie Goldberg, p. 68

### 4. LOSE CONTROL

When you're writing, don't try to 'stay on the topic' or write about something the way you think you should write about it. Just write fast and honestly, accepting what comes. You can edit later.

*Writing is more effective when you can illuminate elements of life that people are unconsciously aware of; that they haven't consciously noticed. Usually when people write fictitious accounts of sex or death they mention only the excitement (sex) or the grief (death). That's why their accounts ring false. There's much more happening than those two things. When somebody dies, for example, the survivors might feel emotions like anger, fear, confusion, guilt, freedom, relief, shock, happiness. That's a short list; it could easily be extended. It may help you realise why an account of death that only deals in grief will be unsatisfying.*

*A girl in South Australia told me how, when she was eight, a boy in her class was killed instantly when struck in the head by a cricket bat. When she heard what had happened she ran to the spot. She said that her first thought when she saw him lying*

*on the ground was, 'at least he won't be able to beat me at swimming anymore.'*  
*(They had been the two best swimmers in the class.) This is a typical human story. We just don't react in obvious and predictable ways. You need to recognise that in your writing.*

Everything I know about writing by John Marsden

## **Conclusion**

*Creativity is a great motivator because it makes people interested in what they are doing. Creativity gives hope that there can be a worthwhile idea. Creativity gives the possibility of some sort of achievement to everyone. Creativity makes life more fun and more interesting.*

—Edward de Bono

Dr Seuss, understood, perhaps more than most, the value of humour and creativity in enriching our lives.

Did you ever fly a kite in bed?  
Did you ever walk with ten cats on your head?  
Did you ever milk this kind of cow?  
Well, we can do it. We know how.  
If you never did, you should.  
These things are fun, and fun is good.

## **Related resources**

### **Websites**

Learn more about Andy Griffiths and his books by visiting the websites below.

Andy Griffiths has a useful website that contains full information (including teaching notes with talking/writing/thinking exercises) on all of his books, as well as biographical details, photographs and news: <http://www.andygriffiths.com.au>

This site presents reviews of books by Andy Griffiths, written by young readers:  
<http://goldcreek.act.edu.au/yara/>

The Scholastic site is a valuable source of information about the author and his books:  
<http://www.scholastic.com/andygriffiths/index.htm>

The following site has six video clips of the author talking about *The day my Butt went Psycho* (US title). It also contains a synopsis and an excerpt from the book, and a short biographical note:

<http://www.bookwrapcentral.com>

The following site features an interview with Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton and highlights their partnership as author and illustrator:

[http://www.cbc.org.au/downloads/A\\_GRIFFITHS\\_&T\\_DENTON.pdf](http://www.cbc.org.au/downloads/A_GRIFFITHS_&T_DENTON.pdf)

The following site provides drama, discussions, storytelling, writing and drawing activities based on the book *The Cat on the Mat is Flat*:

<http://www.panmacmillan.com.au/resources/AG-TheCatontheMatisFlat.pdf>

Teaching notes for books by Andy Griffiths can be found on the following site:

[http://www.panmacmillan.com.au/pandemonium/teachers\\_notes.asp](http://www.panmacmillan.com.au/pandemonium/teachers_notes.asp)