| **The Art of Funny** |
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| Before Reading Poll    Kids can learn a lot at summer camps. Some people say summer camps give kids a much-needed break from computers. What do you think?  Having new chances to learn is more important now than ever before.  Top of Form   * Agree * Disagree   Explain why you voted the way you did.    Bottom of Form |
| Article    Page 1  image  Photo credit: AP/Larry Neumeister  Zach Rosenfeld does his act at the 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show.  **NEW YORK, New York** (Achieve3000, March 5, 2013). At the Gotham Comedy Club in New York City, 16-year-old Eric Kurn climbed onto the stage. He gave the crowd a wide-eyed look. Then, he started his bit. "I think it's time I had a girlfriend," Eric said. "There's just one little problem. None of the girls I know think it's time I had a girlfriend. Even some of the girls I don't know yet agree with that." The crowd burst out in laughter.  Getting laughs is exactly what Eric is learning to do.  Eric is a student at Kids 'N Comedy, a program for future comedians. Kids 'N Comedy teaches students all about the art of being funny. The program is based in New York City. It was started in 1996 by Stu and Jo Ann Grossman. It offers comedy training classes for kids ages 9 to 18. The classes last nine weeks. There are also two-week summer camps. The program is a chance for class clowns to sharpen their comedy skills—without ending up in the principal's office.  Kids 'N Comedy students are trained by professional comedians. They're taught how to write one-liners. They're taught how to create an act. They're taught how to deliver that act on stage. Students are often encouraged to write jokes based on their own lives. They then refine those thoughts into an act.  "We try to motivate them to write all the time," Jo Ann Grossman said. "To keep it fresh, you have to keep on writing."  At the end of their beginning training in comedy club work, the students can try out their material. This happens in front of a live, paying crowd of strangers.  For Zach Rosenfeld, 14, that show was the hardest part of the program—at least at first. Zach started taking the classes when he was 9. He remembers preparing for his first experience on stage. He was frozen by fear. He worried that he wouldn't be funny. He said he sat nervously backstage. He forgot most of his lines once he got before the crowd.  "I was very nervous," Zach said. "But...the class teaches you to calm down and not be so scared."  Zach didn't do well in his first show. Still, he said he knew he would perform again. And he has. Zach did his act at the 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club. This time, he won the crowd over.  "When you hear laughter on the stage, it's one of the greatest things on the face of the earth," Zach said. "You're shining in the stage's light, and people like you."  The 2012 holiday show reached a new high point: It was Kids 'N Comedy's first sold-out show. For Grossman, this served as proof of the hard work of the talented students.  "These kids—they're funny. They're really funny," Jo Ann Grossman said. "Nobody's doing knock-knock jokes."  *Information for this story came from AP.*    Page 2  Dig Deeper  image  Photo credit: AP/The Free Press, Janet S. Carter  A camper enters the water at a summer camp in North Carolina.  In "The Art of Funny," you read about a program that offers summer camps where kids learn the art of stand-up comedy. A summer camp is a place that provides kids with activities during their time off from school. There are all kinds of summer camps in the United States. There are arts camps, sports camps, and educational camps. Some camps offer a little bit of everything. There are day camps. There are also sleep-away camps. Camps have been around in the U.S. for more than 150 years.  Where did the idea of summer camp come from? It probably came from William Frederick Gunn and his wife Abigail. The Gunns ran a private school in Connecticut. In 1861, they decided to take some of the boys into nature. The Gunns loved the outdoors. They often closed the school when the weather was nice. They would take the students on long hikes. They sometimes hiked to a campsite in the wilderness, several miles from the school. The students stayed there for two weeks. Their activities included swimming, boating, and fishing. In the evenings, everyone would gather around a fire and sing songs.  The students liked summer camp for the same reason camp is popular today: It gave them a chance to get away from their day-to-day lives and try something new. In the 1800s, cities in the U.S. were growing. They were full of crowded neighborhoods and the smells of factories. The country offered fresh air and natural beauty. In nature, campers built strong friendships. They also learned new skills, such as starting campfires and finding wild berries.  By 1900, several people and groups had started summer camps. At first, all camps were for boys only. In 1892, Camp Arey in New York became the first camp to admit girls. Within 10 years, several other girls' summer camps had opened.  Different summer camps had different goals. Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps adopted military traditions. Campers stick to a strict schedule and eat in mess halls, for example. These traditions help maintain order. They also promote responsibility. Other camps adopted certain Native American traditions. In the early 20th century, the Woodcraft League of America was created. The group promoted Native American practices in summer camps. It taught survival and respect for nature.  Summer camps became a more established part of American society in 1910. That year, the American Camp Association (ACA) was started. The ACA is a group for camps and their owners.  Camp was popular from the start. But for decades, many wouldn't allow minorities. In 1950, the ACA started holding meetings for camp owners only in places where minorities were welcome. Over time, the ACA made more changes. ACA membership and jobs became open to people of all races and religions. These changes helped open summer camps to all American children.  Today, children attend summer camp as an escape and a chance to make new friends. Many camps say that the experience is more important than ever. Kids today often spend more time on iPads and iPods than they do outdoors. Kids at summer camps are learning new skills. They're also learning about the world around them.    Dictionary   |  | | --- | | **comedian** *(noun)*    someone who tells jokes and makes people laugh | | **motivate** *(verb)*    to drive or move someone to do something | | **professional** *(adjective)*    having to do with something that is a paid job, not a hobby that is done just for fun | | **refine** *(verb)*    to improve; to fine-tune | | **survival** *(noun)*    work to stay alive, or the act of staying alive | |
| Activity    Page 1   |  | | --- | | Top of Form  1.  http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/content/images/KB/n/NYCcomedy_042613_e_g.gif  Which fits best in the empty box above?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Students learn how to calm down and not be scared in front of a crowd.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Students are encouraged to write jokes based on their own lives.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   The Kids 'N Comedy program was started by Stu and Jo Ann Grossman.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   The Kids 'N Comedy program teaches kids how to be comedians.  Bottom of Form | | Top of Form  2. Think about the article. Since Zach was frozen by fear during his first time on stage, then \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   He joined the Kids 'N Comedy training program.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   He did his act for the program's 2012 holiday show.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   He made sure to prepare for his first Kids 'N Comedy show.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   He forgot most of his lines and didn't do very well.  Bottom of Form | |      |  | | --- | | Top of Form  3. Which is the closest **synonym** for the word *refine*?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Polish   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Examine   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Mumble   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   Introduce  Bottom of Form | | Top of Form  4. Which information is **not** in the article?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   How old Zach Rosenfeld was when he joined Kids 'N Comedy   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   When Kids 'N Comedy was started   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Where Kids 'N Comedy is located   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   How many students are in the Kids 'N Comedy program  Bottom of Form | |      |  |  | | --- | --- | | Top of Form  5. Suppose you were writing a summary of the article. Which of these would **not** be important to put in the summary?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Students learn how to create and deliver a comedy act.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Kids 'N Comedy teaches future comedians about the art of being funny.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Eric Kurn climbed onto the stage and gave the crowd a wide-eyed look.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   Students try out their material in front of a live crowd.  Bottom of Form | | | Top of Form  6. Which of the following is a statement of fact?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Kids 'N Comedy is the best comedy-training program out there.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Delivering a comedy act successfully is the toughest thing a performer can do.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   The talented students at Kids 'N Comedy are funnier than most adult performers.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   Kids 'N Comedy students perform in front of a live, paying crowd.  Bottom of Form |      |  | | --- | | Top of Form  7. The article states:  **For Grossman, this served as proof of the hard work of the *talented* students.**  Which would be the closest **synonym** for the word *talented*?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Ragged   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Cheerful   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Dangerous   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   Gifted  Bottom of Form | | Top of Form  8.  The article states:  **They're taught how to write one-liners. They're taught how to create an act. They're taught how to deliver that act on stage. Students are often encouraged to write jokes based on their own lives. They then refine those thoughts into an act.**  The author uses these sentences mostly to help the reader \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Understand why students are given the chance to try out their material   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Understand why Kids 'N Comedy students are taught by professional comedians   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Understand how to create funny one-liners to deliver on stage   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   Understand what Kids 'N Comedy teaches its students about comedy  Bottom of Form | | |
| After Reading Poll    Now that you have read the article, indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement.  Having new chances to learn is more important now than ever before.  Top of Form   * Agree * Disagree   Bottom of Form |
| Thought Question    Imagine you are making a movie. It will be about the Kids 'N Comedy program. It will also be about the history of summer camps. Pick important events from the readings to put in your movie. Explain why each event is important. Use information from the lesson in your answer.  Type your answer in the box below. |
| Poll Results    OPINION STATEMENT: Having new chances to learn is more important now than ever before.   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Before Reading | | | After Reading | | | | How you voted | | | | | | | Agree | | | Agree | | | | Disagree | | | Disagree | | | | National results | | | | | | | Agree |  | 87% | Agree |  | 89% | | Disagree |  | 13% | Disagree |  | 11% | | 13% changed their opinion after reading the article. | | | | | | |
| Math    Page 1   |  | | --- | | Top of Form  1. Kids take comedy classes at a program in New York City. There are seven boys in the classes. There are eight times as many girls as boys in the classes. How many girls are in the comedy classes?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   63 girls   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   56 girls   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   15 girls   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   54 girls  Bottom of Form | |
| Stretch Article    Page 1  image  Photo credit: AP/Larry Neumeister  Zach Rosenfeld, 14, delivers his act at the 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club in New York City.  **NEW YORK, New York** (Achieve3000, March 5, 2013). At the Gotham Comedy Club in New York City, 16-year-old Eric Kurn climbed onto the stage and gave the packed audience a look of wide-eyed bewilderment before launching into his deadpan bit. "I think it's time I had a girlfriend," Eric said. "There's just one little problem. None of the girls I know think it's time I had a girlfriend. Even some of the girls I don't know yet agree with that," the budding comic continued, drawing cascades of laughter from the crowd.  Getting laughs, sometimes at his own expense, is precisely what Eric is learning to do.  Eric is a student at Kids 'N Comedy, a New York City-based program that teaches aspiring comedians all about the art of being funny. The program was founded in 1996 by Stu and Jo Ann Grossman. It offers a series of nine-week comedy training classes and two-week summer camps for kids ages 9 to 18. It's a chance for class clowns to hone their comedy chops—without ending up in the principal's office.  Trained by professional comedians, Kids 'N Comedy students learn all about the nuances and fundamentals of comedy. They're taught how to write one-liners, how to create an act, and how to deliver that act on stage. Class participants are often encouraged to craft jokes based on their life experiences. They then refine those thoughts into an act.  "We try to motivate them to write all the time," Jo Ann Grossman said. "If you want to keep it fresh, you have to keep on writing."  At the end of their basic training in comedy club work, the students are given a final exam of sorts: an opportunity to try out their material in front of a live, paying audience of strangers.  For Zach Rosenfeld, 14, delivering that performance was the hardest part of the program—at least at first. Zach started taking Kids 'N Comedy classes when he was 9. He recalled that while preparing for his first experience on stage, he was frozen by the sheer fear of failing to be funny. He said he sat nervously backstage, trying to remember his lines, only to get before the crowd and forget most of them.  "I was very nervous," Zach said. "But after sitting through a couple of those classes, I started to open up more and more....The class teaches you to calm down and not be so scared."  Even after bombing at his first performance, Zach said he knew he would perform again—and he has. Most recently, Zach did his act at the 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club, and this time, the relatively seasoned jokester won the crowd over.  "When you hear laughter on the stage, it's one of the greatest things on the face of the earth," Zach said. "You're shining in the stage's light, and people like you."  Zach wasn't the only shining star at the holiday show. Leo Frampton, 17, another crowd favorite, said he gets annoyed during holiday breaks when adults repeatedly ask him if he's looking forward to returning to school. He joked that he'd like to counter, "Hey, it's almost tax season….Looking forward to going back to the office?"  The 2012 holiday show set an important milestone for the program: It was the first sold-out show in the history of Kids 'N Comedy. For Grossman, the accomplishment was a testament not just to the strength of the workshops, but also to the hard work of the talented students.  "To see these kids—they're funny, they're really funny," Jo Ann Grossman said. "Nobody's doing knock-knock jokes."  *The Associated Press contributed to this story.*    Page 2  Dig Deeper  image  Photo credit: AP/The Free Press, Janet S. Carter  A camp counselor helps a young camper into the water at a summer camp at Neuseway Park's Nature Center in Kinston, North Carolina.  In "The Art of Funny," you read about a program that offers summer camps where kids learn the art of stand-up comedy. A summer camp is a place that provides kids with activities during their time off from school. There are all kinds of summer camps in the United States—arts camps, sports camps, academic camps, and camps that offer a little bit of everything. There are day camps, where kids go only during the day, and sleep-away camps. Camps have existed in the U.S. for more than 150 years.  Summer camp probably originated in the summer of 1861. That's when William Frederick Gunn and his wife Abigail, headmasters of a private school in Connecticut, decided to take some of the boys into nature. This idea probably didn't surprise the students; the Gunns loved the outdoors and promoted the importance of exercise. They often canceled classes when the weather was nice, opting instead to take the students on long hikes. They sometimes hiked to a campsite in the wilderness, several miles from the school. The students stayed there for two weeks. Their activities included swimming, boating, and fishing. In the evenings, the Gunns and their charges would gather around a fire and sing songs.  Summer camp appealed to the Gunns and their students for the same reason camp is popular today: It gave the campers a chance to get away from their day-to-day lives and try something new. In the 19th century, the U.S. was becoming more urban. The cities were full of crowded neighborhoods and the smells of factories, while the country offered fresh air and natural beauty. Parents wanted their children to be in a healthier environment, if only for a short time. In this quiet environment, campers bonded with their peers and sometimes even learned new skills, such as starting campfires and foraging for berries.  By 1900, several individuals and organizations had established summer camps. At first, all camps were for boys only. Some of them aimed to teach boys skills that weren't taught in classrooms during the school year. Others hoped to build a sense of responsibility in boys from wealthy families, who were used to being waited upon by servants. In 1892, Camp Arey in New York became the first camp to admit girls. Within 10 years, several other girls' summer camps had opened. One of them, Camp Wyonegonic in Maine, is the oldest continuously operating camp for girls in the U.S.  Summer camps were influenced by certain cultural traditions that reflected the aims of the camps. Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps both adopted military traditions. Campers are required to stick to a strict schedule and eat in mess halls, for example. These traditions help maintain discipline at the camps and promote responsibility in campers. Other camps adopted certain Native American traditions. In the early 20th century, naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton established the Woodcraft League of America, which promoted Native American practices in summer camps. Woodcraft was all about survival and respect for nature.  Summer camps became a more established part of American society in 1910, with the founding of the American Camp Association (ACA). The ACA is an association for camps and their owners.  Camp was popular from the start, but for decades, many excluded minorities. In 1950, the ACA resolved that its meetings for camp owners would be held only in places where minorities were welcome. Fifteen years later, due to complaints about racial discrimination, the ACA revised its bylaws to state that ACA membership and jobs would be open to all, regardless of "race or creed." It also recommended that ACA member camps be open to children of all races and religions. This change caused many camps to leave the ACA. Some did not return for many years. However, the new law helped open summer camps to all American children.  Today, children continue to attend summer camp as an escape and a chance to make new friends. Many camps say that the experience is more important than ever, since kids often spend more time in front of iPad and iPod screens than they do outdoors. Kids at summer camps are learning new skills, and they're also connecting with the world around them.    Dictionary   |  | | --- | | **aspiring** *(adjective)*    trying to reach a goal | | **deadpan** *(adjective)*    having a matter-of-fact style or manner, without expression | | **hone** *(verb)*    to perfect or refine | | **nuance** *(noun)*    a subtle characteristic of something | |
| Stretch Activity    Page 1   |  | | --- | | Top of Form  1. What is this article mainly about?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   The Kids 'N Comedy program's recent milestone   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   A program called Kids 'N Comedy that teaches kids how to write jokes and develop comedy acts   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   A teen comedian named Eric Kurn who performed at New York's Gotham Comedy Club in 2012   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   The requirements and responsibilities of a comedian  Bottom of Form | | Top of Form  2. According to the article, why did Zach do better in his most recent show than he did the first time he performed?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Because the Kids 'N Comedy program teaches kids how to open up and remain calm on stage   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Because the Kids 'N Comedy program teaches kids how to refine jokes about life into an act   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Because his 2012 performance was at the Gotham Comedy Club in New York City   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   Because his 2012 performance was part of a sold-out show in front of a packed audience  Bottom of Form |  |  | | --- | | Top of Form  3. Which is the closest **synonym** for the word *hone*?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Relish   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Polish   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Diversify   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   Certify  Bottom of Form | | Top of Form  4. Which information is **not** in the article?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   A reason why some kids might enjoy telling jokes on stage   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   The number of students who have participated in the program   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   An example of something the program teaches students   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   The names of the founders of the program  Bottom of Form | |  |  | | --- | | Top of Form  5. Which of these is **most** important to include in a summary of this article?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Sixteen-year-old Eric Kurn performed at Kids 'N Comedy's 2012 holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Seventeen-year-old Leo Frampton gets annoyed when adults ask him if he's looking forward to going back to school.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Kids 'N Comedy is a program in New York City that teaches young people all about being a comedian.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   The Kids 'N Comedy program set an important milestone when its holiday show sold out for the first time.  Bottom of Form | | Top of Form  6. Which of the following is a statement of fact?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   The Grossmans are really gifted teachers, and they are especially good at working with shy teenagers.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Eric Kurn's humorous deadpan bit was the best performance of all during the 2012 holiday show in New York.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Zach Rosenfeld's clever jokes and entertaining performance in the holiday show suggest that he will be a great comedian.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   The 2012 Kids 'N Comedy holiday show at the Gotham Comedy Club was the first sold-out show in the program's history.  Bottom of Form |  |  | | --- | | Top of Form  7. The article states:  **The 2012 holiday show set an important *milestone* for the program: It was the first sold-out show in the history of Kids 'N Comedy.**  Which would be the closest **synonym** for the word *milestone*?   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Embarrassment   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Comedian   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Achievement   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   Rehearsal  Bottom of Form | | Top of Form  8. The author's purpose for writing this article was probably to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/A.gif   Inform readers about the program that Stu and Jo Ann Grossman created for aspiring young comedians   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/B.gif   Advertise for the Kids 'N Comedy program's upcoming show in New York   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/C.gif   Review the recent performance of aspiring young comedian Eric Kurn   * http://portal.achieve3000.com/assets/images/common/component/activity/D.gif   Persuade readers between the ages of 9 and 18 to sign up for a summer camp with Kids 'N Comedy  Bottom of Form | |