

Jokes For Communication, Sally Millar, CALL Scotland

When setting up a vocabulary for a child (or adult) who uses a voice output communication aid, major priorities are:

- how to get him/her to WANT to use it?
- how to make it sociable and interactive? (ie. so that other communication partners will want him/her to use it)
- how to make it empowering, so that he/she can 'hold the floor' and experience some 'control' in a communication situation?

Most children seem to find it quite difficult (boring?) to use the so-called 'social vocabulary' (hello, how are you, fine, how are you?). But they generally enjoy having jokes to tell. They may manage by themselves to draw in individual communication partners, using jokes, or, if the situation can be 'engineered' imaginatively by adults, they may get to command a whole roomful of listeners at Circle time, Assembly, or a play, drama/video or language session.

Therapists, teachers and families have to source suitable jokes, to programme in. Help! I don't know about you, but I can only ever remember about one joke, ever (ie. What do you get if you cross an elephant with a fish? Swimming trunks! Thanks to somebody in Cauldeen Primary School for that one, and to Morna for re-telling it constantly on her DynaVox with such verve and enthusiasm!). OK, children can get a great laugh from re-telling the same jokes many times. But to be fun, and socially effective in drawing in communication partners, one really needs a constant supply of new jokes. Finding more jokes is always possible but inevitably time consuming.

This resource aims to supply you with a pile of idiotic jokes that will help you to quickly refresh the vocabularies of VOCA users without sending you off to steal other children's comics and joke books. They are in no particular order here (and may or may not be 'owned' by someone, who knows, so please don't try to sell them or publish them on yourself!) Many thanks to Rosie Gilbride in Highland for her son's comics, and to Sarah Marjoribanks of the CALL Centre for the research and collection work (trawling the internet and weeding out unsuitable material).

Rather than just programming jokes in yourself, it is really important to involve the child. Choosing the 'right' joke(s) together (say from 3 or 4 options, and lots of time for repetition and explanation etc.) is a good way to make sure the child understands and likes the joke (although a lot of kids will enjoy the attention and the social interaction if another person laughs, even if they don't quite understand it themselves). A lot of children's jokes are based on 'sort of puns', which can be quite a useful 'assessment window' into their language understanding ability (phonological analysis and semantic processing connections.).

How you lay the joke out on the VOCA overlay is another key issue. The main priority is that the user can reliably and quickly link the right 'starter line' up with the right punchline ie. this is a social exercise that must go right, NOT a time to make things challenging for the user, or a test! Use of a colour code (2 parts of the same joke in lighter and dark shades of the same colour - always light first, then dark for punchline?) might help. So will supportive use of spatial layout, i.e. putting the jokes in pairs of 2 cells, always left for the starter line and right for punchline. (Or all starters down the left of the screen - or all along the top - with all the punchlines lined up to match them on the other half of the screen.) HAVE FUN!!

| Joke Starter line | Punch line |
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| What goes up, but never comes down? | Your age |
| What wobbles as it flies? | A Jellocopter |
| Where do sheep get their hair cut? | At the baa-baa shop |
| Why did the thief take a bath? | So he could make a clean getaway |
| What are the wettest animals in the world? | Reindeer |
| What did the letter say to the stamp? | Stick to me and we'll go places |
| Why did the teacher wear sunglasses? | Because her students were too bright |
| Where would you find a dog with | Right where you left him |

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| no legs? | |
| What's the difference between roast beef and pea soup? | Anyone can roast beef |
| What lies at the bottom of the ocean and twitches? | A nervous wreck |
| What do you call a Boomerang that doesn't come back? | A stick |
| Why was the broom late? | Because it overswept |
| What do you get when cross a snowman with a vampire? | Frostbite |
| What did baby corn say to mommy corn? | Where's pop corn |
| Why did the tightrope walker visit the bank? | To check his balance |
| Why was the Egyptian boy confused? | Because his daddy was a mummy |
| Why do black sheep eat less than white sheep? | Because there aren't as many of them |
| What do you call a fish with no eyes? | A fsh |
| What's brown and sticky? | A stick |
| Why would you invite a mushroom to your party? | Because he's a fungi to be with |
| What goes ha, ha, ha, clonk? | A man laughing his head off |
| Why is it so difficult to train dogs to dance? | Because they have two left feet |
| What do you give a man who has everything? | Antibiotics |
| Why are tall people the laziest? | Because they lie longer in bed |
| Which is fastest, hot or cold? | Hot, because you can catch cold |
| What did the hat say to the scarf? | You hang around while I go on-ahead |
| Why does a golfer wear two pairs of socks? | In case he gets a hole in one |

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| What do you get if you walk underneath a cow? | A pat on the head |
| What's orange and sounds like a parrot? | A carrot |
| Why was six scared of seven? | Because seven eight nine |
| What's the best way to stop food going bad? | Eat it |
| What ring is square? | A boxing ring |
| What do prisoners use to call one another? | Cell phones |
| Why do gorillas have big nostrils? | Because they have big fingers |
| When is a door not a door? | When it's ajar |
| Doctor, Doctor, I tend to flush a lot! | Don't worry it's just a chain reaction |
| Why was the centipede dropped from the football team? | He took too long to put his boots on! |
| What do whales eat? | Fish & ships |
| Why did the boy go to bed? | 'Cos the bed wouldn't come to him! |
| What is a parrot's favourite game? | Hide and speak! |
| Why did the dog chase his own tail? | He was trying to make both ends meet! |
| Why was the tomato last in the race? | It couldn't ketchup! |
| Why did the tap dancer retire? | He kept falling in the sink! |
| Which word in the dictionary is spelled incorrectly? | Incorrectly! |
| What's the difference between a fish and a piano? | You can't tuna fish! |
| What do you call an ant who skips school? | A truant! |
| What do you call a greedy ant? | An anteater! |
| How does a lion greet the other | Pleased to eat you |

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| animals in the field? | |
| What do cats read in the morning? | Mewspapers |
| What do you call a cat wearing shoes? | Puss in boots |
| What does a bee get at McDonalds? | A hamburger! |
| What buzzes, is black and yellow and goes along the bottom of the sea? | A bee in a submarine! |
| What did the spider say to the bee? | Your honey or your life! |
| What did one bee say to another in summer? | Swarm here isn't it! |
| Where do bees go on holiday? | Stingapore! |
| Why did the turtle cross the road | To get to the Shell station |
| What do chicken families do on Saturday afternoon? | They go on peck-nics |
| What do you get when a chicken lays an egg on top of a barn? | An egg roll! |
| What kind of dog chases anything red? | A Bull dog! |
| What do you get if you cross a computer and a Rottweiler? | A computer with lots of bites |
| What dog loves to take a bubble bath? | A Shampoodle! |
| Why do elephants eat raw food? | Because they don't know how to cook! |
| What's grey with red spots | An elephant with measles |
| What do you call an elephant at the North Pole? | Lost! |
| Why did the elephant paint his toenails red? | So he could hide in the cherry tree! |
| What do you get if you cross an | Big holes all over Australia! |

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| elephant with a kangaroo? | Boing Boing |
| What do you call an arctic cow? | An eskimoo! |
| What is a cow's favourite TV show? | Dr. Moo! |
| What goes 'peck, bank, bang, peck, bank'? | A bunch of chickens in a field full of balloons! |
| What fish only swims at night? | A starfish! |
| What kind of fish goes well with ice-cream? | Jellyfish! |
| Why is a fish easy to weigh? | Because it has its own scales! |
| Why are fish boots the warmest ones to wear? | Because they have electric 'eels! |
| What insect runs away from everything? | A Flea! |
| How do you start an insect race? | One, two, flea go! |
| How do fleas travel? | Itch hiking! |
| What is a grasshopper! | An insect on a pogo stick |
| What is green and can jump a mile in a minute? | A grasshopper with hiccups! |
| What is green, sooty and whistles when it rubs its back legs together? | Chimney Cricket! |
| What do moths learn at school? | Mothmatics! |
| What are crisp, like milk and go 'eek, eek, eek' when you eat them? | Mice krispies! |
| What is small, furry and brilliant at sword fights? | A Mouseketeer! |
| What did Tom get when he locked Jerry in the freezer? | Mice cubes! |
| What do mice do when they're at home? | Mousework! |
| What's a frogs favourite game? | It's croak-et! |

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| What's a frogs favourite flower? | A croakus! |
| What did the bus conductor say to the frog? | Hop on! |
| What kind of pole is short and floppy? | A tadpole! |
| What do you call a girl with a frog in her hair? | Lily! |
| What do Scottish toads play? | Hop-scotch! |
| How do snails get their shells so shiny? | They use snail varnish! |
| Why is the snail the strongest animal? | Because he carries a house on his back! |
| What do you call a big Irish spider? | Paddy long legs? |
| What does a spider do when he gets angry? | He goes up the wall! |
| Why did the sparrow go to the library? | It was looking for bookworms! |
| Doctor, Doctor my son has swallowed my pen, what should I do? | Use a pencil till I get there! |
| Doctor, Doctor I think I'm a bell | Take these, and if it doesn't help give me a ring! |
| Doctor, Doctor I feel like a sheep. | That's baaaaaaaaaaaaaad! |
| Doctor, Doctor I feel like a bee. | Well buzz off I'm busy! |
| Doctor, Doctor I feel like an apple | We must get to the core of this! |
| Doctor, Doctor I think I'm a snail | Don't worry we'll soon have you out of your shell! |
| What kind of food do maths teachers eat? | Square meals! |
| What do Gnomes do after school? | Gnomework! |
| How did your mum know you hadn't washed your face? | I forgot to wet the soap! |

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| Where do tadpoles change? | in a croakroom! |
| Why are goldfish red? | The water turns them rusty! |
| What is the best hand to write with? | Neither it's best to write with a pen! |
| What does Mini mum meant? | A very small mum! |
| What kind of biscuit would you find at the South Pole? | A penguin! |
| Where do snowmen go to dance? | A snowball |
| Why did the burglar take a shower? | He wanted to make a clean getaway |
| Why do polar bears have fur coats? | Because they would look silly in anoraks! |
| What is the one word a dog can say | Bark |
| Knock, Knock Who's there? | Boo / Boo Who? / Don't cry its only a joke! |
| Why did the computer go to the doctors? | Because it had a virus! |
| Why did the chicken cross the playground? | To get to the other slide! |
| What happened when the dog swallowed a firefly? | It barked with de-light! |
| Why do birds fly south in the winter? | Because it's too far to walk! |
| What sound do porcupines make when they kiss? | Ouch! |
| What did one fish say to the other? | You keep your mouth closed and you won't get caught! |
| Why are fish so smart? | Because they live in schools! |
| What colour is a burp? | Burple! |
| What is black and white, white and black, black and white? | A zebra caught in a revolving door! |
| Why did the cook get arrested? | Because he beat up an egg. |

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| What did the blanket say to the bed? | You are under cover! |
| What's a snake's favourite subject? | Hisssss tory |
| Why didn't the skeleton go to the ball? | Because he had no 'body' to go with! |
| What do you call a nervous celery stalk? | An edgy veggie! |
| What's black and white and red all over? | A penguin with a rash! |
| What did the mayonnaise say to the fridge door? | Close the door, I'm dressing! |
| What are the best days in 'Foodland'? | Fry-days and Sundaes! |
| What do you call a sleeping bull? | A bulldozer! |
| Why do fish live in salt water? | Because pepper makes them sneeze |
| What did the hedgehog say to the cactus? | Is that your mummy? |
| What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire? | Frostbite! |
| What's brown and sticky? | A stick |
| What dog keeps the best time? | A watch dog! |
| What did the grape do when it got stepped on? | It let out a little wine! |
| Why did the tomato turn red? | It saw the salad dressing! |
| How do you make a tissue dance? | Put a little 'boogey' in it! |
| What did the water say to the boat? | Nothing, it just waved. |
| What did the fish say when he swam into the wall? | Dam! |
| What has 4 legs but can't walk? | A table! |
| What did the ground say to the earthquake? | You crack me up. |

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| What do you get when you cross a cow and a duck | Milk and quackers! |
| Why did the elephant eat the candle? | He wanted a light snack! |
| Why was 6 afraid of 7? | Because 789! |
| Why did the biscuit go to the hospital? | Because it felt crummy! |
| How do you know carrots are good for your eyes? | Because you never see rabbits wearing glasses! |
| What tests to witches have to pass? | Spell-ing tests! |
| Why did the boy eat his homework? | Because his teacher said it was a piece of cake! |
| Why is basketball such a messy sport? | Because you dribble on the floor! |
| What season is it when you are on a trampoline? | Spring time |
| What happens to cows during an earthquake? | They give milk shakes! |
| Where do cows go on holiday? | Moo York |
| What has one head, one foot and four legs? | A bed |
| Why did the birdie go to the hospital? | To get a tweetment |
| What do you call a cow eating grass in a paddock? | A lawn mooer |
| What gets bigger and bigger the more you take away from it? | A hole. |
| Why did the traffic light turn red? | You would too if you had to change in the middle of the street. |
| What did one lift say to the other lift? | I think I'm coming down with something. |
| What did the little mountain say to the big mountain? | Hi Cliff! |

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| Why should you take a pencil to bed? | To draw the curtains. |
| What kind of button won't unbutton? | A bellybutton. |
| What are two things you cannot have for breakfast? | Lunch and dinner. |
| What kind of shoes do all spies wear? | Sneakers. |
| What did one wall say to the other wall? | I'll meet you at the corner. |
| What did the alien say to the garden? | Take me to your weeder. |
| How do footballers keep cool? | Sit next to their fans |
| What gets wetter the more it dries? | A towel. |
| Why was the maths book so sad? | Because it was full of problems. |
| How do you catch a squirrel? | Climb a tree and act like a nut. |
| What do you do with a blue whale? | Try to cheer him up. |
| Where do sheep go to get their hair cut | To the Baa Baa shop. |
| Why can't a leopard hide? | Because he's always spotted. |
| What do you give a dog with a fever? | Mustard, it's the best thing for a hot dog. |
| What do you get when you cross a cat with a lemon? | A sour puss. |
| Why does a hummingbird hum? | Because it doesn't know the words. |
| Why are some fish at the bottom of the ocean? | Because they dropped out of school. |
| What's invisible and smells like carrots? | Bunny farts. |
| What kind of bed does a mermaid sleep in? | A water bed. |

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| Why was the broom late? | It over swept |
| What do you get when you put a fish and an elephant together? | Swimming trunks |
| What goes up when the rains comes down? | An umbrella |
| What did the big chimney say to the small chimney? | You are too little to smoke. |
| What do you call a doctor with 8 arms? | A Doctorpus |
| Why did the belt go to jail? | Because it held up a pair of pants |
| What did the stamp say to the envelope? | Stick with me and we'll go places |
| What do computers do when they are hungry? | They eat chips. |
| What do you call two banana skins? | A pair of slippers |
| Why did the balloon burst? | Because it saw a lolly pop |
| What flower grows on your face? | Tu-lips |
| What is a computers favourite dance? | Disk-o |
| Why did the computer squeak? | Because someone stepped on its mouse |
| Why do cows have bells? | Because their horns don't work |
| Why did the chewing gum cross the road? | It was stuck to the leg of the chicken. |
| What did one egg say to the other egg? | Lets get cracking. |
| What's in the middle of a jellyfish? | A jellybutton |
| What do you get if you cross a Cocker Spaniel with a Poodle and a rooster? | A cockapoodledoo |
| What to you call a pig with 3 | A Piiig |

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| eyes? | |
| Where do mermaids go to see movies? | A dive-in |
| What goes 'tick, tick, woof, woof'? | A watchdog |
| What did the digital watch say to the grandfather clock? | Look pop.... No hands |
| Why are pianos hard to open? | The keys are inside |
| What's green and loud? | A froghorn |
| What's a hedgehog's favourite food? | Prickled onions |
| What do you call a blind dinosaur? | I-don't-think-he-saurus |
| What do pigs put on sore trotters? | Oinkment |
| What does a bee use to brush his hair? | A honeycomb |
| What do you get when you cross a cow with a rabbit? | Hair in your milk |
| Why couldn't the flower ride his bike? | Because he lost his petals |
| What's black and white and red all over? | A zebra with a sunburn |
| What did one plate say to the other? | Lunch is on me. |
| Why can't a bike stand up for itself? | Because it's too tired. |
| What kind of coat goes on wet and never has buttons? | A coat of paint |
| What do frogs drink? | Croak-a-Cola |
| What has four legs and goes "oom-oom"? | A cow walking backwards |
| Where is the best place to have a bubble gum contents? | On a Choo-Choo train |
| What's full of holes and still holds water? | A sponge |

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| What do you call someone that keeps talking when no-one is listening? | A teacher |
| What did the mud say when it started to rain? | If this keeps up, my name is going to be mud. |
| What do you take off last before getting into bed? | Your feet off the floor |
| What did the chewing gum say to the shoe? | I'm stuck on you |
| What do you call a fairy who hasn't taken a bath? | Stinkerbell |
| What do you call a scared dinosaur | A nervous-rex |
| Who granted the fish's wish? | Fairy Cod-mother |
| What games do cows play at parties? | Moosical chairs |