

Annotation Guidelines
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Introduction:

In contrast to what is defined as a meme nowadays, Dad jokes were seen as memes in the 1990s. A Dad joke is a kind of joke told by fathers, with a punchline that is predictable, obvious, or a play on words, intended to be understood as an “anti-joke”, or as something corny/punny (an anti-joke is meant to not be funny or to lack newfound meaning). It references universal concepts such that the listener of the joke understands the reference, however, it can lack coherence or wittiness. It leaves the listener dumbfounded at the lack of coherence (presence of random elements within the joke) or the lack of wit usually required for one to tell a successful joke, resulting in laughter.

Stage comedians constantly need to catch up with the times to stay relevant, and gag humor relies on a fleshed-out cast of characters and context for the jokes to make sense. Dad jokes, in contrast, work well on their own, and are one and done. As Seven from National Post puts it, “It’s a genre most kids grow up with and can relate to, no matter where they are from. It requires no cultural know-how, no knowledge of social trends or world updates.”

Another common theme is that Dad jokes tend to be quite wholesome. In many jokes, somebody is the target/victim of the joke, such as in the recent drama over Chris Rock’s joke about Will Smith’s wife, which turned into a fiesta of tears and controversy on social media platforms. In contrast to our current age of online nastiness and parasitic-natured jokes, dad jokes are refreshing, light-hearted, and are meant to be “healing”.

Some other descriptors of Dad jokes include “indescribably cheesy and/or dumb,” “corny jokes you hate with every fiber of your being but also can’t help but laugh at,” with a tendency to “generate groans instead of guffaws” and “pitying glances, not affectionate smiles.” On r/dadjokes (Reddit), users go to share “the jokes that make you laugh and cringe in equal measure”.

An example of this is shown below, as we see a question asked that does not have context behind it and yet it has a fairly predictable transformation into a punny joke. The strength lies in the punchline, which makes you roll your eyes and facepalm at the obvious nature of the answer, but, nevertheless, smile:

Q: What is your secret to always staying down-to-earth?

A: Well, I mean, gravity.

Annotation Guidelines

Notes:

- Jokes that are either grammatically incorrect or don’t make (humoristic) sense have been removed.

- We have chosen to rate jokes on a scale from 1 to 4.

1 - Not a Dad Joke

Which jokes go into this category?

These are normal jokes that require a significant amount of thought, require a significant amount of background knowledge, or contain humor that relies on elements that are not found in the above introduction (for example, punniness, randomness, wholesomeness, corniness, etc.). These, clearly have not been constructed from the mind of a Dad.

Examples:

- If life gives you melons, you might have dyslexia.
- Broken pencils... ...are pointless.
- What gun do you use to hunt a moose? A moosecut!
- I like my slaves like I like my coffee: Free.
- Bee jokes, courtesy of my niece (age 8). What did the bee use to dry off after swimming? A *bee*ch towel. What did the bee use to get out the tangles? A honeycomb.
- What's worse than a centipede with sore feet? A giraffe with a sore throat

2 - Could be a Dad Joke

Which jokes go into this category?

These are jokes that contain puns or play on words, however, do not have any comedic value a Dad joke would have. It is solely an anti-humor joke with aspects of a Dad joke such as puns or play on words.

Examples:

- Two artists had an art contest... It ended in a draw
- How much did the skeleton charge for his excellent legal services? An arm and a leg.
- I went for a job interview today... The interviewer said to me, What would you say your greatest weakness is? I said, I think I'd have to say my listening skills are my greatest strength.

3 - Probably a Dad Joke

Which jokes go into this category?

These jokes contain most of the Dad Joke elements such as lack of wit or a lack of coherence, and are likely attempts of a Dad creating a humorous moment. However, it would not spark comedic laughter from others.

Examples:

- What did the bartender say to the jumper cables? You better not try to start anything.
- Knock Knock Who's there Boo!! Boo who? Don't cry, it's only a joke
- Wanna hear a joke about unemployed people? Nevermind, they don't work.

4 - Dad Joke

Which jokes go into this category?

These are extremely strong Dad jokes that have come from the mind of a father who attempts to create humorous moments, yet lacks the wit and cleverness to create an original/profound joke. The jokes below have an easily identifiable (or easily constructed) pun and/or lack depth. They are cheap in the sense that they are constructed without profound thought, insightful reflection upon phenomena, and do not require a lot of background or context; they are often trite.

Examples:

- What's brown and sticky? A stick.
- What's red and bad for your teeth? A brick.
- Don't you hate jokes about German sausage? They're the wurst!
- Why did the chicken cross the playground? To get to the other slide.
- What did the number zero say to the number eight? "Nice belt."
- Why do gorillas have such big nostrils? Cos they got big fingers.
- What did the owner of a brownie factory say when his factory caught fire? "I'm getting the fudge outta here!"

Sources Cited:

<https://nationalpost.com/life/how-the-dad-joke-was-born-and-why-itll-never-go-out-of-style>
<https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2018/09/deconstructing-the-dad-joke/571174/>