

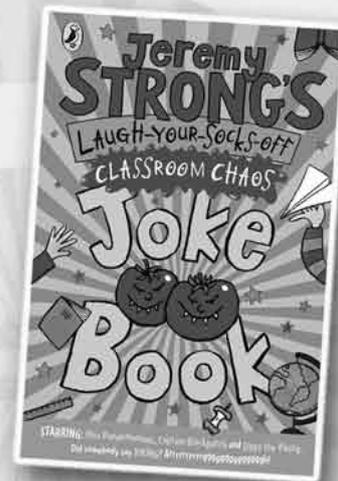
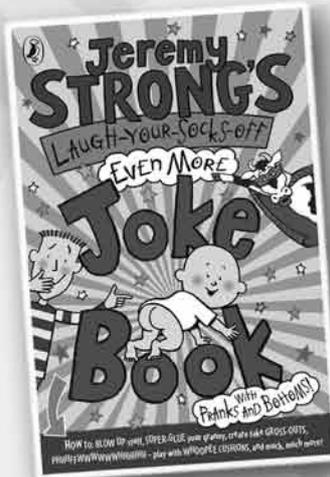
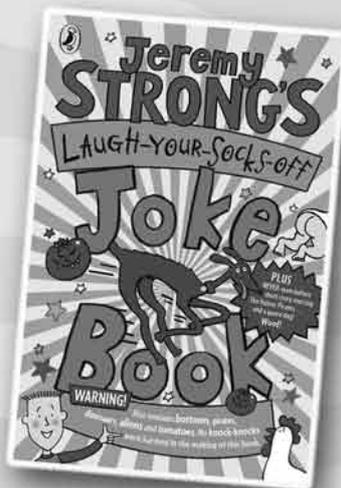
HOST A JOKE SWAP PARTY

Jokes can be a great way of encouraging children to explore books – especially reluctant readers for whom the bite-size content is much less challenging than a full-length story. Reading them out loud, meanwhile, can boost public speaking skills and confidence – and we all know that laughter is the best medicine for all ages! So, why not organise a fun-filled joke swap event? Here are six top tips to help you.

1 Find a time and place. Try to set aside at least half an hour. A joke-telling session could form a good part of any literacy session, but you might prefer to organise something after school and give it more of a party feel. It would make a fun end-of-week or end-of-term session too.

2 Spread the word. Ask all the children to think about their favourite jokes. Tell everyone to bring at least one joke along to the party – or more if you have time. And suggest that the children practice telling their jokes too – it's the way they tell 'em that matters, after all!

3 Help with research. See if your school library has any joke books for children to borrow, and find a few suitable (and age appropriate) websites they can explore. If some children are struggling to think of any good jokes, they could pinch some ideas from Jeremy Strong!



4 Tell the jokes. Give every child in turn the chance to stand in front of the class and tell their joke. If they are nervous, try to lighten the mood by telling one or two jokes yourself.

5 Talk about the jokes. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, ask children which jokes they found funny and why. What makes a good joke? Which sort do they prefer – short puns or long shaggy dog stories? And does the way a joke is delivered make a difference to how they think about it?

6 Choose the best joke. Once all the children have told their jokes, organise a voting system to find the best one. You could ask for a show of hands for each one, or organise a 'clapometer' by asking everyone to clap or cheer each joke and seeing which gets the loudest response. If you have a bit more time, give every child a slip of paper to write on, and tally up the votes. Consider awarding the winner a prize – a book by Jeremy Strong would be ideal! You could also print the winning joke in the school newsletter or pin it up on the noticeboard.