

# Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Sist oppdatert 26.04.19

Dette dokumentets nettadresse (URL) er:

<https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/cm4all/uproc.php/0/vits.pdf>

## Vits

(\_sjanger) En kortfattet morsomhet, som tradisjonelt lever på folkemunne, men som også blir samlet i vitsebøker.

“Jokes are a form of verbal humor, including one-liners, riddles, and other things that make us laugh; but the joke is also a form – a funny, made-up story with a punchline told by one person.” (<http://www.wisegeek.org/what-is-a-joke.htm>; lesedato 14.10.13)

“Although joke-tellers typically try to draw links between the jokes they tell and the ongoing topic of conversation, a joke is a context-free and self-contained unit of humor that carries within itself all the information needed for it to be understood and enjoyed.” (Martin 2007)

De aller fleste vitser framkaller latter ved å gi en plutselig innsikt i en uventet sammenheng, en komisk “aha”-opplevelse. Det overraskende kan f.eks. skyldes ords dobbeltbetydninger, eller tvetydighet (“Om jeg vil kjøpe disse kortene? Hundre kroner er for mye forlangt for kort”). De fleste vitser kommer raskt til poenget. Noen inneholder replikker.

“The elements of a good joke have been debated for centuries. Jokes seem to include surprise and shock; they lead us down a familiar path and then take an unexpected turn.” (Steve Ellen i <https://theconversation.com/the-lowdown-on-laughter-from-boosting-immunity-to-releasing-tension-56568>; lesedato 18.05.18)

“Jokes work because they defy expectations. [...] Humans experience the humor of a joke in three phases. First, the listener encounters some type of incongruity: a punch line that seems out of place compared with the joke’s set-up. Then, following a cognitive construct called surprise and coherence, the listener tries to resolve this incongruity. Finally, the listener’s brain determines the joke’s sense – or lack thereof – and decides whether or not the joke is funny. [...] Most successful jokes are funny because the incongruity occurs within the few beats that exist between the set-up and the punch line. The following joke provides an example: Gymnast: Can you teach me to do the splits? Gymnastics instructor: How flexible

are you? Gymnast: Well, I can't come in on Thursdays. We suss out the humor of this joke using the concept behind what scientists call the incongruity-resolution theory. The set-up gets us thinking in one direction, then the punch line comes along and jars us into realizing there is a completely different way to interpret the situation.” ([https://hms.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/HMS\\_OTB\\_Spring10\\_Vol16\\_No2.pdf](https://hms.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/HMS_OTB_Spring10_Vol16_No2.pdf); lesedato 26.04.19)

Det finnes en rekke ulike undersjangerer, bl.a. disse:

- alle barna-vitser (“Alle barna lekte med motorsag unntatt Svein, han var grein”)
- gåtevitser (“Hva er det som er lite og blått og hopper fra tre til tre? Et ekorn i treningsdrakt”)
- nasjonsvitser (skottevitser, svenskevitser osv.)
- blondinevitser – blonde kvinner framstår som ekstremt dumme
- ordbok-/definisjonsvitser (“Mattetime: kurs for teppehandlere”, “Dykker: en person som er god på bunnen”, “Bamsemums: turister på Svalbard”)
- molbohistorer/-vitser (personer fra Mols på Jylland i Danmark oppfører seg naivt og idiotisk; de første historiene ble trykt i Christian Elovius Magnors bok *Beretning om de vidtbekjendte Molboers vise Gierninger og tapre Bedrifter*, 1771)

I tillegg er det i vitsebøker ofte kategorier som kannibalvitser, svigermorvitser, elefantvitser, politivitser, piratvitser, vitser om svensken, danske og nordmannen, m.m.

Vitser kan også bli gruppert etter hvor de blir fortalt eller har oppstått (trøndervitser, russiske vitser osv.).

Det utgis bøker med dumheter (tabber) sagt (eller gjort) av politikere, artister, kjendiser osv., som fungerer som vitser. Det samme gjelder “fra barnemunn”-uttalelser som også er ufrivillig komiske, f.eks. “For ikke å snakke om hai. De er finske på ryggen” (Liv Mira 6 år), “Kroppsvæske er noe man bruker når man skal vaske seg, for at ikke bakteriene skal informere seg” (Olav Hermund 7 år).

En undersjanger er litterære vitser, dvs. om litteratur eller med litterære allusjoner, f.eks. disse: “To klegger plaget Robinson Crusoe, så sa den ene: - Dette får være nok for i dag, ser deg på Fredag.” “Og så var det krysningen av en hval og Donald Duck, som fikk navnet Moby Duck.” “Hvordan leser bønder bøker? De pløyer gjennom dem.” En annen undersjanger er vitser om vitser, av denne typen: “- Jeg kan en hårreisende dårlig vits. - Så fortell den til en skallet mann.” “- Hva ler du av? - Jeg forteller vitser til meg selv, og nå fortalte jeg en som jeg ikke har hørt før.” “Hva får du hvis du blander dynamitt og en vits? Noe farlig morsomt.”

Øystein Sjaastad og Jørgen Gaare ga i 2012 ut boka *Hva er vitsen? Humor fra Homer til Simpson*. “I boken har de mange eksempler på at enkeltpersoner eller grupper av mennesker får gjennomgå: polakker, jøder, negere, svensker. Og blondiner. Men mange av dem snur situasjonen trill rundt, gjør underdoggen til den overlegne og blir en slags hevnen-er-søt-vits.” (*Stavanger Aftenblad* 18. mai 2012 s. 15)

I boka *Good Humor, Bad Taste: A Sociology of the Joke* (2006) har Giseline Kuipers denne inndelingen om temaer det vitses om:

“1. Sexuality and gender: Ambiguity and innuendo; being over-sexed/promiscuity; asexuality/frigidity; celibacy; adultery; marriage (marriage as a mistake; authority relationships within marriage); sexual achievements & size; prostitution; (apparent) naivety; homosexuality; rape; incest; pedophilia; bestiality & sex with animals; ugly women & old maids; sex and aging; etc.

2. Shortcomings and social deviance: Jokes about uncivilized, unusual, maladjusted or incompetent behavior, such as: Stupidity; craziness; drunkenness; childishness; laziness; criminality; aggression; impoliteness; absentmindedness; impaired speech; unusual appearance; filthiness; stench; naivety; cowardliness; gluttony; incomplete control of bodily functions; all sorts of lacking talent and incompetence

3. Sickness, suffering and death: Sickness; infirmities and handicaps; accidents & disasters; blood and mutilation; castration, famine; public scandals (e.g. Dutroux [en belgisk torturist og morder]), horror stories; war (Second World War; holocaust jokes; Hitler jokes)

4. Religion: Blasphemy; Godly interference and punishment; hypocrisy, after-life; celibacy; clergymen; breaking religious commandments

5. Money and wealth: Poverty; richness; miserliness; covetousness; business acumen; prodigality; cunning ways of getting money

6. Power and authority: Role reversals: superior & inferior, civilian & law enforcer, child & adult; Jokes upwards: politicians, Royal House, celebrities; Jokes downwards: inferiors, servants, laborers

7. Stereotypes and relations with Others (usually combined with one of the categories above): Stereotyping: see 2. Cultural rivalry and superiority; attitude jokes; insulting the audience; aggression and violence. Primarily ethnic, also, for instance, farmers, blondes, mothers-in-law, politicians etc.”

“Winick (1976) concentrates on speaker intention. His definition of a joke is “any type of communication that has a witty or funny intent that is known in advance by the teller.” [...] I use the term jokes to refer specifically to canned jokes. These are

chunks of humour whose basic form has been memorized. Canned jokes will have a punchline, or some point at which an incongruity is resolved (Raskin 1985). They often have a standardised form. Narrative jokes and question and answer jokes are subcategories of this. A narrative joke is a joke that takes the form of a story. Jokes such as those beginning “there was an Englishman an Irishman and a Scotsman...” are typical examples of narrative jokes. Question and answer jokes are jokes in which the punchline takes the form of an answer to a question. “Why did the chicken cross the road” jokes are question and answer jokes.” (Jennifer Hay i <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.3.5937&rep=rep1&type=pdf>; lesedato 25.04.18)

“Many believe, as the saying goes, “There is a grain of truth in every joke,” or “a joke is truth wrapped in a smile.” Sigmund Freud suggested that jokes were true, serving two purposes: aggression (such as sarcasm) or to expose unconscious desires (the sexual joke). [...] Freud certainly had a point; many jokes are hostile and may indicate the teller’s true feelings. This can be seen in ethnic, racial, or other prejudicial jokes. Sarcasm provides another example of jokes intimating a person’s true feelings. Sarcasm is laced with truth and indicates an underlying anger or hostility that seeks escape. Even self-deprecation done in a joking manner may indicate a poor self-image, or an attempt at humbling an otherwise overconfident persona. Freud’s other point suggests truth as well; many jokes are sexual in nature. As Freud believed there were two basic drives, life (sex) and death (aggression), it stands to reason he would see all jokes in this manner. It’s certainly possible that making a sexual joke may indicate something about the person’s unconscious sexual desire. [...] Sarcasm is, in all likelihood, the most popular form of humor today. [...] I believe that most people can identify someone they know who uses humor to confront another about something he finds disagreeable. If the individual is then challenged about his confrontation, he likely backs off and says he was just kidding. This is used to deflect responsibility back on the person who was the brunt of the joke, stating that he is just being sensitive. In this manner, those using sarcasm in a hostile way are able to express displeasure without taking responsibility for it.” (psykolog William Berry i <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/the-second-noble-truth/201302/the-jokes-who>; lesedato 08.05.18)

“I like the definition of a scandal provided by James Lull and Stephen Hinerman: “A media scandal occurs when private acts that disgrace or offend the idealized, dominant morality of a social community are made public and narrativized by the media, producing a range of effects from ideological and cultural retrenchment to disruption and change” [...] Shortly after the appearance of such a scandal story, distancing through joking also occurs. In other words, one response is disavowal of having allied with the star.” (Staiger 2005 s. 122-123)

“Humor is amazingly complex and functions in many ways. [...] it can be used to cope with or reflect conflict, fear, or anxiety; [...] All in all, humor is a very economical and efficient way of communicating one’s values, often unconsciously.

Frequently the jokes that convey such messages are generated by events that are reported in the mass media. Television, radio, newspapers, and magazines are channels through which we are bombarded with news about the latest happenings of major significance in the world. The ready accessibility of this information frequently results in the circulation in the United States of many jokes of a topical nature – like Ethiopian jokes, AIDS jokes, *Challenger* and NASA jokes – referring to a recent event or a public figure in the news. Often taking disasters or other tragedies as their referents, topical jokes begin to circulate virtually as soon as the relevant news reaches the public.” (<http://www.temple.edu/isllc/newfolk/reactions1.html>; lesedato 30.12.04)

Da sykdommen AIDS oppstod, oppstod det også AIDS-vitser. “So, *why* do people tell these jokes? They do not work as entertainment for the most part, but they do express attitudes and feelings. They are partly a reaction to the emphasis on AIDS in the media from time to time. They are also, and primarily, a reaction to homophobia and the fear of AIDS, which one person has labeled AfrAIDS. Hudson’s disclosure of his illness allowed AIDS to be used as a means for people to express their feelings about gays. The jokes reinforce stereotypes and in doing so allow the tellers to make the psychologically comforting statement, “We won’t be affected if we can keep them away from us and in their place.” Thus, the jokes are a coping mechanism, but their effectiveness as such is limited; they relieve enough of the pressure, discomfort, and anxiety for people to avoid dealing with the real issue: AIDS is a lethal disease that attacks people, regardless of age, color, sex, sexual orientation, or any other variable; the virus does not discriminate. And even more, a major part of the issue that is being avoided is that gays are people just like everyone else. Finally, the jokes provide a vehicle for bringing up a subject that is so serious and anxiety provoking that it might not be introduced into a conversation otherwise. [...] All of these functions are therapeutic.” (<http://www.temple.edu/isllc/newfolk/reactions1.html>; lesedato 30.12.04)

“Product names and other commercial elements are often woven into jokes because the media have made them such a major memorable part of our lives, whether we like it or not. For example, in the spring of 1981, shortly before the arrest of Wayne Williams for the murder of more than twenty black boys and young men, there were many racist Atlanta killer jokes circulating, probably as a direct result of the increased attention that the situation was receiving in the media. The following joke combines the Atlanta killer topic with a fast-food marketing campaign that was underway at the time: “The blacks were upset because there weren’t any black winners in McDonald’s ‘Build a Big Mac’ contest, so McDonald’s agreed to hold a special contest just for blacks. First prize is a free trip to Atlanta for two, and you can take your kids along.” [...] public figures are constantly covered by the media, and little-known people are not likely to be joked about outside their sphere of familiarity. [...] Jokes about deaths and assassinations of public figures seem unpredictable: there appears to be no rhyme nor reason determining which ones are

joked about.” (<http://www.temple.edu/isllc/newfolk/reactions1.html>; lesedato 30.12.04)

Noen vitser kan oppfattes både som hån og som ros, f.eks. denne: “Around 1979, when Stanley Kubrick was filming *The Shining* at Pinewood Studios in London, he was joined by Hollywood up-and-comer, Steven Spielberg. [...] Apparently, Spielberg’s stargazing of Kubrick spawned this joke during production: Spielberg died and went to heaven, but at the Pearly Gates he’s denied admittance; God doesn’t like film directors. Just then, a shabby balding figure in strained cords and battered sneakers cycles by. “Isn’t that Stanley Kubrick?” asks Spielberg. St. Peter spares the rider a troubled glance. “No, it’s God. He just thinks he is Stanley Kubrick.” ” (siteret fra Mullen 2013 s. 248)

“National Chemistry Week runs from Oct. 20-26. In honor of our most elemental (heh heh) science, how about some chemistry jokes? These 15 chemistry jokes and puns are really cheesy and may only have the power to make a chemist laugh, but don’t worry: we’ve included an explanation below each joke so at least you’ll understand their cheesiness. And maybe even learn something along the way. Two chemists go into a bar. The first one says “I think I’ll have an H<sub>2</sub>O.” The second one says “I think I’ll have an H<sub>2</sub>O too” – and he died. Explanation: H<sub>2</sub>O is the molecular formula for water. But H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is the molecular formula for hydrogen peroxide, which will kill you if you drink it. [...] Q: Did you hear oxygen went on a date with potassium? A: It went OK. Explanation: The atomic symbol for oxygen and potassium are “O” and “K,” respectively. They get together they spell OK. [...] The optimist sees the glass half full. The pessimist sees the glass half empty. The chemist sees the glass completely full, half with liquid and half with air. Explanation: The glass is always completely full of something, be it a solid, liquid, or gas – unless the entire thing is in a vacuum and all the atoms are removed.” (<http://www.businessinsider.com/15-jokes-only-a-chemist-will-get-2013-10?r=US&IR=T&IR=T>; lesedato 04.06.18)

Eksempler på vitsesamlinger:

Karsten Isachsen og Oddvar Søvik: *Kirken den er et muntert hus* (1983)

Arvid Andreassen: *Arvid’s krim-vitser* (1994)

Tor Johannessen: *Rubel og rangel: Vitser fra Russland* (1994)

Jørn Roeim: *Syk og svak og dårlig bak: Norges beste doktorvitser* (1996)

Roger Kristiansen: *499 kelnervitser* (1998)

Kjell Arne Larsen: *Sanne og nesten sanne vitser og skrøner om folk og fe i Vestfold* (1998)

Henry Johnsen: *En elg er jammen halvtung: Vitser og jug med Trysil-vri* (1998)

Carl Magne Jagland: *Verdens beste politikervitser* (1999)

Sigurd S. Pøkelsen (pseudonym): *485 grøsservitser* (2008)

Anonym: *Skrullete vitser som gir bakoversveis* (2015)

Anton Andersen: *Verdens morsomste vitser: Alle barna-vitser, vill vest-vitser, brillevitser, prompevitser, bøllevitser, doktorvitser, heksevitser og mye, mye mer! – for hele familien* (2017)

“Philogelos (The Laughter Lover) is a collection of some 265 jokes, likely made in the fourth or fifth century CE. Some manuscripts give the names of the compilers as the otherwise-unknown Hierocles and Philagrios. Other manuscripts drop the name of one or other or both. Although The Laughter Lover is the oldest surviving example, joke-books already had a long pedigree. According to Athenaeus 614d-e, Philip the Great of Macedon had paid handsomely for a social club in Athens to write down its members’ witticisms. At the dawn of the second century BCE, Plautus twice has a character refer to joke-books (Persa 392; Stichus 400). Modern scholars such as Rapp and Baldwin have noted how women are infrequent targets of the humor [...]. Yet one may wonder, for instance, whether the jokes under “Misogynistic Men” have as their primary target the female sex rather than the men who hate them. Baldwin also remarks on the virtual absence of homosexual themes in the collection.” (John T. Quinn i [http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/quinn\\_jokes.shtml](http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/quinn_jokes.shtml); lesedato 08.04.16)

Blant vitsene *Philogelos* i er:

“An intellectual, falling sick, had promised to pay the doctor if he recovered. When his wife nagged at him for drinking wine while he had a fever, he said: Do you want me to get healthy and be forced to pay the doctor?”

“A rude astrologer cast a sick boy’s horoscope. After promising the mother that the child had many years ahead of him, he demanded payment. When she said, “Come tomorrow and I’ll pay you,” he objected: “But what if the boy dies during the night and I lose my fee?” ”

“A man, just back from a trip abroad, went to an incompetent fortune-teller. He asked about his family, and the fortune-teller replied: “Everyone is fine, especially your father.” When the man objected that his father had been dead for ten years, the reply came: “You have no clue who your real father is.” ”

“A glutton betrothed his daughter to another glutton. Asked what he was giving her as a dowry, he replied: A house whose windows face the bakery.”

(oversatt av John T. Quinn i [http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/quinn\\_jokes.shtml](http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/quinn_jokes.shtml); lesedato 08.04.16)

“I sin tid utnyttet de verdensberømte britene Monty Python briternes fordommer mot tyskerne til fulle, ikke minst i sketsjen om verdens morsomste vits. Der får britene tyskerne til bokstavelig talt å le seg i hjel på slagmarken. [...] fortsatt er det sånn at hver gang noen lager en film eller en bok der man gjør narr av Hitler, arrangeres høytidelige debatter om hvorvidt det virkelig nå endelig er lov til å le av Hitler. Det gjelder også da boken til Timur Vermes: *Han er tilbake*, utkom. Det er en satirisk roman der Hitler våkner opp i Berlin i vår tid, og boken kommer snart på norsk. I Norge har vi sett noe lignende etter 22. juli, med diskusjoner om det er lov til å vitse om Breivik [...] en komiker som Anne Kat Hærland mener at man ikke kan spøke om ham. - Men det skyldes kanskje at det har gått for kort tid.”  
(*Aftenposten* 20. april 2013 s. 30)

“In September 2001 Richard Wiseman and The British Association for the Advancement of Science embarked on one of the world’s largest, and most unusual, scientific experiments. The project aimed to find the world’s funniest joke and answer important questions about the psychology of humour.

Questions such as:

Do men and women find the same jokes funny?

Does our sense of humour change as we grow older?

When is the best time of day to tell a joke?

Do people from different countries laugh at the same jokes? [...]

Over the course of a year we received over 40,000 jokes and 1.5 million ratings. At the end of the project, we discovered the gags that made men giggle and women groan, those that tickled children but not adults, and the jokes that proved most popular in different countries. After much hard work, we finally managed to track down the world’s funniest joke. [...] Here it is:

“Two hunters are out in the woods when one of them collapses. He doesn’t seem to be breathing and his eyes are glazed. The other guy whips out his phone and calls the emergency services. He gasps, “My friend is dead! What can I do?”. The operator says “Calm down. I can help. First, let’s make sure he’s dead.” There is a silence, then a shot is heard. Back on the phone, the guy says “OK, now what?”

This joke was submitted by Gurpal Gosall, a 31 year old psychiatrist from Manchester in the UK. He told LaughLab: “I like the joke as it makes people feel better, because it reminds them that there is always someone out there who is doing something more stupid than themselves.” [...] The joke is interesting because it works across many different countries, appeals to men and women, and young and old alike. Many of the jokes submitted received higher ratings from certain groups of people, but this one had real universal appeal. Also, we find jokes funny for lots

of different reasons – they sometimes make us feel superior to others, reduce the emotional impact of anxiety-provoking events, or surprise us because of some kind of incongruity. The hunters joke contains all three elements – we feel superior to the stupid hunter, realise the incongruity of him misunderstanding the operator and the joke helps us to laugh about our concerns about our own mortality.” (<http://www.richardwiseman.com/LaughLab/introduction.html> og <http://www.richardwiseman.com/LaughLab/winner.html>; lesedato 23.05.18)

I dokumentarfilmen *The Aristocrats* (2005; regissert av Paul Provenza) forteller 100 komikere og andre artister den samme, obskøne vitsen og diskuterer den. Noen ganger i løpet av filmen hevdes det at det er fellestrekk mellom vitsing og jazzmusikk: et “samme stykke” blir framført mange ganger, både gjenkjennelig og annerledes enn i tidligere framføringer.

“En dødsdømt fange i USA vil gjerne dø med et smil om munnen og har bedt folk om å sende inn vitser som han kan lese opp før henrettelsen. Patrick Knight (39) ser ut til å ta galgenhumor ganske bokstavelig. Han har nemlig laget en nettside der han ber folk om å sende inn vitser han kan lese opp rett før han blir henrettet med giftsprøyte tirsdag. - Han sier han ønsker å gjøre henrettelsen munter, sier talsperson Michelle Lyon for fengselsmyndighetene i delstaten Texas. Knight ble dømt til døden i august 1991 for drap på to eldre naboer i Amarillo i Texas. Ifølge Lyon har Knight fått in flere hundre vitser han kan velge mellom etter å ha startet en vitsekonkurranse på nettet. - Vi har hatt fanger som har lest opp dikt eller et bibelvers, noen har bedt om tilgivelse og noen har bedt en bønn. Dette er så vidt jeg vet første gang noen velger en vits som sine siste ord, fremholder Lyon.” (VG 27. desember 2001 s. 49)

Boka *The Collected Jokes of Slavoj Zizek* (2012) er et “merkelig prosjekt, utført av [Audun] Mortensen, kjent blant annet for sin baklengse versjon av “Lolita”, kalt “Roman”. Han har trålet verkene til den slovenske filosofen Slavoj Zizek, på jakt etter vitser. Han har funnet 132 stykker. Noen av dem svært morsomme, andre mer finurlige eller politiske. Etterordet er skrevet av Momus alias Nick Currie, musiker og forfatter blant annet av romanen “Book of Jokes”.” (*Dagbladet* 6. august 2012 s. 46)

Se også <https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/cm4all/uproc.php/0/humor.pdf>

Alle artiklene og litteraturlista til hele leksikonet er tilgjengelig på <https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no>