

Jest for Fun

The World According to Student Bloopers

by Richard Lederer, Ph.D.

For Anguished English, my first language book for the larger public, I pasted together the following history of the world from genuine, authentic, certifiable, and unretouched student bloopers collected by teachers around the globe, from eighth grade through college level. Read carefully, and you will learn a lot.

Little did I know at the time that this fractured chronicle of the human race would become the fuel that runs the motor of my career—the riff I am most often requested to perform as a speaker and the progenitor of four additional books in the Anguished English series.

The inhabitants of ancient Egypt were called mummies, and they all wrote in hydraulics. They lived in the Sarah Dessert, which they cultivated by irritation and over which they traveled by Camelot. The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere, so certain areas of the dessert are cultivated by irrigation. Ancient Egyptian women wore a calasiris, a loose-fitting garment which started just below the breasts which hung to the floor.

The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book of the Bible, Guinness, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, once asked, “Am I my brother’s son?” Noah’s wife was called Joan of Ark. Lot’s wife was a pillar of salt by day and a ball of fire by night.

God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Montezuma. Jacob, son of Isaac, stole his brother’s birthmark. Jacob was a patriarch, who brought up his twelve sons to be patriarchs, but they did not take to it. One of Jacob’s sons, Joseph, gave refuse to the Israelites.

Pharaoh forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw. Moses led them to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread without any ingredients. Afterward, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the Ten Commandments, but he died before he ever got to Canada. David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Philatelists, a race of people who lived in Biblical times. Solomon, one of David’s sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

The Greeks were a highly sculptured people, and without them we wouldn’t have history. The Greeks invented three kinds of columns—Corinthian, Ironic, and Dork. They also

created myths. A myth is a female moth. One myth says that the mother of Achilles dipped him in the river Styx until he became intolerable. Achilles appears in the *Iliad*, by Homer. Homer also wrote the *Oddity*, in which Penelope was the last hardship that Ulysses endured on his journey. Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock.

In the Olympic Games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits, and threw the Java. The reward to the victor was a coral wreath. The government of Athens was democratic because people took the law into their own hands.

Eventually, the Romans came along and conquered the Geeks. History calls people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long. At Roman banquets, the guests wore garlics in their hair. Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king. Caesar expired with these immortal words upon his dying lips: “Eat you, Brutus!” Nero was a cruel tyranny who would torture his poor subjects by playing the fiddle to them.

The Romans were overrun by the ball bearings. Then came the Middle Ages, when everyone was middle aged. King Alfred conquered the Dames. King Arthur lived in the age of shivery, with brave knights on prancing horses and beautiful women. King Harold mustarded his troops before the Battle of Hastings. Joan of Arc was burnt to a steak and cannonized by Bernard Shaw. People contracted the blue bonnet plague, which caused them to grow boobs on their necks. Magna Carta provided that no free man should be hanged twice for the same offense. People performed morality plays, about ghosts, goblins, and other mythical creatures.

In midevil times most of the people were alliterate. The greatest writer of the time was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and verses and also wrote literature. Another tale tells of William Tell, who shot an arrow through an apple while standing on his son’s head.

The Renaissance was an age in which more individuals felt the value of their human being. Martin Luther was nailed to the church door at Wittenberg for selling papal indulgences. He died a horrible death, being excommunicated by a bull.

It was the ssculptor Donatello’s interest in the female nude that made him the father of the Renaissance. It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented the Bible

and removable type. Sir Walter Raleigh discovered cigarettes and started smoking. And Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100-foot clipper.

The government of England was a limited mockery. Henry VIII found walking difficult because he had an abcess on his knee. Queen Elizabeth was the Virgin Queen. As a Queen she was a success. When Elizabeth exposed herself before her troops, they all shouted, "Hurrah!" Then her navy went out and defeated the Spanish armadillo.

The greatest writer of the Renaissance was William Shakespeare. Shakespeare never made much money and is famous only because of his plays. He lived at Windsor with his merry wives, writing tragedies, comedies, and errors. In one of Shakespeare's famous plays, Hamlet rations out his situation by relieving himself in a long soliloquy. In another, Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth to kill the king by attacking his manhood. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet.

Writing at the same time as Shakespeare was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote *Donkey Hote*. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*. Then his wife died, and he wrote *Paradise Regained*.

During the Renaissance America began. Christopher Columbus was a great navigator who discovered America while cursing about the Atlantic. His ships were called the Nina, the Pintacolada, and the Santa Fe. Later the Pilgrims crossed the ocean, and this is known as the Pill's Grim Progress. When they landed at Plymouth Rock, they were greeted by the Indians, who came down the hill rolling their war hoops before them. The Indian squaws carried porpoises on their back. Many of the Indian heroes were killed along with their cabooses, which proved very fatal to them. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for the settlers. Many people died, and many babies were born. Captain John Smith was responsible for all this.

One of the causes of the Revolutionary War was the English put tacks on their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. Finally, the colonists won the war and no longer had to pay for taxis.

The United States was founded by four fathers. Delegates from the original thirteen states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin had gone to Boston carrying all his clothes in his pocket and a loaf of bread under each arm. He invented electricity by rubbing cats backwards and declared, "A horse divided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

George Washington married Martha Curtis and in due time became the Father of Our Country. Then the Constitution of the United States was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the Constitution the people enjoyed the right to keep bare arms.

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his very own hands. When Lincoln was president, he wore only a tall silk hat. He said, "In onion

there is strength." Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address while traveling from Washington to Gettysburg on the back of an envelope.

On the night of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in the moving picture show. The believed assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a supposedly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

Meanwhile in Europe, the enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltaire invented electricity and also wrote a book called *Candy*. Gravity was invented by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn, when the apples are falling off the trees.

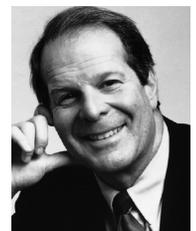
Johann Sebastian Bach wrote a lot of music and had a great many children. He kept an old spinster up in his attic on which he practiced every day. Bach was the most famous composer in the world, and so was Handel. Handel was half-German, half-Italian, and half-English. He was very large. Bach died from 1750 to the present. Ludwig van Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

France was in a very serious state. The French Revolution was accomplished before it happened. The "Marseillaise" was the theme song of the French Revolution, and it catapulted into Napoleon. During the Napoleonic Wars, the crowned heads of Europe were trembling in their shoes. Then the Spanish gorrillas came down from the hills and nipped at Napoleon's flanks. Napoleon became ill with bladder problems and was very tense and unrestrained. He wanted an heir to inherit his power, but since Josephine was a baroness, she couldn't bear children.

The sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire is in the East and the sun sets in the West. Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She sat on a thorn for 63 years. Her reclining years and finally the end of her life were exemplary of a great personality. Her death was the final event which ended her reign.

The nineteenth century was a time of many great inventions and thoughts. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Cyrus McCormick invented the McCormick reaper, which did the work of a hundred men. Samuel Morse invented a code of telepathy. Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabbits. Charles Darwin was a naturalist who wrote the *Organ of the Species*, Madman Curie discovered radio, and Karl Marx became one of the Marx Brothers.

Richard Lederer, Ph.D., is the author of more than 3,000 books and articles about language and humor. His syndicated column, "Looking at Language," appears in newspapers and magazines throughout the United States. See order form for books by Richard Lederer on page 19.



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