

How to be a Comedian

by Tom Shillue

Team:

Challenge

Create and perform a 3-minute comedy routine.

Module Overview

Big Meet: Review the template and complete the “Grandparents Example” exercise.

Masterclass: Learn from an industry expert about communication.

Roundtable I: Propose ideas & pick the top 3 jokes. Then, write the jokes using the IIIT formula.

Roundtable II: Pick a presenter and practice your routine.

Presentation: Perform your 3-minute comedy routine.

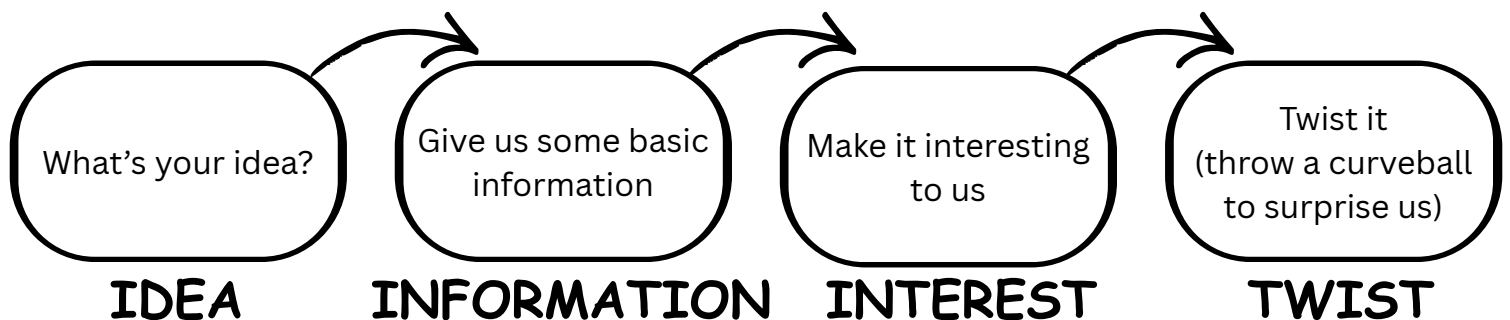
Comedy as Communication

Stand-up Comedy is just communicating an idea. You split the idea into set-up and punchline. The punchline is where you help the audience “punctuate” your idea with a laugh. As a stand-up comedian, you are always Setting Up or Punching.

The IIIT Formula

As you go through your day, you will have ideas. They don’t have to be “funny” right off the bat - they are just interesting things, the kind of things that “make you think.” Write them down. These are the foundations of your stand up routine.

To get your ideas into Set-Up and Punchline form, use this formula:



Running Shoes Example

Watch Andy Hendrickson’s bit on Running Shoes (start at 1:01):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVBShIAk00g>

Andy went to buy running shoes and he was shocked at the price, so that is his simple

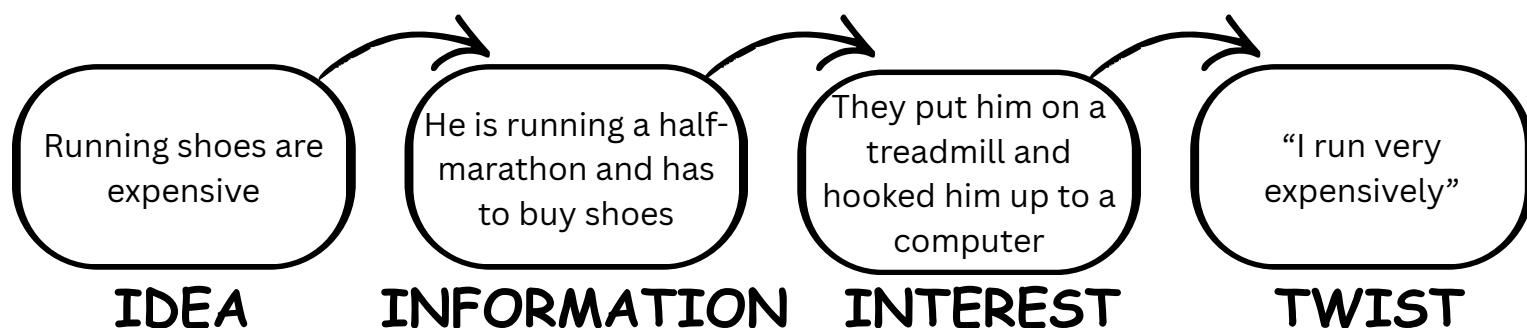
information: “Running shoes are pricey.” To communicate this comedically, he has to reveal that they are pricey in a funny, unexpected way.



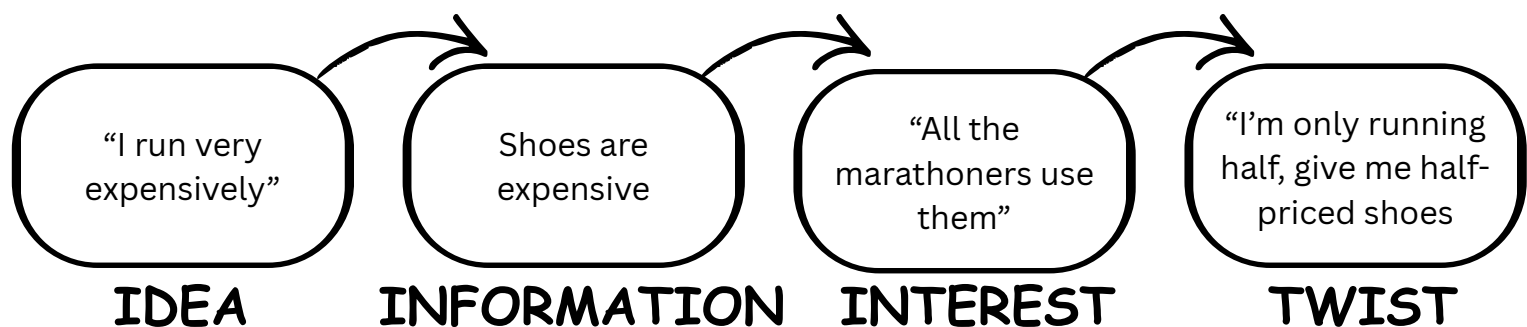
He needs to go to step two - make it **interesting** to us. He brought us into the moment of his sticker shock by describing the store experience. It turns out the store put him on a treadmill, which is a nice and slightly strange detail. Now we're interested.

Then to the surprise twist. He wants to show us that shoes are expensive - but instead of just saying "Shoes are expensive" he proves that they are expensive with his story. He says that the store will recommend a shoe "based on how you run." Then he says "I found out I run very expensively."

Here, we break up Andy's joke:



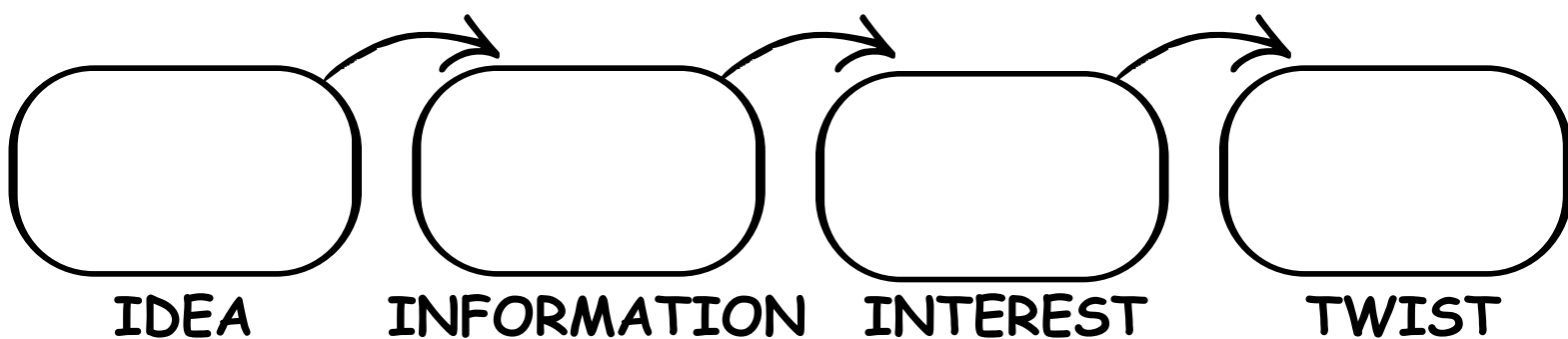
As a bonus, Andy then uses his punchline as the set-up for his next joke:



Grandparents Example

Now, watch Ivan Decker's bit on Grandparents: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/C6ZopMLFUFi>

EXERCISE: Split up the clip of Ivan Decker into that same format.



HOW TO WRITE



IDEA

INFORMATION

INTEREST

TWIST

IDEA

INFORMATION

INTEREST

TWIST
