Humor audiobook scripts

30 practice scripts from VO Journey Academy. Free to record, free to use in your reel. Download the PDF to mark up in the booth, or print it straight from here.

Mother Has Joined the Chat

Family comedy, the group chat · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

My mother has discovered the family group chat. Yesterday she sent eleven messages. Nine were photographs of a casserole from slightly different angles. One said, "Who is this." One was a thumbs up, to herself.

This morning she sent a single word, "Bananas," and then nothing for four hours.

My brother thinks it was a grocery list. I think it was a cry for help. We have agreed that neither of us will ask.

Reply to All, Regrettably

Office comedy, the wrong email · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

I would like to explain what happened on Tuesday.

I meant to send one email, to one person, saying that the quarterly meeting could have been a postcard. I sent it to four hundred and twelve people. One of them invented the quarterly meeting.

He replied within a minute. He replied to all. He wrote, "Agreed. What size postcard?"

I have not slept. I do not know if I am fired or promoted.

The Cat Would Like It Known

Pet comedy, the hungry cat · Any · Neutral British · 30 seconds

The cat would like it known that she has been fed only once today.

This is not true. She has been fed three times, by three different people, each of whom was told the same story with the same enormous eyes.

She is now sitting beside her bowl, looking at the wall, the picture of an animal abandoned by society. It is four in the afternoon.

She is going to try the lodger next. He is new, and soft.

The Noise I Make Sitting Down

Middle age, new noises · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

At forty-six, I have started making a noise when I sit down. Nobody warned me. It is not a word. It is a sort of announcement, like a bus lowering itself to the curb. I make a different one getting up.

Last week I pulled a muscle sleeping. I was not running in my sleep. I was not dreaming of tennis. I was simply lying there, being forty-six, incorrectly.

Chirp

Family comedy, the smoke alarm · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

At three in the morning, something in our house went chirp.

Just once. Then forty seconds of silence, exactly long enough to fall back asleep. Then chirp.

My father came out onto the landing in his robe, carrying a broom like a man going to war. "Smoke alarm," he said. "Low battery."

We have six. He stood under each one in turn, staring up, waiting. None of them made a sound while he was looking at it. They can tell.

By four he had all six lined up on the kitchen table, batteries out, like suspects.

Chirp.

We looked at each other. Then, slowly, we looked at the carbon monoxide detector.

Spares

Comic essay, flat-pack furniture · Adult (30-45) · Australian · 45 seconds

My husband does not read instructions. He considers them an opinion.

So when the bookcase arrived, flat, in a box the size of a door, he tipped the lot onto the lounge room floor and said, "It's a bookcase. How hard can it be?"

Three hours, it turns out. There were forty-one screws, a small bent tool, and a diagram of a smiling man who was not sweating.

At the end we stood back. It was upright. It held books. It was, I will admit, a bookcase.

"Told you," he said.

I held up my hand. In it were six screws, two wooden pegs, and a whole shelf.

"Spares," said my husband.

Arguing With Brenda

Travel disaster, the sat nav · Adult (25-40) · Neutral British · 45 seconds

My father does not trust the sat nav. He calls her Brenda, and he argues with her.

"In two hundred yards, turn left."

"I shan't, Brenda. I've been driving to Leicester since before you were a microchip."

"Turn left."

"No."

"Recalculating."

"She's sulking now," he tells me, pleased.

We have been in the car three hours. Leicester is ninety minutes from our house. We have passed the same garden centre twice, from different directions, and my mother has stopped speaking altogether.

"At the roundabout," says Brenda, "take the fourth exit."

My father looks at the roundabout. It has three exits.

"Now she's just being spiteful," he says, and for once I think he's right.

Annual Review: Waffles

Pet comedy, a dog's job review · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

Annual review. Employee: Waffles. Position: dog.

Strengths. Waffles shows tremendous enthusiasm. He greets every visitor as though they have returned from the sea. He has never once been late for dinner.

Areas for improvement. Waffles was hired to guard the house. In March, a man came to read the meter, and Waffles showed him where we keep the spare key. He barks only at the vacuum, the toaster, and one particular cushion.

Goals for next year. Stop eating socks. Come when called, at least as a courtesy.

Overall rating. Exceeds expectations. I don't know how. I wrote "needs work," and he looked at me, and my hand just moved.

Taking Orders From a Scale

Comic essay, the self-checkout · Mature (55+) · Midwestern US · 45 seconds

I do not care for the self-checkout. I did not apply for a job at the grocery store, and yet there I am, working, for free, and doing it badly.

"Unexpected item in the bagging area," the machine says.

It is my purse. I move my purse.

"Please return item to the bagging area."

I put it back. I am sixty-eight years old and taking orders from a scale.

Then it wants to know how many bananas. I tell it four. It asks me to wait for assistance. Over comes a boy of about nineteen, who looks at my bananas and counts them. Out loud.

"Four," he says.

Now I ask you. Which one of us did they not believe?

Which One Was the Tall One

Middle age, the class reunion · Adult (40–55) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

The name tags at my thirtieth reunion have our senior pictures on them, so we can recognize each other. This is a kindness, and it is also a cruelty.

A man walks up. Bald, sunburned, a mustache like a push broom. He looks at my chest. I look at his. On his tag is a boy with a great deal of hair.

"Danny?"

"Phil!"

We shake hands, two strangers wearing photographs of people we used to know.

"You look great," he says, to the tag.

"You too," I tell his.

Then he squints at the real me. "Sorry. Which one of us was the tall one?"

It was me. I have checked. I am not anymore.

A Card for Gary

Office comedy, signing the card · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

The card for Gary in Accounts reached Priya's desk at 9:14, inside a folder marked Confidential, as though Gary did not sit eleven feet away.

She opened it. Thirty people had already signed. All the good ones were taken. "Happy birthday, Gary!" "Have a great one, Gary!" Someone in Legal had written a paragraph.

Priya held her pen over the last free corner. She had worked with Gary for four years, and she knew three things about him. He liked soup. He had a boat, or possibly a goat. And he had once held an elevator for her, which she had never properly repaid.

She could not write, "Thanks for the elevator."

She wrote, "Happy birthday!" Then she looked at it, and panicked, and added, "From all of us."

She had just signed on behalf of thirty people who had already signed.

At 9:31 the folder came back with a sticky note on it. "It's a retirement card."

The Team-Building Canoe

Office comedy, the company retreat · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Our company took us to a lake for team building. The idea is that if you put two colleagues in a canoe, they will learn to communicate. This is true. I learned a great deal about Derek.

Derek is our head of strategy. In a canoe, it turns out, Derek has no strategy. Derek paddles on whichever side Derek feels like, and when the canoe turns in a circle, Derek says, "Interesting."

Other teams went past us. The interns went past us. A duck went past us, twice, and I believe the second time it was showing off.

"I think we need to align on a direction," Derek said.

"The dock, Derek. The direction is the dock."

"Let's not jump to solutions."

After forty minutes, a woman in a kayak towed us in with a rope.

On Monday he presented our learnings. There was a slide. I am not on it, but the duck is.

Nineteen Euro to Malaga

Travel disaster, the cheap flight · Adult (25-40) · Irish · 1 minute

The flight to Malaga costs nineteen euro, and I am about to find out why.

The bag is extra. Fine. Printing the boarding pass at the airport is extra, so I am at the desk with my phone held up like a woman bidding at an auction.

"That's a screenshot."

"Of the boarding pass."

"We need the live one."

There is no signal. I walk the length of the terminal with my arm in the air until I find a single bar, beside the gents'.

On the plane, the man beside me has paid for nothing at all. He is wearing three jumpers and a coat, and his pockets are full of what I slowly realise is the rest of his luggage. He takes a shoe out of his jacket.

"Twelve years," he tells me, with dignity. "Never paid for a bag."

I look at my receipt. Sixty-one euro. He has a whole sandwich in his hood.

The Wheel on the Wrong Side

Travel disaster, the hire car · Mature (55+) · Scottish · 1 minute

I had driven for forty-one years without incident, all of it on the left. So when Moira booked us a hire car in France, I told her it would be no bother. It is the same car. They have just put the wheel on the wrong side.

Then came the first roundabout, and every instinct I own told me to go round it the proper way.

"Other way, Alec," said Moira.

"I know."

"Alec. Other way."

"I am aware of the way, Moira."

I went round it three times, because I could not work out how to get off, with my wife calling the exits like a bingo caller. Each time I reached for the gearstick, I punched the door.

We came off, finally, on a road I had not chosen. It ran through sunflowers for eleven miles. It was the best part of the holiday.

"You meant to do that," Moira said.

"Aye," I said. "Obviously."

Oliver Is Very Honest

Family comedy, the parent-teacher meeting · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

The chairs at the parent-teacher conference are built for six-year-olds, so I begin the meeting with my knees beside my ears, trying to look like a responsible adult.

"Oliver is a delight," says Miss Tran.

Good. Lovely.

"He's very honest."

Oh no.

"We did a unit on families. The children shared what their parents do all day." She opens a folder. "Oliver said his father is a dentist."

"He is."

"And he said you," she checks her notes, "hide in the pantry and eat the good cookies."

I say nothing. There is nothing to say. There is a crayon drawing. I can see it from here. I am in the pantry. The likeness is excellent.

"He also said you tell the dog you love him best."

"That one's private."

"I've put it on the wall," says Miss Tran, kindly. "With the others. You should see what Mrs. Albright does in her car."

Kenneth Does Voices

Pet comedy, an inherited parrot · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 1 minute

We inherited the parrot from my wife's aunt, along with a sideboard. The sideboard has been no trouble.

Kenneth is an African grey, and he does impressions. For the first month it was only the aunt, which was unsettling, since we had been to her funeral. Then he began on us.

He does the microwave. He does the doorbell, and I have got up to answer it more often than I care to admit.

But his masterpiece is me. I did not know I had a noise. Apparently, when I cannot find my glasses, I say, "Now then, now then, now then," like a policeman in a pantomime. Kenneth does it perfectly. He does it whenever I walk into a room.

Last week the vicar came to tea, and from under the cover came my own voice, quite clearly, saying, "Has he gone yet?"

I have never said that. I have only thought it. That is what worries me.

Fitness Age

Middle age, joining the gym · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I joined a gym at fifty-two, and they gave me a young man named Tyler to show me the machines.

Tyler was about twenty-three and appeared to have been carved. He asked what my goals were. I said I would like to put on a sock standing up.

"Awesome," said Tyler. He said it about everything. My heart rate, awesome. My weight, awesome. My answer to "When did you last exercise?", which was "last century," awesome.

He put me on a rowing machine. "Just give me two minutes at a comfortable pace."

I gave him forty seconds. Then I gave him a look.

"Awesome. Let's hydrate."

At the end he printed out my fitness age. That is a thing they can do now. He looked at the paper, and for the first time, Tyler did not say awesome.

"What's the number?"

"It's just a number, sir."

"Tyler."

He folded the paper in half. "Let's focus on the sock," he said.

Nine Pairs of Glasses

Middle age, the reading glasses · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I own nine pairs of reading glasses, and at this moment I cannot find a single one.

I bought them in a pack, like socks. The plan was simple. One pair in every room, so that wherever I was, there they would be. A system.

What happens instead is that they migrate. All nine travel together to a single location, like geese, and never the same place twice. Last month it was the car. Before that, the drawer with the batteries.

So I am holding the pill bottle at arm's length, wishing for a longer arm. I cannot tell whether it says one tablet or seven.

"Sam," I call. "Come and read this for me."

My son is fifteen. He takes the bottle. Then he looks at me, slowly, at a spot just above my forehead.

I put my hand up. There is a pair there. And behind that one, another.

The Zucchini Ordinance

Small-town farce, the town meeting · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

The town meeting in Pell's Corner was called to order at seven, and by five past it was about zucchini.

"It's an epidemic," said Hal Brewster. "I left my truck unlocked ten minutes at the post office. Came back, there's a bag of them on the seat. No note."

"That's generosity, Hal."

"That's dumping, Louise. I've got forty of my own."

Everybody had forty of their own. That was the whole trouble.

So an ordinance was proposed. No resident shall leave squash of any kind in or upon the vehicle, porch, or mailbox of another. It passed, twenty-two to three.

Hal walked out to the lot feeling that democracy, for once, had worked.

His truck was locked. He had made sure. But the bed of a pickup does not lock, and in his lay a zucchini the size of a canoe paddle, with a ribbon on it.

There was a note, this time. "Ordinance takes effect in thirty days."

The Tidiest Village

Small-town farce, the judges and the goat · Mature (55+) · Irish · 1 minute

The judges for the county's Tidiest Village were due in Ballymoran at noon, and at ten to, Father Dolan's goat got out.

Now, the village had been preparing since March. The kerbs were painted. The bridge had geraniums on it. Mrs. Hegarty had washed the bus shelter, and the bus had not stopped there since 2009.

The goat went through the geraniums first.

"Don't chase him," called Nora Hegarty. "He likes it."

They chased him. He went up Main Street with a hanging basket round his neck like a medal, and half the committee behind him.

At twelve, a small grey car pulled up. Two judges got out with clipboards. The village stood very still, and smiled, and sweated.

The judges looked at the bitten flowers. Then the goat came round the corner of the church, wearing the basket, and stopped, and stared at them.

"Lovely," said the first judge, writing. "A floral mascot. We haven't seen that before."

Leaving a Party, a Guide

Mock advice, leaving a party · Any · Neutral American · 1 minute

Leaving a party is a skill, and you do not have it.

Begin at nine-fifteen, by catching your partner's eye across the room and raising your eyebrows. This means, shall we? Your partner will raise theirs back. This means, I am having a wonderful time, who are you?

At nine-forty, stand up, say, "Well!" and slap your knees. Nothing will happen. This is normal. Sit back down.

At ten, find your coat. It is at the bottom of a pile on a stranger's bed. Put it on. You are now a person at a party in a coat, which is worse.

Say goodbye to the host. The host will say, "Already?" and introduce you to someone who has just arrived, and who sells insurance.

At eleven-thirty you will reach the front door. Open it. Step out into the cool, quiet air.

Then remember that your partner is still inside, in the kitchen, starting a new story.

Welp

Mock advice, the long goodbye · Adult (30-45) · Midwestern US · 1 minute

Where I come from, we do not end conversations. We wind them down, over a period of time, like a ceiling fan.

Say you meet your neighbor at the mailbox. You will cover the weather. You will agree that we needed the rain, or that we did not.

Then one of you must say, "Welp." This is the signal. It does not mean the conversation is over. It means that the ending has begun.

After "Welp" comes "I suppose." After "I suppose" comes "I'll let you go," which is generous, since you are the one who wants to go.

At this point your neighbor will remember something. A sale on mulch. You will be there another twenty minutes, both of you walking backward, getting farther apart and louder.

My mother once said goodbye to Carol Dietz in June. They finished in the dark, shouting about a casserole.

They were both still holding their mail. By then it was yesterday's.

Swans, Reserved Seating

Comic novel, the wedding planner · Adult (30–45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Imogen Farrow had planned two hundred and six weddings, and the first rule she gave every bride was the same. No animals. Not a dove, not a pony, not a dog with the rings on a little pillow.

The Castellano wedding had swans.

They had been the groom's mother's idea. Two of them, hired by the hour, to glide across the lake behind the vows. In the brochure they looked like a pair of folded napkins. In person, they looked like they wanted to speak to a manager.

"They're not gliding," said the bride, through her smile.

"No," said Imogen.

"They're getting out."

They were. They came up the lawn side by side, unhurried, past the string quartet, which stopped, and down the aisle, which emptied.

Nobody breathed.

Then both swans sat down in the front row, in two seats marked Reserved, and faced the minister.

"Start the music," Imogen whispered into her headset. "Apparently they're with the family."

Townsperson Four

Comic novel, community theater · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Walter Finch had been with the Maple Hollow Players for nineteen years and had never once been given a line. He had been a tree. In the spring musical he had been Townsperson Four, and had been asked to hum more quietly.

But Walter knew every part. He sat in the wings each night with his lips moving, and he lived for the day somebody got the flu.

The lead had lost his voice. The director looked around backstage like a man counting lifeboats, and his eyes landed on Walter.

"Finch. You know the role?"

"I know all the roles."

Walter stood. Nineteen years. He walked out into the light, opened his mouth, and delivered the first speech perfectly. Then he delivered the reply. Then the reply to that.

He did the butler. He did the aunt. He did eleven minutes alone before the leading lady sat down on the sofa and started clapping.

Attempt Six

Comic novel, the driving test · Mature (55+) · Southern US · 1 minute

Miss Opal Tidwell is seventy-four years old, and this morning she is taking her driving test for the sixth time.

Her late husband drove, and then her sister drove, and now her sister has moved to Mobile with a retired dentist. So Opal has decided to see about it herself.

The examiner is Mr. Pruitt. He has been her examiner all six times. By now they exchange Christmas cards.

"Morning, Miss Opal. Whenever you're ready."

She pulls out of the lot at a speed Mr. Pruitt will later describe to his wife as geological.

Nothing goes wrong. She signals. She stops. She parks between the cones in only four tries, a personal best.

Mr. Pruitt looks at his clipboard for a long time.

"Miss Opal," he says, and his voice is not quite steady. "You passed."

"Well, I should think so," says Opal. "Now, who is going to teach me the highway?"

Mr. Pruitt closes his eyes.

A Few Words About Ron

Comic essay, the neighbor's leaf blower · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 1 minute

My neighbor Ron has bought a leaf blower, and I would like to say a few words about peace.

Ron's lawn is forty feet across. I have measured it, at night. On it, in October, fall perhaps two hundred leaves, which a man with a rake could gather in the time it takes to boil an egg. Ron owns a machine that sounds like a jet being sad.

On Saturdays he blows the leaves into the street. The wind, which also lives here, blows them back. This goes on until lunch. It is not yard work. It is a relationship.

I have tried hints. I have stood at the window in my robe, with an expression. Ron waves.

So last week I walked over, prepared to discuss it like adults.

"Ron," I said.

He turned it off. He smiled, and held it out to me. "Want a go?"

I did his whole driveway. It is wonderful. I have ordered one.

Forty Gnomes

Comic novel, the inheritance · Adult (30-45) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

Great-Aunt Cordelia left the house to the cats' home, the money to the lifeboats, and to her nephew Rupert, whom she had always considered wet, she left the gnomes.

There were forty. The solicitor read the number twice.

They arrived in a removal van and were set out on the gravel behind Rupert's flat, where they stood in rows and looked at him. Fishing gnomes. A gnome with a wheelbarrow. One, at the back, who appeared to be reading the paper and had a distinctly disapproving nose.

"You could sell them," said his sister on the telephone.

"She put a condition. I'm to keep them a full year, all forty, in plain sight, or they go to cousin Hugo. I don't want anyone to have them, Flora. I want them not to exist."

But a year is a long time. In March he found himself straightening the one with the wheelbarrow. In May he bought a small tin of red paint, for hats. By August the woman from the ground floor stopped at the gravel and asked whether the one reading the paper had a name.

"Gerald," said Rupert, to his own surprise.

"He looks like a Gerald." She had a very nice smile. "I'm Beth."

On the last day of the year the solicitor rang. The gnomes were his to dispose of.

"Thank you," said Rupert, watching Beth repaint a fishing rod. "I shall have to ask Gerald."

Did You Think This Was About the Books

Comic essay, the book club · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

I joined a book club in January, as a resolution, and I would like it on the record that I have read every single book.

This makes me the only one.

There are eight of us. We meet on the first Thursday at Diane's, because Diane has the big sofa and the opinions. I buy the book. I read it. I put little flags in it, in three colors, because I was once told I was "a pleasure to have in class" and never got over it.

At seven-thirty Diane says, "So! What did everyone think?"

There is a silence.

"I loved the cover," says Renata.

"I'm about halfway," says Joyce, who is not.

Then somebody mentions her kitchen remodel, and that is the last we hear of literature. For two hours we discuss countertops. We discuss Joyce's son-in-law, who is in a band at thirty-nine.

In June I had had enough. I stood up, holding the book. "I have a question about chapter twelve," I said. "About why she goes back."

Seven faces turned to me, politely, the way you would look at a dog that had started to speak French.

"Oh, honey," said Diane. "Did you think this was about the books?"

I sat down. I thought about the eleven months I had lived in this town before January, without one person knowing my name.

"Pass the cheese," I said. "And tell me about the band."

Five Words on a Napkin

Family comedy, the wedding toast · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

I am the best man at my brother's wedding, and in ninety seconds I have to give a speech that I wrote on the plane.

The good one is on my laptop, in a taxi somewhere in Cleveland, having a nicer evening than I am.

What I have is a cocktail napkin. On it are five words. "Funny story. Fishing. Mom. Toast." I do not remember the funny story. I am not confident about "Fishing."

The DJ hands me the microphone. My brother Ben gives me a thumbs up, the same one he gave me when I was nine and about to jump off the garage roof on his advice.

"Hi," I say. "I'm Josh. I'm the brother."

So far, accurate.

"Ben is four years older than me. So my whole childhood, he got there first. First one to tell me what happens if you jump off a garage."

A small laugh. I look at the napkin.

"I had a funny story," I hear myself say. "I lost it. So here is the true one. When I broke my arm, he carried me four blocks to the hospital. He cried more than I did. And he told Mom it was his idea before she could even ask." My voice does something. "That's who you married, Claire. He'll tell you to jump. But he will carry you after."

I raise my glass. I check the napkin.

"Also, Mom. Hi."

Camping, Once

Travel disaster, the family camping trip · Adult (40-55) · Midwestern US · 90 seconds

I took my family camping one time. I want to stress the number.

My wife had suggested a cabin. I said my father took us every summer with a canvas tent and a can opener, and it built character. I did not mention that what I mainly remember is being cold.

The tent was new. The instructions said one person could put it up in eight minutes, and I would like to meet that person. At six-thirty my twelve-year-old took the poles away from me, gently, the way you take car keys from a grandfather.

It rained at nine. Just steadily, and from the side.

At eleven, something outside ate our entire cooler. It took its time. It opened the mustard.

"Dad," whispered my daughter. "Is that a bear?"

"No, honey."

"How do you know?"

I did not know. I lay there in an inch of water, holding a flashlight like a man who intends to reason with it.

At dawn I unzipped the tent. On our picnic table sat a raccoon the size of an ottoman, finishing a hot dog bun. It did not leave.

I turned to tell my family we were going home.

They were asleep. All three, in a wet heap, my son's foot in my wife's hair. They woke up laughing.

They want to go again in July. I was outvoted, three to one. Four, if you count the raccoon.

Practice with these, record them, post them as demos or reels, use them in auditions. Please do not resell them as scripts. © VO Journey Academy · avosjourney.com