



# Humor and the Freedom of Assembly

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## OBJECTIVES

- » Students will understand when it is appropriate to use humor as a form of protest
- » Students will understand how humor can assist political change/protest

## CORE CONTENT STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Chart paper and/or white board or smartboard
- Access to projection for videos
- Note-taking handout and Informational handout (included)

### INTRODUCTION/ANTICIPATORY SET

- 1) Play the following video for students to give them a visual of freedom of assembly: <http://www.youthforhumanrights.org/what-are-human-rights/videos/right-to-public-assembly.html>
- 2) Ask the class: Based on the video, what do you think the freedom of assembly is?
- 3) Using chart paper or whiteboard, create a class definition of assembly. You may also provide students with the following definition and information: Assembly is “the *intentional* and *temporary presence* of a number of *individuals* in a *public place* for a *common expressive purpose*.”
- 4) During class discussion, encourage students to consider various modes of assembly: rallies, marches, sit-ins, walk-outs, strikes, vigils, occupations
- 5) Show the following video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tE8zJU9k>  
(You can stop at 3:56 to save time/if you think students may lose interest)

### ACTIVITIES

- 1) Ask students to identify major goals of ‘laugh-tivism’ from the video and to take notes in the Handout.
- 2) Be sure to cover the following principles and goals of laughtivism, either by student suggestion or teacher reveal: undermining authority; building credibility; breaking fear and apathy; building target audiences.
- 3) Describe the following examples of laughtivism for students to take notes on:
  - a) Otpor threw a public birthday party for Milosevic with prank gifts including a jail uniform and a one way ticket to the Hague (International Criminal Court). If helpful, here is the text of the birthday card to share:

“Thank you for the childhood you have taken from us, for the unforgettable war scenes you have given us, for all the crimes you have committed in the name of Serbs, for all the lost battles. Thank you for Krajina, Slavonija, Bosnia, Kosovo and everything else you plan to sell under your wise policies. Thank you for the unforgettable convoys of our brothers, for the sound of air raid sirens, for all the lives lost in vain. Happy birthday, Mr. President, may you

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celebrate the next one with your nearest and dearest on a deserved holiday in The Hague.”

- b) In 2012, a group in Russia had their application for a protest demanding fair elections turned down by the government, so they staged a protest demanding fair elections...using toys like Lego men, toy soldiers, stuffed animals, and toy cars.

If you find it useful to project images of the toy protest for students, here are some: Images of toy protest:

<https://www.jpost.com/Video-Articles/Video/Toy-rally-pushes-limits-of-Russian-protest-movement>

- 4) Instruct students to answer the questions on Handout A. Then share with the larger group how these two examples meet the goals of laughtivism.
- 5) Break students into groups of two or three. Distribute information about one of three different laughtivism examples to each group for analysis and Handout B (included).

Articles to use: Otpor barrel stunt: <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2015/02/srdja-popovic-on-using-laughter-to-topple-slobodan-milosevic-the-power-of-laughtivism.html>

Billionaires for Bush: <http://beautifultrouble.org/case/billionaires-for-bush/>

Raging Grannies: <https://seniorplanet.org/meet-the-raging-grannies-troublemakers-in-disguise/>

<https://raginggrannies.net/> (song lyrics database)

## CLOSURE/ASSESSMENT

- 1) Each group shares information they collected about their assigned humor-centered assembly.
- 2) Lead a class discussion using the following questions:
  - a) What made these particular actions well suited to their time and issue?
  - b) What circumstances make laughtivism most effective?
  - c) Can you think of other situations, whether current, or historical, that might have been good opportunities for laughtivism?

## OPTIONAL EXTENSION(S)

- Each group can find additional material related to their assigned assemblies to share with the larger group.

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- ❑ Students can research additional assemblies that use humor.
- ❑ Students can design their own laughtivist assembly for a current issue.
- ❑ Students can do deeper research into Otpor! and the use of laughtivism to remove Milosevic.

# HANDOUT A

## NOTE-TAKING SHEET: LAUGHTIVISM

**GOALS OF LAUGHTIVISM:**

**EXAMPLES OF LAUGHTIVISM:**

**HOW EXAMPLES MEET THE GOALS:**

**Milosevic Birthday Card**

**Russian Toy Protest**

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# HANDOUT B

## LAUGHTIVISM ANALYSIS SHEET

1) When and where did this action take place?

2) Who designed the action?

3) Who participated in the action?

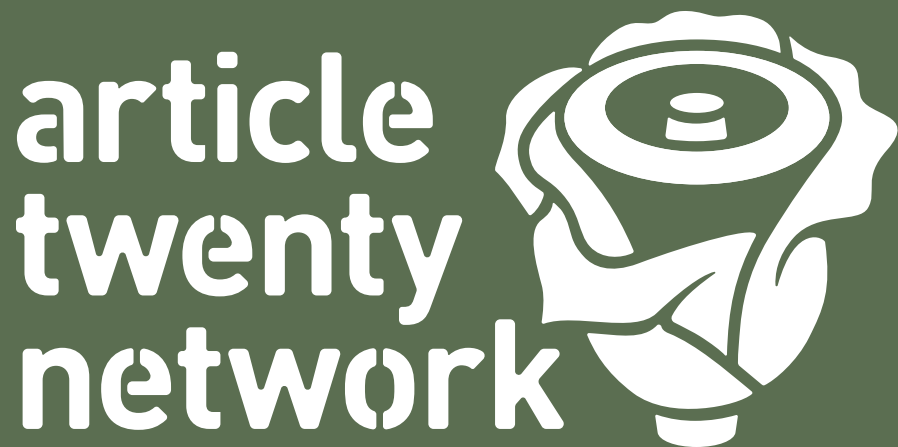
4) How does this action engage the audience? What is its message?

5) How does this action meet the laughtivism goals?

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The Article 20 Network defends and advances the human right to freedom of peaceful assembly worldwide.

Through education, advocacy, research and legal services, the Article 20 Network encourages the proliferation of public demonstrations and fights back against obstacles and threats to our human right to peacefully assemble.

Learn more about peaceful assembly and our work at:

[a20n.org](https://a20n.org)