



Surprise!

People laugh when they are surprised. You can trick people into thinking you are talking/writing about one thing by using words that have more than one meaning (homonyms). When they realise what you have done, it can make them giggle.

A lot of animals share the name of their species with a human feature or quality. For example, a person can be "catty", or "cruel", just like a situation can be "fishy", or "suspicious". You can use these words to make funny sentences.

Can you complete these sentences?

"My brother was a real pig at dinner. He
....."

(In the blank space, write in something that an actual pig would do. Your listener will expect you meant he was greedy, and ate a lot. But what else could he have done?)

"My teacher really badgers me about my homework. They
....."

(In the blank space, write in something that an actual badger would do, like eat worms or go digging. Your listener will expect you meant they kept talking about something.)

"I was too chicken to watch the scary movie. I
....."

(In the blank space, write in something that an actual chicken would do. Your listener will expect you meant you were scared.)

Can you do the same thing with these words?

- small animals: "rat" (tell tales on), "weasel" (get out of something), "rabbit" (talk a lot), "ferret" (find), "dog" (not let someone get away), "hare" (chase), "beaver" (work busily at), "bug" (annoy)
- big animals: "wolf" (eat quickly), "ape" (impersonate), "cow" (subdue), "ram" (force something into place), "sheepish" (embarrassed), "seal" (close properly)
- birds: "parrot" (repeat), "crow" (boast), "duck" (get lower down), "grouse" (complain), "swan" (move about in a fancy way), "swallow" (gulp down)
- fish: "carp" (complain), "perch" (sit on the edge), "skate" (glide on roller-skates or ice-skates)

Can you imagine one of these animals behaving like the word itself? What would embarrass a sheep so they would become sheepish? What would annoy a bug?

If the activity you are describing links back to the animal word you have used, you have the makings of a joke! For example: "I'm suspicious of penguins. They smell fishy to me!"