Year 5

Name: .....

Reading

Exercise 1: Read the text and write the headings in the box in the correct spaces 1-5.

What makes jokes funny? **The effect of jokes** **Are jokes just for people?** **The brain does all the work**

Exercise 2: Read the text and circle the correct words in each sentence.

1 When we laugh we have ***more / less*** energy.

2 Laughter has a ***positive / negative*** effect on our body.

3 There is a special area in our ***body / brain*** that understands jokes.

4 We find jokes funny because we ***expect / are surprised by*** the punchline.

5 Animals ***have / don't have*** a sense of humour.

1 _____

We know that when we laugh, changes to our mind and our body take place. Our heart rate increases, our stomach muscles tighten and our brain is flooded with endorphin, the hormone which is connected with pleasure and happiness. We also become more energetic, and if we were in pain before, laughter makes the pain go away! We also know that when we're in the company of others, we find jokes funnier and we laugh more. All these are the positive influences of laughter on our bodies and minds!

2 _____

But what makes us laugh? In other words why do we find jokes funny? Researchers believe that there is a special area in our brain which allows us to understand and react to humour. In the research, volunteers listened to serious sentences and jokes and their brain activity was monitored. The scientists found out that when the volunteers heard the punchline of the joke, their brains worked much harder to think about the joke and understand why it was funny.

3 _____

It seems that for a joke to be funny, it has to have an element of surprise in it. In other words, in a situation which we know or have experienced, something changes which allows our brain to be surprised and this is what we find funny. The beginning of the joke makes us think in one way, but the punchline shows us that there is another way of looking at the situation – the surprise makes us laugh out loud.

4 _____

It will seem strange, but humans aren't the only species with a sense of humour. Chimpanzees and monkeys enjoy a good joke too, and those who have pets will tell you that they enjoy jokes, as well. They may not use words, but they play games and they surprise their masters or the other animals in their group! They play practical jokes on them! So perhaps it's time we reconsidered our ideas about who has a sense of humour!