

GROUCHO MARX



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Groucho Marx was a comedian who rose to fame in the early 20th century. He's best known for performing in a comedy troupe with his brothers, known together as The Marx Brothers. His style of comedy is a major influence on many modern comedians.

Groucho Marx was born Julius Henry Marx in 1890. Groucho's uncle was a vaudeville performer, and his mother wanted to see Groucho and his brothers go into show business like him. At the age of 12, he began performing in a singing group with his brothers.

Groucho and his brothers were good singers, but they weren't great. On nights when they could tell the audience didn't like the show, they'd start making jokes to lighten the mood. Pretty soon, they discovered that people liked to hear them make jokes more than they liked listening to them sing! They started performing as a comedy troupe instead, doing funny skits and plays for people. They quickly became one of most popular vaudeville acts in the country.

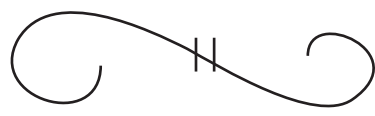
Around this time, movies with sound had just been invented and were becoming popular. The Marx Brothers made several successful comedy films, such as *Duck Soup*, *Animal Crackers*, and *A Night at the Opera*.

After that, his brothers left show business, but Groucho continued to do comedy on his own. In 1947 he was chosen to be the host of a radio show called *You Bet Your Life*, where he would ask players quiz questions. However, the show became more famous for Groucho's jokes than for the actual game! The show was turned into a TV game show in 1950 and was a great success. Though he was still very famous, Groucho retired from performing in the 1960s.

Groucho Marx is remembered today as being an all-around talented comedian. He could perform all styles of comedy – not only was he great at physical gags, he could also write very smart, witty jokes. His work has inspired countless other comedians and comedy writers, including legends like Mel Brooks and Woody Allen.

1. Groucho Marx's real first name was _____.
2. Groucho and his brothers got their start singing in these kinds of shows.

3. Name a movie that the Marx Brothers made together.



Vaudeville

Vaudeville was a popular form of entertainment in the late 1800s and early 1900s. A vaudeville show was made up of many types of performances: there were actors, singers, dancers, comedians, jugglers, even animals that did tricks! People would come to the theater to see all kinds of acts performed in just one show. In a time before movies, television and video games, a vaudeville show would have been considered a fun night out!

Think up a vaudeville act of your own! What talents do you have that people would like to watch you do? Write a description of your act here.

On the back of this page or on a new piece of paper, draw a poster advertising your act. Use bright colors and persuasive language! What would you put on a poster to encourage people to come to the show?