***JUST JOKING*** DEMO TEXTS

**Directions**: Read the seven options, choose one, and incorporate it into an argument paragraph. Authorize, illustrate, and, if possible, extend/counter.

**1.** “Laughter and humor are instinctive ways of coping that help people deal with the disappointments and struggles of life. Specifically, it is believed that by finding humor in stressful or potentially threatening situations, people can replace negative attitudes with positive ones, thereby giving them a better ability to cope with negative situations.”

–Julia Wilkins, PhD, Department of Special Education, St. Cloud State University and author of *Humor Theories and the Psychological Benefits of Laughter*

**2.** “Disparagement humor at the expense of traditionally discriminated against groups may be especially hurtful since it is a bitter reminder of their group’s lower status and historical experience of [discrimination](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/bias). The cleverness of derogation humor and that it is not intended to harm, sometimes masks its meanness and makes us forget that many people from the derogated groups may experience it as prejudiced, hurtful, and exclusionary.”

—Sean Burn, Ph.D, author of *Presence of Mind*

**3.** " In our self-conscious, suspicious and defensive time — when the default settings of public discourse seem to vacillate between piety and rage — comedy might be the only widely available vehicle for the arguments we otherwise don’t want to have. . . . Fighting about what is or isn’t funny is our way of talking about fairness, inclusion and responsibility.”

—A.O. Scott, American journalist and film critic for the *New York Times*

**4.** “Although humor often is thought of as frivolous silliness, it is actually an advanced intellectual means of reframing situations, reinterpreting meanings, and taking control when one has no other way to do so. . . .In the battle against bullying, throwing punch lines instead of punches is the most civilized and safe option, and one that will build confidence rather than break spirits.”

–Nichole Force, M.A. in counseling psychology, author of “Humor’s Hidden Power: Weapon, Shield, and Psychological Salve”

**5.** “It is one thing to laugh **with** someone, but you know there is a problem if you are laughing **at** someone.”

-- Julia Ransohoff, high school student writer, from Sutter Health Palo Alto Medical Foundation, August 2013

**6**. “Political correctness is 'condescending' as it only allows jokes to be made about certain groups while implying others need to be protected. We can make jokes about Swedes and Germans and French and English and Canadians and Americans, but we can't we make jokes about Mexicans? Is it because they are so feeble that they can't look after themselves? It's very condescending there.”

—John Cleese, British actor, writer, comedian, and film director

**7.** “Humor is something that thrives between man’s hopes and his limitations. There is more logic in humor than in anything else. Because, you see, humor is truth.”

—Victor Borge, famous 20th century Danish humorist