

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Fun with Puns

### Definition

**Puns** are plays on words that exploit multiple meanings of a word or words that sound alike but have different meanings. This wordplay creates humor through the deliberate confusion of similar-sounding terms.

### Example

| Pun                                                                               | Word Played On | Multiple Meanings                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| "Time flies like an arrow;<br>fruit flies like a banana."                         | flies          | verb<br>(passes)/noun<br>(insects) |
| "I used to be a baker, but I<br>couldn't make enough<br>dough."                   | dough          | bread/money                        |
| "The electrician was fired<br>because he refused to<br>conduct himself properly." | conduct        | behavior/electr<br>icity flow      |
| "A bicycle can't stand on its<br>own because it's two-tired."                     | two-tired      | having two<br>tires/too tired      |
| "I'm reading a book about<br>anti-gravity. It's impossible<br>to put down!"       | put down       | set aside/fall<br>downward         |

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### Part 1: Multiple Choice Questions

1. Read the following pun about Siberian permafrost: Scientists studying the permafrost said their research was "groundbreaking," but everyone knew it was just scratching the surface.

Which words contain the pun in this sentence?

- A. permafrost/scratching
- B. scientists/research
- C. groundbreaking/surface
- D. studying/scratching

2. Why is this statement considered a pun?

The permafrost researchers didn't get a warm reception because their findings were too chilling.

- A. "warm reception" contrasts with cold temperatures
- B. "chilling" refers to both frightening discoveries and cold temperatures
- C. "researchers" sounds like "re-searchers"
- D. "findings" has a double meaning

3. Identify the pun in this sentence:

When the scientist fell into the permafrost pit, she said she was having a "meltdown" over her research.

- A. pit/research (location/study)
- B. scientist/research (person/study)
- C. fell/permafrost (accident/location)
- D. meltdown (emotional breakdown/thawing ice)

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### Part 2: Fill in the Blank

**Complete each sentence with an appropriate pun related to Siberian permafrost.**

1. When the permafrost thawed unexpectedly during the experiment, the scientists had to quickly come up with a \_\_\_\_\_. (Create a pun using a word related to impromptu solutions and cold)
2. The methane released from thawing permafrost is no laughing \_\_\_\_\_. (Complete this pun based on a gas-related wordplay)
3. The permafrost research team's funding was \_\_\_\_\_ after their revolutionary discovery about ancient microbes. (Complete with a pun related to money and temperature/freezing)
4. After working in Siberia's permafrost for months, the geologist said she needed to \_\_\_\_\_ before returning to fieldwork. (Complete with a pun related to rest and temperature)
5. The ancient viruses trapped in the permafrost remained \_\_\_\_\_ until recent warming began to release them. (Complete with a pun related to dormancy and imprisonment)

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## Fun with Puns – Answer Key

### Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. C. groundbreaking/surface ("groundbreaking" means both innovative and literally breaking the ground, while "scratching the surface" refers to both minimal impact and literally only affecting the top layer)
2. B. "chilling" refers to both frightening discoveries and cold temperatures (dual meaning of the word creates the pun)
3. D. meltdown (emotional breakdown/thawing ice) (plays on both the emotional meaning and the literal melting of frozen ground)

### Part 2: Fill in the Blank

1. Plan B-rrr (combines "Plan B" with the sound "brrr" indicating cold)
2. matter (plays on methane as a gas and "no laughing matter" meaning a serious issue)
3. unfrozen/on ice (either "unfrozen" playing on "frozen assets" being released, or "on ice" meaning both frozen and set aside)
4. thaw out/chill (either "thaw out" meaning both warm up and relax, or "chill" meaning both get cold and relax)
5. on ice/under ice-olation (either "on ice" meaning preserved and set aside, or a play on "isolation" with "ice")