



Topic 17 LAUGHING online - keep it short

Laughter is universal. People all over the world, no matter what language they speak, express laughter the same way when they interact face-to-face: they giggle, chuckle, laugh out loud, chortle, snicker, guffaw or roar. Sometimes the laughter is nervous, high (or low) pitched, or forced. Laughter is often accompanied by facial grimaces, tears, vocalizations, closed eyes and exaggerated, hand and body movements.

➔ *How is laughter communicated virtually?*

Text-based abbreviations, often accompanied by laughing emojis, are widely used to communicate laughter or merriment in emails, text messages and online chatting. Here are five popular **English** laughing abbreviations which are used in lower or upper case:

lol (laugh out loud)

jbol (I just burst out laughing)

haha (an onomatopoeic representation of laughter)

lqtm (laughing quietly to myself)

rofl (rolling on the floor laughing)

➔ *How do languages communicate laughter virtually?*

Looking across languages we see laughter communicated in text-based abbreviations using specific language specific terminology that, for non speakers, is unclear even when translated.

Here are some examples:

FRENCH **mdr** (mort de rire: dead from laughter)

GREEK **κλάίω** (I cry: I'm crying from laughter)

ITALIAN **volo** (I fly: you made me laugh so hard I'm flying away)

JAPANESE **www** (repetition of the first letter in **warau** which means laughter)

SPANISH **jajaja** (hahaha)

For text-based laughter abbreviations in additional languages see:

<https://restofworld.org/2023/how-people-laugh-online/>