

The Memeing Instructor: Increased Attention = Increased Retention

Additional Resources

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Memes and GIFs are a way of connecting with our patrons in a way they likely don't expect. There are many stereotypes and preconceptions our patrons have about libraries and the people who work in them, but it's probably pretty safe to say that they don't consider us a place with its finger on the pulse of pop culture.

Memes

A meme or memed picture of yourself could be a fun and useful way of connecting with and surprising our students (in a good way!) in a number of places:

- As a fun alternative to your standard work photograph on your LibGuide/faculty profile page/LMS
- As an addition to handouts given out in class to help students put a (memorable!) face to the name
- Or you could just insert the picture into your slides, with the caption a bit of subject-area wisdom (e.g., "I don't always evaluate websites, but when I do, I use the CRAAP test") or just as a kind of business card at the end.

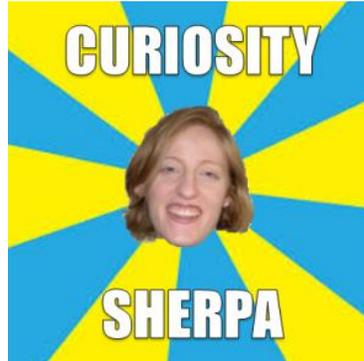
How to meme yourself

- Open a picture of yourself in MS Paint. Using the eraser tool, create an outline around your face (you may find it helpful to zoom in for this, and to erase using shorter swipes rather than at one go so you can hit CTRL-Z if your hand slips and you take out an eye). Comme ça:



- Using the Select: Free-form Selection (lasso) tool, draw around your face *in that white space* and copy the selection.
- Paste into PowerPoint.
- Follow the directions [here](#) to make the picture background transparent.
- Find a meme background you like (I just did a Google Image Search for 'meme background') and copy-and-paste it into the PowerPoint slide on top of your face.
- With the meme background still selected, click the Picture Tools menu and choose Send Backward. Center/resize your face as necessary.

- To create text with the traditional meme look, click Insert: WordArt and choose the 4th option (Fill - White, Outline). Change the Text Outline to black. From the Home menu, change the font to Impact; I also added a Text Shadow effect (from the Home menu) for greater contrast.



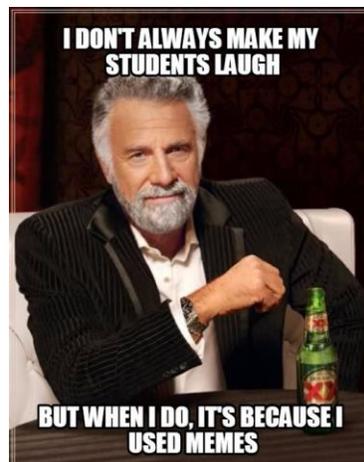
Voila! While this process looks super-long and complicated here, it actually takes all of 5 minutes (longer to write out than to actually do!).

How to Create a Meme Using a Meme Generator

Images: There are lots of websites out there that will quickly and painlessly make memes for you—just do an internet search for “meme generator.” With most meme generators, you can upload one of your own images, but for the most impact, you’ll want to use a meme that’s currently trending. Check out Reddit, where there’s a number of [subreddits](#) devoted to memes. Reddit uses a voting system to ensure that the most popular posts are on the front page, so you know whatever you see here is popular.

[Meme Dad](#) has a ‘Hot on Reddit’ section that will take you straight to a page of trending memes on Reddit. If you mouse over one of these images, you’ll see the ‘name’ of that meme (such as Success Kid, First World Problems, etc.).

Text: Most memes have text on top, and additional text on bottom. The text on top is often a question or provocative statement, the text on the bottom often sarcastic or unexpected in some way. [Know Your Meme](#) will give you all the details you need on whether any language is typically associated with a meme. For example, The Most Interesting Man in the World, here, for example doesn’t always..., but when he does, he.... The “official” meme font is generally Impact in white with a black outline, unless the meme is a [Rage](#) or [Hyperbole and a Half](#) comic.



Saving: Meme generators generally allow you to create accounts to store your memes online, but you can also just download (right click, save as) the image to your computer.

GIFs

GIFs, on the other hand, are short animations, usually evocative clips from celebrity interviews or the entertainment industry. Often there's no text, just a really funny facial expression or action, such as a llama rearing its head in a strange way. Because the GIF field, so to speak, is so wide—all recorded content—there are a ton to choose from, and finding GIFs that use a trending phrase (such as 'on fleek' in the 2014-2015 academic year) or currently popular celebrities and actors therefore isn't important the way it is for memes. Finding them is as easy as an internet search for a particular 'emotion' + the word GIF, such as 'surprised GIF.' Alternatively, you can search for the name of a TV show, actor, or character + the word GIF, such as 'Joffrey GIF.'

If you want to make your own GIF, you've got two options: taking a clip from pre-animated media (such as a TV show, music video, or film), or combining still images into a stop-motion film. There are many free online GIF creators that will help you do either of these, and walk you through the necessary steps: just do an internet search either for 'video to GIF' or 'animated GIF creator.'

Memes and GIFs can help you bring humor and pop culture into your classes and presentations quickly, and with minimal effort. Give it a try!