



Comedy: The Silent Era

1. What was the first film comedy? The first narrative film? (Underline titles.)
2. Why did Pathé initially fare so well in film comedy? And Italy?
3. What did early Italian and French comedies look like (mise-en-scene)? What subjects did they explore?
4. How long did Europe's golden age of comedy last? Why so short?
5. With whom and which studio does American film comedy begin?
6. What did Keystone silents look like, mise-en-scene, etc.? What was the company's "guiding rule"?
7. Who are the giants of early American film comedy? Explain the talents and onscreen personas of each.
8. Why does your textbook call screen comedy "distinctly an American art form"?
9. What happened to the four comedy greats (and other comedians) when synchronized sound appeared?
10. **Buster Keaton insert:** Explain why Keaton (right) was the silent clown who suffered the most after 1927 but whose "reputation has recovered the best."
11. **Charlie Chaplin insert:** How does Chaplin's personal life translate to screen? What is Chaplin's role with UA? How long into the sound era did Chaplin create silent films?

