

**ACTIVITY GUIDE**

**Mary Mack – Folk Humorist**

**Writing/Essay/Journal**

Mary Mack tapes her open-mike performances, transcribes them after the fact, and then whittles several minutes of material down into the 4 sentences that will make up the core of a joke.

Over the course of 5 minutes, write a personal narrative as fast as you can detailing an event (it doesn't have to be a comedic piece!). Make it as long as you can and don't edit yourself as you go. When the five minutes are up, review your piece and cut out any inessential information. Compare the two pieces. Which version packs more of a punch and why?



**Activity**

Mary writes comedy ideas on random scraps of paper as she thinks of them. Try this method out yourself. Identify a long-term project you are planning. The project can be anything from a birthday party to a song you want to write. Any time you think of an idea for that project, write it down. (It might help to carry a small notebook around with you.) After three weeks, go through your notes to see if they inspire any new ideas or action!