

satire and satirical devices

Satire Defined:

Sarcasm, irony or wit used to ridicule or mock - poke fun of something serious.

Satire Classified:

There are two types of satire: **Horatian** and **Juvenalian**

Horatian satire is: tolerant, witty, wise and self-effacing

Juvenalian satire is: angry, caustic, resentful, personal

Satirical Devices:

1. Irony—the actual intent is expressed in words which carry the opposite meaning. It is lighter, less harsh in wording than sarcasm, though more cutting because of its indirectness. The ability to recognize irony is one of the surest tests of intelligence and sophistication. Irony speaks words of praise to imply blame and words of blame to imply praise. Writer is using a tongue-in-cheek style. Irony is achieved through such techniques as hyperbole and understatement.

A. *Verbal Irony* - simply an inversion of meaning; saying the opposite of what is meant

B. *Dramatic Irony*—when the words or acts of a character carry a meaning unperceived by himself but understood by the audience. The irony resides in the contrast between the meaning intended by the speaker and the added significance seen by others.

C. *Socratic Irony*—Socrates pretended ignorance of a subject in order to draw knowledge out of his students by a question and answer device. Socratic irony is feigning ignorance to achieve some advantage over an opponent.

D. *Situational Irony*—Depends on a discrepancy between purpose and results. (The burning firehouse, the cardiologist who dies young from a heart attack, etc.)

2. Travesty: presents a serious (often religious) subject frivolously; it reduces everything to its lowest level. “Trans”=over, across “vestire”=to clothe or dress. Presenting a subject in a “dress” intended for another type of subject. Monty Python’s *Life of Brian*.

3. Burlesque: ridiculous exaggeration achieved through a variety of ways. For example, the sublime may be absurd, honest emotions may be turned to sentimentality. STYLE is the essential quality in burlesque. A style ordinarily dignified may be used for nonsensical matters, etc. Modern burlesque incorporates strip tease but still holds the original concept.

4. Parody: a composition imitating or burlesquing another, usually serious, piece of work. Parody ridicules in nonsensical fashion an original piece of work. Parody is in literature what the caricature and cartoon are in art. *Airplane* and *Scary Movie* series.

NOTE—TRAVESTY, BURLESQUE & PARODY are similar, but travesty always makes a mockery of a serious subject, whereas burlesque and parody may do the reverse.

5. Farce/Exaggeration/Inflation: exciting laughter through exaggerated, improbable situations. This usually contains low comedy: quarreling, fighting, course with, horseplay, noisy singing, boisterous conduct, trickery, clownishness, drunkenness, and slap-stick.

6. Knaves & Fools: in comedy there are no villains and no innocent victims. Instead, there are rogues (knaves) and suckers (fools). The knave exploits someone “asking for it”. When these two interact, comic satire results. When knaves & fools meet, they expose each other.

7. Malapropism: a deliberate mispronunciation of a name or term with the intent of poking fun. *Rosanne Rosannadanna*.

8. Anachronism: is placing an idea, invention, item or word in the wrong time period. This is not always used just for satire and may just be an unintentional error, but when used deliberately it adds to the humor of the story by highlighting contrasts between one era and another. *Mel Brooks' Blazing Saddles, History of the World*

9. Comic Juxtaposition: linking together with no commentary items which normally do not go together; Pope's line in *Rape of the Lock*: "Puffs, patches, bibles, and billet-doux"

10. Mock Epic/Mock Heroic: Using elevated diction and devices from the epic or the heroic to deal with low or trivial subjects.

11. Understatement /Diminution: taking a real-life situation and reducing it to make it ridiculous and showcase its faults. Giving the nickname "tiny" to a 350 pound man, or describing him as "not the smallest guy in the room."

12. Deflation: the English professor mispronounces a word, the President slips and bangs his head leaving the helicopter, etc.

13. Grotesque: creating a tension between laughter and horror or revulsion; the essence of all "sick humor: or "dark humor." Many a *South Park* episode.

14. Invective: harsh, abusive language directed against a person or cause. Invective is a vehicle, a tool of anger. Invective is the bit-terest of all satire.

15. Sarcasm: a sharply mocking or contemptuous remark. The term came from the Greek word "sarkazein" which means "to tear flesh." The hallmark style of *Bill Maher*.

16. Mock Encomium: praise which is only apparent and which suggests blame instead.

Source: I wish I knew the originator of this material. This composition derives from two different presentations combined to make a single reference document. After looking at 20+ websites, each having identical information, the task of identifying the true originator became something of a farce. Apologies if you are that person and are feeling a bit plagiarized. If it makes you feel better, the document is being used to inform high school students who are in a panic over a looming AP examination and who are not likely to attempt to profit illicitly from the material. Besides, you left it on the internet unprotected.