

SATIRE

DEFINITION AND OVERVIEW
FOR ENGLISH 9 HONORS

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WHAT IS SATIRE?

- Satire is a literary approach in which ideas, customs, or institutions are ridiculed - usually through the use of hyperbole and/or humor - for the purpose of improving society.
- Satire often exaggerates a wrong, forcing the reader to see the subject in a more critical light.

WHAT IS SATIRE?

- Satire usually has a definite target - an idea, a custom, a tradition, a person, a group of people, an institution, a social practice, a policy, etc.
- Satire necessarily assumes a reasonably informed and intelligent audience able to understand its allusions and irony
- A formula for satire:
ironic humor + informed criticism = implicit argument for reform (*satire*)

WHAT IS SATIRE?

- Satire is *not* the same as sarcasm
 - Sarcasm is more of a simplistic use of irony in order to belittle or insult somebody, but there is no implicit argument for reform or improvement

BASIC TYPES OF SATIRE

FORMAL	INFORMAL
Often 1st Person Narrator	Often 3rd Person Narrator
The Narrator may be presenting from behind a satirical <i>mask</i> or <i>persona</i>	Characters often occupy a satirical story or environment
EX: A satirical editorial column	EX: A satirical movie

BASIC TYPES OF SATIRE

HORATIAN	JUVENALIAN
Named fro the Roman poet Horace	Named for the Roman poet Juvenal
Satire is gentle, light, smiling	Satire is biting, angry, caustic, often offensive
Often aims to draw attention to a perceived wrong through gentle, sympathetic humor	Often is contemptuous and delivered with a sense of moral indignation

BASIC TECHNIQUES OF SATIRE

- EXAGGERATION

- To enlarge, increase or represent something beyond the normal bounds so that it becomes ridiculous and absurd; faults are exposed; common literary connection: *hyperbole*

- INCONGRUITY

- To present things in a manner that is out of place, out of sync or in a clearly absurd in relation to their surroundings; common literary connection: *situational irony* and *dramatic irony*

BASIC TECHNIQUES OF SATIRE

- REVERSAL

- To present things in a contrary or opposite order or sequence; common literary connection: *situational irony*

- PARODY

- To imitate or remake the techniques or styles of a person, place, thing, institution, etc.; common literary connection: *lampoon* or *pastiche*

KEY QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

- What/who is being satirized? *What institution, practice, group, belief, etc.?*
- Who is the intended audience? *Is the audience clearly identified? Are they capable of understanding and responding to the satire?*
- What is the tone of the satire? *What type is it - Horatian or Juvenalian?)*
- What techniques are being used and why? *Exaggeration? Parody? Etc.*
- What is the purpose of the satire? *What is the satirist proposing be changed, reformed, eliminated, etc.?*
- How effective is the satire? *Did the piece cause its intended change?*

SATIRE

- What else should we consider?
- What great examples do you have of satire?
- Questions?