

IRONY IN LITERATURE

High School English Language Arts Worksheet

What Is Irony?

Irony occurs when there is a contrast between what is expected and what actually happens, what is said and what is meant, or what the audience knows and what a character knows.

The Three Main Types of Irony

- verbal irony
- situational irony
- dramatic irony.

1. Verbal Irony - occurs when a speaker says one thing but means something different, often the opposite.

Example: *It is pouring rain outside, and someone says, "What a beautiful day!"*

The speaker does not literally mean that the weather is beautiful.

2. Situational Irony - occurs when the actual outcome of a situation is very different from what is expected.

Example: *A fire station burns down.*

People expect a fire station to be a place protected from or prepared to fight fires, so the outcome is unexpected.

3. Dramatic Irony - occurs when the audience or reader knows something that a character does not know.

Example: *The audience knows that a villain is hiding in the house, but the character enters the house unaware of the danger.*

Part I: Identify the Type of Irony

Write **V** for Verbal Irony, **S** for Situational Irony, or **D** for Dramatic Irony.

- ____ A character looks at a huge pile of homework and says, "This shouldn't take long."
- ____ The audience knows that the character's best friend is secretly planning a surprise party, but the character believes everyone has forgotten their birthday.
- ____ A police station is robbed.
- ____ A character says, "Great! Another flat tire!" after discovering a flat tire on the way to work.
- ____ In a mystery story, the reader knows who the murderer is, but the detective suspects the wrong person.
- ____ A professional chef accidentally burns dinner while cooking for an important food critic.
- ____ A student who forgot to study says, "I'm definitely going to ace this test."
- ____ A character spends an entire story trying to avoid a particular place, only to discover at the end that the place was actually their childhood home.
- ____ The audience knows that the "empty" room contains someone hiding behind the curtain, but the character does not.
- ____ A swimming instructor is afraid of water.

Part II: Multiple Choice

11. Which best describes verbal irony?
 - A. The opposite of what is expected happens.
 - B. The audience knows something a character does not.
 - C. A speaker says something but means something different.
 - D. A character experiences a surprising event.
12. Which best describes situational irony?
 - A. A character says the opposite of what they mean.
 - B. The outcome is different from what is expected.
 - C. The audience knows more than the characters.
 - D. A character tells a lie.
13. Which best describes dramatic irony?
 - A. The audience knows important information that a character does not know.
 - B. A character says something sarcastic.
 - C. The outcome is unexpected.
 - D. A character misunderstands another character.
14. Which situation is the best example of situational irony?
 - A. A student says, "I'm thrilled," when they are clearly upset.
 - B. The audience knows that the hero is walking into a trap.
 - C. A professional thief accidentally locks himself out of his own house.
 - D. A character misunderstands an important conversation.
15. Which situation is the best example of dramatic irony?
 - A. A character says, "This is just perfect," after spilling coffee.
 - B. A doctor becomes sick before an important medical conference.
 - C. The audience knows that a character's phone is being monitored, but the character does not.
 - D. A character expects to win but loses.
16. Which situation is the best example of verbal irony?
 - A. A character says, "I love waiting in traffic," while stuck in traffic for an hour.
 - B. A firefighter's house catches fire.
 - C. The audience knows the villain is hiding nearby.
 - D. A character receives an unexpected gift.

Part III: Is It Actually Irony?

Read each example. Write **I** for **IRONY** or **NI** for **NOT IRONY**.

17. ____ A student studies for a test and earns an A.
18. ____ A dentist has terrible teeth.
19. ____ A character says, "I'm so excited," while clearly looking miserable.
20. ____ A dog runs after a ball.

21. ____ A fire station catches fire.
 22. ____ A character eats dinner because they are hungry.
 23. ____ The audience knows that the character's "friend" is actually the villain.
 24. ____ A student forgets their pencil at home.
 25. ____ A teacher tells a student who has not completed an assignment, "I see you've been very productive."
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