



ELA Virtual Learning

AP Lang and Comp:
Satire

May 14, 2020



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Objective/Learning Target:

To develop an understanding of satire, students will:

- Become familiar with the underlying concepts behind satire
- Analyze the interaction between satire and current events

Background Information:

Satire is a technique employed by writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society, by using humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule. It intends to improve humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. A writer in a satire uses fictional characters, which stand for real people, to expose and condemn their corruption.

A writer may point a satire toward a person, a country, or even the entire world. Usually, a satire is a comical piece of writing which makes fun of an individual or a society, to expose its stupidity and shortcomings. In addition, he hopes that those he criticizes will improve their characters by overcoming their weaknesses.

Before you begin...

Satire is categorized into three different titles. Familiarize yourself with the definitions.

Horatian: Horatian satire is comic and offers light social commentary. It is meant to poke fun at a person or situation in an entertaining way.

Juvenalian: Juvenalian satire is dark, rather than comedic. It is meant to speak truth to power.

Menippean: Menippean satire casts moral judgment on a particular belief.

Warm-Up Activity:

In this fake movie trailer from Saturday Night Live, the story portrays someone standing up to the President within his own party. Click [here](#) to watch.

- What are the creators saying about the power the president has?
- Is this an example of horatian, juvenalian, or menippean satire?
- Why do they keep using TBD and what do the creators mean by it?



Lesson:

- Today, you will be thinking critically about the relationship between comedy and satire, and you will be exploring the question of how it helps us interpret global events.
- Watch the following video from The Colbert Report titled “[Poor In America](#)” (2011). Colbert discusses a Heritage Foundation report which tries to prove that as long as “poor” Americans have refrigerators and the strength to brush flies off their eyeballs, they're not really poor.
- Consider the following questions:
 - What elements of satire does Colbert use in his critique?
 - Based on this source, do you think it is possible for satire to be unbiased?

Write-Up:

- On a sheet of paper, explain how this piece meets the definition of satire by examining the topic and elements of satire. Look to spend 10 - 15 minutes writing and covering at least 2 elements of satire with an example from the video.
- Before you write, answer the following questions:
 - What background research is necessary to understand the piece?
 - What elements of the video function as satire, and how do they play on our understanding of the event?

Further Practice:

- [This Daily Show clip from late May \(2015\)](#) begins by satirizing the outrageously exaggerated descriptions in news coverage of pollen. Then, the clip turns on itself in a remarkable critique of its own cynical humor. The clip presents a great opportunity to both analyze hyperbole in news representations of reality and discuss the dangers of media literacy analysis fostering cynicism.
 - How does this clip pair with the news report from the lesson today?
 - What do you think of Stewart choosing to subvert his own message about not trusting sensationalism in the news? How does it affect his own trustworthiness? Does that matter?