



ELA Virtual Learning

AP Lang and Comp:
Satire

May 15, 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
- Apply their knowledge of satire and the news to create their own satirical pieces

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:

This video from VOA News shows the impact of satirical news and the reach it has had on the youth today. Click [here](#) to watch.

- Why is it important for there to be a satirical news source?
- Is satire necessary for change?



Lesson:

- Today, you will be examining one story but approached two different ways. The topic is over the Keystone Pipeline. The [first video](#) is accompanied by a video about President Obama vetoing a bill that would have approved the Keystone Pipeline expansion, a project that caused fierce debate between Republican lawmakers and environmentalists.
- Next, [read the article from The Onion](#), a satirical news outlet, titled “Keystone Veto Buys Environment At Least 3 Or 4 More Hours.” This article pokes fun at the veto from Obama and what it actually means.
- What to consider as you read:
 - What knowledge is required to “get” the jokes?
 - How can even serious historical events be rendered in humorous ways?
 - Does the passage of time give us the ability to joke about the past?

Activity:

- Now that you have had experience with reading factual and satirical pieces, it is your turn to investigate satirical news.
- Use this handout to investigate satirical news sources.
- First, go online and find a satirical article that's about a current political or world event or issue. Write the home page address of the website where you found the article.
- Second, look for how and where the site discloses that its content is satire.
- Third, write the headline of the story you chose.
- Fourth, briefly explain the real-world issue or event that the story is related to.
- Fifth, read the satirical story. What aspect(s) of the real-world situation is the story commenting on, and how? Is it poking fun? Being sarcastic? Making a ridiculous comparison? Something else?
- Lastly, discuss how easily someone could be fooled by this story? Explain what might make someone think this is real and what clues indicate that is isn't real.

Further Practice:

- One of the best ways to completely understand satire is to create it yourself. Follow these guidelines to create your own piece of satirical work.
- First, choose a current event that you are interested in.
- Second, decide what background research is necessary to write the piece.
- Third, choose at least one element of satire to use when writing.
- Fourth, begin writing your piece through the satirical lense that you chose.
 - If you need help finding current events, use [CNN](#) or [FOX News](#) to help you find something you may be interested in.
- Your goal is to make it comedic and yet still attack a vice or folly within the article.