

Humour

Irony, satire, and sarcasm all fall into the category of, "That's funny but I'm not sure what my English teacher wants me to call it." So let's take a look at some different types of humour.

A.

Wit

Quick and clever humor or intelligence.

Wit is a biting or insightful kind of humor. It includes sharp comebacks, clever banter, and dry, one-line jokes. It can be cynical or insulting.

Example:

A lady to Churchill :

"You, sir, are drunk."

Churchill's answer :

"You, madam, are ugly, and in the morning I shall be sober."

Oscar Wilde was very famous for his witty writings.

B.

Irony

When something happens opposite to what you expect. "It's ironic that he forgot his own birthday."

- Verbal irony: Saying the opposite of what you mean. "Nice weather we're having," said during a storm.
- Situational irony: An unexpected outcome. A fire truck catches fire.
- Dramatic irony: The audience knows something the characters don't. In Romeo and Juliet, the audience knows Juliet is alive, but Romeo doesn't.

C.

Satire

A way of criticizing people or ideas in a humorous way, especially in order to make a social or political point.

Examples: Fight Club, Animal Farm, etc.

D.

Sarcasm

A mocking or ironic remark, often meant to criticize or complain. "Oh, great! Another flat tire!"

E.

Nonsense

Words or ideas that don't make sense. "That excuse is pure nonsense."

Literary nonsense (or nonsense literature) is a category of literature which balances elements that make sense with some that do not.

It has existed since the 19th century. Intellectuals created sophisticated nonsense for political satires.

Alice in Wonderland is a good example of this literary style.

F.

The Absurd

The word "absurd" refers to something that is illogical or ridiculous. "The idea of living on Mars is absurd."

In literature, The Absurd is a style of writing that is influenced by humanity's isolation and a lack of logic in the universe. It focuses on the meaninglessness of the universe and humanity's attempts to make sense of it.

Absurdist fiction is a genre of literature that came to prominence in the 1950s and 60s. It was inspired by disillusionment with war and how things "were."

Famous writers : Kafka, Camus and Beckett.

G.

A farce

An exaggerated, silly comedy, often with impossible situations, some kind of deception or miscommunication, or cases of mistaken identity. It appeals to some of our most basic instincts, with slapstick humor and physical comedy, like people falling down or receiving pies in the face.
Ex : Molière, Shakespeare's comedies, Oscar Wilde