

## Satire: Lesson Plan

Topic	
Satire is a work that reveals flaws, absurdities, and/or vices of a person or another work. It is used especially as social, moral, or political commentary. The aim of satire is to alert the public of a problem and force a change.	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
English, Public Speaking, Politics, Government, History	30-35 minutes
Video link:	
<a href="https://academy4sc.org/topic/satire-its-no-joke/">https://academy4sc.org/topic/satire-its-no-joke/</a>	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define satire.</li> <li>• List the various functions of satire and when to best employ them.</li> <li>• Reliably identify satirical works.</li> </ul>	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
Political commentary, Parody *	
Materials Needed	
Worksheet, Student Internet Access	
Before you watch	
<b>Turn &amp; Talk:</b> How can you argue a point beyond using pure facts? What other tools can you use to make your message heard?	
While you watch	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are some tools satire uses to make a statement?</li> <li>2. When the term satire was first used, what did it exclusively refer to?</li> <li>3. What does satire teach its audience to do?</li> </ol>	

### After you watch/discussion questions

1. How does mixing comedy and criticism affect one's argument? What happens if there is an abundance of comedy? What about an abundance of criticism?
2. Does satire need to be political? Does it need to address a complex issue? What other forms of satire could there be?
3. When might it be most effective to use satire? When would it be least effective?

### Activity Ideas

- It has been observed that many young people stay up to date on current events via various satiric networks. Test how true this is for your individual class by polling students for specific ways they stay informed on politics and world events (i.e., not "newspapers" but "*The Boston Globe*"). Feel free to bring up such satirical works and groups if students are not forthcoming. Some examples of these include *The Onion*, *SNL*, *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*, *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, etc. Discuss with students how these news providers differ from traditional journalism. What are the benefits of receiving news this way? Detriments?
- Have students individually or in pairs research a satirical work. It can be anything from literature to music to a skit to any artistic expression, so long as it is a satire. In a short essay, students should explain what topic is being satirized and evaluate how effective the satire is at making its point. Be sure they provide textual evidence to strengthen their claims.
- Individually have students complete the Worksheet. Then have them review answers in small groups.

### Sources/places to learn more

1. Griffin, Dustin H. *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*. The University Press of Kentucky, 1994, ISBN: 0-813101844-1.
2. Hight, Gilbert. *Anatomy of Satire*. Princeton University Press, 1972, ISBN: 0-691-01306-3.
3. Hodgart, Matthew. *Satire: Origins and Principles*. Transaction Publishers, 2010, ISBN: 978-1-4128-1060-9.
4. Knight, Charles A. *The Literature of Satire*. Cambridge University Press, 2004, ISBN: 978-0-521-83460-5.



5. Simpson, Paul. *On the Discourse of Satire: Towards a stylistic model of satirical humour*. Queen's University Belfast, 2003, ISBN: 978-90-272-3333-2.

## Notes

Students often have trouble distinguishing between satire, parody, and irony, but the terms are not interchangeable. While satire can employ parody or irony to further its point, satire does not need to do so. Satire is defined by its function, provoking critical thought and inspiring change, which is not a defining characteristic of either parody or irony.