

Name: _____

Identifying Irony

Directions: Read the following examples of irony. Determine which of the three types of irony are being used and then explain your answer.

Dramatic irony – This occurs when the reader or audience understands more about the events of a story than a character.
Situational irony – This occurs when what actually happens is the opposite of what is expected or appropriate.
Verbal irony – A character says one thing but really means the opposite.

1. A mean old man ate a large meal at a restaurant. The waitress tried to provide him with excellent service, but every time she brought him a dish, he complained. First he thought that the soup was too cold when it was hot. Then he said that his steak was dry and chewy, when it was moist and succulent. Then he complained that one of her blonde hairs was in his mashed potatoes, but the hair was actually grey like his own. She remained patient and continued to try to help him until the end of the meal, when he left her a quarter for a tip. She replied on his way out, “Thank you for the generous tip, Mister.”

Which type of irony is used? _____

Explain your answer:

2. Tom has always liked Lucy, but Lucy has always thought Tom was annoying and unattractive. One day, Lucy comes home to find an eviction notice on her door. Apparently, her roommate had been spending the rent money that Lucy was giving her on other things. Lucy only has 24 hours to get all her stuff over to her mom’s house, and Lucy doesn’t even have a car. But Tom has a truck. So Lucy calls up Tom and asks him how he’s doing. She tells him that she’s always thought he was funny, and that they should hang out sometime. Tom thinks that Lucy has finally come around is beginning to like her. He also thinks that his jokes are funny because she is laughing after everything that he says.

Which type of irony is used? _____

Explain your answer:

3. The rapper Eminem is well-known for his song writing ability, but he is equally known for his shockingly profane and obscene lyrical content. Eminem has made a fortune selling his curse filled songs to millions of children around the world. But, on a 60 Minutes interview, Eminem claimed that there was no swearing in his own home and that his children were not allowed to play music with curse words, including his own tracks.

Which type of irony is used? _____

Explain your answer:

4. When Lawrence saw the posters for the circus hanging on the bulletin board, as he swept up the trimmings at Slim's Barbershop, he knew he would be taking his little cousins. They loved animals, and he was looking forward to seeing the smiles on their faces as the circus performers amazed them with their stunts. But sweeping up hair clippings didn't pay a whole lot. Lawrence spent 45 dollars just getting tickets. But it was worth it to see his cousins' faces. The day finally came and everyone was excited as they walked into that big circus tent. But Lawrence soon realized that he and his cousins would be thirsty and hungry. As they sat in their seats, the drink vendor walked by selling beverages. Desperately thirsty, Lawrence asked him how much a lemonade would cost, and the drink vendor said, "Eleven dollars each." Lawrence replied, "Oh, that's it? Just eleven dollars? What a great deal for one cup of lemonade. That's totally worth it." The drink vendor walked away.

Which type of irony is used? _____

Explain your answer:

5. Mr. Reinhart is the building inspector for the entire county. Anytime a person wants to add a permanent structure to their home or property, such as a deck or balcony, the building plans need to be approved by Mr. Reinhart before construction can begin. Mr. Reinhart checks to see that each plan is safe before construction begins. Once building begins, he checks to see that construction is going according to the plan. In a way, he is responsible for ensuring that every structure in the county is built properly. One day Mr. Reinhart was having a party at his house. He and his three guests were barbecuing on the porch attached to his house, when the structure suddenly collapsed. Apparently, termites got into the wood and had been chewing away the support beams for several months.

Which type of irony is used? _____

Explain your answer:

6. Mr. Bath is the president of Make-A-Bath Industries, a small company that employs fifteen workers, including Tom Miller, father of six. Ever since the economy went down the tubes, Make-A-Bath hasn't been selling bath tubs like they once did, and now Mr. Bath has to fire three workers, one of whom will be Tom Miller. But Mr. Bath has never fired anyone before, so he has been delaying giving Tom and the other employees the bad news. But Christmas is approaching. Tom wants to buy nice gifts for his six children, but he doesn't have any money. So Tom charges a whole bunch of nice gifts on his credit card, figuring that he can pay it back with money from his checks that he will be getting from his job all year. Tom and his family don't have a lot of extra money to spend, so he likes to get his kids nice Christmas presents. Tom is looking forward to one of the best Christmases ever.

Which type of irony is used? _____

Explain your answer: