

7 SATIRE TECHNIQUES WITH TIPS

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Satire is a writing style that often educates and entertains its readers. You might write satire if you work for newspapers or media outlets, create your own fiction or nonfiction writing, or simply want to add elements of exaggeration and humor into your professional writing. Knowing the most effective satire techniques can help connect you with your readers or gain a new audience that enjoys that style of writing.

In this article, we discuss what satire is and who uses it, and we list seven techniques and tips for using this style of writing effectively.

What is satire?

Satire is the use of literary devices such as humor, exaggeration, or irony to criticize someone or something educationally. Public figures, politicians, political groups, prominent philosophies, and popular culture are some of the most common targets of satire. Satire is a way to provide social commentary, and you can use satire in various [literary genres](#) such as comics, novels, short stories, poetry, and humorous news articles or essays.

Here are the three main types of satire:

1. **Horatian:** Horatian is satire aimed at flaws in humans rather than societal issues. Its primary goal is often to entertain based on relatable topics rather than to educate on larger issues.
2. **Juvenalian:** Juvenalian satire is often political satire used to expose flaws, injustices or other problems in a society or group of people. It's often more serious in tone than Horatian satire.
3. **Menippean:** Menippean satire is writing that targets people's attitudes. It's similar to Horatian satire, as it's focused on an individual, but its serious tone is more similar to Juvenalian satire.

Who uses satire?

[Professional writers](#) in any genre might use satire. If you're a professional writer, consider using satire to comment on relevant topics using techniques such as parody. Satire provides your audience with information often disguised as entertainment or silly content. Newspaper writers might include a satire section, and comic writers, essayists, and novelists are some of the most common professionals to use satire.

7 satire techniques

Satire techniques are strategies professional writers use to incorporate satire into their work. Here are seven techniques to consider when writing satire:

1. Exaggeration

Exaggeration entails making a situation or person look better or worse than they are by overstating or understating certain characteristics beyond reality. Exaggeration typically considers a person's or situation's real characteristics and makes them seem ridiculous or far-fetched. For example, consider the constantly increasing size of cell phones. When employing satire, you might write about a future version of a phone that requires both hands to carry.

Here are a few common examples of exaggeration:

- **Caricature:** Caricature is the exaggeration of physical characteristics. For example, if you describe someone as tall, you might compare them to a tree or a building.
- **Burlesque:** Burlesque exaggeration is the exaggeration of language. This might include creating new words based on how someone from a particular city pronounces them.
- **Overstating and understating:** These techniques either increase or decrease a person, object, or idea's size or significance. Understating the effects of something can show a character's deception, while overstating can highlight a person's desires in relation to reality.

2. Incongruity

Incongruity is an often absurd method of satire where you present something unexpected into an otherwise normal scene or story. Comic writers commonly use this style where the actions of characters in a scene might seem normal, but the caption displays incongruity. In writing, you might write a story about a baby as the CEO of a company. They might wear a suit or hold a phone but still babble when communicating. Because these things are impossible or incongruous, this situation is satirical.

3. Reversal

Reversal is a type of satire that switches the positions of two things or people. This can be effective to highlight absurdities in human actions or behaviors. For example, a story of a life-size dog walking a human on a leash is a reversal. Reversal often exposes problematic qualities in situations or characteristics that we view as normal.

4. Parody

Parody in satire is the act of imitating either a person or an original work. In writing, you might mimic the chapter structure, setting, or main characters in a particular work but alter other

elements. If your reader recognizes the original work in your writing, the parody you employ might be more effective. Parodies often mock common conventions in literature and style. For example, in a parody article, you might write the headline "Major Celebrity Eats Lunch." Though this isn't an authentic article, it mimics the absurdity of celebrity culture and paparazzi emphasizing mundane activities.

5. Irony

Irony is satire that compares what someone actually means with their language against what they actually say or do. Here are the four main types of irony:

- **Verbal:** Verbal irony is when the meaning of what someone says is the opposite of the intended message. For instance, if it's expected to rain in the forecast, satirically saying that there's a beautiful weekend ahead is an example of verbal irony.
- **Dramatic:** Dramatic irony is when a situation occurs despite what a character knows. For example, if a character ends a relationship to be with someone else and that other person is in a relationship with another person, that's a situation that features dramatic irony.
- **Situational:** Situational irony is the difference between what people expect to happen and what actually happens. For example, you might write a story where a man walks to work only to find his office permanently closed.
- **Socratic:** Socratic irony is when a person pretends to be ignorant for personal gain. This reveals information to the audience through one character tricking another character.

Consider using irony in your writing to explain contradictory ideas and to make your writing more appealing to audiences.

6. Anachronism

Anachronism is a type of satire that places people or objects in other periods of time. For example, including cars in a story about dinosaurs is an example of anachronism. This could show philosophical differences or behavioral differences between people and time periods, adding a silly and entertaining element to your writing.

7. Malapropism

Malapropism is the intentional mispronunciation or misuse of a word by a writer. For example, a character might say that the class should rent a "liberty book." Liberty almost sounds like library, so the reader knows the intent. This creates entertaining content and can often reflect real mispronunciations made by public figures.

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