

# TEN STEPS TO ADVANCING COLLEGE READING SKILLS

Fifth Edition

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# Chapter One:

## Vocabulary in Context

Do you know the meaning of the word *ubiquitous*?

Look at the sentence below and see if the **context**—the words surrounding the unfamiliar word—helps you figure out the meaning of the word.

Cell phones have become *ubiquitous*; you can see—and hear—they everywhere.

What does *ubiquitous* mean?

**A.** unaffordable

**B.** complicated

**C.** widespread

## VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

If the phones are “everywhere,” they must be *widespread*.

The **context** helps you figure out that *ubiquitous* means “widespread.”

Cell phones have become *ubiquitous*; you can see—and hear—they *everywhere*.

What does *ubiquitous* mean?

**A.** unaffordable

**B.** complicated

**C.** widespread

## VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Using context clues will help you by

- **saving you time** when reading
- **adding to your vocabulary**

# VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

There are four common types of context clues:

- 1 Examples
- 2 Synonyms
- 3 Antonyms
- 4 General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Examples

Look at the cartoon below. What do you think the word *adverse* means?



*Adverse* means

- A.** known.
- B.** pleasant.
- C.** harmful.

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Examples

Look at the sentences below and see if the examples help you understand the meaning of the word *tribulations*.

As they moved westward, early pioneers faced many *tribulations*, such as scarce food, extreme weather, and loneliness.

*Tribulations* means

- A.** criminals.                      **B.** hard decisions.                      **C.** great difficulties.

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Examples

Look at the sentences below and see if the examples help you understand the meaning of the word *idiosyncrasy*.

Each of my coworkers has a strange *idiosyncrasy*. For instance, our receptionist wears only pink. The mail clerk always speaks in a whisper. And my office mate lives on peanuts and apples.

*Idiosyncrasy* means

**A.** hidden thought.    **B.** unusual goal.    **C.** unusual personal trait.



# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Examples

Examples are often introduced with **signal words and phrases** like *for example, for instance, including, and such as*.

### *Examples*

As they moved westward, early pioneers faced many *tribulations*, **such as** scarce food, extreme weather, and loneliness.

Each of my coworkers has a strange *idiosyncrasy*. **For instance**, our receptionist wears only pink. The mail clerk always speaks in a whisper. And my office mate lives on peanuts and apples.

## TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

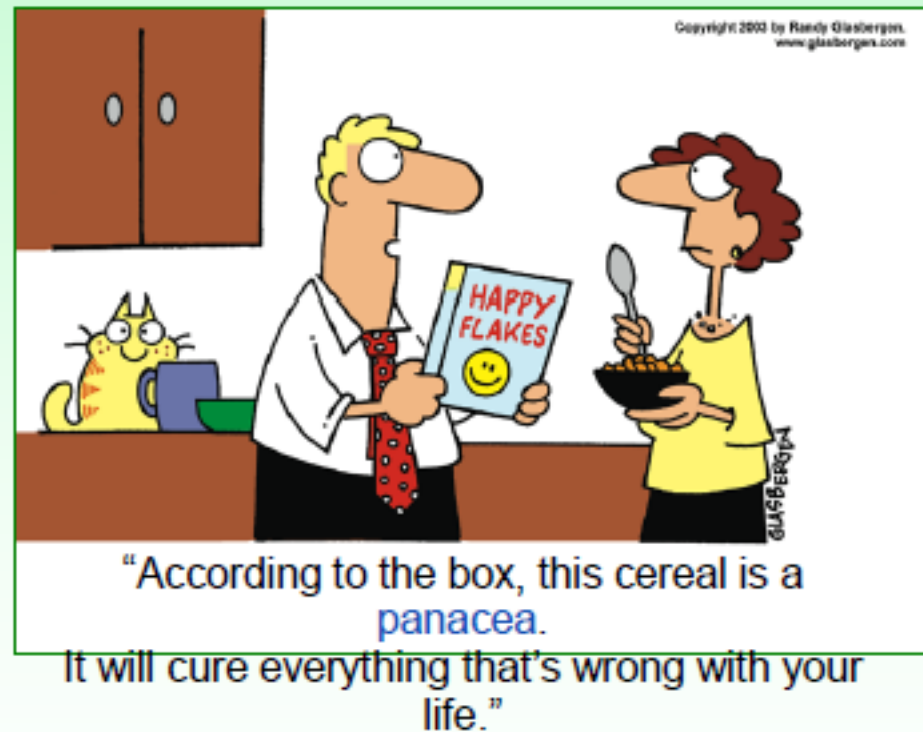
### Synonyms

Context clues are often found in the form of **synonyms**: one or more words that mean **the same** or **almost the same** as the unknown word.

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Synonyms

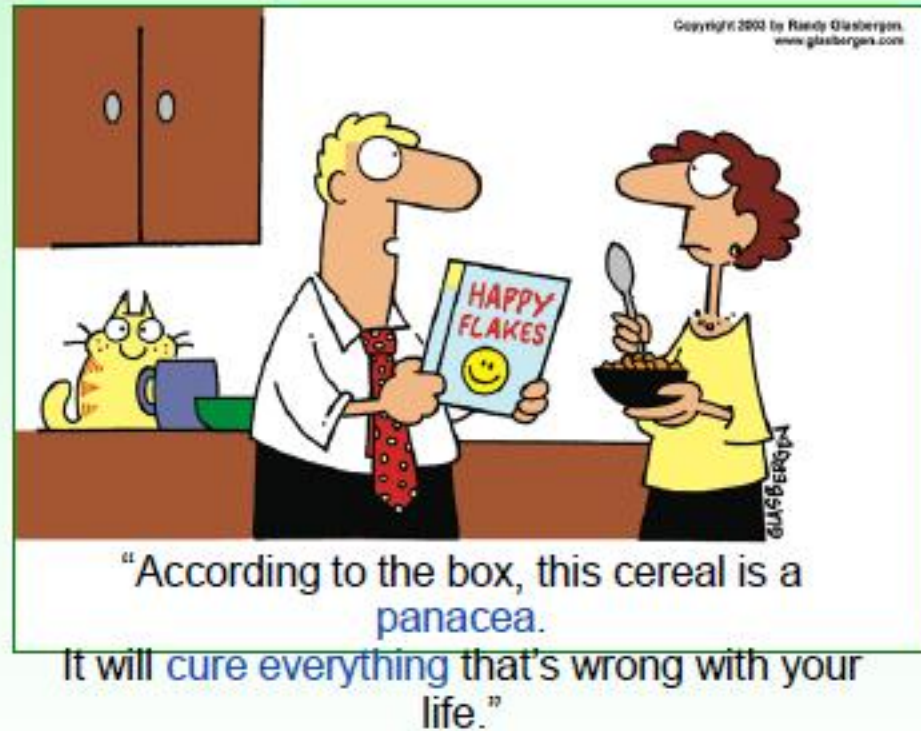
Look at the cartoon below. What words help you understand what *panacea* means?



# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Synonyms

Look at the cartoon below. What words help you understand what *panacea* means?



The **synonym** that helps you understand the word *panacea* is "cure everything."

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Synonyms

In the sentences below, what is the **synonym** that tells you the meaning of the word *innate*?

That five-year-old girl must have *innate* musical talent; playing the piano so well at her age requires an inborn gift.

## TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

### Synonyms

In the sentences below, what is the **synonym** that tells you the meaning of the word *mentor*?

Gaining a *mentor* is helpful when you are beginning a new job. A wise and trusted advisor can greatly assist your career.

## TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

### Antonyms

**Antonyms** are words or phrases that mean the **opposite** of a word.

Antonyms are also useful as context clues.



# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Antonyms

Look at the cartoon below. What words help you understand what *indolent* means?





# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Antonyms

Look at the cartoon below. What words help you understand what *indolent* means?



The **antonym** *hard work* helps you figure out that the word *indolent* means "lazy."

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Antonyms

In the sentence below,

1. What is the **antonym** that helps you figure out the meaning of the word *verbose*?
2. What is the meaning of *verbose*?

A memo that is brief and to the point is more likely to be read than one that is *verbose* and rambling.

*Verbose* means

- A.** argumentative.      **B.** wordy.      **C.** short.

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Antonyms

In the sentence below,

1. What is the **antonym** that helps you figure out the meaning of the word *bizarre*?
2. What is the meaning of *bizarre*?

Most of my friends' mothers seemed ordinary; mine, however, did such *bizarre* things as spraying green paint on a dead tree in front of our house.

*Bizarre* means

**A.** odd.

**B.** easy.

**C.** dangerous.

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## Antonyms

Antonyms are sometimes signaled by words such as *however, but, yet, on the other hand,* and *in contrast*.

### *Example*

Most of my friends' mothers seemed ordinary; mine, **however**, did such *bizarre* things as spraying green paint on a dead tree in front of our house.

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

- Sometimes, to figure out an unfamiliar word, you must **draw conclusions** based on the information given.
- **Asking yourself questions** can help you make an accurate guess about the meaning of the unfamiliar word.

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

Look at the cartoon below. To understand the meaning of *opportune*, ask yourself: Is this a good time for the boss to tell the injured worker that he's been fired?



# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

Read the sentence below. Then think about the question that follows to figure out the meaning of *rectified*.

One argument against capital punishment is that if an innocent person is executed, the mistake cannot be *rectified*.

(What cannot be done about a mistake as final as an execution?)

*Rectified* means

**A.** remembered.

**B.** predicted.

**C.** corrected.

# TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES

## General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

Read the sentence below. Then think about the question that follows to figure out the meaning of *extricate*.

It took two days for volunteers to *extricate* the little girl from the bottom of the well.

(How would volunteers try to help the trapped girl?)

*Extricate* means

**A.** free.

**B.** delay.

**C.** remember.



## TEXTBOOK DEFINITIONS

- Textbook authors often provide definitions of important terms, followed by examples.
- They usually set off the terms they are defining in *italic* or **boldface** type.

### *Example*

In all societies there is some **vertical mobility**—moving up or down the status ladder. The upward movement is called *upward mobility* and the downward movement, *downward mobility*. The promotion of a teacher to the position of principal is an example of upward mobility, and demotion from principal to teacher is downward mobility.

## CHAPTER REVIEW

In this chapter, you learned the following:

- To save time when reading, you should try to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words. You can do so by looking at their *context*—the words surrounding them.
- There are four kinds of context clues: **examples** (marked by words like *for example*, *for instance*, *including*, and *such as*); **synonyms** (words that mean the same as unknown words); **antonyms** (words that mean the opposite of unknown words); and **general sense of the sentence** (clues in the sentence or surrounding sentences about what words might mean).
- Textbook authors typically set off important words in *italic* or **boldface** and define those words for you, often providing examples as well.

## Chapter Eight

# Purpose and Tone

There is an **author**—a person with thoughts, feelings, and opinions—behind everything you read.

Authors write from a **personal point of view**.

That point of view is reflected in

- the **purpose** of a piece of writing—to inform, to persuade, or to entertain—and
- its **tone** — the expression of **attitude** and **feeling**.

# PURPOSE AND TONE



The **purpose** of this cartoon, like all cartoons, is to entertain.

Can you tell what the **tone** of each speaker is? Which one actually means what he or she is saying? Which one does not?



# PURPOSE AND TONE



The man means what he is saying. He is asking the woman to go on an errand with him, so we can assume he enjoys and desires her company.

The woman does not mean what she is saying. Few people would consider a trip to drugstore a "fun date," so we can infer she is being sarcastic, saying the opposite of what she means.

# PURPOSE

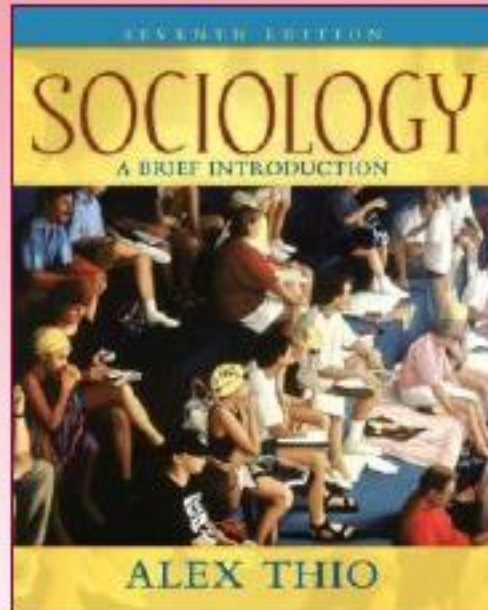
Three common **purposes** (reasons for writing) are:

- To **inform** — to give **information** about a subject.
- To **persuade** — to **convince** the reader to agree with the author's point of view on a subject.
- To **entertain** — to **amuse** and **delight**; to appeal to the reader's senses and imagination.



# PURPOSE

The cover and title of anything you read often suggest the author's primary purpose. What do you think is the main purpose of each of these books?



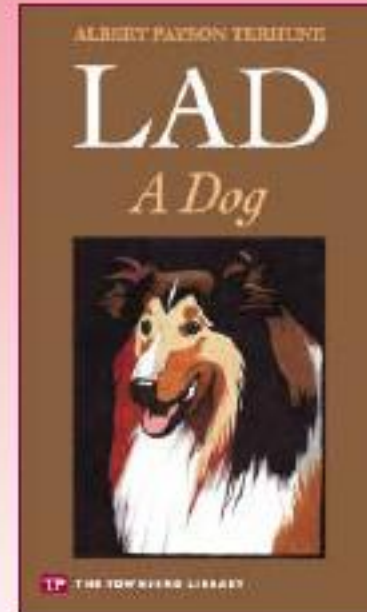
Primary purpose:

- A.** to inform
- B.** to persuade
- C.** to entertain



Primary purpose:

- A.** to inform
- B.** to persuade
- C.** to entertain



Primary purpose:

- A.** to inform
- B.** to persuade
- C.** to entertain

## PURPOSE

Read the paragraph below and decide what the author's **purpose** is.

Athletes should not earn millions of dollars a year. If they weren't paid so much, then tickets to sports events wouldn't have to be so expensive, and more people could enjoy sports more often. Also, more reasonable pay would make for better role models for young people, many of whom look up to sports figures.

Primary purpose:

- A. to inform
- B. to persuade
- C. to entertain



## PURPOSE

Read the paragraph below and decide what the author's **purpose** is.

The Bubonic plague, also called the Black Death, swept Europe, Asia, and Africa from 1346 to 1353. So deadly was this disease that it killed one-third of the population of these continents. The plague was spread by fleas infected with bacteria from diseased rats. When it resulted in pneumonia, coughing spread the bacteria directly through the air.

Primary purpose:

- A. to inform
- B. to persuade
- C. to entertain

## PURPOSE

Read the paragraph below and decide what the author's **purpose** is.

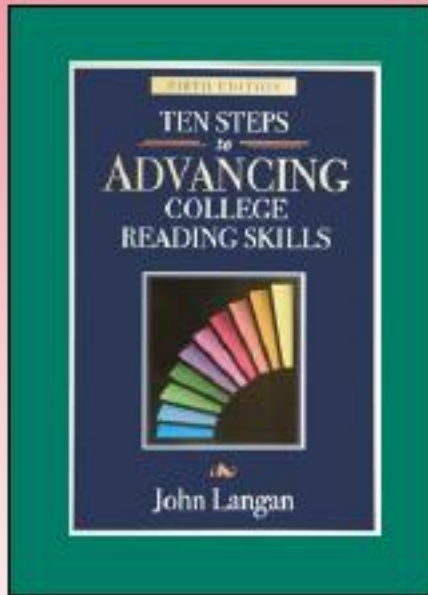
Men don't even notice 97 percent of the beauty efforts women make. For example, the average woman spends five thousand hours per year worrying about her fingernails. But I have never once, in more than forty years of listening to men talk about women, heard a man say, "She has a nice set of fingernails!" Many men would not notice if a woman had upward of four hands.

Primary purpose:

- A. to inform
- B. to persuade
- C. to entertain

# WRITING WITH MORE THAN ONE PURPOSE

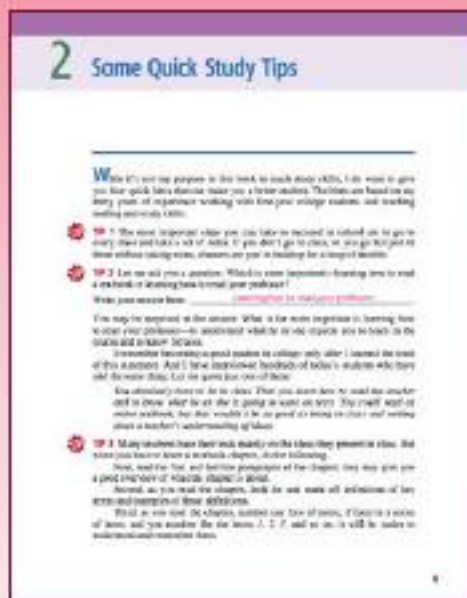
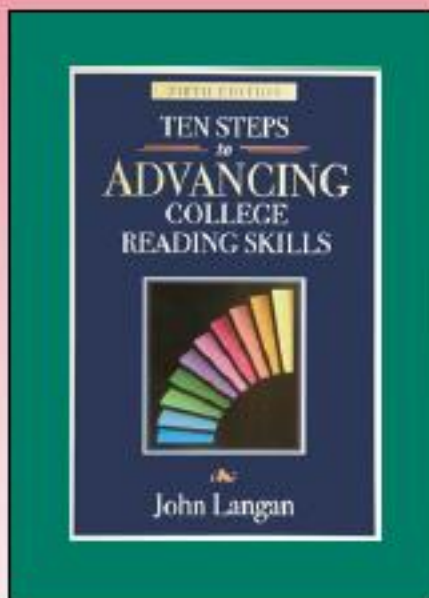
At times writing may blend two or even three purposes.



The main purpose of your textbook for this course is to inform.

# WRITING WITH MORE THAN ONE PURPOSE

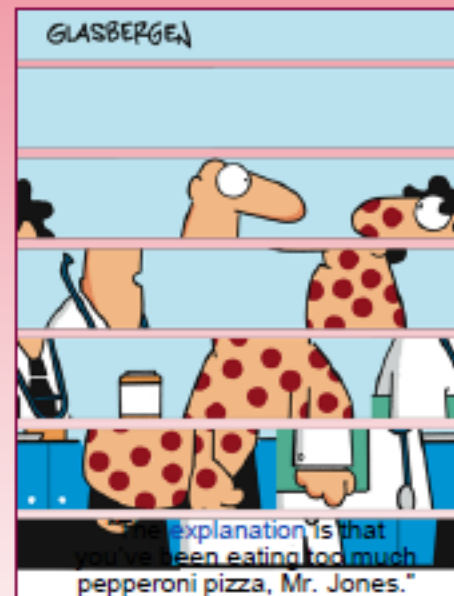
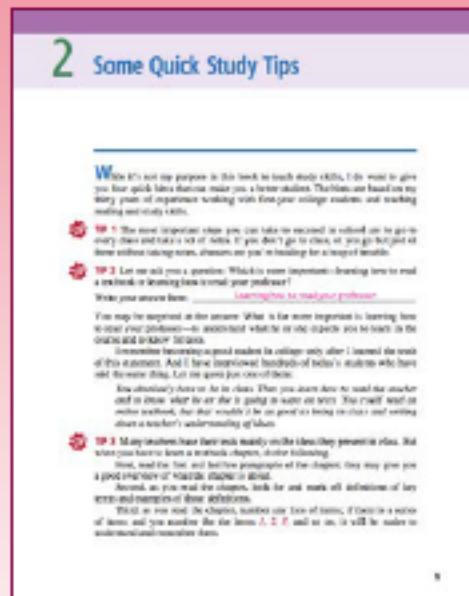
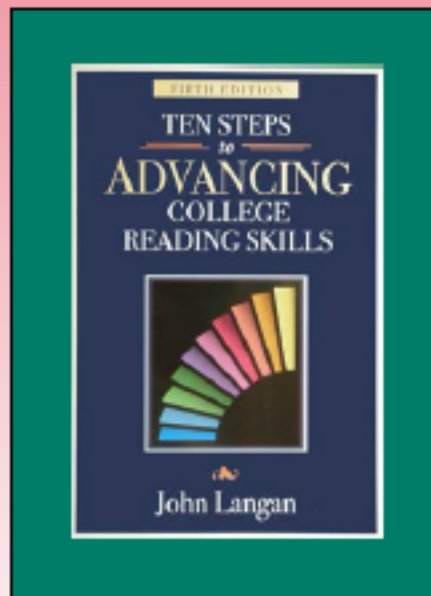
At times writing may blend two or even three purposes.



The main purpose of your textbook for this course is to inform. But the purpose of "Some Quick Study Tips" on pages 9 and 10 is to inform and to persuade.

# WRITING WITH MORE THAN ONE PURPOSE

At times writing may blend two or even three purposes.



The main purpose of your textbook for this course is to inform. But the purpose of "Some Quick Study Tips" on pages 9 and 10 is to inform and to persuade. And the purpose of the cartoons in the book is to inform and to entertain.



# TONE

- A writer's **tone** reveals the **attitude** he or she has toward a subject.
- Tone is expressed through the **words** and **details** the writer selects.

# TONE

Below are three statements by employees of a fast-food restaurant. Notice the differences in tone.

“I have no doubt that flipping burgers and toasting buns will prepare me for a top position on Wall Street.”

*Tone: mocking, sarcastic*

“I love working at Burger Barn. I meet interesting people, earn extra money, and get to eat all the chicken nuggets I want when I go on break.”

*Tone: enthusiastic, positive*

“I’m not excited about wearing fluorescent green polyester uniforms, but the managers are willing to schedule me around my classes, and the company offers scholarships to hard-working employees.”

*Tone: fair-minded, objective*

## TONE

Here is another statement by an employee of a fast-food restaurant. How would you describe the **tone**?

"I hate this job. The customers are rude, the managers are idiots, and the food smells like dog chow."



# TONE

What is the **tone** of each of the following statements?

Unfortunately, this car is a lot less reliable than I'd like.

The tone is: **A.** optimistic **B.** disappointed **C.** caring

It's not the greatest car in the world, but it usually takes me where I have to go.

The tone is: **A.** angry **B.** humorous **C.** tolerant

# TONE

## A Note on Irony

- One commonly used tone is **irony**.
- When writing has an **ironic** tone, it says one thing but means the opposite.

# TONE

## A Note on Irony

Below are three examples of **verbal irony** (also known as **sarcasm**).

Notice the quotation in each says the opposite of what is meant.

- If the price tag on a shirt you like is double what you'd expect, you might mutter, "What a bargain."
- After sitting through the first session of what is clearly going to be a very boring class, you say to a classmate, "I only hope you can stand all the excitement."
- After seeing your favorite basketball team play its worst game ever, you might comment, "I knew they wouldn't disappoint me."

# TONE

## A Note on Irony

**Irony** also refers to situations in which what happens is the **opposite** of what we might expect.

In the cartoon below, it is **ironic** that the father who expects his son to clean his room permits himself to have a very messy environment.





# TONE

## A Note on Irony

Here are two more examples of situations in which what happens is the **opposite** of what we might expect.

- A doctor tells a man that he'd better exercise if he wants to stay healthy. So the man begins jogging. One day while jogging across the street, he is hit by a truck and dies instantly.
- A woman loved dancing, but her boyfriend did not dance well. So she insisted he take dancing lessons. After he started taking lessons, he fell in love with his dancing teacher.

# TONE

## A Note on Irony

Look at the cartoon below. Then decide whether the quotation is **straightforward** or **ironic** (in which what is said is sarcastically the opposite of what is really meant).



1. "If we know our senior executive is making a bad decision, shouldn't we tell her?"

**A.** straightforward

**B.** ironic



# TONE

## A Note on Irony

Look at the cartoon below. Then decide whether the quotation is **straightforward** or **ironic** (in which what is said is sarcastically the opposite of what is really meant).



2. "Let's end our careers by challenging a decision that won't change. That's a great idea."

A. straightforward

B. ironic

# TONE

## A Note on Irony

Look at the cartoon below. Then decide whether the quotation is **straightforward** or **ironic** (in which what is said is sarcastically the opposite of what is really meant).



3. "And let's pull our neckties until it hurts."

A. straightforward

B. ironic

## CHAPTER REVIEW

In this chapter, you learned that part of effective reading is to do the following:

- Be aware of an author's **purpose**: the reason he or she writes. Three common purposes are to inform, to persuade, and to entertain.
- Be aware of **tone**: the expression of the author's attitude and feeling about the subject. A writer's tone might be objective—the case in most textbook writing—or it might be lighthearted, sympathetic, angry, affectionate, respectful, or any of many other tones.
- One important tone to recognize is **irony**: saying one thing but meaning the opposite.