

Critical Analysis and Interpretation of Texts



Academic, or critical, reading is very different from everyday reading.

Whilst studying at University you will read a large number of texts and publications, requiring your concentration and good understanding.

Academic reading introduces you to new ideas and enables you to think about them in a different way. You will need to grasp main ideas, theories, key themes and arguments.

Once you have understood these ideas, you can express yourself in essays and exams.

Myth about Academic Reading

Myth	Reality
You have to read everything	No – be selective!
You have to read every word in a text	No – read the important bits first
You should read everything at the same speed in the same way	No – choose a reading strategy that matches the type of text and matches the purpose for reading
Reading a text once is enough	No – read important bits first, then re-read again more slowly

- Academic reading is all about being selective, there is no need to read every text on a subject.
- Reading a text just once is not enough, you will need to read the important bits first, then re-read these sections more slowly.
- Academic reading is more than just recognising words on a page. It requires concentration on a deeper level, and you will need to understand the meaning of what the author is trying to say and think about the main theories and concepts.

Being Critical

As you are reading have the following types of question in mind:

- What evidence is used and how credible is it?
- Can you see any bias in the author's work - what is opinion?
- How has the conclusion been reached?
- Are there any other points of view out there?
- Are you satisfied with the evidence in the conclusion ?

For every article/essay, regardless of the mode, consider the broad categories of content, organization, style, and correctness.

Content: Consider the topic (its appropriateness and interest for the assignment as well as a clear focus suitable to essay length) and the way the topic is developed (clarity/sufficiency of its argument, its scope, subcategories, amount and type of examples, anecdotes, evidence, etc.).

Organization: Consider how the essay is introduced and concluded (especially looking for a “frame” to the essay, where the intro and conclusion refer to the same idea), whether the thesis is located in the most helpful place (direct or implied), how the essay is structured, whether the order or extent of development is successful, as well as how individual paragraphs are organized (clear topic sentences, appropriate and concrete evidence, logical organization of evidence).

Style: Style can refer to the overall style of an essay: whether the tone is appropriate (humorous, serious, reflective, satirical, etc.), whether you use sufficient and appropriate variety (factual, analytical, evaluative, reflective), whether you use sufficient creativity. Style can also refer to the style of individual sentences: whether you use a variety of sentences styles and lengths, whether sentences are worded clearly, and whether word choice is interesting and appropriate.

Correctness: Correctness refers to grammar, punctuation, and form of the essay. You do not need to know the exact grammatical term or rule to know when a sentence is not correct. Even though you may not know the term dangling modifier, you could identify that the following sentence is not correct

Personal Perspective: refers to the individual response to the discussion.-Agree or Disagree. Did they like the style of writing? Has the writer done justice to the topic?

CRITIQUE GUIDELINES

Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic• Main Idea (argument)• Supporting Details (examples, anecdotes, evidence)
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patterns (Cause and Effect, Comparison and Contrast etc)• Transitions/Connectors
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing style (factual, analytical, descriptive, formal/informal)• Purpose (to persuade, inform, entertain)• Tone (humorous, serious, reflective, satirical, etc.)
Correctness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spellings• Grammar• Punctuation
Personal Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree or Disagree• Suggestions

Humor, Satire & Irony

Humor

comes in many different styles, forms and types

Satire

- technique employed by writers to expose the vices or follies of an individual, a group, an institution, an idea, a society, etc., usually with a view to correcting it.
- is a literary manner which blends humor with criticism for the purpose of instruction or the improvement of humanity

- Ninety percent of the politicians give the other ten percent a bad reputation.
 - (exaggeration to highlight the vices of politicians.)
- When I was a boy, I was told that anybody could become President. Now I'm beginning to believe it.
 - (humor to allude that the current President has no talent.)



- (irony to attack the idea of censorship)

The necessary ingredients

- Humor
- Criticism,
 - either general criticism of humanity or human nature or specific criticism of an individual or group.
 - Some kind of moral voice: mocking or criticism is not "satire."
 - Sarcasm is not a manner in which satire is presented as it is usually spiteful
- Satirists frequently use irony

Satire

- Exaggeration-overstates an obvious problem.
- Reversal puts an opposite idea in another's place,
" ...Alcohol the cause of and solution to all of life's problems"
- Incongruity is when somebody says something that doesn't make any sense, even though they think it's right
- parody makes fun of something... a work of literature that mimics another work of literature, usually as a way of criticizing it

Irony

- irony (n.) - incongruity between what is expected and what actually occurs;
- an often indirect contradiction between the surface meaning and the underlying meaning.
- The use of a word or phrase to mean the exact opposite of its literal or expressed meaning.
- is the discrepancy between
 - what is said and what is meant,
 - what is said and what is done,
 - what is expected or intended and what happens,

Types of Irony

- Verbal-
 - The writer says one thing and means another
- Dramatic-
 - The reader sees a character's errors, but the character does not
- Situational-
 - The purpose of a particular action differs greatly from the result

Verbal Irony

- occurs when a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite...
- crudest form _ *sarcasm*,
- In conversation, the speaker intends to be understood as meaning something that *contrasts with* the literal or usual meaning of what he says.
- It is easy to stop smoking. I've done it many times.
- "Marriage is the chief cause of divorce."
- "I never forget a face, but in your case I'll be glad to make an exception."
- That is just what I needed. (i.e., It isn't.)
- I am so glad it has started raining. (i.e., I'm not.)

Situational Irony

- occurs when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect –
- Example:
- You wash your car and it rains.
- A deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub.
- Ali arrived late to chair a town-planning meeting due to the roads being grid locked with traffic.

Dramatic Irony

- occurs when a character or speaker says or does something that has a different meaning for the reader than they do for the characters.
- “a detective does not know that the criminal responsible for the crimes in the city is his partner”.
- The audience however is already aware of this fact and waits anxiously to know what will happen once the character finds out what they already know.
- In Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare Romeo finds Juliet in a drugged state and he thinks she is dead. He kills himself. When Juliet wakes up she finds Romeo dead and kills herself.

Why does the author use irony...

- to make fun of social conventions or conditions, usually to evoke change.
- to make characters seem foolish or pathetic
- writers often use* to make readers think about something or to emphasize a point in the story



The word 'school' is misspelled in a school zone.

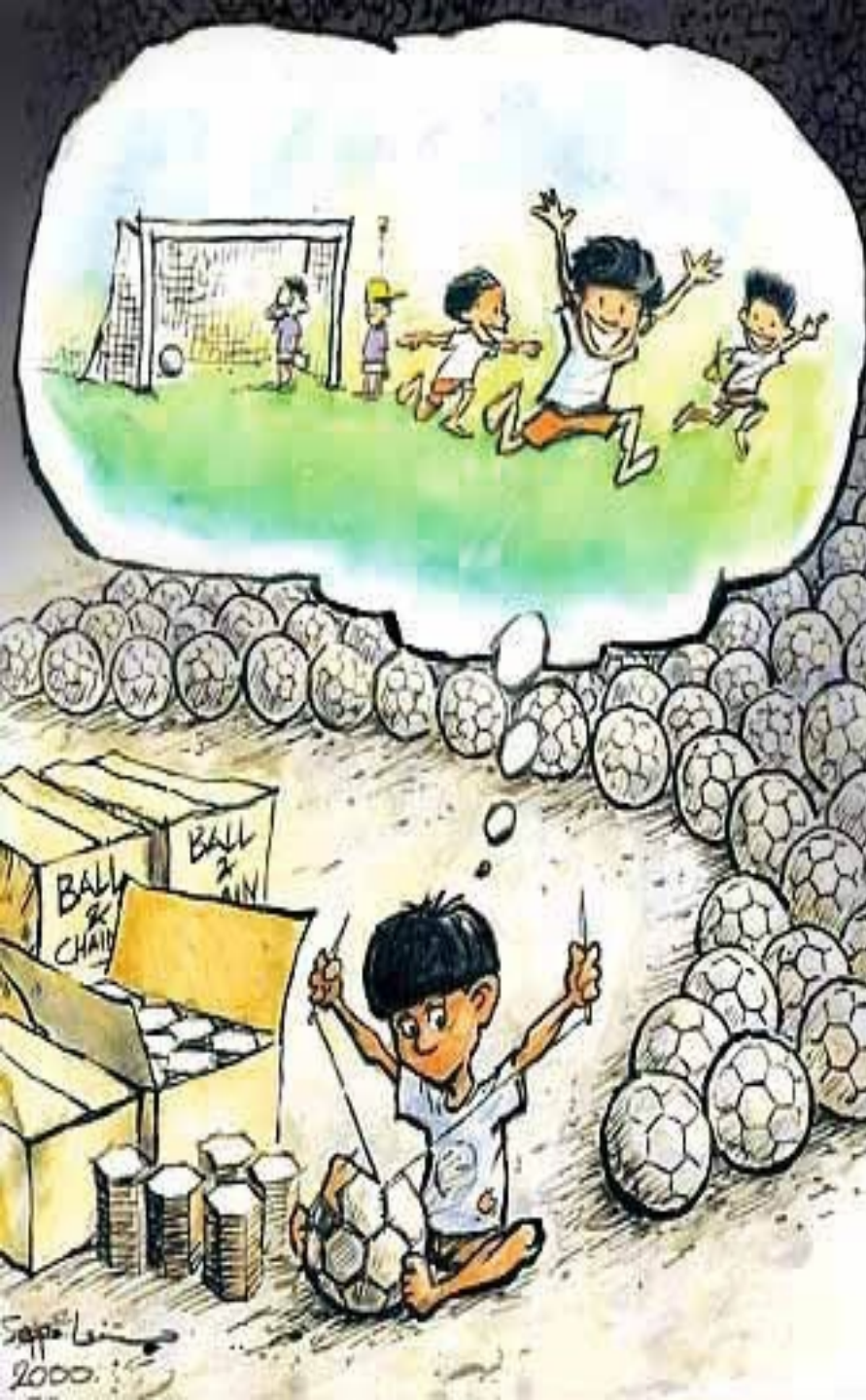
A guy wearing a 'Peace Team' t-shirt is part of a violent altercation.



Identify!



Law Enforcement



BAAP RE BAAP

WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?

I'M LOOKING FOR
PEACE AND PROSPERITY!



Identify the irony type

Verbal - Dramatic –Situational irony

1. In real life, an ambulance comes to a woman' s house to take her to the hospital, hopefully to save her life. On the way to the hospital the ambulance is hit by a semi truck and everyone on board the ambulance is killed.

- **Situational irony**

2. A movie you are watching shows a woman jogging in the woods. The next scene shows a mountain tiger lying in wait down the path where the woman is jogging.

1. **Dramatic irony**

- 3: James, who has campaigned for years against the Dangerous Dogs Act, was hospitalized after a vicious attack by his neighbor's dog.

Situational irony