

Insulting Comparisons: Guidelines

Insults and Comparisons

A **comparison** is the act of evaluating two or more things by determining the relevant characteristics of each thing to be compared, and then determining which characteristics of each are similar to the other, which are different, and to what degree.

An **insult** is an expression or statement (or sometimes behaviour) which is disrespectful or scornful.

An insult may be accurate, but at the same time abusive, such as the word *inbred*.

Explicit vs. Implicit Insults

Insults can be divided into explicit and implicit insults.

Explicit insults are insults in which individual words themselves have an (unambiguously) offensive nature. Examples are:

- *You are the ugliest person I've ever seen.*
- *Shut up, you beaner.*
- *Go lick a pig you piece of scum.*

[You find a large example list of insulting words here](#). Note that this list may not be exhaustive.

Implicit insults do not contain insulting words but are still perceived as insults.

Examples are:

- **Irony:** *It took you 5 minutes to solve this simple exercise. Your intelligence is so breathtaking!!!!!!*
- **Negative Stereotypes:**
 - *I haven't had an intelligent conversation with a woman in my whole life.*
 - *Muslims marry children all the time.*
 - *All gay people have HIV.*
- **Jokes:** *Why aren't there any Mexicans on Star Trek? Because they do not work in the future either.* (Note that this joke also includes a racist stereotype.)
- **Comparisons**

- *Your car looks as if a child had designed it.*
- *With your mouth open you look as intelligent as you are.*
- *With your weight you have to take 3 seats at the cinema.*
- *You look like a toad.*
- *Your drawings have the charm of a car crash.*
- *Your mouth reminds me of a fish.*
- *You eat like a pig.*

This survey only deals with implicitly insulting comparisons.

Negative Expressions which are not Insults

It is important that you are aware of the fact that not all comments that are negative are automatically insults. Typically, negative statements that are directed against inanimate things are not insults:

- *This car looks horrible.*
- *The food is rotten.*

The situation is, however, different if these things are related in some way to a person you address. They are likely to be perceived as insults:

- *The car you designed looks horrible.*
- *The food you prepared for us is rotten.*

Even negative remarks that are directed towards a person or a group of persons need not be an insult:

- *You had a lot of bad luck recently.*
- *The situation must have been very painful for you.*
- *You failed in the exam.*

Often it is a matter of perception of whether a remark is an insult or not. You should always ask yourself whether you imagine the addressed person to perceive the remark as an insult. You may be hardened, therefore you should imagine how a sensitive person might react. In many cases, it is the wording of the remark that makes it insulting. The underlying fact may not be that decisive.

Instead of *You failed in the exam.* one could say *You moron failed in the exam.* or *I am not surprised that you failed in the exam at all.*

The latter two remarks are more likely to be perceived as an insult than the first.

The first of these two remarks includes the insulting word *moron*. In the second remark, the speaker of the utterance already anticipated failure which may suggest that (s)he considers the addressee to be of low intelligence.

Some facts are always perceived as an insult:

- *You are silly.*
- *You are fat.*
- *You are arrogant.*
- *You are embarrassing.*

Even if these observations were correct with regard to the addressee, the 4 above examples would be perceived as insults.

Goal of this Survey

Your task is to invent comparisons that are implicitly insulting. Examples of such implicit insulting comparisons are:

With that haircut you look like you got electrocuted.

Your ears remind me of cauliflower.

I've seen paralyzed people do better in running than you.

A snail could do this job faster than you.

Your face is as spotty as a pizza.

With all your make up you look like a clown.

You will be given **5 example sentences** that have **missing slots** on each page. The slots are marked with **brackets []**. Please write a **full sentence** into the text field and fill in the brackets with your own choice of words.

The implicitly insulting comparison should be **self-contained** and be understandable for anyone knowing English. Please do not assume any prior knowledge. **Please avoid these kind of comparisons:**

You remind me of my aunt Mary.

With your big nose you look like Pinocchio.

Your attitude is like Donald Trump.

Your face reminds me of Quasimodo

You remind me of the Miss World runner-up.

These comparisons cannot be understood by everyone because it requires knowing what kind of a person these people are, or who the famous people mentioned are.

Some kinds of comparisons are used very frequently, and thus not really new and creative. We ask you to please **avoid** using **comparisons** that contain the following terms: child/toddler or any kind of **young or old person**, **any kind of animal**, and **any kind of food**.

Be as mean as you possibly can be, without using any insulting words or the words mentioned above.

Rules

- Please vary the type of comparisons and expressions.
- Always write full sentences.
- Please keep your sentences short.
- Avoid repetitive ideas, such as
 - *You are as intelligent as an insect.*
 - *You are as intelligent as an ant.*
- Please avoid comparisons that mention children, young people or any kind of animal.
- Do not use comparisons like *my grandmother*, *me*, *your wife*, *your mom* that are not self-contained.
- **Implicitly insulting comparisons must not contain any insulting words.**

You may use the [list of insulting words](#) as a reference.

In order to avoid insulting words, you are welcome to use irony instead.

Instead of saying *You are as ugly as a toad*, you may write *You have the beauty of a toad*.

- If we ask you to invent some implicit insult, please do not employ insulting words and obfuscate them,
e.g. *f*uck* instead of *fuck*, *s.h.i.t.* instead of *shit*, or *b1tch* instead of *bitch*.
We consider the utterances in which insulting words occur that are obfuscated as

explicit abuse as well.