

Snark

Definition of Snark

Snark is a combination of two words, “snide” and “remark,” which means a sarcastic comment. It is a literary device that is meant to be sarcastic speech. Depending on the subject, the [audience](#), and the [speaker](#), snark can be taken as sophisticated, witty, or asinine.

Snark is defined as making sharp and critical comments, and a wonderfully witty blending of cynicism and [sarcasm](#). There are many examples of snark from Shakespeare’s works such as, “Thrift, thrift, Horatio! The funeral bak’d meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables...” (*Hamlet*). The major [character](#), Hamlet, makes sarcastic remarks on the affair of his mother and uncle, and regarding their marriage ceremony.

Characteristics of Snark

Snark is a witty and sarcastic comment used in writing or speech. Hate speeches pointed towards large groups of people cannot be considered as snark examples. It is a rug-pulling and teasing type of insult that is used to steal somebody’s charm, and annihilate his effectiveness. Snark can appeal to the shrewd audience at large who can understand the derision of the snarker and his references.

Examples of Snark in Literature

Example #1: *Mending Walls* (By Robert Frost)

“Good fences make good neighbors.
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head.”

Frost makes snarky remarks by pointing out that, although two neighbors have made a wall between their countries, every winter the wall falls apart, and the neighbors meet to mend the wall. Therefore, they spend a lot of time together while mending the wall.

Example #2: *Road Not Taken* (By Robert Frost)

“I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the
difference.”

The poet talks about two roads, one of which most people choose, while the other is less traveled. The poet has chosen the less traveled one. Since he feels regret for his choice of path, he makes a snarky and sarcastic comment that it made a difference.

Example #3: *Canterbury Tales* (By Geoffrey Chaucer)

“A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye,
A limitour, a ful solempne man,
So mucche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte.”

Chaucer depicts the character Friar in a bitter speech, because the said character is a priest who accepts bribes from rich people. He does not take interest in his duties, and he spends money from confessions of sinners on women and merry-making.

“O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou, Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name.
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I’ll no longer be a Capulet...”

Here, Juliet makes a sarcastic comment, and asks Romeo his name, asking why his name is Romeo. It is because their families are enemies, and they could never be united. She tells him to change his name or she will change hers.

Example #5: *Julius Caesar* (By William Shakespeare)

“Friends, countrymen, lend me your ears.
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honorable man.
So are they all, all honorable men.”

Here, Mark Antony recurrently uses a specific phrase, “an honorable man.” He calls Brutus an honorable man who has killed Caesar. His persistent use of this phrase reverses the real meaning, hence it is a sarcastic use of this phrase.

Function of Snark

Snark can be used for different purposes. However, mostly it is utilized as a mask. Others might use it as a defensive device. When bitterness is not easy to express in an agreeable way, snark is used without hurting anyone directly.

The major purpose of snark in literary works is to create a special flavor, just to make the piece of work real. However, the essence of snark in literary works is to hurt someone through bitter words.