

Innuendo

Definition of Innuendo

Innuendo can be defined as an indirect or a subtle observation about a thing or a person. It is generally critical, disparaging, or salacious in nature, and its use is almost always derogatory. However, it must be kept in mind that it is the most thinly-veiled form of [satire](#), and when it is strong, it takes the shape of criticism.

Types of Innuendo

Innuendo can be categorized into different forms, such as:

- Innuendo in nature
- Innuendo in everyday life
- Innocent innuendo
- Accidental innuendo
- Sexual innuendo

Examples of Innuendo in Literature

Several literary writers consider innuendo an unbelievably gratifying experience, and they feel an urge to create pages laced with innuendo until at last their stream of innuendo saturates the text with fun and naughtiness. Let us have a look at some examples:

Example #1: *Hard Times* (By Charles Dickens)

Several characters in Dickens' *Hard Times* were named by the author according to how he saw their realities in life. For example, the school teacher is named "Mr. Choakumchild," which reflects his criticism of the educational system of that time. Similarly, he names a union leader "Slackbridge," which shows how he viewed dishonest workers of the time. The objective is to provide a comment to the readers according to the

situation in the story, and how the readers should view the characters. This is a mild form of innuendo.

Example #2: *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (By T. S. Eliot)

“Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?”

These are lines from *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, are spoken by a [character](#) who is suffering from sexual frustration. The innuendo, quite visible here, is the reflection of the [speaker](#)'s impotence.

Example #3: *Now Look What You've Done* (By Roderick Molasar)

“Now look what you've done,
She pouted
In that exquisitely girlish and
Lilting soft [voice](#) of hers.
It's all red and swollen...

To get bitten by a rattlesnake
Right up the crack of her ****”

Sexual innuendo has become very common in romantic poetry, and predominantly in dramas written in a time when it was not possible to use such language openly.

Example #4: *Oliver Twist* (By Charles Dickens)

“With this irrepressible ebullition of mirth, Master Bates laid himself flat on the floor: and kicked convulsively for five minutes, in an ecstasy of facetious joy. Then jumping to his feet ... advancing to Oliver, viewed him round and round ...”

“‘It's the worst of having to do with women,’ said the Jew, replacing his club; ‘but they're clever, and we can't get on, in our

“The noise of Charley’s laughter, and the voice of Miss Betsy, who opportunely arrived to throw water over her friend ... perform other feminine offices for the promotion of her recovery...”

In Dickens’ novel *Oliver Twist*, the author offered interesting surprises to readers. He used a lot of innuendos that appear whenever he brings in his character named “Master Bates.”

Example #5: *Venus and Adonis* (By William Shakespeare)

“Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.”

A good example of innuendos can be seen in this poem.

Function of Innuendo

Literature abounds with innuendo – especially romantic poetry, novels, and dramas. Some authors believe that innuendos are used to fill a void in literature, and that their readers consider them as uplifting and entertaining. However, they come across as passive and aggressive [categories](#) of communication, since they are indirect and generally used to attack or insult somebody or some section of society.

Innuendos serve as oblique allusions and vague references to reputation and character. Hence, they could be the best tool for those who do not want to be direct. Innuendo can be an effective way of undermining somebody’s character in society.