

# Humor

## Definition of Humor

Humor is a literary tool that makes audiences laugh, or that intends to induce amusement or laughter. Its purpose is to break the monotony, boredom, and tedium, and make the [audience](#)'s nerves relax. The writer uses different techniques, tools, words, and even full sentences in order to bring to light new and funny sides of life. Humor is often found in literature, theater, movies, and advertising, where the major purpose is to make the audience happy.

## Types of Humor

There are several types of devices that create humor. Humor is, in fact, the end product and not the device itself. These devices are:

[Hyperbole/Exaggeration](#)

Incongruity

Slapstick

Surprise

[Sarcasm](#)

[Irony](#)

Pun

## Examples of Humor in Literature

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### Example #1: *Pride and Prejudice* (By Jane Austen)

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Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* is one of her most popular works. Throughout the entire novel, Jane Austen uses humor. She presents a very hilarious scene between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. Mrs. Bennet endlessly breaks down and makes complaints for her husband's lack of understanding her nerves, and then he responds by saying:

“You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least.”

He constantly pokes fun at her. Likewise, Austen bursts with humor in the case of Elizabeth and Darcy as, upon their first meeting, both feel a sense of disgust for one another. However, later they enjoy teasing each other.

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### **Example #2: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (By Mark Twain)**

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“No, don’t you worry; these country jakes won’t ever think of that. Besides, you know, you’ll be in costume, and that makes all the difference in the world; Juliet’s in a balcony, enjoying the moonlight before she goes to bed, and she’s got on her night-gown and her ruffled nightcap. Here are the costumes for the parts.”

In this example, the duke is unable to notice the silliness of his own actions, instead he makes comments on the low level of understanding of the country jakes.

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### **Example #3: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (By Harper Lee)**

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Harper Lee has inserted humor by creating funny situations with a serious tone in her novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Many descriptions about Dill are funny and humorous, as he is presented as a larger-than-life person. When we first meet him, the kids take him a puppy. Then he says his name is Charles Baker Harris, saying that he can read, in spite of his age.

We also see a lot of humor in Scout’s actions, coming from her efforts to comprehend adult ideas, which are very complex for a child like her. Author is showing her to be a very smart kid. A humorous event occurs during Scout’s first day at school. Miss Caroline, the teacher, is naive, and “looked, and smelled like a peppermint drop.” We meet her when Scout tells her she had already been punished before lunch on her very first day at school, making children mildly suspicious.

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#### Example #4: *Great Expectations* (By Charles Dickens)

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Charles Dickens derives humor through [characterization](#) in his novel *Great Expectations*. The tone is serious, but there are humorous touches that punctuate the main action. We see a humorous scene in the dinner party when Joe Gargery tells his life story to Pip, and subtly measures gravy on Pip's plate, while Mrs. Gargery gets onto him. Another funny situation happens when Magwitch wants to sleep and asks Pip:

“Where will you put me?” [Magwitch] asked, presently. “I must be put somewheres, dear boy.”

#### Function of Humor

Humor is one of the most effective literary weapons to please the audience, as it develops characters and makes plots useful and memorable. Humor plays many functions in a literary work. It arouses interest among readers, sustains their attention, helps them connect with the characters, emphasizes and relates ideas, and helps the readers picture the situation. Through this tool, writers can also improve the quality of their works by pleasing the audience. Apart from that, the most dominant function of humor is to provide surprise, which not only improves quality, but improves memorable [style](#) of a literary piece. The writers learn how to use words for different objectives.

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