

# Anecdote

## Definition of Anecdote

Anecdote is defined as a short and interesting story, or an amusing event, often proposed to support or demonstrate some point, and to make the [audience](#) laugh. Anecdotes can include an extensive range of tales and stories. In fact, it is a short description or an account of any event that makes the readers laugh or brood over the topic presented for the purpose.

## Types of Anecdote

There are several types of anecdotes. Amusing anecdotes are often used in literature, or at such events as family reunions, wedding receptions, and other get-togethers. Teachers tell anecdotes to their students in classrooms about eminent people and celebrities. Writers and poets use them in their literary works.

## Examples of Anecdote in Literature

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### Example #1: *The Crucible* (By Arthur Miller)

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**Parris:** “(It is very hard to say): Aye, a dress. And I thought – someone naked running through the trees!”

**Abigail:** (In terror) “No one was naked! You mistake yourself, uncle!”

**Parris:** (With anger) “I saw it! (Her moves from her, then, resolved.) Now tell me true, Abigail. And I pray you feel the weight of truth upon you, for now my ministry’s at stake, my ministry and perhaps your cousin’s life. Whatever abomination

you have done, give me all of it now, for I dare not be taken unaware when I go before them down there.”

**Abigail:** “There is nothin’ more. I swear it, uncle.”

**Parris:** (Studies her, then nods, half convinced) “Abigail, I have fought here three long years to bend these stiff-necked people to me, and now, just now when some good respect is rising for me in the parish, you compromise my very [character](#). I have given you a home, child, I have put clothes upon your back – now give me upright answer. Your name in the town – it is entirely white, is it not?”

**Abigail:** (With an edge of resentment) “Why, I am sure it is, sir. There is no blush about my name.”

**Parris:** (To the point) “Abigail is there any other cause that you have told me, for you being discharged from Goody Proctor’s service? I have heard it said, and I tell you as I heard it, that she comes so rarely to church this year for she will not sit so close to something soiled. What signified that remark?”

**Abigail:** “She hates me, uncle; she must, for I would not be her slave. It’s a bitter woman, a lying; cold, sniveling, woman, and I will not work for such a woman!”

**Parris:** “She may be. And yet it has troubled me that you are now seven months out of their house, and in all this time no other family has ever called for your service.”

**Abigail:** “They want slaves, not such as me. Let them send to Barbados for that. I will not black my face for any of them! (With ill-concealed resentment at him.) Do you begrudge my bed, uncle?”

**Parris:** “No – no.”

**Abigail:** (in a temper) “My name is good in the village! I will not have it said my name is soiled! Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar!”

Here in this literary text, Reverend Parris finds her niece Abigail Williams

suspects them of magic and witchcraft. However, she does not accept any of the accusations of Parris and starts narrating whimsical stories to justify her actions. Abigail makes an account that Goody Proctor is a liar. The stories of Abigail are perfect examples of anecdotes.

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### **Example #2: *Death in the Arctic* (By Robert W. Service)**

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is that? Bells, dogs again! Is it a dream? I sob and cry. See! The door opens, fur-clad men Rush to my rescue; frail am I; Feeble and dying, dazed and glad. There is the pistol where it dropped. “Boys, it was hard – but I’m not mad ... Look at the clock – it stopped, it stopped. Carry me out. The heavens smile. See! There’s an arch of gold above. Now, let me rest a little while – *Looking to God and Love ... and Love...*”

In this poem, the [speaker](#) is freezing slowly in the Arctic. He recollects the memories of his life and tells the whole story to the readers, but sees flashes of his life before he dies. In fact, he is using anecdotes to tell his life story.

### **Function of Anecdote**

Anecdotes and humorous pieces are not only jokes, but exquisite [literary devices](#) as well. Their primary purpose is to stir up laughter, to disclose a truth in a general way, or to describe a feature of a character in such a way that it becomes humorous, and at the same time gives us a better understanding of the character.

Anecdotes may also serve as cautions. Writers tell their readers about the possibilities of future happenings, in case they do not follow particular processes and techniques.