



Eighth Grade

ELA

Planning and Revising an Analysis of a Humorous Text

Learning Strategies

Graphic Organizer
Marking the Text
Note-taking
Drafting
Discussion Groups

Learning Targets

- Analyze the effects of humorous elements in texts.
- Draft and revise an essay analyzing a humorous text.

Preview

In this activity, you will identify the parts of an essay and revise a sample student essay.

Identifying and Analyzing the Elements of Humor

- Complete the graphic organizer using the three texts you have read, and rank how comfortable you are with understanding the elements (#1 being most comfortable, #2 being second most, etc.).

Elements of Humor			
Humorous Element	Definition	Comedic Effect	Examples from Texts
Comic Characters and Caricatures	A caricature is a pictorial, written, or acted representation of a person that exaggerates characteristics or traits for comic effect.		
Comic Situations and Situational Irony	Comic situations are when characters are in an unlikely situation or are victims of circumstances and react in a comical way. Situational irony involves a contrast between what characters or readers might reasonably expect to happen and what actually happens.		
Comic Language: Hyperbole	Hyperbole is extreme exaggeration used for emphasis, often used for comic effect.		
Comic Language: Wordplay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-liners Puns 	A one-liner is a short joke or witticism expressed in a single sentence. A pun is the humorous use of a word or words to suggest another word with the same sound or different meaning.		

4.11

Choose a text from this unit to reread and analyze. Mark the text by highlighting humorous elements. Annotate using precise diction to describe the intended humor and humorous effect.

Complete the following graphic organizers.

Level of Comedy	Explanation	Evidence

Description of Humor and Intended Effect	Examples from Text	Explanation (Commentary)

Universal Truth (Theme)	Evidence from Text

Reading and Analyzing a Sample Essay

An effective essay includes a clear introduction to the topic, body paragraphs that expand on the thesis and provide evidence and commentary to support it, and a conclusion that provides closure for the topic.

Introduction

- Begin with a **hook**.
- Set the **context** for the essay.
- Establish a **controlling idea (thesis statement)** that directly responds to the prompt.

Body Paragraphs

- Begin with a **topic sentence** related to the thesis.
- Include **evidence** from the text (paraphrased and directly quoted).
- Provide **commentary** that uses precise diction to describe humor and the intended effect.
- Use a variety of **transitions** to connect ideas and create coherence.

Concluding Paragraph

- Discuss the universal truth revealed through the text.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the author's use of humor to communicate this truth.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- As you read the sample student essay, draw two lines under commentary that uses precise diction and academic vocabulary, especially humorous vocabulary.
- Draw a rectangle around the hook in the first paragraph.
- Highlight in different colors the topic sentence, evidence, commentary, and transitional phrases in each body paragraph.
- Place a question mark by any sentences or sections that you think need to be revised.
- Circle the thesis statement in the first paragraph.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

My Notes

Student Essay

The Power of Pets

by Isha Sharma (an eighth-grade student)

1 Every child has gone through a phase in life when they have a sudden fixation with getting a pet, and parents often have to go through a lot of trouble in order to appease the child, at least until the obsession is replaced with another. In the light-hearted essay, “I’ve Got a Few Pet Peeves about Sea Creatures,” Dave Barry uses hyperbole and verbal irony to show how a parent will often go through great lengths to satisfy his child, often hoping that the child will learn something in the process.

2 To point out the often ridiculous experiences parents go through for their children, Barry uses hyperbole to emphasize how complicated getting a pet fish can be. For example, he explains first how a “pet” beetle under his daughter’s “loving care and feeding ... thrived for maybe nine seconds before expiring like a little six-legged parking meter.” [1] The additional use of simile and the exaggerated amount of time adds to the humor, as in any case, one’s “loving care and feeding” should not cause the death of anything so quickly, no matter how terrible the “care” could actually be. The explanation of the parents replacing each beetle with another shows how willing parents are to support their children no matter how ridiculous the circumstances. Furthermore, Barry calls the fish he bought “so nonviolent that, in the wild, worms routinely beat them up and steal their lunch money.” As known to all people, it is fish that eat worms and not the other way around. This is hyperbolic because worms are not known for “beating fish up” and animals do not have money, lunch money included. This also ties back to a metaphor/analogy Barry made that “an aquarium is a powder keg that can explode in deadly violence at any moment, just like ... junior high.” Both of these situations are highly exaggerated. Through the use of hyperbole, Barry is able to convey how parents often feel about their struggle even in simple situations, to which a child might react to them as being overdramatic.

3 Also, Barry uses verbal irony/sarcasm to vent and display his frustration, which proves furthermore the lengths he is going to help his daughter. For instance, when complaining about the aggressive nature of fish, he says they could become aggressive if “it was a month containing the letter ‘R,’ or they heard the song ‘Who Let the Dogs Out.’” Months and songs are all aspects

of human life, it is unlikely that fish will ever have fish months or fish songs. This adds to the sarcastic tone of the writer, which shows that even through his frustrations, he is struggling to find the right choice for his daughter, no matter how much of a nuisance it is to make it. Also, Barry uses sarcasm when explaining the variety of needs for a fish tank so that “the fish would be intellectually stimulated and get into a decent college.” The author, as with most intellectual people, knows that fish do not have colleges, and seeing that their intelligence capacity is smaller than a human’s, they cannot be

“intellectually stimulated.” The author uses this verbal irony to point out that even though the needs of a fish are not as significant as the needs of a human, caring for them still requires a lot of effort. Clearly, the author chooses to go through this effort for his daughter. The usage of verbal irony in this piece further points out the “struggles” of a father to appease his child.

4 Even in the most trivial instances, the parent will go through many obstacles to help his child, often in the hope that the child will learn something along the way. Whether or not the child actually learns this is questionable, yet the parent's effort should not go unnoticed.

Working from the Text

4. Using your annotations of the text, identify the main points of the essay by completing the following outline. As you reread the essay, ask yourself: What is the author's thesis statement? How does the author support that thesis statement? What universal truth does the author reveal?

Outline I. Introductory Paragraph

A. Hook:

B. Thesis:

II. Body Paragraphs

A. Topic Sentence:

B. Topic Sentence:

III. Concluding Paragraph

A. Universal Truth:

5. Use your outline to write a one-paragraph summary of the essay. Be sure to include the central idea identified in the thesis, the main ideas identified in the two topic sentences, and the universal truth in the conclusion in order to summarize the essay. Then improve your paragraph by including transitions among the main points.
6. Referring to the question marks you notated in the text, create revision suggestions for each. Write your responses in the My Notes space next to the text.
7. Revise the student essay. You may want to review the roles and responsibilities of writing group members in Activity 1.9. Select one or more of the following:
 - Write a new introduction.
 - Write a third support paragraph.
 - Write a new conclusion.
8. Add the following features for increased understanding and effect:
 - Headings
 - Graphics (charts, tables, etc.)
 - Multimedia (such as photos or drawings)
9. After you have revised the ideas in the essay, revise sentence-level errors. Be sure to:
 - Create variety in your sentences by using verbals.
 - Make sure your verb tense is consistent.
 - Maintain subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.
 - Punctuate clauses appropriately.

Writing an Analysis of a Humorous Text



ASSIGNMENT

Write an essay that explains how an author creates humor for effect and uses it to communicate a universal truth.

Planning and Prewriting:

Take time to make a plan for your essay.

- What reading strategies (such as marking or diffusing the text) will help you take notes on the author's use of humor as you read the text?
- How can you demonstrate your knowledge of the humor genre by correctly identifying the level of comedy, elements of humor, and intended comedic effect on the reader?
- What prewriting strategies (such as outlining or graphic organizers) could help you explore, focus, and organize your ideas?

Drafting: Write a multiparagraph essay that effectively organizes your ideas.

- What elements of an effective introductory paragraph will you use in your writing?
- How will you develop support paragraphs with well-chosen examples (evidence) and thoughtful analysis (commentary) about at least two elements of humor?
- How will you use transitions to create cohesion?
- How will your conclusion support your ideas, identify and analyze the level(s) of comedy, and evaluate the author's effectiveness at communicating a universal truth?

Evaluating and Revising the Draft: Create opportunities to review and revise your work.

- During the process of writing, when can you pause to share and respond with others in order to elicit suggestions and ideas for revision?
- How can the Scoring Guide help you evaluate how well your draft meets the requirements of the assignment?
- How can you use a precise vocabulary of humor to enhance your critical analysis?

Checking and Editing for Publication: Confirm your final draft is ready for publication.

- How will you proofread and edit your draft to demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and usage?
- Did you effectively use verbals?
- Did you establish and maintain a formal style?

Reflection

After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this task, and respond to the following:

- How has your understanding of how humor is created developed during this unit?
- Do you think your sense of humor will change as you mature? Explain.

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishes and fully maintains a clearly focused controlling idea about the use of humor to convey a universal truth develops the topic with relevant details, examples, and textual evidence uses insightful commentary to analyze the effect of humorous elements. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishes and maintains a controlling idea about the use of humor to convey a universal truth develops the topic with adequate details, examples, and textual evidence uses sufficient commentary to analyze the effect of humorous elements. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishes and unevenly maintains a controlling idea that may be unclear or unrelated to the use of humor to convey a universal truth develops the topic with inadequate details, examples, and textual evidence uses insufficient commentary to analyze the humor. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lacks a controlling idea fails to develop the topic with details, examples, and textual evidence does not provide commentary or analysis.
Structure	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduces the topic and context in an engaging manner uses a well-chosen organizational structure that progresses smoothly to connect ideas uses a variety of effective transitional strategies provides a satisfying conclusion. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduces the topic and context clearly uses an organizational structure that progresses logically to connect ideas uses appropriate transitions to create cohesion and link ideas provides a logical conclusion. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides a weak or partial introduction uses a flawed or inconsistent organizational structure uses inappropriate, repetitive, or basic transitions provides a weak or disconnected conclusion. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lacks an introduction has little or no obvious organizational structure uses few or no transitions lacks a conclusion.
Use of Language	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses precise diction and language to maintain an academic voice and formal style demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and usage. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses some precise diction to maintain a generally appropriate voice and style demonstrates adequate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and usage. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses diction that creates an inappropriate voice and style demonstrates partial or inconsistent command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and usage. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vague or confusing language lacks command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and usage.