

AP Language: Q2 Outside Reading Text (Satire)

Due Dates:

- ☐ Procure novelNOW.
- ☐ Research title, epigram/s, and allusions, bring notes to class, AND finish reading first half of novel. Be prepared to discuss your novel in groups. December 20/21
- ☐ Finish reading novel. Bring text and five choice quotations. January 20/21

Choices:

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

(Twain) ISBN-13: 9780553210798

The adventures of a boy and a runaway slave as they travel down the Mississippi River on a raft. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is an incredible book. Huck's adventures are symbolic of the struggling consciousness at this time in American History. Huck runs from his abusive father and friends. A run away slave named Jim. Huck and Jim travel by raft down the Mississippi River. Huck struggles with his ideas about slavery. On the river life is so peaceful but on land life is crazy.

Babbitt

(Lewis) ISBN-13: 9781593082673

In the small midwestern city of Zenith, George Babbitt seems to have it all: a successful real-estate business, a devoted wife, three children, and a house with all the modern conveniences. Yet, dissatisfied and lonely, he's begun to question the conformity, consumerism, and competitiveness of his conservative, and ultimately cultureless middle-class community. His despairing sense that something, many things are missing from his life leads him into a flirtation with liberal politics and a fling with an attractive and seemingly "bohemian" widow. But he soon finds that his attempts at rebellion may cost more than he is willing to pay. The title of Sinclair Lewis's 1922 satire on American materialism added a new word to our vocabulary. "Babbitt" has come to stand for all that's wrong with a world where the pursuit of happiness means the procurement of things—a world that substitutes "stuff" for "soul." Some twenty years after *Babbitt's* initial success, critics called Lewis dated and his fiction old-fashioned. But these judgments have come to seem like wishful thinking. With Babbitt evident all around us, the novel is more relevant than ever.

Brave New World

(Huxley) ISBN-13: 9780060850524

Huxley's vision of the future in his astonishing 1931 novel *Brave New World* -- a world of tomorrow in which capitalist civilization has been reconstituted through the most efficient scientific and psychological engineering. Mr. Huxley is eloquent in his declaration of an artist's faith in man, and it is his eloquence, bitter in attack, noble in defense, that, when one has closed the book, one remembers.

Candide

(Voltaire) ISBN-13: 9781593080280

One of the finest satires ever written, Voltaire's *Candide* savagely skewers this very "optimistic" approach to life as a shamefully inadequate response to human suffering. The swift and lively tale follows the absurdly melodramatic adventures of the youthful Candide, who is forced into the army, flogged, shipwrecked, betrayed, robbed, separated from his beloved Cunégonde, and tortured by the Inquisition. As Candide experiences and witnesses calamity upon calamity, he begins to discover that—contrary to the teachings of his tutor, Dr. Pangloss—all is perhaps not always for the best. After many trials, travails, and incredible reversals of fortune, Candide and his friends finally retire together to a small farm, where they discover that the secret of happiness is simply "to cultivate one's garden," a philosophy that rejects excessive optimism and metaphysical speculation in favor of the most basic pragmatism. Filled with wit, intelligence, and an abundance of dark humor, *Candide* is relentless and unsparing in its attacks upon corruption and hypocrisy—in religion, government, philosophy, science, and even romance. Ultimately, this celebrated work says that it is possible to challenge blind optimism without losing the will to live and pursue a happy life.

Catch-22

(Heller) ISBN-13: 9780684833392

Arguably the best novel to come out of World War II, in which Heller strips away the veneer of martial glory to expose its insanity, and gives our language a new paradoxical phrase to describe mankind at the mercy of its own institutions. As revealing today as when it was first published, this brilliant novel by the author of *Picture This* expresses the concerns of an entire generation in its black comedy. World War II flier John Yossarian decides that his only mission each time he goes up is to return—alive! Below its hilarity, so wild that it hurts, *Catch-22* is the strongest repudiation of our civilization, in fiction, to come out of World War II.... To compare *Catch-22* favorably with *The Good Soldier Schweik* would be an injustice, because this novel is not merely the best American novel to come out of World War II; it is the best American novel that has come out of anywhere in years.

Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates

(Robbins) ISBN-13: 9780553379334

Switters is a contradiction for all seasons: an anarchist who works for the government; a pacifist who carries a gun; a vegetarian who sops up ham gravy; a cyberwhiz who hates computers; a man who, though obsessed with the preservation of innocence, is aching to deflower his high-school-age stepsister (only to become equally enamored of a nun ten years his senior). Yet there is nothing remotely wishy-washy about Switters. He doesn't merely pack a pistol. He is a pistol. And as we dog Switters's strangely elevated heels across four continents, in and out of love and danger, discovering in the process the "true" Third Secret of Fatima, we experience Tom Robbins — that fearless storyteller, spiritual renegade, and verbal break dancer — at the top of his game. On one level this is a fast-paced CIA adventure story with comic overtones; on another it's a serious novel of ideas that brings the Big Picture into unexpected focus; but perhaps more than anything else, *Fierce Invalids* is a sexy celebration of language and life.

Gulliver's Travels

(Swift) ISBN-13: 9781593081324

Considered the greatest satire ever written in English, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* chronicles the fantastic voyages of Lemuel Gulliver, principally to four marvelous realms: Lilliput, where the people are six inches tall; Brobdingnag, a land inhabited by giants; Laputa, a wondrous flying island; and a country where the Houyhnhnms, a race of intelligent horses, are served by savage humanoid creatures called Yahoos. Beneath the surface of this enchanting fantasy lurks a devastating critique of human malevolence, stupidity, greed, vanity, and short-sightedness. A brilliant combination of adventure, humor, and philosophy, *Gulliver's Travels* is one of literature's most durable masterpieces.

Pride and Prejudice

(Austen) ISBN-13: 9781593083243

'It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.' Thus memorably begins Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, one of the world's most popular novels. *Pride and Prejudice*—Austen's own 'darling child'—tells the story of fiercely independent Elizabeth Bennet, one of five sisters who must marry rich, as she confounds the arrogant, wealthy Mr. Darcy. What ensues is one of the most delightful and engrossingly readable courtships known to literature, written by a precocious Austen when she was just twenty-one years old. Humorous and profound, and filled with highly entertaining dialogue, this witty comedy of manners dips and turns through drawing-rooms and plots to reach an immensely satisfying finale. In the words of Eudora Welty, *Pride and Prejudice* is as 'irresistible and as nearly flawless as any fiction could be.'

Slaughterhouse Five

(Vonnegut) ISBN-13: 9780440180296

Unstuck in time, Billy Pilgrim, Vonnegut's shattered survivor of the Dresden bombing, relives his life over and over again under the gaze of aliens; he comes at last to some understanding of the human comedy. The basis of George Roy's great 1972 film and perhaps the signature student's novel in the 1960's embracing protest and the absurdity of war. I now, I know (as Kurt Vonnegut used to say when people told him that the Germans attacked first). It sounds crazy. It sounds like a fantastic last-ditch effort to make sense of a lunatic universe. But there is so much more to this book. It is very tough and very funny; it is sad and delightful; and it works. But is also very Vonnegut, which mean you'll either love it, or push it back in the science-fiction corner.

Satiric Techniques:

1. Exaggeration (overstatement) (hyperbole); saying more than you mean to say: a deliberate form of exaggeration to produce humor. E.g.: "Ladies and gentlemen, I've been to Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and I can say without hyperbole that this is a million times worse than all of them put together." (Kent Brockman, *The Simpsons*)
2. Understatement: Implying the opposite by saying less than you mean to say. A form of irony in which one plays down the concept to produce humor. For example, a person has "a penny or two if he is wealthy." This is an *intentional* representation of something as less than what it is. E.g.: "It's just a flesh wound." (Black Knight, after having both of his arms cut off, in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*)

3. Irony: a double meaning; saying one thing and meaning another. There is verbal irony, situational irony, and dramatic irony. i.e.: by William Verbal: "Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honourable man". Mark Antony really means that Brutus is dishonourable (*Julius Caesar*)
Situational: If someone were to go on a trip and decide not to take a plane because they are worried about crashing, and take a bus instead, it would be ironic if a plane hit the bus they took, thereby realizing their fears of crashing with a plane, despite measures taken at the outset of the journey to avoid such a fate.
Dramatic: In *Oedipus the King*, we know that Oedipus himself is the murderer that he is seeking; Oedipus, Creon and Jocasta do not.
4. Burlesque: a composition which derives its humor from exaggerated imitation of a more serious work. A person's action may be burlesqued, as in Cervantes' burlesque of medieval romances in Don Quixote.
5. Parody: a mocking imitation of a known person, literary work, movie, or event. Saturday Night Live does many parodies.
6. Sarcasm: Using praise to personally mock someone; the words comes from the Greek *sarkazein* meaning "to tear flesh", literally to put in hooks and to rip flesh. A form of verbal irony where a strong and personal disapproval is given. i.e.: "Oh, a sarcasm detector. That's a *really* useful invention!" (Comic Book Guy, *The Simpsons*)
7. Invective: harsh, abusive language directed against a person or cause. i.e.: "A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking, whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable, finical rogue; ..." (William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of King Lear*, II.2)
8. Innuendo: a form of irony in which something derogatory is implied.
Example: *the man recovered from the bite, while the dog died*. Or: "When her father goes out the door, I come in-a-window."~ Groucho Marx on sexual innuendo
9. *Reductio ad absurdum*: a method of argument which carries to an extreme, but logical conclusion some general idea. For example: *the more sleep one gets the healthier one is: therefore, someone who has sleeping sickness and sleeps for months or someone in a coma is really in the best of health*.
10. Paradox: a statement which, because of its contradictory nature, seems absurd, but which really is well founded. i.e.: *Nature often shows her strangeness in her sameness*. Or: "Some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again." (C.S. Lewis to his godchild, Lucy Barfield, to whom he dedicated *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*)
11. Antithesis: a contrast or opposition of thoughts, usually in two phrases, clauses, or sentences, which have parallel structure. Example: *The prodigal robs his heir; the miser robs himself*. Or: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all

going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way." (Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*)

12. Oxymoron: a figure of speech expressed in two contradictory terms in which two words are joined. I.e.: *living death, sad joy, wise fool, sweet revenge, eloquent silence, military intelligence*.
13. Caricature: a person's features may be mimicked. Caricature in art or in literature is an exaggerated representation of a character, a cartoonlike portrait. In literature, it is a form of Burlesque.
14. Bathos: Going quickly from the sublime or serious to the ridiculous or to the over-sentimentalized. i.e.: When the character Ophelia in Hamlet commits suicide the character Laertes jumps into the grave and tells the men to bury him in the ground with her. This extreme measure of love tugs at the reader's emotions, but at the same time seems far too far fetched for reality.
15. Mockery: subject of laughter, scorn, or ridicule. i.e.: Spelling the name "Microsoft" with a dollar sign (Micro\$oft) to say they are greedy or laughing at someone if they fall over.
16. Mock heroic: Imitation of a literary epic and its style by exaggeration and distortion or by elevating the trivial to a level higher than it deserves. i.e.: *A rooster is a handsome hero and his hen, a fair damsel*. The Rape of the Lock by Alexander Pope is an example of mock-heroic verse. Pope's poem was inspired by Lord Petre's cutting of a lock of Miss Arabella Fermor's hair without her permission.

Extra Credit: Find an example of satiric writing and analyze it in two—four pages using the terminology above.

Due: January 21 by midnight

Satire Exercise: Quotation Chart

Fill in the chart below with five quotations that show satire and provide an explanation of the quote in your own words.
