

Figurative Language

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[Understatement Definition and Examples](#)

[Sarcasm Definition and Examples](#)

[Irony Definition, Examples, and Lesson](#)

[Pun Definition and Examples](#)

[Oxymoron Definition, Examples, and Lesson](#)

[Malapropism Definition, Examples, and Lesson](#)

[Biblical, Literary, Historical, and Mythical Allusions](#)

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Definitions

Understatement: Stating or presenting something with modesty or restraint to create a subtle or ironic effect.

Hyperbole: An obvious and deliberate exaggeration or overstatement intended for effect and not to be taken literally. For example, "He had a million excuses."

Sarcasm: A scornfully ironic remark. Originating from Ancient Greece, sarcasm is often used to be mean to others, but it can also leave the user feeling a bit sore too.



Activity #1: Teaching Videos

What is verbal irony? - Christopher Warner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liR-bnCHIYo>

Hyperbole and Understatement - A Short Digital Piece [4:03]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAt36-EqHIE>

Hyperboles in Music [1:09]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGXM3oF4FWU>



Activity #2: Literature Search: Finding Humor Devices in Picture Books

Introducing humor devices to upper elementary students can be a fun, educational experience, especially when you incorporate literature that they are already familiar with. Humor devices such as understatement, hyperbole, and irony are fun to identify and enhance students' comprehension and analytical skills. Below is a list of picture books with these humor devices, along with specific examples to guide your students' exploration.



Understatement:

Big Old Bones by Carol Carrick: The story of an archaeologist who makes monumental discoveries, yet the text humorously downplays the excitement.

The House Gobbaleen by Lloyd Alexander: The subtle and modest presentation of the goblin's tricks creates a comic contrast.

Squiggle's Tale by Andre Dahan: A tale of a small fish that understatedly narrates its big adventures.

Bewildered for Three Days: As to Why Daniel Boone Never Wore His Coonskin Cap by Andrew Glass: The title itself sets up an understated approach to a quirky historical anecdote.

Goldilocks Returns by Lisa Campbell Ernst: This story presents Goldilocks' return in a manner that downplays the chaos she caused.

Dread Pig of Night by Jean Gralley: The protagonist's fears are understated, making the story amusing.

Mama and Me and the Model T by Faye Gibbons: A journey in a Model T that is humorously understated in its challenges and triumphs.

Hyperbole:

Tall tales such as *Paul Bunyan*, *Johnny Appleseed*, and *John Henry* exemplify hyperbole with their larger-than-life characters and exaggerated deeds.

A Spoon in Every Bite by Joe Hayes: In this story, a boy eats a lot of soup, and each spoonful becomes a hyperbolic adventure.

Trouble with Thunder Mountain by Russell Hoban: A mountain with exaggerated problems that escalate humorously makes for an entertaining and engaging story.

Irony / Sarcasm:

The Full Belly Bowl by Jim Aylesworth: The ironic consequences of the protagonist's wish with a magical bowl create an unexpected twist in the story.

The Table Where Rich People Sit by Byrd Baylor: The story turns the concept of wealth on its head, presenting a rich irony in the protagonist's realizations.

Switch on the Night by Ray Bradbury ironically contrasts the protagonist's fear of the dark with the beauty found within it.

The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark by Carmen Agra Deedy: The use of irony in a historical context where appearances versus reality play a crucial role highlights the contrast between what is seen and what is true.

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin: The cows' demands create an unexpected and humorous situational irony.

Why? by Lindsay Camp: The protagonist's constant questions lead to ironic responses.

You'll Drive Me Wild! by Mem Fox: The mother's sarcastic remarks to her child's antics create humor.

Come On, Rain! by Karen Hesse: The anticipation and irony of waiting for rain during a drought create a poignant contrast between hope and the harsh reality.

Activity #3:

In this activity, students will explore using humor devices in storytelling. They will read four short stories, each presented in three paragraphs, and identify the humor device used in each section. The humor devices covered are hyperbole, understatement, and sarcasm. Use the story below to explain the activity to students. This activity aims to engage students in recognizing different types of humor and understanding how they are used in writing to create comedic effects.

Story 1

Paragraph 1: Hyperbole

Lucy stepped outside and was immediately hit by a gust of wind so strong it felt like she was standing in a hurricane. She pulled her scarf tighter, convinced it would take a hundred layers of clothing to keep warm in this weather.

Paragraph 2: Understatement

She continued walking to the park, noticing the pond was a bit chilly. The ice forming on the surface gave it away, but Lucy thought it added a nice sparkle to the scenery.

Paragraph 3: Sarcasm

When Lucy finally reached the park bench, her friend Max looked at her wide-eyed. "Oh, brilliant choice to leave your hat at home, Lucy. You really know how to dress for a blizzard," he grinned. Lucy laughed, knowing he was right.



Story 1

Paragraph 1: _____

As Tim walked to the store, he felt like his backpack was filled with bricks instead of school books. Every step seemed to sink him deeper into the ground, as if gravity had suddenly doubled its pull.

Paragraph 2: _____

Upon arriving at the store, Tim noticed a sign on the door that read, "Beware of the dog." He chuckled to himself, thinking it was probably just a tiny Chihuahua guarding the entrance.

Paragraph 3: _____

Inside, Tim found himself staring at shelves stocked with a dizzying array of snacks. "Oh great," he muttered, "just what I need, more choices." He rolled his eyes at the overwhelming selection, knowing he'd spend more time deciding than actually shopping

Story 3

Paragraph 1: _____

Sam's soccer team lost the game 10-0. The coach said, "We didn't do too well today," which was putting it mildly. The team knew they had a lot to work on.

Paragraph 2: _____

After the game, Sam's friend Jake said, "Well, that was the best game we've ever played. Really stellar." Sam laughed, appreciating Jake's attempt to make light of their tough loss.

Paragraph 3: _____

Sam felt like he had run across the entire universe during the game. His legs were about to fall off, and he was sure he had sweat enough to fill an ocean. He couldn't wait to get some rest.

Story 2

Paragraph 1: _____

Jake's bedroom was a disaster zone. His mom peeked in and said, "Wow, Jake, I can see the floor. Not." Jake knew he had some serious cleaning to do.

Paragraph 2: _____

He started by picking up his clothes, which felt like they weighed a ton. It seemed like he had to climb a mountain of laundry to get to his bed. When he was done, he felt like he had cleaned for a million hours.

Paragraph 3: _____

When Jake was finally finished, his sister Emma walked in. "It's a bit better in here," she said, even though the room looked spotless. Jake smiled, knowing he had done an excellent job.

Story 4

Paragraph 1: _____

Mia's desk was piled high with homework. Her brother Leo walked in and said, "Oh, I see you're planning to have a fun night of partying with all those books." Mia rolled her eyes and chuckled.

Paragraph 2: _____

As she started working, she realized finishing everything might take a little while. The stack of assignments was daunting, but she told herself she'd get through it eventually.

Paragraph 3: _____

By the time she got halfway through, Mia felt like she had written a thousand pages and solved a million math problems. Her brain was ready to explode from all the information she was trying to process.

Story 1

Paragraph 1: **Hyperbole**

As Tim walked to the store, he felt like his backpack was filled with bricks instead of school books. Every step seemed to sink him deeper into the ground, as if gravity had suddenly doubled its pull.

Paragraph 2: **Understatement**

Upon arriving at the store, Tim noticed a sign on the door that read, "Beware of the dog." He chuckled to himself, thinking it was probably just a tiny Chihuahua guarding the entrance.

Paragraph 3: **Sarcasm**

Inside, Tim found himself staring at shelves stocked with a dizzying array of snacks. "Oh great," he muttered, "just what I need, more choices." He rolled his eyes at the overwhelming selection, knowing he'd spend more time deciding than actually shopping.

Story 3

Paragraph 1: **Understatement**

Sam's soccer team lost the game 10-0. The coach said, "We didn't do too well today," which was putting it mildly. The team knew they had a lot to work on.

Paragraph 2: **Sarcasm**

After the game, Sam's friend Jake said, "Well, that was the best game we've ever played. Really stellar." Sam laughed, appreciating Jake's attempt to make light of their tough loss.

Paragraph 3: **Hyperbole**

Sam felt like he had run across the entire universe during the game. His legs were about to fall off, and he was sure he had sweat enough to fill an ocean. He couldn't wait to get some rest.

Story 2

Paragraph 1: **Sarcasm**

Jake's bedroom was a disaster zone. His mom peeked in and said, "Wow, Jake, I can see the floor. Not." Jake knew he had some serious cleaning to do.

Paragraph 2: **Hyperbole**

He started by picking up his clothes, which felt like they weighed a ton. It seemed like he had to climb a mountain of laundry to get to his bed. When he was done, he felt like he had cleaned for a million hours.

Paragraph 3: **Understatement**

When Jake was finally finished, his sister Emma walked in. "It's a bit better in here," she said, even though the room looked spotless. Jake smiled, knowing he had done an excellent job.

Story 4

Paragraph 1: **Sarcasm**

Mia's desk was piled high with homework. Her brother Leo walked in and said, "Oh, I see you're planning to have a fun night of partying with all those books." Mia rolled her eyes and chuckled.

Paragraph 2: **Understatement**

As she started working, she realized finishing everything might take a little while. The stack of assignments was daunting, but she told herself she'd get through it eventually.

Paragraph 3: **Hyperbole**

By the time she got halfway through, Mia felt like she had written a thousand pages and solved a million math problems. Her brain was ready to explode from all the information she was trying to process.

Activity #4: Teaching Humor Devices with Cartoons from Cartoon Stock

Cartoon Stock is a fantastic resource for upper elementary teachers looking to add a fun and engaging element to their humor-device lessons. With over 750,000 cartoons available, this site offers a vast collection of humorous content that can illustrate concepts like understatement, hyperbole, and irony. Although the site is primarily designed for writers to purchase cartoons for their work, students can still enjoy browsing through the cartoons without making any purchases. To help you get started, I've included links to three categories that align with our current topic:

[Understatement Cartoons](#)

[Hyperbole Cartoons](#)

[Irony Cartoons](#)



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Be sure to get all the parts of this activity.

Blog Post

[Irony Definition, Examples, and Lesson](#)

Tall Tales [Teachers](#)

[Pay Teachers.](#)

