



Discuss the Verbal Irony

Verbal irony is when the intended meaning of a statement is the opposite of what the statement appears to mean.

Example: A mother surveys her son's messy room as he watches television. "I'm so glad you decided to clean up your room."

The mother in the example is not glad, nor has the son decided to clean up. Her underlying statement is the opposite of what the words mean on the surface.

Below are several scenarios that include verbal irony. Identify the irony and write a paragraph on why it is irony.

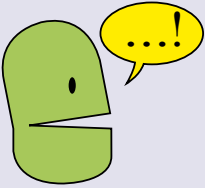
1. Peter was excited about his new phone. He ran into the cafeteria to show his best friend, Mark. As Peter ran across the room, he tripped over Ellen Carson's backpack. He went flying across the lunch table where the swim team was eating. Lunch trays, cups, food, and drink went spilling over the neighboring tables. Peter skidded to a stop in front of Mark, as Mark was doused with juice. "My, that was graceful," said Mark.

2. Janet woke up late for school. Elizabeth would be there to pick her up at any moment. Janet dashed to the bathroom in her pajamas to wash her face and fix her hair. She had soap suds all over her face, as she awkwardly tried pull her hair up in a ponytail. The water in the sink splashed her pajamas. At that moment, there was a knock on the bathroom door.

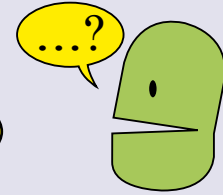
"It's Elizabeth," said her friend. "May I come in?" Janet answered with a quick yes.

Elizabeth opened the door and stood gazing at Janet. "Are you ready to go?"

3. Five year old Lee lived in a storm-ravaged area of town. He slept next to his brothers on the floor of a partially destroyed house. The family only had enough money for heat on the very coldest of winter days. Most of the family finances went to provide food for the hungry bellies. Even then, there were many nights when Lee and his brothers went to bed without dinner. How they would rebuild their home was a mystery. Now, all intelligent people know that poverty is a character flaw, especially in small children. Nonetheless, it was hard to see such a small child so hungry and cold.



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Student's answers will vary. Correct analysis should include the following references:

Peter was not graceful; he was, in fact, quite clumsy.

2. Janet woke up late for school. Elizabeth would be there to pick her up at any moment. Janet dashed to the bathroom in her pajamas to wash her face and fix her hair. She had soap suds all over her face, as she awkwardly tried pull her hair up in a ponytail. The water in the sink splashed her pajamas. At that moment, there was a knock on the bathroom door.

"It's Elizabeth," said her friend. "May I come in?" Janet answered with a quick yes.

Elizabeth opened the door and stood gazing at Janet. "Are you ready to go?"

Elizabeth can obviously tell that Janet is in no way ready to go, as she has soap on her face and she is in her pajamas.

3. Five year old Lee lived in a storm-ravaged area of town. He slept next to his brothers on the floor of a partially destroyed house. The family only had enough money for heat on the very coldest of winter days. Most of the family finances went to provide food for the hungry bellies. Even then, there were many nights when Lee and his brothers went to bed without dinner. How they would rebuild their home was a mystery. Now, all intelligent people know that poverty is a character flaw, especially in small children. Nonetheless, it was hard to see such a small child so hungry and cold.

The writer is being critical of those who think that poverty in small children is a character flaw by saying "all intelligent people know..." and "especially in small children." The writer means the opposite, that poverty in small children is not a character flaw and deserves compassion.