

# Analyzing Irony in “Lamb to the Slaughter” Lesson Plan

## Standards

1. **RL.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. **RL.9-10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. **L.9-10.6** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

## Procedures

This lesson should be done after you read “Lamb to the Slaughter.” It can be done as part of a whole class reading or done as an individual reading, depending on the skill level and knowledge of students.

1. Discuss irony. The graphic organizer handout lists the basics of irony and is sufficient for successful completion of the lesson’s objectives.
2. Find examples of irony in “Lamb to the Slaughter” and copy them in the chart.
3. Identify the type of irony and write it in the chart.
4. Interpret the irony and explain its significance to the overall meaning of the story.
5. Discuss student discoveries with a small group and/or full class discussion.
6. Optional: Write an irony analysis of “Lamb to the Slaughter.”

## Assessment

The chart is an excellent opportunity to practice and discuss the lesson’s stated objectives. In most cases it should be considered a formative assignment. In order to determine individual student mastery, there are questions on the short story quiz (included). An irony analysis writing assignment would also suffice.

## Analyzing Irony in Literature

Irony is the contrast between what is expected and what is real. Three primary types of irony in literature are *situational*, *verbal*, and *dramatic*.

**Situational Irony:** When what happens is the opposite of what is expected.

**Verbal Irony:** A contrast between the intended meaning and the apparent or expected meaning.

**Dramatic Irony:** When the audience knows something a character does not.

**Directions:** Fill in the chart below. In the left column write a specific example of irony in “Lamb to the Slaughter.” In the middle column write the type of irony in your example. In the right column explain the significance of the example.

Specific Example	Type of Irony	Analysis
She loved to luxuriate in the presence of this man, and to feel-almost as a sunbather feels the sun-that warm male glow that came out of him to her when they were alone together.	Situational	Certainly didn't predict this story's outcome based on this passage. One might expect a more tranquil exchange between the husband and wife this particular afternoon. Of course, that wouldn't make for much of a story now, would it?

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"If you're too tired to eat out," she went on, "it's still not too late. There's plenty of meat and stuff in the freezer, and you can have it right here and not even move out of the chair."	Verbal	This is only ironic after the fact, but he does get “plenty of meat” and, although not in the chair, he won't be moving anytime soon.
“At that point, Mary Maloney simply walked up behind him and without any pause she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head.”	Situational	Did you see that coming? Cause I didn't see that coming. Life comes at you fast.
She put the parcel down on the table and went through into the living room; and when she saw him lying there on the floor with his legs doubled up and one arm twisted back underneath his body, it really was rather a shock.	Dramatic	The shock should come as no shock since she's the one who killed him, but she has become so detached from her actions, it's as if she doesn't know it. We know it, though.
It'd be a favor to me if you'd eat it up. Then you can go on with your work again afterwards."	Verbal	It would be a favor to Mary if they ate it, but not for the reason the detectives suspect.
"Probably right under our very noses. What you think, Jack?"	Dramatic	We know they're eating the murder instrument, but the detectives do not.

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