

Analyzing Irony in “Civil Peace” 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 “Civil Peace.” 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 “Civil Peace” 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 “Civil Peace.”

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 “Civil Peace.” 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
“Jonathan Iwegbu counted himself extraordinarily lucky.”	Verbal or Situational	Perhaps lucky means something different because I’m not sure most people reading this would consider Jonathan lucky at all. It’s situational inasmuch as you wouldn’t expect someone who’s gone through a Civil War and lost a son to be so positive. This opening statement highlights one of the story’s primary themes—the power of positive thinking.

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“Only two houses away a huge concrete edifice some wealthy contractor had put up just before the war was a mountain of rubble. And here was Jonathan’s little zinc house of no regrets built with mud blocks quite intact!”	Situational	Perhaps Jonathan is lucky. His house has survived the war, even though better built houses right next to his did not last.
“The only money I have in this life is this twenty-pounds egg-rasher they gave me today . . .”	Verbal	This is a flat out lie, but it saves Jonathan’s life. It turns out the money is a huge blessing but for a far different reason than Jonathan expected when he received it.
“You done finish?” asked the voice outside. “Make we help you small. Oya, everybody!” “Police-o! Tief-man-so! Neighbors-o! We done loss-o! Police-o! . . .”	Verbal and Situational	Wow! The thieves are calling for the police. One wouldn’t expect that. Of course, the thieves really don’t want the police to show up (or care). What they say and what they intend is different. This is a good piece of mockery by the thieves.
“I count it as nothing,” he told his sympathizers, his eyes on the rope he was tying. “What is egg-rasher? Did I depend on it last week? Or is it greater than other things that went with the war? I say, let egg-rasher perish in the flames!”	Situational	Usually when I’m the victim of a home invasion and have my family’s life threatened by a gang of thieves, I’m a little rattled. Not Jonathan.

