

Questions and Activities Regarding Satire

In preparation for a multiple-choice exam on the winter reading, address the following questions and prompts. Some may require a bit of research on your part. Use a separate page or pages to record your work.

1. What is “satire” and how does it differ from “parody” and “sarcasm”?
2. In general, what is Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* satirizing and what is it parodying?
3. In particular, what happens in Parts III and IV of *Gulliver’s Travels*? Write a 200-word summary of each.
4. In *Gulliver’s Travels*, why does Jonathan Swift write in what appears to be title case? Is it title case? Explain.
5. Chronicle the life of satire as a genre or style of literary expression. When, how and why did it emerge, and how has it evolved? To share your info, draw a timeline; write a one- to two-page summary; or create a graphic display of some sort.
6. What is the purpose of satire?
7. How is satire different from absurdism?
8. Who is one prominent satirical writer of Ancient Greece?
9. Who are two prominent satirical writers of the European Renaissance?
10. What are three significant satirical texts of all time? Explain why you chose them.
11. Compare and contrast “The Colbert Report”, “The Daily Show”, “The Office” and the *Onion* and explain how each is or is not as effective as their counterparts. For example, compare the *Onion* to the both the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Village Voice*. What is the objective of each paper, and does each succeed in meeting it?
12. Write a two-page synopsis of *This is Spinal Tap*. Your synopsis should include logline (two-sentence description of the basic scenario, including any early ironic twists) title, author, genre, theme, main characters and a summary of the plot.
13. What is Episode 101 of “The Office” satirizing? Be thorough and specific.
14. What is Episode 501 of “The Office” satirizing? Be thorough and specific.
15. Draw a caricature of a friend or family member.
16. Draw a caricature of a celebrity.
17. Describe how it feels to caricature someone close to you versus someone in the public eye.
18. How does satire function in politics versus in one’s personal life? Is there/should there be a difference?
19. While satire is usually a soft blow meant to bring about change, is it ever a form of affection? Explain.
20. Create your own worksheet or assignment on any topic that somehow satirizes or parodies the assignments of any of your teachers. Keep in mind the overall purpose of satire.