

CLASS 06

Tone — Ironic Family Three Cousins, One Ladder

Continuation of the Tones series · Part 4

IR · SA · SD

contradiction · ridicule · contempt

WHAT THIS CLASS DOES

- 1 Pin down what irony actually IS — and isn't
- 2 Separate satire from irony from sardonic
- 3 Drill the 10 most common student mistakes
- 4 Walk through 6 CLAT-style two-liners
- 5 50-Q in-class practice + answer key

RECAP & TODAY

From disapproval to indirection

Last class: six cousins of direct disapproval. Today: three cousins of INDIRECT disapproval.

LAST CLASS

Disapproving Family

Six cousins. Direct rejection — moral, analytical, casual, public, emotional, doubting.

CN · CR · DS · DN · IN · SK

TODAY

Ironic Family

Three cousins. INDIRECT rejection — the author criticises without saying so plainly.

IR · SA · SD

THE FAMILY

Ironic — criticism by indirection

"All three cousins criticise without naming the criticism. They differ in flavour — contradiction, ridicule, or contempt."

RANGE

Subtle contradiction (IR) →
humorous social criticism (SA) →
bitter scorn (SD).

DECISION

Decide the flavour, not the topic.
All three may attack the same
target.

TRAPS

Mocking ≠ satire. Criticism ≠
sardonic. Contradiction ≠
bitterness.

IR

COUSIN

Ironic

Surface meaning vs reality — the cool cousin

COUSIN · IR

Ironic — meaning by contradiction

The writer says one thing but means the opposite, exposing contradiction, absurdity, hypocrisy, or unexpected reality. Mild, clever, witty, indirect.

CUE PATTERNS

Surface praise + opposite reality · 'admirable, considering...' · "'quick service' 40 minutes late' · self-defeating action

EXAMPLE

The government's commitment to transparency is truly admirable, considering how none of the reports were made public.

CONTRAST

Irony is contradiction. Sarcasm is mocking irony aimed at a person. Sardonic is bitter irony at large.

SSA

COUSIN

Satirical

Humorous criticism of system / institution

COUSIN · SA

Satirical — ridicule of institutions

Uses humour, exaggeration, or absurdity to expose social / institutional / political flaws or collective folly.

CUE PATTERNS

Absurd institutional action · committee about committees · system criticism · ridicule of collective conduct

EXAMPLE

The ministry formed another committee to determine why previous committees had failed.

CONTRAST

Satire targets a system; Irony lives in one sentence's contradiction; Sardonic carries bitterness.

SD

COUSIN

Sardonic

Bitter contempt — the dark cousin

COUSIN · SD

Sardonic — bitter scorn

Bitter, scornful, contemptuous mockery. Reflects cynicism and disappointment about people, society, or human folly at large.

CUE PATTERNS

'national talent' · 'renewable resource' · 'delusion' · contempt for human folly · cynical worldview · weariness

EXAMPLE

Expecting honesty from politicians has become the nation's favourite delusion.

CONTRAST

Sardonic is sour and weary. Satirical is funny and ridiculing. Irony is cool and contradictory.

MASTER COMPARISON

The Ironic-family ladder — one row at a time

DIMENSION	IRONIC	SATIRICAL	SARDONIC
Core feature	Surface vs reality	Humorous criticism	Bitter contempt
Mood	Witty, cool, light	Mocking, ridiculing	Cynical, weary
Target	An action / statement	A system / institution	Human folly at large
Source of edge	Contradiction	Absurdity / exaggeration	Scorn / disappointment
Reader feels	'That's contradictory.'	'That's ridiculous and funny.'	'That's bitter and contemptuous.'

“

*Ironic = 'That's contradictory.' Satirical
= 'That's ridiculous and funny.' Sardonic
= 'That's bitter and contemptuous.'*

The shortcut · CLAT Gurukul

TAKEAWAYS

Common mistakes — Part 1 of 2

- 1 Marking every mocking statement as 'Satirical' — but mockery alone is not satire.
- 2 Confusing Irony with Sarcasm — sarcasm is one form of irony, aimed at a person.
- 3 Ignoring emotional intensity — content alone doesn't decide the cousin; mood does.
- 4 Assuming Satire must always be funny — CLAT satire is often dry editorial humour.
- 5 Confusing Sardonic with Critical — Critical is calm; Sardonic carries scorn.
- 6 Missing fake praise as Irony — positive words + negative reality usually = IR.

TAKEAWAYS

Common mistakes — Part 2 of 2

- 1 Overlooking exaggeration in Satire — absurd numbers / scale are SA signals.
- 2 Confusing Cynical with Sardonic — Sardonic adds ridicule and contempt on top of cynicism.
- 3 Ignoring the writer's intention — ask 'what is the writer trying to do', not 'what is the topic'.
- 4 Treating tone like vocabulary — CLAT tone is contextual and emotional, not dictionary-bound.
- 5 Quotation-marks rule — ""X"" done by the author usually signals IR or SD, rarely SA.
- 6 Family-first rule — first ask: indirect criticism? Then choose IR vs SA vs SD by mood.

“

Contradiction. Ridicule. Bitterness. — in that order of intensity.

The Ironic-family ladder

QP-Q2

WALKTHROUGH

To reduce paperwork, the office introduced six additional approval forms.

A. Satirical

B. Optimistic

C. Melancholic

D. Laudatory

TRAP

Many will mark IR because there is contradiction. But the criticism is at the institutional / system level — the office is being ridiculed for an absurd self-defeating policy.

WORKING

System-level absurdity = SA. The author isn't bitter, just exposing institutional folly.

QP-Q3

WALKTHROUGH

Citizens once again trusted election promises, proving that memory loss is a national talent.

A. Celebratory

B. Sardonic

C. Didactic

D. Objective

TRAP

Some will mark Satirical because it ridicules. But the verdict is on the citizens themselves — 'national talent' is a scornful diagnosis of collective folly.

WORKING

Contempt for human folly at scale = SD. The mood is weary scorn, not playful ridicule.

Q P-Q8

WALKTHROUGH

The anti-corruption rally was sponsored by leaders currently under investigation.

A. Ironic

B. Reverential

C. Euphoric

D. Sombre

TRAP

Some will mark SA because corruption is a 'system'. But this is one clean sentence-level contradiction — no exaggeration, no scorn for citizens.

WORKING

Surface vs reality inside one statement = IR. Pure contradiction, no bitterness.

QP-Q23

WALKTHROUGH

The minister praised simplicity while arriving in a convoy of twenty luxury vehicles.

A. Satirical

B. Emotional

C. Appreciative

D. Neutral

TRAP

Many will mark IR because of the contradiction. But the criticism exposes a political class through exaggerated detail — institutional / collective ridicule.

WORKING

Humorous criticism of a political actor via exaggeration = SA.

QP-Q33

WALKTHROUGH

People still expect privacy from apps that literally track their every movement.

A. Sardonic

B. Analytical

C. Objective

D. Didactic

TRAP

Some will mark IR because of the surface-vs-reality structure. But the writer's mood is contemptuous — 'still expect... literally' carries weary scorn for users.

WORKING

Contempt for human folly = SD. The bitterness is in the word 'still' + 'literally'.

QP-Q44

WALKTHROUGH

The city's flood-prevention conference was postponed because the venue was flooded.

A. Satirical

B. Reverential

C. Gentle

D. Objective

TRAP

Some will mark IR because of the contradiction. But this is institutional absurdity — a system failing its own purpose, with the author ridiculing it.

WORKING

Institutional absurdity = SA. The criticism is structural, not personal contempt.

KEEP GOING

After this lecture

1. Attempt the 50-Q practice sheet under 35 min, +1/-0 marking.
2. Compare against the answer key — circle the contradiction / absurdity / contempt for every wrong.
3. Coming up → Mixed-family RC drill (six + three cousins together).

HELPLINE / WHATSAPP

+91 70330 05444

Drop your doubt with a screenshot of the question.

THE TONES SERIES

Critical · Analytical · Appreciative

Disapproving (six) — CN/CR/DS/DN/IN/SK

Ironic (three) — IR/SA/SD ← TODAY

Next: full-passage tone drill across all families.