

EXPLORING SATIRE

EVALUATING SOURCE CREDIBILITY

Satirical devices: parody, diminution, inflation, juxtaposition

Media concepts: “infotainment,” “hard news” versus “soft news”

Students will work in groups to explore one of the following satirical news sources:

Group 1- Saturday Night Live’s “Weekend Update”

(<https://www.nbc.com/saturday-night-live/video/weekend-update-apple-card/3931604>)

Group 2- “The Daily Show with Trevor Noah”

(<http://www.cc.com/shows/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah>)

Group 3- “The Onion” (<https://www.theonion.com/>)

Group 4- “Clickhole” (<https://www.clickhole.com/>)

Group 5- “Borowitz Report”

(<https://www.newyorker.com/humor/borowitz-report>)

Each group evaluates its satirical news source using the following prompts: (take notes in your composition book)

- a. What is the format of your satirical news source? (Television program? Online version of a print source? Online-only source?)\
- b. Does the source use convincing language to convey journalistic credibility, or is it clearly a “spoof”? How accessible or “user friendly” is the Web site? What are the “top stories” or “headlines”?
- c. Does this source convey political or partisan (Democratic or Republican) bias? If so, what are two examples?
- d. What brand or type of satire does this source seem to use the most? (Parody? Inflation? Diminution? Caricature?)
- e. Who or what are the main targets of political satire in this source?
- f. Choose a story or article from your source and evaluate it for its satirical effectiveness. Is it funny? Why or why not? Does it “ridicule, expose, or discredit” its target? If so, how? If not, how does it fail in its efforts?

Further Questions for Discussion: (We will discuss these as a class, but look them over so you are prepared)

To what extent should real news sources be held accountable for their mistakes or false reports?

–What is your opinion of “infotainment,” or the increasingly blurry lines between news reporting and entertainment?

–Do you think people who are the subject of these stories should respond? What are the possible implications of ignoring it? What are the possible implications of responding?

–How do you think American journalists can be encouraged to report on more challenging news stories, or to take reporting risks without worrying about offending government or corporate news sponsors?

Lesson Adapted from The Learning Network (NY Times)

name: _____ per: _____

EXPLORING SATIRE NOTES

satirical news source: _____

<p>–What is the format of your satirical news source? (Television program? Online version of a print source? Online-only source?)</p>	
<p>–Take notes on your satirical news source’s website. Does the source use convincing language to convey journalistic credibility, or is it clearly a “spoof”? How accessible or “user friendly” is the Web site? What are the “top stories” or “headlines”?</p>	
<p>–Does this source convey political or partisan (Democratic or Republican) bias? If so, what are two examples?</p>	

<p>–What brand or type of satire does this source seem to use the most? (Parody? Inflation? Diminution? Caricature?)</p>	
<p>–Who or what are the main targets of political satire in this source?</p>	
<p>–Choose a story or article from your source and evaluate it for its satirical effectiveness. Is it funny? Why or why not? Does it “ridicule, expose, or discredit” its target? If so, how? If not, how does it fail in its efforts?</p>	