**Satire** is a [genre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genre) of [literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literature), and sometimes [graphic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_arts) and [performing arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performing_art), in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule.   
The intent of satire is to shame individuals, corporations, government or society, itself, into improvement.Although satire is meant to be funny, its greater purpose is to criticize society through the use of wit and humor.   
Wit becomes a weapon and a tool to draw attention to those changes in society the satirist wants to change or improve.

Satire’s most frequent and effective literary technique is strong [irony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irony) or sarcasm. Other techniques used in satire are [parody](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parody), hyperbole, juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, [double entendre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double_entendre), and logical fallacies.  
  
\*The irony or sarcasm makes it appear that the satirist approves of—or at least accepts as natural—the very things the satirist wishes to attack.

[*Stephen Colbert*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Colbert)*’s television program,* [*The Colbert Report*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Colbert_Report) *(2005), is instructive in the methods of contemporary American satire.* [*Colbert's character*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Colbert_(character)) *is an opinionated and self-righteous commentator who, in his TV interviews, interrupts people, points and wags his finger at them, and "unwittingly" uses a number of logical fallacies. In doing so, he demonstrates the principle of modern American political satire: the ridicule of the actions of politicians and other public figures by taking all their statements and purported beliefs to their furthest (supposedly) logical conclusion, thus revealing their perceived hypocrisy or absurdity.*

TECHNIQUES OF SATIRE

Irony—most powerful and frequent technique  
  
Sarcasm

Logical Fallacies

Hyperbole  
  
Litotes or Meiosis (Understatement)

Examples of litotes: This is no small problem. She was not a little upset. It’s not unpleasant.

Parody

Parody is a kind of comedy that imitates and mocks individuals or a piece of work. However, when it mingles with satire, it makes satire more pointed and effective. Most importantly, a parody appeals to the reader’s sense of humor. He enjoys the writer poking fun at the set ideals of society and becomes aware of the lighter side of an otherwise serious state of affairs. Thus, parody adds spice to a piece of literature that keeps the readers interested.

Shakespeare wrote “[Sonnet](http://literarydevices.net/sonnet/) 13” in parody of traditional love poems common in his day. He presents an anti-love [theme](http://literarydevices.net/theme/) in a manner of a love poem mocking the exaggerated comparisons they made:

“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips’ red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;”

Unlike a love-poem goddess, his mistress does not have eyes like the sun, she does not have red lips nor does she have a white complexion. Her cheeks do not have a rosy color and her hair is not silky smooth. All the cliché qualities are missing in his mistress. Such a description allows Shakespeare to poke fun at the love poets who looked for such impossible qualities in their beloved.

DOUBLE ENTENDRE   
a word or expression capable of two interpretations with one usually risqué

example:  
"If I Said You Had a Beautiful Body, Would You Hold It Against Me."