

8 Irony, paradox, and interrupted patterns – Part 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English

Write it 3 times (English)

Irony

paradox

Recall

- You have said 'wonderful' and meant the opposite.
- You know two true statements can seem to contradict.
- You notice when a poem breaks its own pattern.

New ideas

Read these first. Each idea has a short worked example. Then do the Practice below.

■ 1 Irony

Irony arises when events or statements are inconsistent with expectations - either those readers bring to a text or those the text itself establishes. Two possible sources, and naming which is part of the analysis.

Worked example. A poem that praises order and then collapses into disorder has broken its own expectation.

■ 2 Paradox

A **paradox** juxtaposes seemingly contradictory elements, and the contradiction - which may or may not be reconciled - reveals a hidden idea.

Worked example. Calling silence 'the loudest answer' holds two terms together to say that refusal can communicate more than speech.

■ 3 Interrupted patterns

When a structural pattern is established, any interruption creates a point of emphasis. The pattern is what makes the break audible.

Worked example. One five-line stanza in a poem of quatrains is where the poem is pointing.

Watch out: Start an analysis with the exception, not the rule. The regular pattern is a background; the one place it breaks is the poem's own emphasis.

Practice

2.1 State the two sources of the expectations irony works against. [2]

2.2 Define paradox. [2]

2.3 State what the CED says about whether a paradox is reconciled. [1]

2.4 State what an interruption in a structural pattern creates. [2]

2.5 Explain why an analysis should begin with the exception. [2]
