


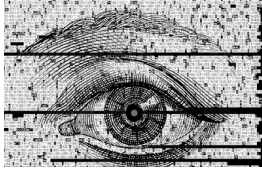
31 January 2012

You may choose your seat.

You will need an **ORANGE** textbook and
2 **pink sheets** (on the table by the door)!

The Lowest Animal
Introducing the Story

As a humorist, Mark Twain had a keen eye and sharp aim on social problems. . . .


He used his wit as a weapon to target injustice.

The Lowest Animal
Introducing the Story

In "The Lowest Animal," Twain pokes fun at the stature of humans within the animal kingdom.

He lampoons a *broad* spectrum of subjects:

greed, slavery, war, the subjection of women, science, and religion.



[End of Section]

The Lowest Animal
Literary Focus: Satire—The Weapon of Laughter


To bring about social change, **satire** ridicules the shortcomings of people and institutions.

I have been studying the traits and dispositions of the "lower animals" (so-called) and contrasting them with the traits and dispositions of man. I find the result humiliating to me. For it obliges me to renounce my allegiance to the Darwinian theory of the Ascent of Man from the Lower Animals, since it now seems plain to me that that theory ought to be vacated in favor of a new and truer one . . . the *Descent of Man from the Higher Animals*.

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The Lowest Animal
Literary Focus: Satire—The Weapon of Laughter



Although **satire** is meant to be funny, its main purpose is to attack something the author strongly disapproves of—using the *weapon of wit*.



The political world or social scene are a satirist's common targets.

The Lowest Animal
Literary Focus: Satire—The Weapon of Laughter

Satire began as a literary form, with the writer taking up the pen to poke fun through **exaggeration** and **irony**.

Today you can find satire in books, plays, song lyrics, talk shows, cartoons, graphic novels, and web sites. Can you think of an example?

The Lowest Animal
Literary Focus: Satire—The Weapon of Laughter


A favorite technique of the satirist is **exaggeration**—overstating something to make it look ridiculous.

I was aware that many men who have accumulated more millions of money than they can ever use have shown a rabid hunger for more. . . . I furnished a hundred different kinds of wild and tame animals the opportunity to accumulate vast stores of food, but none of them would do it. . . . [T]he ant pretended to store up supplies, but I was not deceived. I know the ant.

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The Lowest Animal
Literary Focus: Satire—The Weapon of Laughter

Irony is another important technique in the art of satire. Irony is a discrepancy or contrast



- between what is said and what is really meant
- between what appears to be true and what is really true

The Lowest Animal
Introducing the Story



Turn to Page 646

“The Lowest Animal”

- Turn to page 646
- Read Twain’s “The Lowest Animal,” paying attention to how he uses exaggeration and irony to make his argument