

Name: _____

Period: _____

Is It Truly Ironic?



INSTRUCTIONS: Listen to the song "Ironic" and closely read the lyrics below. For each example of irony depicted in the song, mark with an X whether it is a strong example of irony, a mediocre one, or just plain weak. Then answer the questions on the preceding page.

You can watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jne9t8sHpUc&list=PLBDF44F1B0C8180D3>

Lyrics: "Ironic" by Alanis Morissette	Strong	Mediocre	Weak
An old man turned ninety-eight He won the lottery and died the next day			
It's a black fly in your Chardonnay			
It's a death row pardon two minutes too late Isn't it ironic... don't you think			
It's like rain on your wedding day			
It's a free ride when you've already paid			
It's the good advice that you just didn't take Who would've thought ... it figures?			
Mr. Play-It-Safe was afraid to fly He packed his suitcase and kissed his kids good-bye He waited his whole damn life to take that flight And as the plane crashed down he thought 'Well isn't this nice...'			
And isn't it ironic... don't you think (Repeat Chorus) Well life has a funny way of sneaking up on you When you think everything's okay and everything's going right And life has a funny way of helping you out when You think everything's gone wrong and everything blows up In your face			
It's a traffic jam when you're already late			
It's a no-smoking sign on your cigarette break			
It's like ten thousand spoons when all you need is a knife			
It's meeting the man of my dreams And then meeting his beautiful wife			
And isn't it ironic... don't you think A little too ironic... and yeah I really do think... (Repeat Chorus) Life has a funny way of sneaking up on you Life has a funny, funny way of helping you out Helping you out			

Copyright Disclaimer Under Section 107 of the Copyright Act 1976, allowance is made for fair use for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research.

Name: _____

Period: _____

"Isn't it ironic?"



Alanis Morissette's classic 1995 song, "Ironic," has been widely used as a teaching tool for irony, much to the dismay of many English teachers and irony purists who criticize (quite ironically) that a number of the examples in the song are not actually ironic—they are instead just coincidences or bad luck.

As comedian, George Carlin, states in his book, *Brain Droppings*:

Irony deals with opposites; it has nothing to do with coincidence. If two baseball players from the same hometown, on different teams, receive the same uniform number, it is not ironic. It is a coincidence... Irony is 'a state of affairs that is the reverse of what was to be expected; a result opposite to and in mockery of the appropriate result.' For instance:

- *If a diabetic, on his way to buy insulin, is killed by a runaway truck, he is the victim of an accident. If the truck was delivering sugar, he is the victim of an oddly poetic coincidence. But if the truck was delivering insulin, ah! Then he is the victim of an irony.*

INSTRUCTIONS: Listen to the song "Ironic," then closely read the lyrics on the next page. For each example of irony depicted in the song, mark with an X whether it is a strong example of irony, a mediocre one, or just plain weak. Then answer the questions below. Be creative with your responses!

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think is the strongest example of irony in the song? Explain your answer.
2. What do you think is the weakest example of irony in the song? Explain your answer.
3. In the opening of the song, a 98-year-old man "won the lottery," then "died the next day." What might he die of to truly make this example ironic?
4. Where else other than "in your Chardonnay" might you find a "black fly" to make this example more ironic?
5. Describe a specific scenario in which "rain on your wedding day" would truly be ironic. Explain.
6. After "meeting the man of (your) dreams," who might you meet or what might you learn that would make this example more ironic?

Extended Thinking Activity: Write your own poem or song about irony. Or create your own video parody of the song "Ironic," improving upon Morissette's examples of irony. You can find an example of such a parody here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=321GwZFoKio>