What is Irony?

- Involves a contradiction between appearance and reality.
- In literature it is a deliberate gap between the language used and what is being discussed.
- Irony difference in POV b/w a character and the narrator or reader.

Four 3 Major Types of Irony:

1. **Verbal Irony.** Spoken words only.

   **occurs when character says one thing, but suggests/intends opposite. Contrast is between what speaker says and what he actually means.

   For ex: in *Julius Caesar*, Mark Antony repeats the words "and Brutus is an honorable man" in the famous “Friends, Romans, Countrymen” speech. Mark Antony’s meaning, however, is that Brutus is dishonorable because Brutus, Caesar’s best friend, joined other conspirators and plunged a knife into Caesar’s chest.

   **Note:** Verbal irony may be confused with sarcasm, but sarcasm is harsh and direct, while verbal irony is implied.

2. **Dramatic Irony.** More than just spoken words.

   **occurs when the meaning intended by character’s words/actions is opposite of the true situation. Contrast is between what the character says, thinks, or does and the true situation. Character cannot see or understand the contrast, but audience/reader can.

   For example, in *Othello*, dramatic irony occurs when Othello refers to Iago as “honest Iago.” Unknown to Othello, Iago is a villain who deceives him into thinking that Desdemona (Othello’s wife) has been unfaithful. For this, Othello unjustly kills his wife, believing the whole time in Iago’s honesty.

   **Note the difference in examples for verbal and dramatic irony:** Antony calls Brutus “honorable” and knows he is not honorable, while Othello calls Iago “honest” and does not know of Iago’s deceit.

3. **Situational Irony:** Defies logical cause/effect relationships and justifiable expectations.

   **occurs when persons/events come together in improbable situations, creating a tension between expected and real results.

   For example, Dorothy travels to a wizard and fulfills her challenging demands to go home, before discovering she had the ability to go back home all the time. The Scarecrow longs for *intelligence*, only to discover he is already a *genius*, and the *Tin Woodsman* longs to be capable of *love*, only to discover he already has a heart.

   **Remember:** In general, irony involves a contradiction between appearance and reality.