

# The use of irony in "advice to youth" by mark twain essay sample

[Life](#), [Adolescence](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## **The Use of Irony in “ Advice to Youth” by Mark Twain Essay Sample**

The use of irony in “ Advice to Youth” by Mark Twain “(born Nov. 30, 1835, Florida, Mo., U. S.—died April 21, 1910, Redding, Conn.) American humorist, journalist, lecturer, and novelist who acquired international fame for his travel narratives, especially *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), *Roughing It* (1872), and *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), and for his adventure stories of boyhood, especially *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885). A gifted raconteur, distinctive humorist, and irascible moralist, he transcended the apparent limitations of his origins to become a popular public figure and one of America’s best and most beloved writers.

Samuel Clemens, the sixth child of John Marshall and Jane Moffit Clemens, was born two months prematurely and was in relatively poor health for the first 10 years of his life. His mother tried various allopathic and hydropathic remedies on him during those early years, and his recollections of those instances (along with other memories of his growing up) would eventually find their way into *Tom Sawyer* and other writings. Because he was sickly, Clemens was often coddled, particularly by his mother, and he developed early the tendency to test her indulgence through mischief, offering only his good nature as bond for the domestic crimes he was apt to commit”[1]

About irony

Samuel Johnson defined as: “ A mode of speech in which the meaning is contrary to the words.” Anatole France claimed that a world without irony

would be like a forest without birds: "Irony is the gaiety of meditation and the joy of wisdom." Novelist David Foster Wallace has argued, in the Review of Contemporary Fiction, that irony is an agent of "great despair and stasis in U. S. culture." In "Robert Fulford's column about irony" we find that irony has been with us since antiquity. Robert Fulford also tells a short story related irony by Michael Hirschorn, who tried to achieve freedom from irony: "He had come to the mournful conclusion that, in this period of history, irony promotes emotional dishonesty. He was giving it up, the way others give up cigarettes or alcohol. He wrote about trying to achieve sincerity by responding honestly to all questions and by actually enjoying (rather than sneering at) culture and humanity." [2] The advice Mark gives to the youth:

"» Always obey your parents.« This is the first peice of advice Mark gives. However its the words that follows these that is satirical. » When they are present.« Twain is say only to obey your parents only when they are around. So when you're on your own, at school, outside, where ever, you don't have to obey your parents. » Be respectful to your superiors, if you have any, also to strangers, and sometimes to others.« An example Twain uses is, if a person offends you and you're not sure whether they did it intentionally or not, don't resort to extreme measures trying to get back at them. Just simply watch them and wait for the best chance to get them back. » Go to bed early, wake up early.« Twain says this is wise, some authorities say to wake up with the sun rise, and some say other things, but Twain says that the best way to get up is with a lark, and if you find the right one, you'll get a good reputation.

The fourth piece of advice Twain gives is about lying. » You want to be very careful about lying« Twain says. Instead of saying that lying is bad and don't do it. He says to be careful, otherwise you will get caught. » Never handle firearms carelessly.« This one is funny. Twain is saying that is ok to handle a gun, just be careful. The last piece of advice that Twain gives is about reading. He says that the best books to read are that ones that young people read. Implying that we don't have to waste our time with these huge chapter books and their fancy vocabulary. The simplified ones are better.”[3] Even at the beginning, the author defines the term of advice, he said anticipated what to expect from his text: “ Being told I would be expected to talk here, I inquired what sort of talk I ought to make. They said it should be something suitable to youth-something didactic, instructive, or something in the nature of good advice.

Very well. I have a few things in my mind which I have often longed to say for the instruction of the young; for it is in one's tender early years that such things will best take root and be most enduring and most valuable.” The irony is present in all advice, we can realise this by the presence of humor which dominates the language. Let us see the following sentences: “ Be respectful to your superiors, if you have any, also to strangers, and sometimes to others. Now as to the matter of lying. You want to be very careful about lying; otherwise you are nearly sure to get caught. Never handle firearms carelessly. The sorrow and suffering that have been caused through the innocent but heedless handling of firearms by the young! There are many sorts of books; but good ones are the sort for the young to read.

remember that. They are a great, an inestimable, and unspeakable means of improvement. Therefore be careful in your selection, my young friends; be very careful; confine yourselves exclusively to Robertson's Sermons, Baxter's Saint's Rest, The Innocents Abroad, and works of that kind." Consequently in the text is about young men receiving advice from the narrator. These advice are full of humor and satire and because on this the text is dominated by irony.

### Bibliographie

1. [http://www. biography. com/articles/Mark-Twain-9512564](http://www.biography.com/articles/Mark-Twain-9512564)
  2. Robert Fulford's column about irony ([http://www. robertfulford. com/Irony. html](http://www.robertfulford.com/Irony.html))
  3. Justin Rivera " Advice to Youth" by Mark Twain: Satire ([http://justinrivera16. blogspot. com/2008/08/advice-to-youth-by-mark-twain-satiremn. html](http://justinrivera16.blogspot.com/2008/08/advice-to-youth-by-mark-twain-satiremn.html))
- [1] [http://www. biography. com/articles/Mark-Twain-9512564](http://www.biography.com/articles/Mark-Twain-9512564)
- [2] Robert Fulford's column about irony ([http://www. robertfulford. com/Irony. html](http://www.robertfulford.com/Irony.html))
- [3] Justin Rivera " Advice to Youth" by Mark Twain: Satire ([http://justinrivera16. blogspot. com/2008/08/advice-to-youth-by-mark-twain-satiremn. html](http://justinrivera16.blogspot.com/2008/08/advice-to-youth-by-mark-twain-satiremn.html))