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## **Episode #230**

Irony, sarcasm, and cynicism.  
Differences.

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- Did you know that most English learners know more grammar than the native speaker but can barely speak?
- Is that so? Now that's pure irony.

Welcome to Speak English Now podcast, with your host, Georgiana. The podcast that will help you speak English fluently with no grammar and no textbooks.

Hi! I'm Georgiana. Thanks for joining me for a new Speak English Now podcast episode.

Today we have a very interesting topic:

- I'm going to talk about three concepts that are often confused: **irony, sarcasm, and cynicism.**
- Next, you'll practice verb tenses with a short story about two kids who have a problem on a frozen lake. Okay, let's get started.

Yes, many language learners indeed know more grammar than the average native speaker, yet they can barely speak fluently. That's why I recommend my mini-course, where you can understand how to develop your speech, among other things.

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**DAY #1**

Well, let's get down to business.

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## What is the difference between irony, sarcasm, and cynicism?

We are going to analyze these concepts one by one, and of course, I will give you some examples; you learn very well with examples! And it's not irony :)

### **Irony.**

The irony is an "expression that implies something contrary or different from what is said, usually as a mockery."

Okay. To make it clear, a "mockery" is an action or words with the intention of laughing at something or someone. It can also be a simple joke.

The **irony** is sometimes directed at oneself or a situation.

Let's look at an example:

- How was the date with that girl you met?
- Ah, fantastic! It couldn't have gone better. She said she would call me... But she didn't ask for my phone number.

When in the dialogue, he says, "it couldn't have gone better," he is obviously saying the opposite of reality and uses it as a subtle mockery of himself.

**Irony** also occurs when there is an outcome that is not expected. For example:

- A fire in a firehouse.
- The financial advisor going bankrupt.
- A dietician with overweight problems.

All these situations have their dose of irony.

Now let's look at sarcasm.

**Sarcasm** is very similar to irony, but what differentiates it is the intention. **Sarcasm** is a cruel irony with which someone or something is offended or mistreated".

The person using sarcasm seeks to ridicule, humiliate or insult.

### **Example:**

- The report won't be ready today. I think I'll finish it next week.

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- Ah, Tom...! You are always such a hard worker!

In this example, sarcasm is used to attack Tom's work and make it clear that he works slowly.

Finally, **cynicism**.

I am not going to go into the philosophical doctrine of cynicism from Ancient Greece, but how it is commonly used.

There are two ways of understanding **cynicism**. First, a cynical person is someone who has no shame. He or she lies unashamedly and defends dishonorable behavior and actions. In other words, someone who has no principles and acts without ethics or morals. For example, a politician is found to be corrupt, and he, instead of apologizing, says: "Well, this is commonplace. All politicians, in one way or another, do similar things."

Second, **cynicism** also refers to extreme skepticism. The cynic no longer believes in anything. He doesn't believe in politics, he doesn't believe in relationships, in friendship, etc. This leads to not trusting anything, having no principles, and being suspicious of everything. In a way, it can lead to behaving like the previous explanation about cynicism.

I have a friend who thinks this way. In some things, she is not wrong. Perhaps the opposite of this kind of cynicism is extreme positivism.

Okay, now we know these three concepts a little better. Information is power, and use power responsibly :)

## POV-Story

(Learn grammar in context)

Now let's move on to practice with a short point-of-view story. I tell you the same story twice. The second time I change some grammar aspect, like the verb tense. This way, you can practice the grammar intuitively and without memorizing anything.

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Come on, the first time, in the past tense:

On a cold winter afternoon, two children decided to go skating on a nearby frozen lake. They put on their skates and started skating, having fun as only children can have fun.

Suddenly, the ice broke, and one of them fell into the water, landing under the ice. Quickly, the other boy grabbed a small rock and hit the ice ferociously until he managed to break it and save his friend.

When the ambulance and police arrived, they were shocked at what happened and wondered:

-How did that little boy manage to break through the ice? It's impossible! It's too thick!

An older man who saw it all happen said:

-I know how the child managed to break the ice.

And they asked him:

-How?

And the older man answered:

-There was no one to tell him he couldn't do it.

Now we change the point of view. From the children's perspective and in the present tense:

On a cold winter afternoon, my friend and I decided to go skating on a nearby frozen lake. We put on our skates and start skating, having fun as only we kids have fun.

Suddenly, the ice breaks, and my friend falls into the water, getting under the ice. Quickly, I grab a small rock and hit the ice ferociously until I manage to break it and save my friend.

When the ambulance and police arrive, they are shocked at what has happened and wonder:

-How did I manage to break through the ice? It's impossible; it's too thick!

An older man who has seen everything that has happened says:

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-I know how the child has managed to break the ice.  
And they ask him:  
-How?  
And the older man replies:  
-There was no one to tell him he couldn't do it.

Sometimes, you have to follow your instinct.  
And speaking of instincts, follow yours and get my complete courses now at:  
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See you next week, and use irony, sarcasm, and cynicism with great caution :) Take care!



*Georgiana*

founder of  
[SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](http://SpeakEnglishPodcast.com)