



**Dorothy Parker**

*US writer, critic, wit*

**1** And on hearing that President Coolidge, a man of few words and even action, was dead, she inquired, '\*\*\*\*\*'.

**2** Then asked what she thought of a certain woman, she breathed, feigning admiration, '\*\*\*\*\*'.



**Sir Noël Coward**

*Terribly, terribly witty actor/playwright*

**3** A dim-witted impresario, no friend of Coward's, blew his brains out. When told, the playwright remarked, '\*\*\*\*\*'.

**4** Asked his opinion of a play featuring a child 'prodigy', Coward remarked, '\*\*\*\*\*'.



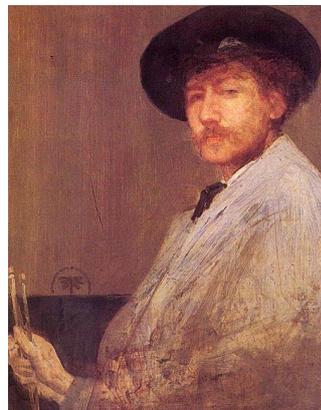
**Oscar Wilde**

*Aesthete, writer, wit*

**5** Wilde, like Churchill, could make a would-be insulter look quite foolish. Receiving bouquets in a theatre foyer one night, he suddenly found himself presented with a rotten cabbage. He took it, smiled and said, '\*\*\*\*\*'.

**6** A custom officer once asked him if he had anything to declare. '\*\*\*\*\*'.

**7** Asked his opinion of a truly awful play, he replied, '\*\*\*\*\*'.



**James Whistler**

*US painter, friendly foe of Wilde*

**8** Whistler often got his own back on Wilde. On the one occasion, after a particularly scintillating remark from the artist, Wilde exclaimed, 'I wish I had said that' '\*\*\*\*\*' said Whistler.

**9** A well-known bore tried to engage him in conversation: 'You know, Mr. Whistler, I passed your house last night-' '\*\*\*\*\*' said Whistler.

A

'You will, Oscar, you will.'

B

'The play was a great success – but the audience was a disaster.'

C

'You know, she speaks eighteen languages – and can't say 'No' in any of them.'

D

'Thank you, my dear fellow. Every time I smell it I shall be reminded of you.'

E

'Thank you.'

F

'No. I have nothing to declare, except my genius.'

G

'Two things should have been cut. The second act and that youngster's throat.'

H

'How can they tell?'

I

'He must have been a marvelously good shot.'

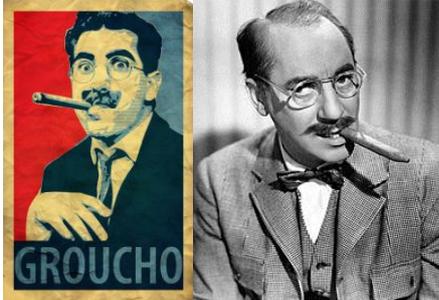
<p><b>A</b> Being mistaken for his own gardener one day, a nosey woman asked <b>Groucho Marx</b> how much he was paid. ‘Oh, I don’t get paid in dollars,’ he replied simply. ‘The lady of the house just lets me sleep with her.’</p>	<p><b>B</b> Warner Brothers threatened legal action over the proposed title of his next picture, ‘A Night in Casablanca’, arguing that it was too close to their own ‘Casablanca’. <b>Groucho Marx</b> told them. ‘I’ll sue you for using the word “Brothers.”’</p>
<p><b>C</b> And asked what he thought of the latest Victor Mature/Hedy Lamarr film, <b>Groucho Marx</b> answered, ‘You can’t expect the public to get excited about a film where the leading man’s bust is bigger than the leading lady’s.’</p>	<p><b>D</b> A drunk lurched up to <b>Groucho Marx</b> , patted him on the back and said, ‘You old son-of-a-gun, - you probably don’t remember me.’ Groucho snapped, ‘I never forget a face but in your case I’ll be glad to make an exception.’</p>
<p><b>E Churchill</b> was one of the few people to get the better of Shaw. The latter invited him to the first night of his play, enclosing two tickets. ‘One for yourself and one for a friend – if you have one.’ Churchill wrote back, saying he couldn’t make it, but could he have tickets for the second night – ‘if there is one.’</p>	<p><b>F</b> And when a very old man, on one of his increasingly rare visit to the House of Commons, an MP remarked of him, ‘After all, they say he’s potty.’ ‘They say he can’t hear either,’ muttered <b>Churchill</b>.</p>
<p><b>G</b> The young man who photographed him on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday said courteously that he hoped to do the same on his hundredth. ‘I don’t see why not,’ said <b>Churchill</b>. ‘You look reasonably fit to me.’</p>	<p><b>H</b> And to a female MP who once rebuked him for being intoxicated at a dinner party, <b>Churchill</b> retorted, ‘And you, madam, are ugly. But I shall be sober tomorrow.’</p>
<p><b>I</b> On the subject of an ill-received play, the newly successful <b>Shaw</b> was cabled by a producer now offering to stage the same work he’d earlier rejected. Shaw cabled back: ‘Better never than late.’</p>	<p><b>J</b> And while at a party, <b>Shaw</b> was noticed standing alone in a corner. His hostess anxiously enquired if he was enjoying himself. ‘Certainly,’ replied. ‘There is nothing else here to enjoy.’</p>
<p><b>K Shaw</b>, once a music critic, was in a restaurant which boasted a tone-deaf orchestra. Its leader recognized him and sent a note asking what he would like them to play next. ‘Dominoes,’ replied Shaw.</p>	<p><b>L</b> Another would-be hostess sent <b>Shaw</b> the pompous invitation: ‘Lady Blank will be at home on Tuesday between four and six o’clock.’ Back it came, bearing Shaw’s scribbled reply: Mr. Bernard Shaw likewise.’</p>
<p><b>M Picasso</b>, like Whistler, despaired of poor design, in his case his own. A visitor once found him staring disconsolately at painting on the easel so, to cheer him up, said ‘It’s a masterpiece.’ ‘No, the nose is all wrong,’ Picasso said. ‘It throws the whole picture out of perspective,’ ‘Then why not alter the nose?’ ‘Impossible,’ sighed Picasso. ‘I can’t find it.’</p>	<p><b>N</b> An American GI told <b>Picasso</b> he didn’t like modern paintings because they weren’t realistic, then went on to show him a snapshot of his girlfriend. ‘My, is she really as small as that?’ asked Picasso.</p>
<p><b>O</b> Asked why he had none of his own paintings on the walls of his house, <b>Picasso</b> replied, ‘I can’t afford them.’</p>	<p><b>P Picasso</b> went to see his local cabinetmaker for a new wardrobe and drew a quick sketch of what he wanted on a sheet of paper. He gave the sketch to the cabinetmaker and asked how much it would cost. ‘Nothing at all,’ replied the craftsman. ‘Just sign the sketch.’</p>

1 'How much are you paid?'

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 .....

2 'Your title, *A Night in Casablanca*, is too close to our title, *Casablanca*.'

.....  
 .....



3 'What do you think of the latest Victor Mature / Hedy Lamarr film?'

.....  
 .....

4 'You old son-of -a-gun, you probably don't remember me.'

.....  
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5 'One for yourself and one for a friend if you have one.'

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6 'After all, they say he's potty.'

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7 'I hope to photograph you again on your hundredth birthday.'

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8. 'You're drunk.'

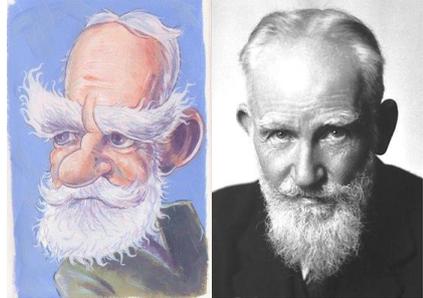
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9 'I will stage your play'

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10 'Are you enjoying yourself?'

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11 'What would you like us to play next?'

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12 'Lady Blank will be at home on Tuesday between four and six o'clock.'

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13 'It's a masterpiece.'

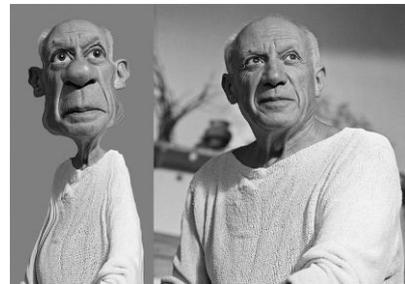
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'Then why not alter the nose?'

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14 'I don't like modern paintings because they aren't realistic.'

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 .....



15 'Why don't you have any of your own paintings on your walls?'

.....  
 .....

16 'How much will it cost?'

.....  
 .....

## TEACHER'S NOTES

## Famous last words

Longman **Reading Games** by **Jill** and **Charles Hadfield** for intermediate to advanced students

### Type of activity

Whole class divided in groups of four retelling anecdotes about famous witticisms and filling in speech bubbles

### Level/Time required

Intermediate/shorter than average

Games material

Introductory cartoons

Parker, Coward, Wilde, Whistler cartoons

Texts: A; B; C; D; E; F; G; H; I; J; K; L; M; N; O; P

Worksheet

### Function practised

Reporting what other people said

### Structures

Past tenses, reported speech

### Lexical areas

Social occasions, art, music, theatre

### Problem vocabulary

Parker, Coward, Wilde, Whistler cartoons:

Disaster, genius, good shot, feigning, dim-witted, impresario, blew his brains out, featuring, prodigy, engage in, would-be, insulter, foyer, rotten, customs officer, scintillating

A: nosey

B: threatened, legal action, sue

C: bust

D: son of a gun, snapped, exception

E: get the better of, latter, enclosing

F: potty

G: courteously

H: rebuked, intoxicated, sober

I: ill-received, stage, cabled

J: hostess

K: tone-deaf, orchestra, dominoes

L: would-be, pompous, scribbled

M: despair of, disconsolately, easel, masterpiece, perspective, alter

N: snapshot

O: afford

P: cabinetmaker, sketch

### How to use the activity

Make one copy of the introductory cartoons for each student. Make enough copies of the Parker, Coward, Wilde, Whistler cartoons for one half of the students to have a copy each. Make enough copies of the sixteen texts, A-P, for the students to have one text each, with as much variety as possible in the class. Make enough copies of the worksheet for one quarter of students to have a copy each.

Begin by giving everyone a copy of the introductory cartoons and talking about them together. Find out if the students know who the people are

(**Sir Winston Churchill**, war leader and one-liner extraordinary;

**George Bernard Shaw**, playwright, critic, socialist;

**Pablo Picasso**, Spanish artist, sculptor and wry wit;

**Groucho Marx**, US comic, maker of snappy remarks) and give them a little background if they don't.

Put the students into pairs and give each pair a copy of the Parker, Coward, Wilde, Whistler cartoons. Ask the students to work in pairs to match the stories with their last lines. When they have done this, give each student one of the sixteen texts, A-P. If you have fewer than sixteen students, give some students two texts. If you have more than sixteen students, some students will have the same text. Ask them to read and memorize the details of the story so that they can tell it to others.

When they are ready, ask them to get up and walk around the class telling their story to other people. You can put a time limit on this part of the activity if you like. When they have finished or the time limit is up, regroup them into fours and give each group a worksheet to fill in.

The object of the activity is to see how many exchanges they can remember and fill in.

**Key:** 1h, 2c, 3i, 4g, 5d, 6f, 7b, 8a, 9e.

Worksheet

1 'How much are you paid?' 'Oh, I don't get paid in dollars. The lady of the house just lets me sleep with her.'

2 'Your title, A Night in Casablanca, is too close to our title, Casablanca.' 'I'll sue you for using the word "Brothers."'

3 'What do you think of the latest Victor Mature / Hedy Lamarr film?' 'You can't expect the public to get excited about a film where the leading man's bust is bigger than the leading lady's.'

4 'You old son-of-a-gun, you probably don't remember me.' 'I never forget a face but in your case I'll be glad to make an exception.'

5 'One for yourself and one for a friend – if you have one.' 'I can't make it, but can I have tickets for the second night – if there is one.'

6 'After all, they say he's potty.' 'They say he can't hear either.'

7 'I hope to photograph you again on your hundredth birthday.' 'I don't see why not. You look reasonably fit to me.'

8 'You're drunk.' 'And you, madam, are ugly. But I shall be sober tomorrow.'

9 'I will stage your play.' 'Better never than late.'

10 'Are you enjoying yourself?' 'Certainly. There is nothing else here to enjoy.'

11 'What would you like us to play next?' 'Dominoes.'

12 'Lady Blank will be at home on Tuesday between four and six o'clock.' 'Mr. Bernard Shaw likewise.'

13 'It's a masterpiece.' 'No, the nose is all wrong. It throws the whole picture out of perspective.' 'Then why not alter the nose?' 'I can't find it.'

14 'I don't like modern paintings because they aren't realistic.' 'My, is she really as small as that?'

15 'Why don't you have any of your own paintings on your walls?' 'I can't afford them.'

16 'How much will it cost?' 'Nothing at all. Just sign the sketch.'

**Follow-up:** Ask students to imagine what would happen if Picasso met Groucho Marx or Churchill met Shaw. Who would insult the other more? Ask them to work in pairs to write an insulting dialogue.

## Vocabulary

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dorothy Parker</b></p> <p>wit [wɪt] остряк; дотепник breathe [bri:ð] дихати; вдихати feign [feɪn] v симулювати; прикидатися, придурюватися admiration [ˌædmə'reɪʃən] n захоплення, захват</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sir Noël Coward</b></p> <p>witty ['wɪtɪ] а дотепний, розумний playwright ['pleɪraɪt] драматург dim-witted а тупий, дурний impresario [ɪmpri'sɔ:riəʊ] n ; (pl- os , - ri) імпресаріо, антрепренер; директор, адміністратор, менеджер blew his brains out вибив його мізки blow your/sb's brains out – to kill yourself or someone else with a shot to the head (тут вжито у переносному значенні) blow out роздмухувати (сварку) feature ['fi:tʃə] виводити в головній ролі prodigy ['prɒdɪdʒɪ] надвичайно обдарована людина (дитина) infant /child/ prodigy — вундеркінд to be a good (dead) shot влучно стріляти marvelously ['mɜ:vələsli] чудово, прекрасно shot [ʃɒt] 1) постріл 2) стрілець 3) спорт. гравець 4) людина, особистість throat [θrəʊt] горло, гортань, глотка</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Oscar Wilde</b></p> <p>aesthete ['i:sθi:t] естет would-be ['wʊdbɪ] потенційний, можливий, майбутній insulter [ɪn'sʌltə] оскорбляючий, кривдник foyer ['fɔɪeɪ] фойє rotten ['rɒtən] гнилий, прогнилий; зіпсований, тухлий cabbage ['kæbɪdʒ] капуста customs officer митник, митний інспектор declare [dɪ'kleə] заявляти; повідомляти; декларувати genius ['dʒi:niəs] геній, геніальна людина success [sək'ses] успіх, удача audience ['ɔ:diəns] публіка, глядачі, аудиторія disaster [dɪ'zɑ:stə] n нещастя; лихо, біда; катастрофа</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>James Whistler</b></p> <p>foe [fəʊ] ворог, недруг occasion [ə'keɪzən] випадок particularly [pə'tɪkjʊləli] дуже, надзвичайно; особливо scintillating ['sɪntɪleɪtɪŋ] іскристий, блискаючий remark [rɪ'mɑ:k] замечание; высказывание; зауваження; вислів artist ['ɑ:tɪst] художник bore [bɔ:] нудна людина; зануда</p>

## Texts A – P

A:

nosey ['nəʊzi] 1) носатий; довгоносий;  
2) цікавий, допитливий

B:

threatened ['θretnd] такий, котрому  
загрожують

legal action *судовий позов*

sue [s(j)u:] переслідувати у судовому  
порядку; порушувати справу

C:

bust [bʌst] верхня частина тіла; груди  
(жінки); бюст

D:

drunk [drʌŋk] п'яний

lurch [lɜ:tʃ] хилитися, нахилитися;  
похитуватися

pat [pæt] поплескувати (*кого-небудь*);  
шльопати

son-of-a-gun негідник; паршивець

snar [snær] розмовляти різко, уривчасто,  
роздратовано; накидатися (*на кого-  
небудь*); огризатися, гаркати

exception [ɪk'seɪʃən] виключення, виняток

E:

get the better of взяти верх над

latter ['lætə] останній (*з двох названих*);  
другий

enclose [ɪn'kləʊz] вкладати (*в конверт*)

F:

increasingly [ɪn'kri:sɪŋlɪ] більшою мірою

rare [reə] рідкісний, винятковий,  
надзвичайний

House of Commons Палата громад (*в  
англійському парламенті*)

MP member of Parliament

potty ['pɒti] 1) дрібний, незначний

2) схилений (*на чому-небудь*); який

втрачає розум, божеволіє (*по кому-небудь*)

mutter ['mʌtə] бурмотати, мимрити;

говорити тихо, невиразно

G:

courteously ['kɜ:tɪəsli] ввічливо

hundredth ['hʌndrədθ] сотий

reasonably ['ri:zənəblɪ] досить, цілком

fit [fɪt] здоровий, бадьорий

H:

female ['fi:meɪl] особа жіночий статі; жінка

rebuke [rɪ'bjʊ:k] дорікати, докоряти;

винити; засуджувати

intoxicated [ɪn'tɒksɪkeɪtɪd] п'яний

retort [rɪ'tɔ:t] відповідати тим же;

відповідати образою на образу

ugly ['ʌɡli] потворний; огидний, бридкий,  
гидкий

sober ['səʊbə] тверезий

I:

subject ['sebdʒɪkt] предмет, тема (*розмови*)

ill-received погано прийнятий

receive [rɪ'si:v] отримувати, сприймати,  
приймати

successful [sək'sesfəl] успішний

cable ['keɪbl] телеграфувати (*по  
підводному кабелю*)

stage [steɪdʒ] ставити (*п'єсу, оперу*)

reject [rɪ'dʒekt] відхилити

J:

alone [ə'ləʊn] один, самотній; на самоті

enjoy [ɪn'dʒɔɪ] насолоджуватися (*чим-  
небудь*); веселитися, добре проводити час

hostess ['həʊstɪs] господиня дому  
(*стосовно гостя*)

anxiously ['æŋkʃəsli] з хвилюванням,  
тривожно

enquire [ɪn'kwɪəɪə] запитувати, дізнаватися

K:

boast [bəʊst] хвастати, хвастатися, похвалитися  
tone-deaf ['təʊn'deɪf] *позбавлений музичного слуху*  
orchestra ['ɔ:kɪstrə] оркестр  
recognize ['rekəɡnaɪz] узнавати, упізнавати  
note [nəʊt] записка  
dominoes ['dɒmɪnəʊz] доміно (*гра*)  
reply [rɪ'plaɪ] відповідати

L:

omprouous ['rɒmpɹəs] помпезний, пихатий, зарозумілий; пишномовний  
scribble ['skrɪbl] неакуратно писати; виводити карлючки  
likewise ['laɪkwɑɪz] подібно, так само, у такий же спосіб

M:

despair [dɪs'peə] *втрачати надію; впадати у відчай*  
design [dɪ'zaɪn] дизайн  
disconsolately [dɪs'kɒnsələtli] *нещасно, невтішно, безутішно*  
easel ['i:zəl] мольберт  
cheer up [tʃiə] підбадьорювати; підтримувати; утішати  
masterpiece ['mɑ:stəpi:s] *шедевр*  
throw [θrəʊ] направляти, посилати; викидати  
perspective [pə'spektɪv] перспектива  
alter ['ɔ:lteɪ] змінювати, переробляти, міняти  
sigh [saɪ] зітхати

N:

GI [dʒɪ:] [aɪ] a soldier in the US army  
soldier['səʊldʒə] солдат, рядовий  
go on (*went; gone*) продовжувати; (*to*) переходити (*до чого-небудь*)  
snapshot ['snæpʃɒt] моментальний знімок, моментальна фотографія  
my [maɪ] *виражає подив, переляк, захоплення (скор. від my God!, my goodness)*

O:

afford [ə'fɔ:d] мати можливість, могли (*зробити що-небудь*); дозволити собі (*покупку, задоволення*)

P:

local ['ləʊkəl] місцевий, приватний  
cabinet-maker ['kæbɪnət,meɪkə] столяр-червонодеревець  
wardrobe ['wɔ:drəʊb] гардероб, платтяна шафа  
draw [drɔ:ɪ] (*drew [dru:]; drawn [drɔ:n]*) малювати; креслити  
sketch [sketʃ] ескіз, нарис; замальовка  
craftsman ['krɑ:ftsmən] ремісник; майстер  
sign [saɪn] підписувати; підписуватися

