

# Sarcasm in a Speech? What an Original Idea!

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Sarcasm is used all the time in simple conversation. It can be rather difficult to define, but its simplest definition is, as the article [Examples of Sarcasm: Understand the Meaning and Types](#) puts it, “an ironic or satirical remark tempered by humor.”

Many characters in our favorite books, movies, and TV shows use sarcasm all the time. For example, take the [following scene](#) from the movie *Captain America: Civil War*, in which Tony Stark (Iron Man) says, “You can call me anytime. I’ll put you on hold. I like to watch the line blink.”

Sarcasm can be a tricky tool to incorporate into speeches, because if you don’t take some precautions, it may be

perceived as a *rude attack* rather than a *harmless joke*. It's perfectly fine to include sarcasm in your speech as long as the target of the joke isn't someone who could be hurt by what you're saying. Therefore, make sure your joke isn't aimed at anyone in the audience.

A much safer idea would be to put it into a story about a) someone who only you know personally, b) someone that has clearly said to you they would be fine with you using the joke, or better yet, c) someone who doesn't exist (an imaginary character).

Now that I've covered what sarcasm is and some limitations on using it in your speech, here are 10 of my favorite sarcastic phrases and retorts from books, movies, and TV to give you inspiration as well as some examples:

Books:

"Do you remember me telling you we are practicing non-verbal spells, Potter?"

"Yes," said Harry stiffly.

"Yes, sir."

**"There's no need to call me 'sir' Professor."** The words had escaped him before he knew what he was saying."

– J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

"Being human totally sucks most of the time. Videogames are **the only thing that make life bearable.**"

– Ernest Cline, *Ready Player One*

“I’m tougher than nails. I could still kick your pony-lovin’ butt with twice this pain.”

Thomas shrugged. **“I do love ponies. Wish I could eat one right now.”**

– James Dashner, *The Scorch Trials*

“The first time Calypso came to check on [Leo], it was to complain about the noise.

“Smoke and fire,” she said. “Clanging on metal all day long. You’re scaring away the birds!”

**“Oh, no, not the birds!”**

– Rick Riordan, *The House of Hades*

“You’ve read half the books in this house? This whole house?”

“Well, approximately half.” Sticky said. “To be more accurate, I suppose I’ve read more like” – his eyes went up as he calculated – “three sevenths? Yes, three sevenths.”

**“Only three sevenths?” said Kate, pretending to look disappointed. “And here I was prepared to be impressed.”**

– Trenton Lee Stewart, *The Mysterious Benedict Society and the Prisoner’s Dilemma*

## Movies and TV:

1. [Captain America: The Winter Soldier \(2014\)](#)
2. [The Lion King \(1994\)](#)
3. [Playing With Fire \(2019\)](#)
4. [Captain America: Civil War \(2016\)](#)
5. [Elf \(2003\)](#)

Sarcasm can be a tough thing for some people to master, and for others, it may come relatively naturally. Either way, as you go through your daily activities in the future, try and spot good uses of sarcasm, whether they are in your friends' or TV characters' conversation, and then try using some yourself! Eventually, with some practice, you'll be able to use it in your speeches with perfect timing and control. You will try it, won't you? ☐

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