

## A Closer Look at Sarcasm

*An extension of "Just joking? But not all jokes are fun for all"*

Read "**Just joking? But not all jokes are fun for all**" on page 19 of the *What's Up* April issue. The article is on humour which is unhealthy. Now, let's focus on one type of unhealthy humour that teenagers are very fond of — sarcasm. Sarcasm is saying words in a way that usually criticises or mocks someone.

Why do so many teenagers love to be sarcastic? There are several reasons. Many kids think that being sarcastic makes them look clever. When their friends laugh, they feel popular. They may use sarcasm to show off their way with words. Sometimes, sarcasm is used to stop an unpleasant conversation. For example, a kid may say "Whatever!" just to cut off parents' scolding. We can tell it is sarcastic from the tone of voice. Sarcasm is also used to purposely put down others.

Sarcasm hurts the victims. Reflect on the examples given below. Try to guess why each speaker is being mean to someone. In your view, how would the sarcastic words affect the victim? Jot down your thoughts in point form. Then, share them with your class.

	<b>Examples of teen sarcasm in action</b> Note: The words in italics say the opposite of what the speaker means.	<b>For you to think about</b> Why is he/she being sarcastic? What affect can these words have on the victim?
1	<i>"Just what we need.</i> All your 'broken' English!" says Jessy to her multi-racial debating team.	
2	<i>"So sorry,</i> no room left on our planet. So, go home, Trez!" says Tom to a new student from another country.	
3	<i>"Renee, you won the Miss Selfie contest? I'm not at all surprised.</i> With all that frizzy hair, no one can see your face," says Agnes to a kid who looks different.	
4	<i>"Meet you outside at night? I'm sure I'll see you easily in the dark!"</i> says Ben to a very dark-skinned kid.	
5	Your example:	

There is a good side to sarcasm. Clever twists of words may be fun for everyone but only if they don't put down anyone. The problem is that people are not always able to guess correctly whether the sarcastic person is being playful in a kind way or just plain mean. Unless you are very sure that your comments will not hurt anyone — or be misunderstood — it is best to avoid sarcasm.