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**Phil**

Hi, this is Question and Answer of the Week. I'm Phil.

**Jiaying**

And I'm Jiaying. 欢迎收听 BBC 英语教学的“你问我答”节目。我们在本期节目中要回答的问题和英式幽默中的两种常见的表现形式有关。问题如下：

**Question**

我想问一下，怎样区分“sarcastic”和“ironic”？

**Phil**

A brilliant question – because this can be a bit complicated. The meanings of 'sarcastic' and 'ironic' can be very similar or even the same in some cases. Especially when we're talking about what people say.

**Jiaying**

是的，虽然“sarcastic”和“ironic”都可以翻译成“讽刺的”，但它们所谈论的情况不同。

**Phil**

Yes, and it's best if we start with 'sarcastic'. If you say something in a sarcastic way – it means that you say the opposite of what you actually mean.

**Jiaying**

是的，形容词“sarcastic”的意思是“讽刺的”，如果我们“say something in a sarcastic way”，意思就是“说反话，冷嘲热讽”。这样做通常是为了挖苦、取笑某人，但并不绝对。“Sarcastic”的名词是“sarcasm（讽刺）”。

**Phil**

Listen to these examples.

## Examples

Oh, I can see you've been working really hard today!

(哟，我看你今天工作真的很卖力呀！[言外之意：你今天真懒，什么工作都没做！])

Well, that's a nice thing to say to someone you've just met, isn't it?

(你对刚认识的人这么说话，你可真有礼貌！[言外之意：真没礼貌！])

## Phil

In both of these examples, the thing that is being said is different to the words being used. The first speaker thinks the other person has been lazy, while the second speaker thinks the other person has been rude.

## Jiaying

没错。有一点值得注意：在口语交流时，人们会重读句子中表达讽刺含义的词语。听两句话，体会这一点。

## Examples

How **surprising!** You're late again.

(真没想到！你又迟到了。[言外之意：这一点也不意外。])

Wow, you spent a **long** time thinking about that, didn't you?

(哇噻，你想这件事情花了很长时间，对吗？[言外之意：没怎么花时间。])

## Jiaying

在第一句话中，说话人强调了单词“surprising”，其实是在说“你又迟到了，这一点也不奇怪”，暗讽对方平时总是迟到。

在第二句话中，说话人强调了单词“long”，其实是在讽刺地说对方“显然没怎么花时间思考问题”，也就是在说对方的想法欠考虑。

## Phil

Now, this is definitely sarcastic, but it could also be described as 'ironic', which is why this is a complicated question. The important thing to remember is that irony is much more than just sarcasm.

## Jiaying

记住：形容词“ironic”的名词是“irony”。虽然形容词“ironic”同样可以用来形容人“（说话）讽刺的”，但它所涵盖的情况要比“sarcastic”更广。接下来，我们就来概括地说说什么是“irony”。

## Phil

Irony can be complicated, but a general definition is that something is ironic if there's a contrast between what we expect to happen and what actually happens.

## Jiaying

名词“irony”是“具有讽刺意味的情况”，“sarcasm”是“讽刺的话语”。两者的区别是：“irony”通常描述“事情的结果与预期相反，因此颇有讽刺意味，或让人啼笑皆非”，而“sarcasm”只能描述“用语言讽刺、挖苦某人”。听两个例句，例句中用形容词“ironic”描述了“（情况是）具有讽刺意味的”。

## Examples

We planned to make children do more homework so that they would have less screen time, but they ended up doing all their homework on a screen. How ironic!

（我们原本想让孩子们多做功课，这样他们就能少看点屏幕，结果他们反倒是在屏幕上做了所有的功课！多讽刺啊！）

I started playing sports to lose weight. But the ironic thing is that after every workout, we go out to eat, so I'm even heavier now!

（我开始通过做运动减肥。但讽刺的是，每次健身后，我们都出去吃饭，所以我现在更重了！）

## Phil

In these examples, the result was exactly the opposite of what was planned, so the results were ironic. There's a contrast between what we expected to happen and what actually happened. An author might use situations like this in a story to be humorous.

## Jiaying

有时，预期和现实之间的联系可能没有那么明显。听下面的两个例句中描述的情况，想一想为什么这两个情况可以用“ironic”来形容。

## Examples

I always get hungry at work, which is a bit ironic because I'm a chef!

（我在工作时总是很饿，这有点讽刺，因为我是个厨师！）

We were going to the shop to buy a map, but we got lost on the way, which is ironic!

（我们本来要去商店买地图，却在去商店的路上迷路了，这真够讽刺的！）

## Jiaying

正是预期与现实之间的反差，让例句中的两个情况“ironic”。

在第一个例句中，一个以烹饪为生的厨师却在工作时感到饥饿。在第二个例句中，说话人本想买一张地图来指引方向，却在去买地图的途中迷路了。两个情况都很“ironic（具有讽刺意味的，让人啼笑皆非的）”。

### **Phil**

Here it's not the direct result of a plan that turned out to be the opposite, just ideas that we had about these people.

### **Jiaying**

上面我们说，一个情况可以“ironic”，那么人的行为也可以用“ironic”来形容。比如，有些人可能会假装喜欢一件事情来“反讽”，目的是逗乐。听下面这段话。

### **Examples**

**A:** Why are you wearing that horrible jumper? You can't actually like it?

“你为什么要穿这件难看的毛衣？你不会真的喜欢它吧！”

**B:** Don't worry, I don't! It's just a bit of fun – I'm being ironic!

“别担心，我不是真的喜欢这件毛衣。我只是觉得好玩，故意搞笑，做和我的想法相反的事情。”

### **Phil**

Again, there's a contrast between what we expect to be true, and what really is.

OK, let's go back to our question – 'sarcastic' has a very specific meaning – using words with an opposite meaning to criticise or mock someone.

### **Jiaying**

“Sarcastic”的意思是“（用话语）讽刺的，冷嘲热讽的”。而形容词“ironic”所“讽刺”的情况则更广泛，意思是“（预期与现实之间的反差是）具有讽刺意味的”。所以，从某种程度上，大家可以把“sarcastic”看成“ironic”的一种形式。

### **Phil**

We hope that we've answered your question! If you have a question about the English language that you'd like to ask us, please send us an email. Our email address is: [questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk](mailto:questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk)

### **Jiaying**

你也可以通过微博向我们提问。我们的微博账号是“BBC 英语教学”。Bye, everyone.

### **Phil**

Bye!