Zeugma in Literature

Zeugma is when you use a word in a sentence one time to simultaneously convey two different meanings. Often one meaning is literal while the other is figurative, but sometimes two completely different meanings of the word are employed. The function of zeugma is surprise.

DIRECTIONS: Explain the zeugma in each sentence.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

> "Yet time and her aunt moved slowly — and her patience and her ideas were nearly worn out before the tete-a-tete was over."

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

> "They tugged and tore at each other's hair and clothes, punched and scratched each other's nose, and covered themselves with dust and glory."

The Pickwick Papers by Charles Dickens

> “Miss Bolo…went home in a flood of tears and a sedan chair.”

© 15Worksheets.com