



# An Introduction to... Anecdotes

## Anecdote Examples

Read these short extracts from works of literature. They each include an anecdote. Can you explain the purpose of the anecdotes used?

But this particular girl gave him the impression of being more dangerous than most. **Once when they passed in the corridor she had given him a quick, side-long glance which seemed to pierce right through him and for a moment had filled him with black terror. The idea even crossed his mind that she might be an agent of the Thought Police.** That, it was true, was very unlikely. Still, he continued to feel a peculiar uneasiness, which had fear mixed up in it as well as hostility, whenever she was anywhere near him.

**Nineteen Eighty-Four** by George Orwell

Walter Cunningham was lying his head off. He didn't forget his lunch, he didn't have any. He had none today nor would he have any tomorrow or the next day. He had probably never seen three quarters at the same time in his life.

I tried again: 'Walter's one of the Cunninghams, Miss Caroline.'

'I beg your pardon, Jean Louise?'

'That's okay, ma'am, you'll get to know all the county folks after a while. The Cunninghams never took anything they can't pay back – no church baskets and no scrip stamps. They never took anything off of anybody, they get along on what they have. They don't have much, but they get along on it.'

**My special knowledge of the Cunningham tribe – one branch, that is – was gained from events of last winter. Walter's father was one of Atticus' clients. After a dreary conversation in our living-room one night about his entailment, before Mr Cunningham left he said, 'Mr Finch, I don't know when I'll ever be able to pay you.'**

**'Let that be the least of your worries, Walter,' Atticus said.**

**When I asked Jem what entailment was, and Jem described it as a condition of having your tail in a crack, I asked Atticus if Mr Cunningham would ever pay us.**

**'Not in money,' Atticus said, 'but before the year's out I'll have been paid. You watch.'**

...

If I could have explained these things to Miss Caroline, I would have saved myself some inconvenience and Miss Caroline subsequent mortification, but it was beyond my ability to explain things as well as Atticus, so I said, 'You're shamin' him, Miss Caroline. Walter hasn't got a quarter at home to bring you, and you can't use any stovewood.'

**To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee