

Writing to entertain/amuse:

- The writer may deliberately exaggerate the facts of a story for comic effect.
- There may be humorous misunderstandings, where the reader knows all the facts, but the characters don't.
- The writer may present things to us in a way we would not expect.
- Comparisons can be used to good effect here, also.
- The writer may reverse our expectations and make us laugh at the unexpected.
- There may be black humour – where suffering is viewed as absurd.
- There may be satire, where a writer holds a person or institution up to ridicule.
- If we can relate to the situation, we are likely to enjoy it more.

Look at this extract from Bill Bryson's *The Lost Continent*, in which he reminisces about family trips in the car when he was a young boy.

My father, when behind the wheel, was more or less permanently lost. Most of the time he was just kind of lost, but whenever we got near something we were intent on seeing he would become seriously lost. Generally it would take him about an hour to realise that he had gone from the first stage to the second. All during that time, as he blundered through some unfamiliar city, making sudden and unpredictable turns, getting honked at for going the wrong way down one-way streets or for hesitating in the middle of busy intersections, my mother would mildly suggest that perhaps we should pull over and ask directions. But my father would pretend not to hear her and would press on in that semi-obsessional state that tends to overcome fathers when things aren't going well.

Eventually, after driving the wrong way down the same one way street so many times that merchants were beginning to come and watch from their doorways, Dad would stop the car and gravely announce, 'Well, *I* think we should ask for directions', in a tone suggesting that this had been his desire all along.