

“Bitter Bierce”

Examine the items below to see why Bierce earned his reputation.

- Here's a parody Bierce wrote of the National Anthem. He called his version the “Rational Anthem.”

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of felony,
Of thee I sing--
Land where my fathers fried
Young witches and applied
Whips to the Quaker's hide
And made him spring.

My knavish country, thee,
Land where the thief is free,
Thy laws I love;
I love thy thieving bills

That tap the people's tills;
I love thy mob whose will's
All laws above.

Let Federal employees
And rings rob all they please,
The whole year long.
Let office-holders make
Their piles and judges rake
Our coin. For Jesus' sake,
Let's all go wrong!

- His book *The Devil's Dictionary* reveals his pessimism as he redefines familiar words. Below are several examples:

Absurdity (n):

A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one's own opinion.

Congratulation (n):

The civility of envy.

Conservative (n):

A statesman who is enamored of existing evils, as distinguished from the Liberal, who wishes to replace them with others.

Discussion (n):

A method of confirming others in their errors.

Happiness (n):

An agreeable sensation arising from contemplating the misery of another.

History (n):

An account, mostly false, of events unimportant, which are brought about by rulers mostly knaves, and soldiers mostly fools.

Philosophy (n):

A route of many roads leading from nowhere to nothing.

Saint (n):

A dead sinner revised and edited.

Zeal (n):

A certain nervous disorder afflicting the young and inexperienced.

NAME: _____
American Literature and Composition Honors
Ambrose Bierce
***The Devil's Dictionary* Assignment**

Directions: Create your own devilish definitions for **five** of the familiar terms that appear below. Type the definitions of these terms on a separate piece of paper in double-spaced 12 point Times New Roman font. Be sure to include the part of speech. The definition can be written in a phrase, a collection of phrases, or a sentence. Do not use the names of any individuals in your definition. Afterwards, choose one of the definitions to document and display to the class. Follow the rubric below.

<i>Classroom</i>	<i>Boyfriend</i>	<i>Apps</i>
<i>Desk</i>	<i>Curfew</i>	<i>Driver's License</i>
<i>Tests</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Television</i>
<i>Grades</i>	<i>Engagement Ring</i>	<i>Texting</i>
<i>Valedictorian</i>	<i>Girlfriend</i>	<i>Video Games</i>
<i>Research Paper</i>	<i>Good Time</i>	<i>Selfies</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Love</i>	<i>Facebook</i>
<i>Homework</i>	<i>Romantic</i>	<i>Twitter</i>

Select **one** of the definitions you created and document it on an 8.5 x 11 piece of typing paper. Please follow the requirements listed below:

____ / 10 Points

- Creative and original definition for all five words (not “googled” or copied).
- Includes the parts of speech.
- No spelling or grammatical errors.
- Written in a phrase, phrases, or sentence.
- Reflects the cynicism of Bierce.

____ / 2 Points

- Proves craftsmanship and written/typed/drawn in large letters on 8.5 x 11 piece of typing paper.
- Appealing design relative to the definition.

TOTAL:

____ / 12 Points