

专八阅读：A Sense of Humor专四专八考试 PDF转换可能丢失  
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Biologically, there is only one quality which distinguishes us from animals: the ability to laugh. In a universe which appears to be utterly devoid of humor, we enjoy this supreme luxury. And it is a luxury, for unlike any other bodily process, laughter does not seem to serve a biologically useful purpose. In a divided world, laughter is a unifying force. Human beings oppose each other on a great many issues. Nations may disagree about systems of government and human relations may be plagued by ideological factions and political camps, but we all share the ability to laugh. And laughter, in turn, depends on that most complex and subtle of all human qualities: a sense of humor. Certain comic stereotypes have a universal appeal. This can best be seen from the world-wide popularity of Charlie Chaplin's early films. The little man at odds with society never fails to amuse no matter which country we come from. As that great commentator on human affairs, Dr. Samuel Johnson, once remarked, 'Men have been wise in very different modes. but they have always laughed in the same way.' A sense of humor may take various forms and laughter may be anything from a refined tingle to an earth quaking roar, but the effect is always the same. Humor helps us to maintain a correct sense of values. It is the one quality which political fanatics appear to lack. If we can see the funny side, we never make the

mistake of taking ourselves too seriously. We are always reminded that tragedy is not really far removed from comedy, so we never get a lop sided view of things. This is one of the chief functions of satire and irony. Human pain and suffering are so grim. we hover so often on the brink of war. political realities are usually enough to plunge us into total despair. In such circumstances, cartoons and satirical accounts of somber political events redress the balance. They take the wind out of pompous and arrogant politicians who have lost their sense of proportion. They enable us to see that many of our most profound actions are merely comic or absurd. We laugh when a great satirist like Swift writes about war in Gulliver ' s Travels.

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