Constructed Response Exemplar

The types of irony that Shirley Jackson uses in “Charles” are situational and dramatic. Situational irony occurs in “Charles” when the mother reports to the PTA expected to meet the mother of Charles when in fact, there is no Charles in kindergarten. On top of that, this “Charles” person is actually her son, Laurie! This was very ironic. Jackson uses situational irony to create humor in this particular situation. It’s funny how the parents are at home talking about this boy named Charles and how he is such a bad influence on Laurie. The mother stated, “Do you think kindergarten is too unsettling for Laurie? All this toughness, and bad grammar, and this Charles boy sounds like such a bad influence”. Jackson created a very humorous situation at the end of the story with a plot twist. The mother learns that her son is in fact Charles. This child that she thought was having such a bad influence was actually her son!

The story also contains dramatic irony. The parents seem clueless, but the reader soon finds out through subtle clues that Laurie is Charles. Jackson leaves some great clues that allows the reader to figure out that Laurie is Charles. For instance, when Laurie is talking to his parents about his first day of kindergarten, he begins to tell them about all the bad things this “boy” did. When the parents asked about this “boy’s” name, the text states, “Laurie thought, ‘It was Charles,’ he said.” Jackson causes the reader to wonder why Laurie would pause. The reader would naturally assume that Laurie was making up a name. Jackson creates even more humor by making the parent completely clueless. They as parents failed to make the connection between their son and this “Charles” from school. They made mindless statements like, “What do you think they will do about this Charles you suppose?” Clearly, they cannot see that Laurie’s behavior is nearly identical to the made up character’s behavior. Jackson does a great job creating humor with this story through the use of irony.

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|  | Mastery | Partial Mastery | Insufficient |
| Identifies any or all types of irony in the story. | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Explains how author uses these types of irony to create suspense and/or humor. | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Supports answers with at least 2 pieces of textual evidence. | 2 | 1 | 0 |