

Using *The Simpsons* in EFL Classes

Most teachers of English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) would agree that our job is not just to teach language, but also to teach culture. Indeed, Krasner (1999) argues that it takes more than just linguistic competence to be proficient in a foreign language. Byram and Risager (1999) also describe the language teacher's role as "a professional mediator between learners and foreign languages and culture" (58). While it is not a problem to accept this dual role, the complication lies in choosing what type of cultural content to include in our lessons. First, we have to decide whether a cultural component means focusing on daily living tips like etiquette and other cultural differences or on popular culture such as music, TV, or movie clips. Furthermore, when the language being taught is English, we have to consider which culture we are talking about.

Depending on your perspective, *The Simpsons* might seem either a strange or an obvious choice for inclusion in EFL classes. On the air

since 1989, *The Simpsons* is now the longest-running animated series in American TV history. It focuses on the misadventures of nuclear power plant employee Homer Simpson, his wife Marge, and their three children—troublemaker Bart, teacher's pet Lisa, and pacifier-sucking baby Maggie. Set in the mythical town of Springfield, the show is a humorous parody of the American family. Some teachers may feel that it is not serious enough, considering that it is a mere cartoon. However, the show is an American institution that can be used in the English language classroom as a springboard for exploring American culture. Whether you want to use the show to expand on lighter cultural topics like holidays and food or deeper societal issues concerned with education, the environment, or gender differences, *The Simpsons* "is a treasure trove of resource material for the ESL/EFL classroom" (Meilleur 2004).

This article will offer ideas on how to use *The Simpsons* as a source of authentic sociocultural teaching

materials for EFL students and will describe how to use clips of the show to arrange lessons into pre-, during-, and post-viewing activities to help students learn English and understand important elements of American culture and society.

Introducing cultural content with *The Simpsons*

When choosing cultural content for our classes, we need to consider two basic criteria. First, will the content help students to understand more about the target culture? Second, will the content help students to actually communicate with people from the target culture?

Despite being a cartoon, *The Simpsons* provides adequate cultural content and hence easily satisfies these two criteria. In fact, one writer even claims that this is the television series that most consistently describes the environment of daily American life (Bianculli 2000). Additionally, any fan of the show is well aware that being a cartoon does not equal a lack of seriousness or sophistication. According to University of Virginia professor Paul Cantor, “*The Simpsons* may seem like mindless entertainment to many, but in fact, it offers some of the most sophisticated comedy and satire ever to appear on American television” (1999, 734). This seriousness refers to the American social issues the show has tackled in its two decades on the air, including nuclear safety, immigration, gay rights, and sexual harassment. EFL teachers less familiar with the show should therefore be aware that *The Simpsons* is not a program that you want to use to teach children. Both the language level and content make it a show appropriate only for adult students. Again, despite being a cartoon, the show is also a great springboard for serious discussions about American culture and society.

In addition to providing a look at daily life and controversial issues in American society, *The Simpsons* also satisfies the second criteria of helping English language students to communicate with Americans. When learning a foreign language, students need more than grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation; another important skill is cultural literacy regarding the target culture. Popularized by E. D. Hirsch, cultural literacy refers to the “shared knowledge” Americans need “to be

able to communicate effectively with everyone else” (Hirsch 1987, 32). Considering the huge popularity of the show in the United States, knowledge of *The Simpsons* is a way for international students to break down barriers and communicate with Americans about shared knowledge. Those who might scoff at the idea of *The Simpsons* being a part of American cultural literacy should consider the results of a recent survey showing that only a quarter of Americans can name more than two of the fundamental freedoms granted by the First Amendment, yet more than half can name at least two members of the Simpsons family (McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum 2006). Mark Lieberman, director of the University of Pennsylvania Linguistic Data Consortium, has even claimed that the show has “taken over from Shakespeare and the Bible as our culture’s greatest source of idioms, catchphrases and sundry other textual allusions” (Macintyre 2007). And familiarity with *Simpsons* characters is not limited to Americans. When doing a survey with her junior high school class in Norway, one teacher found that just as many of her students could identify at least one *Simpsons* character as could identify then President George W. Bush (Kristiansen 2001).

Challenges of the show

Despite the benefits of using *The Simpsons* in the classroom, understanding the show is obviously a challenge for non-native speakers. Therefore, I will examine some of these challenges and provide tips for making the show more accessible to students.

Vocabulary and slang

As they might with any TV show or movie, non-native speakers will struggle with the advanced vocabulary and slang used in *The Simpsons*. It is worth repeating that despite being a cartoon, *The Simpsons* is primarily a show for an adult audience, meaning the vocabulary used in the show is not basic. As previously mentioned, the show has tackled many serious topics, increasing the chances that advanced or technical vocabulary will be used. Additionally, the show has been known to create its own vocabulary and is credited with such additions to the dictionary as “D’oh!” (Homer’s annoyed grunt) and “Meh” (a sigh of indifference). Other common catch-

phrases popularized by the show, such as “Don’t have a cow” (“Don’t get so upset”) and “Eat my shorts” (“Leave me alone”), are rarely used outside of *The Simpsons* context. While it may be part of American cultural literacy, such odd slang will present comprehension problems for non-native English speakers.

Cultural literacy

Although cultural literacy was previously mentioned as a potential benefit of *The Simpsons*, it can also be an obstacle. Despite the growing worldwide familiarity with American culture, the sophisticated writing style of *The Simpsons* makes for not only very American cultural references, but also generational and obscure references. For example, when Homer’s boss, Mr. Burns, answers the phone with the greeting “Ahoy hoy,” it may sound nonsensical, but it is actually the original telephone greeting suggested by Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone. This is a cultural tidbit that would be lost on a majority of Americans, let alone non-native English speakers. In another episode, Homer’s intelligence is greatly increased after he removes a crayon that had been lodged against his brain. Lamenting the ignorance of those around him, he moans, “I’m a Spalding Gray living in a Rick Dees world.” It is doubtful that even a majority of Americans would get such an obscure cultural reference, as it would require knowing that Gray’s dry monologues are considered sophisticated humor and being familiar with Dees’ lighter and more simplistic humor, including the 1970s novelty song *Disco Duck*.

Humor

Humor obviously varies from culture to culture, and *The Simpsons* is a very American brand of humor. Although there is a lot of physical, slapstick comedy, the show is much more lauded for its intelligent and sophisticated humor. The result is plenty of laughs for the average American, but a real challenge for the average non-native English speaker. Humor is very culture based, and—expanding on the issue of cultural literacy—Ziesing (2001) explains that “understanding humor requires a number of cultural reference points, including history, customs, games, religion, current events, taboos, kinship structures, traditions, and more” (8). Additionally, humor

on *The Simpsons* can be sarcastic or even dark, causing confusion as to why Americans consider such things funny. Finally, the show sometimes uses clever puns or wordplay, which the average English language learner would not easily understand.

Making *The Simpsons* accessible

Despite the aforementioned challenges of *The Simpsons*, steps can be taken to make the show accessible for non-native speakers. It is indeed true that the show is a “treasure trove of resource material” (Meilleur 2004), but special care needs to be taken to ensure that students can benefit from watching it.

Accessible chunks

Movies or TV shows in their entirety are obviously too much for the average EFL student to handle, so many teachers advocate comprehensible chunks (King 2002). Considering the fast pace and bizarre twists of *The Simpsons*, clips of 3–5 minutes are an appropriate length for classroom use. In addition to relatively short clips, pre-viewing activities such as warm-up questions or pre-teaching of vocabulary are necessary to make the clips more accessible. Finally, the key word here is “accessible.” Despite the great array of episodes and topics to choose from, clips have to be chosen carefully. Clips with too many obscure cultural references or inside *Simpsons* jokes will frustrate your students. A sample lesson based on a short clip will be provided later in this article to demonstrate how to make the show accessible.

Repeated viewings

For EFL students, one viewing of authentic video is rarely sufficient. The first viewing is good for grasping what the students can and cannot understand, allowing the teacher to give clues for the second viewing. Several comprehension or true/false questions can help the students understand the gist of each scene. Most *Simpsons* DVDs have a language setting for English captions, so this is also an option for the final viewing.

Visual reinforcement

Watching authentic video materials does not have to be relegated to just listening exercises. It is best to choose scenes that provide visual reinforcement for the plot or

main point. Comprehension questions can be based not only on listening but on visual cues as well. Additionally, talking about what they have seen gives students the chance to use their English to practice pre-taught vocabulary related to the scene.

Not just a focus on humor

When I started using *The Simpsons* in my classes, I made the mistake of putting the emphasis on the humor. Despite the aforementioned cultural differences when it comes to humor, I naively believed that what was funny for me would also be funny for my students. However, as one teacher who has used *The Simpsons* in her classes concludes, “there is nothing so unfunny as explaining humor in detail” (Kristiansen 2001). The point is that, although *The Simpsons* is designed to be funny, humor need not be the focus of the lesson. Spending too much time trying to explain the humor to non-native speakers might have the opposite effect of leaving your students frustrated at their inability to understand. In addition to the humor, the show has enough content—cultural or other—to stand on its own as a supplement to the curriculum.

Thematic teaching

Due to the great variety of themes that *The Simpsons* has covered in its long run on television, it is a great complement to thematic or content-based teaching. Video has many uses in thematic teaching, from introducing the theme to wrapping up a theme-based unit (Stoller 1992). Showing TV or movie clips on a theme the students have already studied will also help them navigate unfamiliar vocabulary (Stryker and Leaver 1997). However you want to exploit *The Simpsons*, it is an excellent tool to use in thematic teaching, which will help to demonstrate the seriousness of the show and also make it more accessible for students, as thematically organized materials are easier for students to learn (Singer 1990). The following suggested thematic topics offer options for the EFL teacher who uses the show in class.

Suggested thematic lesson topics

With more than 400 episodes to choose from, *The Simpsons* offers an almost endless selection of possible thematic topics. Which episodes to use in class will depend on the level and focus of your students, but the show

tends to be at its best when it tackles serious current social issues. Again, this demonstrates that the show is more appropriate for adults than children. Watching such episodes will help students learn more about deeper cultural issues than just, for example, light topics like American holidays or food. Ideally, it will also lead to interesting cross-cultural discussions on cultural attitudes toward different issues. Below are just a few recommended topics and episodes. (The season numbers and airdates are written in parentheses.)

Sex roles and gender issues

Considering the sibling rivalry between Bart and Lisa, and Homer’s lack of chivalry, this topic comes up again and again throughout the series and can be explored in interesting ways. Some of the episodes that illustrate this topic are:

- *Separate Vocations* (Season 3, 1992): On a career aptitude test, Bart is suited to be a police officer while Lisa is chosen as a homemaker, rather than the saxophone player she dreams to be. This is a good episode for exploring gender roles and standardized testing bias.
- *Marge Gets a Job* (Season 4, 1992): Marge gets a job at the power plant but is fired for not going on a date with Mr. Burns. This episode could be used to explore sexual harassment and gender in the workplace.
- *Lisa vs. Malibu Stacy* (Season 5, 1994): Lisa is shocked when her new talking doll utters phrases such as “Don’t ask me, I’m just a girl,” so she teams up with the creator to make a more feminist doll. This is another good episode for exploring gender roles. Additionally, since the Barbie doll is an internationally known icon, an interesting side note is that the episode was based on the controversy of the Teen Talk Barbie saying “Math is tough.”

Environmental issues

Current problems such as global warming make environmental issues a popular topic in content-based English language classes. *The Simpsons* has touched on these issues in several episodes, with one writer claiming that “the show’s rhetoric presents a strong environmen-

tal message regarding the relationship between humans and the rest of nature” (Todd 2002, 65). Furthermore, the show has won seven Environmental Media Awards. Two outstanding episodes are:

- *Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish* (Season 2, 1990): This early classic episode explores the safety of nuclear power when Bart and Lisa discover a three-eyed fish downstream from the nuclear power plant.
- *Lisa the Tree Hugger* (Season 12, 2000): Lisa camps out in a redwood tree to prevent logging. The episode also makes references to vegetarianism and radical environmental movements.

Health and lifestyle

America’s fast food and obesity epidemic are well known around the world. Homer’s love of junk food and Lisa’s vegetarianism allow for contrasting looks at health issues:

- *Lisa the Vegetarian* (Season 7, 1995): See the sample lesson.
- *King-Size Homer* (Season 7, 1995): While Lisa makes a healthy change to vegetarianism, Homer goes in the other direction with his plan to gain enough weight to qualify for disability and earn the right to work from home. The episode explores the drawbacks and stigma of obesity.

Gay rights

The same-sex marriage debate will be a global issue for years to come, and *The Simpsons* has not shied away from exploring homophobia and gay rights. Two episodes stand out:

- *Homer’s Phobia* (Season 8, 1997): In 1997, *The Simpsons* took a chance on an episode detailing Homer’s homophobia as he worries that a homosexual family friend is turning Bart gay. The show managed to get director John Waters to be the voice of the gay character, and the episode received a GLAAD Media Award.
- *There’s Something about Marrying* (Season 16, 2005): *The Simpsons* took on the same-sex marriage debate in 2005 when Marge’s sister Patty announced her intention to wed her female lover.

Educational issues

One good thing about cartoons is that the characters never age. From the beginning, Bart and Lisa have been students at Springfield Elementary School, giving teachers a great range of choices dealing with educational issues. Some of the more notable episodes are:

- *Separate Vocations* (Season 3, 1992): (See the previous *Sex Roles and Gender Issues* section.)
- *Itchy & Scratchy: The Movie* (Season 4, 1992): This episode deals with Bart’s misbehavior at home and at school and features a wealth of images of American schools, such as parent-teacher conferences and school punishments (e.g., writing sentences on the blackboard).
- *Homer Goes to College* (Season 5, 1993): In this episode, Homer has to go back to school to get his degree. The episode features funny cultural tidbits, such as traditional college pranks.
- *The PTA Disbands* (Season 6, 1995): The teachers at Springfield Elementary go on strike, providing an interesting look at funding issues in American schools.
- *Lard of the Dance* (Season 10, 1998): Lisa’s new classmate, voiced by *Friends* star Lisa Kudrow, tries to get the elementary school students to grow up by showing off her pierced ears and cell phone. This episode provides a good look at the issue of what it means to grow up.
- *Brother’s Little Helper* (Season 11, 1999): When Bart misbehaves yet again at school he is put on an experimental drug called Focusyn, an interesting parody of the Ritalin issue.

Availability of *The Simpsons* episodes

The first 13 seasons of *The Simpsons* are now available on DVD. Additionally, the 20th season has been released to commemorate the show’s 20th anniversary. All but one of these suggested episodes (*There’s Something about Marrying*) are in these earlier seasons. Fortunately, beginning with Season 3, the DVD sets feature English captions, an important option if you wish to show clips both with and without captions. Due to the advanced nature of the show, captions are a big plus.

In addition to DVDs, there are online options for accessing episodes of *The Simpsons*. At this stage, however, DVD sets offer the best quality and reliability. Some clips are available on YouTube, but like anything, quality will be mixed and there is always the potential that clips will be taken down. Meanwhile, hulu.com and amazon.com's Video on Demand currently feature some full episodes, but unfortunately they cannot yet be viewed outside of the United States. Of course, the show is still in heavy syndication in the United States, so another alternative is to record a collection of episodes from TV.

Sample lesson: *Lisa the Vegetarian*

This sample lesson focuses on the Season 7 episode *Lisa the Vegetarian*, in which Lisa becomes a vegetarian after seeing cute lambs at a petting zoo. This is an excellent EFL lesson for several reasons:

- This episode focuses on the universal topic of food and eating choices.
- Several scenes take place at Lisa's elementary school, so education is another theme that can be explored.
- This is a relatively easy clip for students to follow because it focuses on a fairly simple plot with sufficient visual reinforcement. Despite the simplicity of the plot, the episode deals with a serious issue, so it is easy to expand for more advanced students.
- This lesson focuses on a rather short (3–4 minutes) comprehensible clip for students (and teachers) who are new to the show. Since it is usually best to use multiple viewings, this is a manageable clip length that will allow time for numerous pre-, during-, and post-viewing exercises.
- The lesson is also historically significant in the context of *The Simpsons*. Paul McCartney and his late wife, Linda—well-known vegetarians—are guest voices in the episode. Paul agreed to do the show on the condition that Lisa remain a vegetarian in the future, a promise that the show's writers have kept.

This clip starts at 2:45 into the episode, just as the family members notice the cute lambs at the petting zoo, and it ends at 7:30

minutes. Despite the short length of the clip, it is separated into three settings—at the petting zoo, at the dinner table, and at school. The only disruption to the flow occurs when the family returns home from the petting zoo; at this point Homer has a one-minute interaction with his neighbor Ned Flanders that has little to do with the main theme of the episode. This presents the perennial problem with using movies or TV shows in the EFL classroom—great clips often also include potentially distracting content that is best avoided. Although a minor inconvenience, I recommend fast-forwarding through—or, if possible, editing out—the Flanders scene. With the exception of this scene, the clip flows smoothly and coherently. The recommended viewing time for the following three scenes is just under four minutes:

- The petting zoo (2:45–3:20)
- The dinner table (4:20–6:00)
- At school (6:00–7:30)

Sample lesson activities for *Lisa the Vegetarian*

To help make *Simpsons* episodes accessible and to best incorporate a meaningful expansion of the topic, teachers can divide the lesson into pre-, during-, and post-viewing activities. (See the Appendix for some pre-, during-, and post-viewing activities.)

Pre-viewing activities

1. If you are showing *The Simpsons* to your students for the first time, it is best to assign some homework to familiarize them with the show and characters. At least some of your students may be familiar with the show, but everyone should get background information on the characters. The show's homepage (www.thesimpsons.com) has a file-cabinet style search option for the main characters. This format provides a good skimming or scanning exercise for your students, so you can assign them questions to get basic information about the Simpson family members to prepare for viewing the show. If your students do not have easy access to the Internet, you can adapt a basic worksheet for them from the homepage or other websites.
2. With this episode, you can start by introducing the pre-viewing vocabu-

lary. This includes vocabulary items heard in the episode as well as items that will be helpful for the warm-up questions and the main theme of vegetarianism. Of special interest in these vocabulary items are several examples of onomatopoeia. These illustrate one of the benefits of authentic DVD recordings, as such items are not generally found in typical English language coursebook dialogues. An example is “ah,” which the Simpson family members say when they see the adorable lambs. It might be fun to contrast this expression with “aw,” which shows disappointment or anger. A similar item is “baa,” the onomatopoeic expression for the sound a sheep makes. Since animal sounds differ from language to language, this should be of interest to students from different cultures. Additionally, Bart later uses a play on words with this sound, so it is an important item to pre-teach.

3. With any *Simpsons* lessons, warm-up questions are an important method for getting students to brainstorm about the topic, especially when combined with content-based or integrated skills instruction. Because the United States is widely viewed as a meat-eating country, these warm-up questions are a good way for students to consider alternative food lifestyles in American culture. Depending on the culture of the students you are teaching, vegetarianism could be a fairly common or extremely rare concept, and the final warm-up question is a good way to get students thinking about what it means to be a vegetarian. Lisa becomes a vegetarian after she comes to the conclusion that eating animals is morally wrong. If you later want to expand on the theme, however, it is important to give students the chance to brainstorm about the different reasons for this lifestyle choice.

During-viewing activities

1. How many times and in what duration to show the clip is up to individual teachers, but one recommendation is to divide the clip into the three scenes.

For during-viewing activities, focus on comprehension questions like those in the Appendix. Although the comprehension questions are fairly easy, the overall difficulty of the language used in the show merits repeat viewings, with at least two to three viewings of each scene overall. Additionally, as mentioned, this DVD set has an English captions setting, so that could be used for the final viewing. The comprehension questions are an important gauge to make sure students understand the main plot of the episode.

Post-viewing activities

1. Since *Simpsons* episodes are often compatible with theme-based instruction, students should be given the chance to discuss topics relevant to the recorded clips. The type of discussion will depend on your teaching context. Although vegetarianism is the main theme, additional discussion topics could include educational issues, since several scenes from this episode occur in school. The discussion themes are flexible and can be adjusted to fit the level of your students. Again, a benefit of *The Simpsons* is the potential to focus either on light cultural topics, such as what is served in American school cafeterias, or on much deeper cross-cultural issues, such as food choices in society or critical thinking in the education system. The series is both a representation of American pop culture and at the same time a window into American society. (See the Appendix for some sample discussion questions.)
2. If you do wish to concentrate on some of the humor, the Appendix contains several examples of humor from the selected clip. It is not recommended to go through all of these, but discussing one or two of the easier ones can help to boost students' confidence. After all, understanding humor is one of the final obstacles in becoming fluent in a foreign language. Even lower-level students should be able to understand Bart's play on words when he says, “Eating meat is baaaaaad.”

Expanding the vegetarian theme

If you are using this episode in an integrated skills or content-based teaching environment, it would be valuable to have students research the topic of vegetarianism on their own before or after the lesson. One useful website is: www.passionatevegetarian.com/vegetarian_types.htm, which defines different types of vegetarians. Since vegetarianism is obviously much more common in some cultures than others, this is a helpful resource for students who are less familiar with what it means to be vegetarian. If you prefer to focus on the reasons for vegetarianism, the following website contains short readings on both the health and environmental benefits of vegetarianism: http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~eh300401/info_pub.htm. One idea would be to divide the class and have half the students report on health benefits and half report on environmental benefits. This arrangement will provide students with more background knowledge about the theme, hopefully leading to a deeper and more fruitful discussion.

Conclusion

As an iconic mainstay of American popular culture for the past two decades, *The Simpsons* is an obvious choice for teachers looking for authentic materials for EFL students. Despite the difficulties the show poses for non-native English speakers, careful structuring of lessons into pre-, during-, and post-viewing activities will make clips of the show accessible. Additionally, knowledge of *The Simpsons* will improve students' cultural literacy and help them communicate with Americans. Finally, using episodes as part of a thematic unit makes the show much more than just mindless entertainment and can help students understand deeper issues about American culture.

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I. Pre-viewing Activity: Vocabulary

1. *vegetarian*: a person who does not eat meat
2. *vegan*: a person who does not eat any animal products at all
3. *diet*: foods people eat on a daily basis
4. *petting zoo*: a zoo where people can touch the animals
5. *ah*: a sound people make when they think something is cute
6. *baa*: the sound a lamb makes
7. *lamb*: a young sheep
8. *dissect*: to cut apart an animal to examine the structure
9. *morally wrong*: against your beliefs; something you ethically disagree with
10. *independent*: not controlled by others; thinking for oneself

II. Pre-viewing Activity: Warm-Up Questions

1. What is your image of the American diet? What do most Americans eat on a daily basis?
2. What percentage of Americans do you think are vegetarian? Explain your guess. (For example, if you think the number is very low, explain your reasons.) *Note to teacher*: If you want to provide students with factual information after their predictions for question no. 2, a good resource is www.vegetariantimes.com/features/archive_of_editorial/667, which has results of a recent study on vegetarianism in America.
3. People become vegetarians for many reasons. What reasons can you think of?

III. During-viewing Activity: Comprehension Questions

Scene 1: At the Petting Zoo. The Simpsons are looking at the animals at the petting zoo.

1. What kind of animal does the family think is so cute?
2. Of the three sheep they look at, which do they think is the cutest?

Scene 2: At the Dinner Table. After returning from the petting zoo, the family is eating dinner together.

1. What are they eating for dinner?
2. What strange thing happens to Lisa as she is eating dinner?
3. After Lisa says she can't eat her dinner, what other foods does her mother suggest?
4. What decision does Lisa make about her eating habits?

Scene 3: At School. The next day, Lisa is in her class at Springfield Elementary School.

1. What activity is the class doing?

2. What happens to Lisa when she starts to do the activity?
3. What does Lisa tell her teacher?
4. In the cafeteria, Lisa asks for a vegetarian alternative. What does the lunch lady give her?

IV. Post-viewing Activity: Sample Discussion Topics

1. At the beginning of the lesson, you brainstormed about reasons for becoming a vegetarian. Do any of these reasons make you want to consider becoming vegetarian? Why or why not?
2. Do you think you could become a vegetarian? If you could not eat meat or animal products, what foods would you miss the most?
3. Did you ever have an experience like Lisa's? Did you do something that many people around you were against? How did you deal with being different?
4. In her school, Lisa shows independent thinking, but the teachers and other students do not support her. In your own school, do you feel that independent thinking is encouraged? Or is it more important just to follow the rules?

V. Post-viewing Activity: Understanding Humor

Read the following examples from this episode and discuss why they are funny or what kind of humor is being used.

1. At the petting zoo, Homer pushes the adult sheep away when it stands in front of the baby lamb. Why does he do this?
2. When the Simpsons are leaving the petting zoo, Marge says to the family, "See, it was a good idea to come here after all." Just after that, there is an announcement on the loudspeaker that says, "Attention families ... the following cars have been broken into." Why are Marge's words ironic?
3. When Lisa does not want to eat the lamb chops, she says, "What's the difference between this lamb and the lamb at the petting zoo." Bart replies, "This one spent two hours in the broiler." What is the meaning of Bart's joke?
4. When Marge says "chicken breast," Lisa imagines a chicken. However, when Marge says "hot dogs," what does Lisa imagine? What does this suggest about hot dogs?
5. When Bart is making fun of Lisa for not eating meat, he says, "Eating meat is bad." How does he pronounce the word "bad"? What is his meaning?
6. When Lisa says she thinks it is morally wrong to dissect an animal, the teacher says, "OK, Lisa, I respect your moral objection." However, what button does the teacher then press? What is ironic about this?