

you have purchased in a restaurant or fast-food franchise. What makes the two meals different based on the way they smell? How do they taste different? Do the meals themselves evoke different emotions and/or memories for you?

Dave Barry

## The Ugly Truth about Beauty

According to the *New York Times*, humorist Dave Barry is “the funniest man in America.” Born in 1947 in Armonk, New York, Barry earned a B.A. from Haverford College. He then worked for several years as a newspaper reporter and a lecturer on business writing before discovering his talent as a humor columnist. The columns he wrote for the *Miami Herald* from 1983 to 2004 have been collected in numerous books. Barry’s hilarious observations on American life won him the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 1988. His most recent books are *Insane City* (2013) and *You Can Date Boys When You’re Forty* (2014).

In “The Ugly Truth about Beauty,” first published in the *Miami Herald* in 1998, Barry compares and contrasts men’s and women’s beauty routines. The essay humorously highlights differences in the ways that men and women view themselves.

**Guiding question** Why do men and women think of their looks differently?

- 1 If you’re a man, at some point a woman will ask you how she looks.
- 2 “How do I look?” she’ll ask.
- 3 You must be careful how you answer this question. The best technique is to form an honest yet sensitive opinion, then collapse on the floor with some kind of fatal seizure. Trust me, this is the easiest way out. Because you will never come up with the right answer.
- 4 The problem is that women generally do not think of their looks in the same way that men do. Most men form an opinion of how they look in seventh grade, and they stick to it for the rest of their lives. Some men form the opinion that they are irresistible stud muffins, and they do not change this opinion even when their faces sag and their noses bloat to the size of eggplants and their eyebrows grow together to form what appears to be a giant forehead-dwelling tropical caterpillar.
- 5 Most men, I believe, think of themselves as average-looking. Men will think this even if their faces cause heart failure in cattle at a range of three hundred yards. Being average does not bother them; average is fine, for men. This is why men never ask anybody how they look. Their primary form of beauty care is to shave themselves, which is essentially the same form of beauty care that they give to their lawns. If, at the end of his four-minute daily beauty regimen,<sup>1</sup> a man has managed to wipe most of the shaving cream out of his hair and is not bleeding appearance and devotes his mind to more critical issues, such as the Super Bowl.

**Pause** Based on the first sentence of paragraph 4, how do you think Barry will go on to develop this essay?

1. **regimen:** routine