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**FICTION**

The origin of fiction is traced to the Latin word *fictum* which means “created” and refers to stories, incidents, events or accounts that are not real. Good examples of fictitious stories are folktales and other fabricated stories. It is a product of the narrator’s imagination or another person’s imagination being narrated by a different person but not factual.

Fiction is the latest to come to full fruition, dating from the eighteenth century. It is basically prose narrative.

Let us observe the form and style of a piece of a fiction given below.

*They had lunch together-husband and wife. He ordered drink plentifully, food modestly. She ordered no drink, food plentifully. She soberly attacked her fare, all the while her ear glued to a portable transistor, speechless. He, with wandering eye, smiled at me…*

Fiction may be used in two ways. In a broad sense, it refers to any story which has been invented. There are different invented stories, and they go under the names of fables, allegory, parable, romance, myth, folktale, short story, and the novel. Any of these stories may be presented as a play or in the form of a prose or verse narrative. What this means is that the distinctions among prose, poetry and drama are not as clear-cut as we may think. They are all interwoven. Shakespeare's play, Macbeth, for example, presents the story of Macbeth's rise and fall. In Jane Austen's Emma, the story is in form of a prose narrative. Chaucer's “The Pardoner's Tale” also tells a story, but in verse form.

When the term prose fiction is used, it does not imply falsehood or lying. That is, you should not think the novelist is a liar. The foundation of work of art in the real sense is on facts or truth about life. This is however painted using the writer's imaginative and word power. For example, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe,* is the true story of a Scottish seaman in which the major character is coloured by the author’s power of imagination and vivid use of words and expressions. In a fiction, the facts are not presented in the way a historian will present it. This is because in literature, the author has certain liberty in creating his own world using words and art of presentation.

It is this additional liberty that makes a writer never a liar, since all the works of art are creations of the writer’s imagination. Prose fiction is usually based on hidden facts. The only difference is that such facts are not presented in the way a historian will do. The creative writer is not bound to give facts accurately in terms of the time, period, place and order of events. Do not attempt to verify the facts of a literary writer or accuse him of not presenting the facts as they occur in history. A few texts are recommended for you to understand fiction better.

John Bunyan - Pilgrim’s Progress (1678)

Jonathan Swift- Gulliver’s Travels (1705)

Daniel Defoe – Robinson Crusoe (1719)

Samuel Richardson – Pamela (1740)

Henry Fielding – Joseph Andrews (1742)

**TYPES OF PROSE FICTION**

The types of prose fiction are fable, allegory, romance, the novel, the novelette and the short story.

**FABLE**

This is usually a very brief prose or verse narrative intended to convey a moral. Animals or inanimate objects with human characteristics often serve as characters in fables. A famous fable is Aesop’s ‘Tortoise and the Hare’. Its concern is to explain a problem in very simple terms, or to point out a moral truth in an inoffensive manner. This is why it usually carries a deeper meaning, through a surface story. More often, the characters are mostly animals who act as surrogate human beings. This does not however totally exclude human characters in some cases. Examples abound in *Panchatantra Stories* in Indian literary tradition and in Aesop's Fables, and Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The Animal Farm that satirizes the defunct Russian revolution is however longer than a normal fable.

**ALLEGORY**

This is also a short story like a fable. It is a narrative technique in which characters representing things or abstract ideas are used to convey a message or teach a lesson. Allegory is typically used to teach moral, ethical, or religious lessons but is sometimes used for satirical or political purposes. Its characters represent ideas such as Hope, Endurance, Love, Jealous, and the like.

**ROMANCE**

Romance, as a type of prose fiction, is a fantastic story whose story incidence and sometimes the characters are detached from real life primarily written to delight shock or chill the blood of the reader. It is a broad term, usually denoting a narrative with exotic, exaggerated, often idealised characters, scenes and themes. Example is Walpole's *Castle of Otranto.*

**NOVEL**

Generally, the novel is a long, fictitious prose narrative whose imaginary characters and events are presented in a realistic, true-to-life manner. The novel was developed from the novella and other early forms of narrative. A novel is usually organised under a plot or theme with a focus on character development and action. There is no hard and fast rule on the length of the novel. Therefore novels are not uniform in their length. A novel is usually organised under a plot or theme with a focus on character development and action. The novel emerged as a fully evolved literary form in the mid eighteenth century in Samuel Richardson’s ‘Pamela’; or Virtue Rewarded’.

**NOVELETTE**

It is like a novel. The major difference the novel and the novelette is, the novelette is short and thus it can be called a "short novel". It is sometimes said to be a "long short story".

**SHORT STORY**

A short story is “That can be read in an hour and remembered for a lifetime.” Because they must create their effect in few words, short stories are great miniature like paintings, tightly focused and organized in such a way that **every** detail counts. It is harder to write a good short story than a good novel.

A well-known woman writer Isabell Allende says, “…novels are, for me, adding up details … short stories are more difficult- they have to be perfect, complete in themselves.” Everyone loves a story. In fact, many writers feel it’s harder to write a good short story than a good novel. Because of its intensity, reading a short story can be a more profoundly moving experience than reading a novel. The range of mood and subject matter in a story will lead to a treasure trove of fascinating reading, ideal for reading aloud to…”

It will enrich and enliven us. Because of its intensity, reading a short story can be a more profoundly moving experience than reading a novel. The range of mood and subject matter of the classic stories is as wide as life itself. Whether around a campfire, or in a classroom, tellers of tales have been spinning yarns to their enthralled audiences since the beginning of time. Because they must create their effect in very few words, short stories are like great miniature paintings, tightly focused and organized in a way that every detail counts.

Like the novelette, the short story is another miniature novel. It is a fictional prose narrative and more focused than a novel. The short story usually deals with a single episode and often a single character. The ‘tone’ the author’s attitude toward his or her subject and audience, is uniform throughout. The short story frequently also lacks denouement (conflict resolution), ending instead at its climax. The short story may be independent or annexed to a novel. Charles Dickens' *The Pick Wick* *Papers* is an example of a famous short story.

**PROCEDURES FOR ANALYSING PROSE FICTION**

To analyse a prose fiction:

a) Read the text very carefully and be sure you understand the story. Re-read the story if understanding is not achieved.

b) Identify the common trends of the events in a logical order as they occur in the story i.e., the story line.

c) Use the storyline to determine the theme or themes of the prose fiction.

d) Relate all other issues, facts, events, and activities in the story to the major theme.

e) Formulate impressions about the characters (minor and major characters), through what they say themselves, what they do, and what other people say about them. 'Relate the characters to the theme of the novel'.

f) Draw conclusions, inferences and implications regarding life, experiences, conflicting issues, and the world at large through all the presentations in prose fiction.

g) Relate the use of words, expressions, and the language of prose fiction to the themes, characterization, and the storyline. Identify the powerful and effective use of language to bring out the author's intentions.

Prose fiction is a work of art, a by-product of imagination, a source of pleasure and the most vivid way to depict life and the world in its reality. Collection of short stories are a treasure trove of fascinating reading, ideal for reading aloud to children or for dipping into at random. You will enjoy reading the stories recommended here.

*The Open Window*

(Saki)

*Lighthouse Keeper*

(Sienkiewicz)

*The Red Headed League*

(Arthur Conan Doyle)

*The Selfish Giant*

(Oscar Wild)

The stories mentioned above will enrich and enliven the reader’s life, and that of every member of the reader’s family.

Forms of short stories:

* A short story is a form of short fictional narrative prose.
* They are more conscious and to the point than longer works of fiction, such as novels.
* Because of their brevity, short stories rely on various literary devices to a greater extent than longer forms of fiction.
* They tend to be less complex than novels.
* Usually, a short story on only one incident, has a single plot, a single setting, a limited number of characters, and covers a short period of time.

In longer forms of fiction, stories tend to contain certain core elements of dramatic structure: **exposition**( the introduction of setting, situation of main characters); **complication**( the event of the story that introduces the conflict);rising action and crisis( decisive moment for the protagonist and the commitment to a course of action); **climax** ( the point of highest interest in terms of the conflict and the point of the story with the most action);**resolution**( the point of the story when the conflict is resolved);and the moral. Elements of a short story are:

***SETTING / THE BACKGROUND***

It gives us an idea about the time and place of the story.

***CHARACTERS***

The persons in a work of fiction: antagonist and protagonist.

**Plot**

The plot is how the author arranges events to develop the basic idea. It is the sequence of events in a story or play and a pattern of events in a cause-and-effect relationship that develops from the interactions between characters. Conflict or problem is essential to plot, they are:

External - a struggle with a force outside one’s self.

Internal - A struggle within one’s self.

**Theme:** Theme is the ‘meaning’ behind the events and the characters’ actions.

Theme in a piece of fiction is its ‘controlling idea’ or its ‘central insight’ and is the ‘focuses of the story. It is the ‘author’s underlying meaning’ or ‘main idea’ that she/ he is trying to convey.

**Point of view:** It is defined as the angle from which the story is told.

**Innocent eye:** the story is told through the eyes of a child (her/his judgement being different from that of an adult)

**Stream of consciousness:** The story is told in such a way that the reader feels as if he is inside the head of one character and knows all his thoughts and reactions.

**First person:** The story is told by the protagonist or one of the characters who interacts closely with the protagonist or other characters (using pronouns I, me, we, etc.) The reader sees the story through this person’s eyes as she/ he experiences it and only knows what she/ he knows or feels.

**Omniscient:** The author can narrate the story using the omniscient point of view. She/ he can move from character to character, event to event, having free access to the thoughts, feelings and motivations of the characters and the information is introduced where and when she/ he chooses.

**Style:** A stylistic analysis of a short story entails an understanding of the style of the writer, the types of imagery, patterns, symbolism, incongruity, suspense, surprise ending, irony, satire and the like used in the short story.

**Literary devices:** Sentence structure, pace or speed, expensive/ economical diction, vocabulary, figurative language, use of dialogue, point of view, tone, word colour / word sound, paragraph, / chapter structure, time sequencing/ chronology, allusion, experimentation in language, and the twist ending.

**DEVICES TO GIVE TWIST TO THE SHORT STORY:**

**Red herring-** A false clue that leads investigators, readers, towards an incorrect solution.

**Flashback-** It is a sudden vivid reversion to a past event and is used to surprise the reader with previously unknown information that provides the answer to a mystery.

**Poetic justice-** A literary device in which virtue is ultimately rewarded or vice punished in such a way that the reward or punishment has a logical connection to the deed.

**Irony-** Irony creates a gap or incongruitybetween what a writer says and what is understood. This often works in narratives to create a twist of fate where an eventual event reverts to a previous one.

**Betrayal-** Also called double cross**,** can become more complex when the writer chooses to have the character who has double crossed betrays the other character as well. This instance is referred to as a triple cross. In rare instances, there have been more counter- betrayals, but this is often considered overly complex.

**NON-FICTION**

It is a literary medium that attempts to mirror the language of everyday speech. It is distinguished from poetry by its use of unmetered, unrhymed, language consisting of logically related sentences. Prose is usually grouped into paragraphs that form a cohesive whole such as an essay or a novel. Prose also includes history, religion, law, philosophy, biography, autobiography, medicine, the novel, short story, magazine articles, essays, criticism, travels, etc. These works are conventionally classified into factual writing and fictional writing, or simply, fiction and nonfiction. The kinds of non-fiction prose that are relevant to literature field are the ones that stimulate and satisfy the readers' imagination or creative mind. Let's discuss them one by one.

**BIOGRAPHY**

It is a connected narrative that tells a person’s life story. It is also an account of the life of a person written by another person. A person's biography may be written while he is still alive, or after his death. Biographies typically aim to be objective and closely detailed. The biographer presents the facts of the person's life as he uncovers them through research, interviews, and visits. But it is possible for the biographer to insert his own imaginative thought, stories, and appreciative comments, to bring out the life of that person. Thus, unlike a scientific or technical text, a biography consists of imagery, figures of speech, narration, description, argumentation, and exposition.

Indeed, the most difficult part of writing a biography is to be neutral and objective. There is the tendency for the biographer to be a sycophant, praise singer or an utter brute that condemns the person whose biography he is writing about completely. A biography loses its credibility if it is packed full of lies. Although the writer has the liberty to invent stories, they should not be all lies. James Boswell’s ‘The Life of Samuel Richardson’ is a famous example of the form.

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

Autobiography is a connected narrative in which an individual tells his or her life story. The difference between a biography and an autobiography is that the autobiography is an account of the person's life written by him personally. Modern biographies and autobiographies show the tendency of adopting forms used in writing a novel. The straightforward narrative is largely broken by presentations of dialogue, conversations, flashbacks suspense, descriptions of a particular issue, exposition, varieties of English, etc. Examples include Benjamin Franklin’s ‘Autobiography’ and Henry Adam’s ‘The Education of Henry Adams’.

**ESSAY**

It is defined as a prose composition with a focused subject of discussion. The term was coined by Michael de Montaigne to describe his 1580 collection of brief, informal reflections on himself and on various topics relating to human nature. An essay can also be a long, systematic discourse. An example of a longer essay is John Locke’s ‘An Essay Concerning Human Understanding’. From the 16th Century down to the present, essays have been undergoing tremendous changes. The essayists are also quite different in form, style, and subject matter. The same essayist may write different essays, different not only in subject matter, but also in style. The characteristics of an essay are: i) Fairly short composition prose; ii) Focus on a topical issue; It is an expression of thoughts on a single subject; iii) Uncommonly, some are a little lengthy; iv) Not a narrative and quite different from a schoolboy composition; v) Written by renowned literary artists; vi) Not limited to a few subjects, diverse in topics; and use different rhetoric forms: narration, description, exposition, vii) written primarily to inform, reform, instruct or merely to entertain. viii) Create pleasant surprises, can be frank, intimate, and usually reveal the personality of the essayists.

**TRAVEL LITERATURE AND ADVENTURE BOOKS**

These are the writings that describe either author’s journey to a distant and alien place, or which discuss the customs, habits, and wildlife of a distant place. Travel and adventure literature is straightforward narration combined with descriptions, expository surveys, etc. Emphasis is not only on the facts presented, but on the manner of presentation. They are full of brave deeds, descriptions of people of great explorations and real or imagined scenes of various kinds.

**READ THE FOLLOWING TEXT AND FIND THE UNIQUE FEATURES IN IT. INDIA**

Of all the world’s countries, India is the most truly prodigious, and this quality of astonishments displays itself afresh every day as the sun comes up in Delhi. Five-hundred-and-eighty-million people, three hundred languages, provinces from the Himalayan to the equatorial, cities as vast as Bombay and Calcutta, villages so lost in time that no map marks them, nuclear scientists and aboriginal hill men, industrialists of incalculable wealth and dying beggars sprawled on railway platforms, three or four great cultures, myriad religions, pilgrims from across the world, politicians sunk in graft, the Grand Trunk Road marching to Peshawar, the temples of Madras gleaming in the sun, an inexhaustible history, an incomprehensible social system, an unfathomable repository of human resource, misery, ambiguity, vitality and confusion- all this, the colossal corpus of India, invests, sprawls around, infuses, elevates, inspires and very nearly overwhelms New Delhi.

Jan Morris

(British travel writer)

Note that narratives are there to avoid the dry-as-dust style often found in textbooks and other academic books.

**LEARNING FROM NARRATIVES**

Narrative is the primary way through which humans organize their experiences into temporally meaningful episodes. It isboth a mode of reasoning *and* a mode of representation. People can “apprehend” the world narratively and people can “tell” about the world narratively. According to Jerome Bruner… narrative reasoning is one of the two basis and universal human cognition modes. The other mode is the logico-scientific… mode looks for universal truth conditions, whereas the narrative mode looks for particular connections between events. Explanation in the narrative mode is contextually embedded, whereas the logico-scientific explanation is extracted from spatial and temporal events. Both modes are “rational” ways of making meaning.

**NARRATIVES OF DISPLACEMENT**

Regarded as both a migration and a sense of being socially or culturally “out of place” focus on time and space representations and on treatment of cultural ambivalence and identity conflict. A few key points on practicing Narratives of Displacements:

Try out personally the analytical approach as a starting point for the further exploration of literature.

Learn to think, and to think specifically about language and literature. Spend little time on close examination of words in literary passages.

Learn how to distinguish between fact and opinion, neutral words and emotive language, apt expression, and vague statement.

Identify the purpose, the tools, idioms, similes, and metaphors serve in different contexts.

Identify how writers use various literary tools to create specific effects.

Language is used not only to express feelings and emotions, but also to arose feelings and emotions among the readers, perceivers, and spectators.

**CRITICISM**

Criticism is very similar to essays in form and substance. While essays can be on many diverse topics, criticism is somewhat limited to passing valued judgments on works of literature: drama, prose, fiction, nonfiction, and other works of art, such as music, art, film, etc. Critical evaluation, strict assessment, and critical analysis of issues are all the intense pre-occupation of criticisms. Of most importance to you is literary criticism, whereby literary texts are assessed along the lines of theme, stylistic preoccupations, plot, language, and characterization.Go through the following text and find some unique features such as tone, texture, and argument.

**THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY**

Everyone knows that we live in a beauty-obsessed culture. But what does it mean to say so, and why do we assume that this is a dangerous state of affairs? How do we define beauty? Is it an essential quality that happens to exist in certain people, things, or ideas or -is it -as we like to say- in the eye of the beholder? What leads us to identify something-or someone - as beautiful, and what kind of power does the thing in question derive from this designation?

In American context (in general), what seems destructive about current ‘cultural fixation’ with physical beauty is their assumption that it is a fixed standard, something that might just be within our ‘grasp’ if we can only acquire the right clothes, the right hair, the perfect skin etc.…

Aldous Huxley

The author says, this is an ‘expensive proposition’, of course, the fact that a multi-billion dollar- industry exists to satisfy (and fuel) these desires suggests that someone stands to benefit considerably from this state of perpetually anxious imperfection.

If beauty is not an essential quality but a fluid concept, if aesthetic values are historically and culturally specific and constantly changing, then how are we to understand beauty -what it is, what it means, what does it?

**ACTIVITIES:**

Note that, this text is somewhat serious both in language and content and it is tempting to do something on a general discussion on the topic ‘beauty’. Particularly on people’s lives.

Pre- teach words would be bootlegging, racketeering, ravishing, retrenching, repellent, hag-ridden, Freudian lasciviousness, crone, consummation, ascetic etc.

**QUESTIONS:**

1.Choose a literary or cultural text in which the representation of beauty features prominently. Examine closely the language used to convey beauty, and consider what values, ideas or judgements are associated with it.

2. How might beauty be said to incite “the search for something beyond itself”?

3.What kind of ideological work do you think the representation of beauty performs in the text?

4. What cultural assumptions does it challenge or reinforce?