

Narrative

Narrative Definition

Narrative is a report of related events presented to listeners or readers, in words arranged in a logical sequence. A *story* is taken as a synonym of narrative. A narrative, or story, is told by a narrator who may be a direct part of that experience, and he or she often shares the experience as a first-person narrator. Sometimes he or she may only observe the events as a third-person narrator, and gives his or her summation.

History of Narration or Storytelling

Storytelling is an essential part of human nature. Man is the only creature that tells stories, and we have been telling stories and listening to them since the time we learned to speak. Storytelling began with oral traditions, and in such forms as myths, legends, fables, anecdotes, and ballads. These were told and retold, passed down from generation to generation, and they shared the knowledge and wisdom of early people.

The basic [theme](#) of various forms of story-telling were fear of natural forces, deeds of heroes, gods and goddesses, and to teach life lessons from others' experiences. Biblical stories have the primary purpose of teaching spirituality. Most biblical stories were performed in churches to convey spiritual messages to the masses.

Narrative Examples in Everyday Life

Modern narratives have a broader function. After a close study of famous examples of modern narrative, we see that such narratives do not merely entertain, but serve as ways to communicate writers' [moral](#), cultural, and political perspectives.

Moreover, narratives have contributed to achieving educational objectives in our everyday life. Different forms of media enable people to express and

record their real life stories, and to share their knowledge and their cultural values across the world. In addition, many documentaries on television adopt a narrative technique to communicate information in an interesting way.

Examples of Narrative in Literature

Example #1: *Animal Farm* (By George Orwell)

Animal Farm, by George Orwell, is a modern narrative example known as a “political [satire](#),” which aims at expressing a writer’s political views. It uses animals on a farm to describe the overthrow of the last Russian Tsar, Nicholas II, and the Communist Revolution of Russia before WWII. The actions of the animals on the farm are used to expose the greed and corruption of the Revolution. It also describes how powerful people can change the ideology of a society.

Example #2: *Faerie Queen* (By Edmund Spenser)

Poetry written in the [style](#) of a narrative is known as “narrative [verse](#).” *Faerie Queen*, by Edmund Spenser, is an example of such poetry. It narrates the adventures of the Red-Cross Knight in helping Lady Una rescue her parents from the evil Dagon. On a symbolic level it describes the mission of the Holiness as helping the Truth, fight Evil, and thus regain its rightful place in human hearts.

Example #3: *The Withdrawing Room* (By Charlotte Macleod)

Charlotte Macleod’s *The Withdrawing Room* is an example of a thriller or [suspense](#) narrative. Augustus Quiffen, a lodger at Sarah’s Brownstone home, is killed by falling under the train. It seems to be an accident until Mary Smith tells Sarah that it is a murder, but she is not sure of the identity of the murderer. Sarah and Max Bittersohn investigate the matter, and find that the killer has planned the death beforehand.

Example #4: *Don Quixote* (By Miguel de Cervantes)

Don Quixote, by Miguel de Cervantes, is a [parody](#) of [romance](#) narratives, which dealt with the adventures of a valiant knight. Unlike serious romances, in *Don Quixote*, the narrative takes a comical turn. We laugh at how Quixote was bestowed a knighthood in his battle with the giants [windmills]. We enjoy how the knight helps the Christian king against the army of a Moorish monarch [herd of sheep]. These and the rest of the incidents of the novel are written in the style of Spanish romances of the 16th century, in order to mock the idealism of knights in the contemporary romances.

Function of Narrative

Storytelling and listening to stories are part of human instinct. Therefore, writers employ narrative techniques in their works to attract readership. The readers are not only entertained, but also learn some underlying message from the narratives.

Moreover, a narrative is set in specific cultural contexts. Readers can get a deep insight of that culture, and develop an understanding toward it. Thus, narratives can act as a binding force in uniting humanity.