

**SENIOR
HIGH
SCHOOL**



Creative Nonfiction

Quarter 1 – Module 1:
A Close Look at the Literary Genres



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Creative Nonfiction

Quarter 1 – Module 1: A Close Look at the Literary Genres

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QUARTER 1, MODULE 1

• A Close Look at the Literary Genres

This lesson will re-introduce you to what is literature and at the same time give you a closer look at the different literary genres. Although this module is about creative nonfiction, it is important for learners to have a solid grounding on literature for you to have a better understanding and appreciation of the different forms of creative nonfiction which you will learn later in the module.

Learning Competencies:

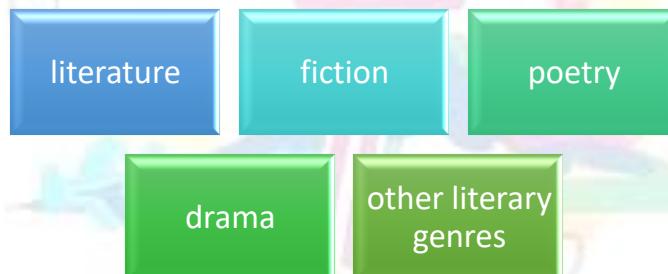
1. Identify dominant literary conventions of a particular genre;
2. Compare and contrast how the elements are used in the different genres.

Learning Targets:

At the end of the lesson, you are expected to:

1. Distinguish the major literary genres;
2. Compare and contrast the use of literary elements in different sample genres.

KEY WORDS



VOCABULARY LIST

1. **Literature** is an art form, usually written. It includes prose and poetry.
2. **Fiction** uses ordinary language that depicts significant human. It has its elements such character, setting, plot, and point-of-view. Its kinds are short stories and novels.
3. **Poetry** uses figurative language. It may be lyric, narrative or dramatic.
4. **Drama** refers to a life story of actors and actresses, usually is performed on a stage.
5. **Other literary genres** are speeches, diary entries, memoirs, etc.

PRE-TEST

Directions: Let's see how well you can recall some important facts about literature. In your notebook, write AGREE if you think the statement is true and DISAGREE if it is not.

1. Literature encompasses works of varying forms from student's classroom essays to famous writers' masterpieces.
2. Fiction is an imaginative work.

3. A poem could have an unusual shape on the page.
4. A drama is intended to be performed before an audience.
5. Speeches are not literary works.
6. Both poetry and fiction utilize the same literary elements.
7. There are various literary genres.
8. Journals and diaries are also considered literary genres.
9. Any artistic literary work can be considered literature.
10. Since nonfiction work is based on truth, it makes use of different literary elements when written.

LEARNING ABOUT IT

Introduction to Literary Genres

Defined simply as the “art of words,” literature comes in various meanings. Rexroth (2020) defines literature as “those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution.” Citing the 11th edition of Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Rexroth adds that literature are “writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest.” These definitions point out two important aspects of literature: excellence and expression. For a work to be considered literature, it should not simply express humankind’s thoughts, feelings, experiences and aspirations, but should also reflect merit and brilliance of expression.

Due to the depth and breadth of literature, various academics have classified it based on its different aspects such as content, technique, tone, or simply definition. On the basis of content, literature is divided into two major forms – fiction and nonfiction. As to techniques used, literature is also classified into prose and poetry.

Genre refers to a type of art, literature, or music characterized by a distinct form, content, and style. In literature, there are four literary genres: poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. All these literary genres have specific functions and features which distinguish one from the others.

As readers of literature, part of understanding a text is knowing to which genre a material belongs since the message it conveys may be affected by certain conventions. When you have mastered what distinguishes one from the other, it is easier to grasp what the writer is trying to tell you hence putting you in a better position to think critically about the material you have read.

Different genres also have different roles. Fiction, for instance, may let you into a world which is totally different from ours. Poetry may enrich your emotional and imaginative powers while drama can help improve your communicative competencies. Nonfiction essays can give you insights about life or it may lead you to think critically or persuasively about things and ideas around you. Whatever genre you read, it is imperative that you have an understanding of what delineates one from the other for you to balance your expectations of a particular literary work’s distinct conventions and style.

Fiction

Fiction Defined

Fiction refers to a literary work which comes from the author's imagination. Through the fictional narrative, a writer may inform, entertain, inspire, or even persuade (Littlehale, 2020). Fiction has three categories: realistic, non-realistic, and semi-fiction. MasterClass (2019) classifies fiction into 14 different forms including the following:

1. **Literary Fiction.** It refers to literary works with artistic value and literary merit. Political criticism, social commentary, and reflections on humanity are most often the content of literary fiction. Contrary to plot-driven works, they are typically character-driven, and places emphasis and focus on the inner story of the character.
2. **Mystery.** Also known as detective fiction, mystery often follows a plot with a detective as character or someone playing detective and tries to solve a case with a sprinkling of clues here and there, giving the readers a feel for suspense, creates anticipation, and ultimately bares the truth with some unexpected turns with nonetheless satisfying conclusions.
3. **Thriller.** This fiction type is characterized by dark, mysterious and suspenseful plots. It rarely utilizes humor but highlights techniques like plot twists, red herrings, and cliffhangers which can keep readers guessing until the very end.
4. **Horror.** Written to shock, startle, scare, and even repulse the readers, horror fiction creates a horrifying sense of dread and may include characters like ghosts, vampires, werewolves, witches, and monsters. Horror themes may be of death, demons, evil spirits, the afterlife, and even fear itself.
5. **Historical.** This type of fiction involves the creative use of research to be able to transport readers to another time and place. This time and place may be real, imagined, or a combination of both. Some historical fiction may utilize characters who were historical figures and use real events in history.
6. **Romance.** Created with a light-hearted, oftentimes optimistic tone, and most often a satisfying conclusion, romantic fiction highlights love stories between people.
7. **Western.** Stories of this type often portray characters and setting of the western frontier like cowboys, outlaws, and settlers of the American Old West. One distinct feature of this form is that it relies mostly on the specific locale, culture, and language of that era in history.
8. **Bildungsroman.** Literally translated as "a novel of education" or "a novel of formation," this form highlights the transition or metamorphosis of a character from youth into adulthood. The transition from immaturity to maturity experienced by the character may involve a profound loss, an insightful journey, or an intense conflict.

9. **Speculative fiction.** This type may be a combination of different fiction forms like dystopian, science fiction, and fantasy, or any other combination. The setting may be in a world so unlike the world we live in. Considered as a supergenre, writers of speculative fiction have limitless use of the possibilities beyond the human imagination.
10. **Science Fiction.** Classified under speculative fiction, sci-fi uses elements that do not exist in the real world. Inspired by both natural science (physics, chemistry, and astronomy) and social sciences (psychology, anthropology, and sociology), sci-fi stories may focus on time travel, space exploration, and societies of the future.
11. **Fantasy.** Another type of speculative fiction, fantasy has imaginary characters and worlds and may have influences of mythology and folklore which can be appealing to both children and adults alike.
12. **Dystopian.** In contrast to utopian fiction which portrays a world better than the one we have, dystopian fiction depicts a society that is worse than ours. Dystopian fiction is also another type of science fiction.
13. **Magical realism.** The world portrayed in magical realism is similar to our real world but with added magical elements which are considered “natural” in which the story takes place.
14. **Realist literature.** This type of fiction portrays a world very much like ours, with all the elements created as truthful as it can be as it happens in our world.

On the other hand, some academics also classify fiction into sub-genres which include the following:

1. **Short Story.** Shorter in length than a novel, a short story is a fictional prose work which usually focuses on one plot, one main character (with a few additional minor characters), and one central theme. It aims at unity of effect and creation of mood rather than on plot. Edgar Allan Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition" describes a short story as one that "should be read in one sitting, anywhere from a half hour to two hours. In contemporary fiction, a short story can range from 1,000 to 20,000 words."
2. **Novel.** A novel is a narrative prose work of considerable length that talks about significant human experience. The novel's beginnings date back to as early as the writing of "*Tale of Genji*" by Murasaki Shikibu; later, in the early seventeenth century, European novels came to be written (Prahl, 2019).

A novel is also characterized by the following: (1) written in prose form, (2) considerable length or word count, (3) fictional content, and (4) individualism; that is, it appeals to an individual audience as a reader rather than to a group.

3. **Myth.** Derived from the Greek *mythos*, which has a range of meanings from "word," through "saying" and "story," to "fiction," a myth is a symbolic narrative of unknown origin and tells events which are partly traditional and associated

with religious beliefs. Myths are specific accounts with gods or superhuman beings as characters involved in extraordinary events or circumstances in a time that is unspecified but which is understood as existing apart from ordinary human experience. Mythology, on the other hand, refers to both the study of myth and the body of myths belonging to a particular religious tradition.

4. **Legend.** A legend is traditional tale which is thought to have historical bases.
5. **Fable.** A fable is an instructive story about human social behaviour with personified animals or natural objects as characters and always ends with an explicit moral message. The concept of time and space is also not specific in a fable.

Poetry

Poetry Defined

Poetry is a means of sharing experiences, telling a story, or expressing feelings or ideas through the use of language in a particular way. As opposed to prose writing, poetry in written form has a distinct structure and words may form patterns of sound, verse or thought. The creation of pictures with words is very important in poetry, hence poets carefully choose words which will appeal to the imagination of the readers and create vivid visual images.

There are some distinctive characteristics of poetry which sets it apart from prose:

- A. the visual patterning of lines of unequal and shorter length,
- B. the frequent division into stanzas (verses),
- C. the possibility of unusual shapes, and
- D. the distinctive use of white space which draws our eye into the compressed essence of feelings and ideas.

Poems are usually shorter than novels, may come in many shapes and forms, and are often (but not always) divided into stanzas (or verses). But just like prose, poems also share similar features like subject (what it is about), theme (what it says about the subject), and a mood/feeling/tone (how the author feels about this or how the author wants the readers to feel).

To make meaning out of poems, two broad approaches can be used:

A) Narrative poem – It tells a story with an orientation, complication, crisis, and resolution, or

B) Lyrical poem – It conveys an experience, or ideas, thoughts or feelings about a subject without necessarily having ‘something happen.’

Poems also come in many forms. These forms are distinguished from the other by the choice of structural units (couplets, quatrains, and their arrangement with the overall poem), the layout of a poem on the page, and the organization of the lines of the poem. Here are some of them:

1) Acrostic. It is a poem which consists of vertical first letters name of the topic while the horizontal words describe the topic.

2) Ballad. It is a narrative poem which tells a dramatic story in four-line stanza with a regular beat. A ballad was originally set to music and sung. Characterized by simplicity of language, repetition of epithets and phrases, simple rhyming schemes (usually abcd, sometimes abab) and refrains, topics are often drawn from community life, local and national history, legend and folklore; while the verse tales are usually of adventure, war, love, death and the supernatural

3) Chant. Dating to prehistoric time, hence one of the earliest forms of poetry, chant is a poem of no fixed form, but in which one or more lines are repeated over and over. It is usually meant to be spoken aloud.

4) Cinquain. It is a five line poem that follows a pattern and does not rhyme. The cinquain consists of five lines of 2, 4, 6, 8 and 2 syllables respectively.

5) Comic Verse. It is a poem that involves humor and makes sense.

6) Diamante. It is a seven line poem in which the first and last lines are opposites or contrasts. It is written in the shape of a diamond.

7) Elegy. It is a poem of mourning to someone's death.

8) Epic. It is a long narrative poem on a subject which is thought to be great and serious.

9) Epigram. It is a short and pointed poem, often a witty statement in verse or prose which may be complimentary, satiric or aphoristic.

10) Epitaph. It is a poem with a short inscription carved on a tombstone (or written with that context in mind). It usually rhymes and lends itself to imitation and distortion. While the epitaph in a cemetery is often serious, the form can be made humorous.

11) Free verse. It is a poetry that does not conform to particular schemes or patterns of rhyme, meter or form because it doesn't follow strict rules it has flexibility. Its rhythm is created by the natural flow of the poet's thoughts and emotions. Each line is based on speech rhythm which is often a mixture of iambic and anapestic feet - sometimes with a regular number of stressed syllables in each line. Each line is a meaningful unit in its own right, and in relation to other lines. There is pattern and rhythm, though not in the traditional, regular form. Form is even more important to free verse than to traditional verse, and it is usually quite subtle.

12) Haiku. Originated in Japan and often tells about nature, it consists of three unrhymed lines containing 17 syllables (5, 7, 5) and portrays a single idea or feeling while having a strong visual imagery.

13) Light verse. It is a poem that is cheerful, airy and light-hearted, it often describes everyday events and uses language of the speaking voice.

14) Limerick. This is usually brief and lends itself to comic effects. The limerick consists of three long and two short lines rhyming aabba. Rhyme and rhythm are used to enhance the content.

15) Lyric. Concerned with feelings and thoughts rather than action or narrative, it usually represents and reflects on a single experience, is intensely personal, and its rhythms often have a musical flexibility. It does not have to tell a story, and is often short (eg haiku, cinquain, shape, tongue twisters, rhyming couplets, acrostic poems).

16) Narrative. It tells a story with an orientation, complication and resolution eg nursery rhymes. It can be short or long, serious, humorous, personal or impersonal. It may come in the form of allegories, fables or accounts of everyday events.

17) Nonsense verse. Categorized as light verse that has structure and rhyme and invented words, it is characterized by fantastic themes, absurd images, artificial language and humor.

18) Nursery rhyme. Usually having regular rhymes, strong rhythms and repetition, it could be described as jingles for children, forming part of the oral tradition of many countries.

19) Ode. Usually celebrating a person, animal or object, an ode is often written without the constraints of formal structure or rhyme.

20) Riddle. It indirectly describes a person, place, thing or idea and can be any length and usually has a rhyming scheme.

21) Song lyric. It is a poem that has been set to music. The word 'lyric' comes from the Greek word lyre, a kind of harp that was often used to accompany songs.

22) Sonnet. It is a lyric poem that has fourteen lines of five beats each. Rather than tell a story. It usually explores a feeling or state of mind or expresses a fixed idea. It first appeared in Italy in the 13th century. Many sonnets have an alternating rhyme scheme and usually have a 'turning point' at the eighth line.

23) Tanka. A type of Japanese poem similar to haiku, it consists of five lines with the first and third lines usually having five syllables and the others seven, making it a total of 31.

24) Villanelle. It is a fixed form, usually containing five three-line stanzas and a four-line stanza, with only two rhymes throughout.

Drama

A drama is a composition in either verse or prose presenting a story through pantomime or dialogue. It contains conflict of characters, particularly the ones who perform in front of the audience on the stage. The person who writes drama for stage directions is known as a "dramatist" or "playwright." The term "drama" is also used for the type of play written for theater, television, radio, and film.

Because of the combination of performance, music, dance, props, and others which enable the audience to feel like a part of the action, drama is considered a unique and distinctive genre of literature.

There are four distinct types of drama:

A. **Comedy.** A comedy is a type of dramatic presentation which intends to make the audience laugh through well-composed humorous elements. The story may be about real-life characters, funny experiences in life, or any type of fun-provoking situation. It may be sarcastic and raunchy, light in tone and has happy endings. Since provoking laughter is not an easy task, comedy writers require high level of intellect and perceptive faculties to attain the desired end for a comedic presentation.

B. **Tragedy.** One of the oldest forms of drama, tragedy exposes the plight and suffering of humans to the audience. Common tragic themes include ruins of a dynasty, downfall of man, emotional betrayals, moral setback, personal loss, death, and denials. A tragedy when composed and enacted well can touch the audience deeply. These rarely have happy endings.

C. **Melodrama.** This type of drama uses a technique marked by surge of feelings since melodrama highlights exaggeration of emotions. The technique intends to make the character and the plot more appealing to the audience although it can sometimes fail to derive applause, because excessive display of emotions can

become monotonous. On the other hand, a superbly-executed melodramatic plot can absorb the audience's attention completely. This happens when it effectively depicts the good and evil aspects of the characters involved.

D. Musical drama. In a musical drama, the story is told through acting and dialogue, as well as through dance and music, as well. The story may be comedic, though it may also involve serious subjects.

Other Forms of Literary Genres

Diaries/Journals

Diaries and journals both contain records of experiences by its writer. A diary records events, transactions, or observations daily or at frequent intervals. A journal, on the other hand, contains one's experiences, ideas and reflections but not necessarily on a daily basis.

Memoirs

A memoir is an author's narrative of his or her experiences, which makes it similar to an autobiography, but with certain distinguishable characteristics. In terms of focus, memoirs highlight what the writer has witnessed, more than the telling of his or her own life, character, and developing self. Secondly, while a memoir talks about how one remembers one's own life, an autobiography is history, requiring research, dates, and facts double-checked.

Speeches

Merriam-Webster defines speech as "the communication or expression of thoughts in spoken words." Although speeches are not primary genres of literature, its significance lies in the fact that these are important historical documents or moments and literature. A formal address meant to be given to an audience, speeches can be found in prose, drama, and poetry, and their primary goals are to persuade, inform, demonstrate, or entertain a reader, an audience, or other characters. They can also be used in nonfiction or fiction, depending on their purpose and use. Some of the primary speech forms include persuasive, informational, demonstrative, special occasion speech, and debate.

KEEPING YOU IN PRACTICE

Task 1

Directions: Can you recall some literary works which you have read? Can you tell the genre form of those works? Try recalling some of them and fill in the table below with the titles of sample genres that you know. Write your answer in your notebook.

Genre form and Sub-genres	Title of Sample Genres
Fiction	
Short Story	
Novel	
Myth	

Legend	
Fable	
Poetry	
Narrative	
Lyrical	
Drama	
Comedy	
Tragedy	
Melodrama	
Musical Drama	
Other Genre Forms (Journal or diary, memoir, or speech)	

Task 2

Directions: Read the following excerpts from literary works and try to guess its genre form- whether it is fiction, poetry, or drama. Then give a reason for your answer. Write your answer in your notebook.

1.

"And it drives me to certain street corners, damp houses, towards hospitals where skeletons leap from the window, to cobbler's shops stinking of vinegar, to alleys awful as abysses.

I pass by calmly, with eyes and shoes, with anger and oblivion, pass by, cross through offices, orthopedic stores, and yards where clothes hang down from wires: underpants, towels, and shirts, that cry slow guilty tears."

-Pablo Neruda

Literary genre: _____
Reason(s): _____

2.

SCENE IV.

Another part of the field

Excursions. Enter RICHARD and CLIFFORD

RICHARD. Now, Clifford, I have singled thee alone.
Suppose this arm is for the Duke of York,
And this for Rutland; both bound to revenge,
Wert thou environ'd with a brazen wall.

CLIFFORD. Now, Richard, I am with thee here alone.
This is the hand that stabbed thy father York;
And this the hand that slew thy brother Rutland;
And here's the heart that triumphs in their death
And cheers these hands that slew thy sire and brother
To execute the like upon thyself;
And so, have at thee! [They fight]

Enter WARWICK; CLIFFORD flies

RICHARD. Nay, Warwick, single out some other chase;
For I myself will hunt this wolf to death. Exeunt

-William Shakespeare, *King Henry VI (Third Part)*, from *Shakespeare's Complete Works*

Literary genre: _____
Reason(s): _____

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3.

On the morning of August 8, 1965, Robert Kincaid locked the door to his small two-room apartment on the third door of a rambling house in Bellingham, Washington. He carried a knapsack full of photography equipment and a suitcase down wooden stairs and through a hallway to the back, where his old Chevrolet pickup truck was parked in a space reserved for residents of the building.

Another knapsack, a medium-size ice chest, two tripods, cartons of Camel cigarettes, a Thermos, and a bag of fruit were already inside. In the truck box was a guitar case. Kincaid arranged the knapsacks on the seat and put the cooler and tripods on the floor. He climbed into the truck box and wedged the guitar case and suitcase into a corner of the box, bracing them with a spare tire lying on its side and

securing both cases to the tire with a length of clothesline rope. Under the worn spare he shoved a black tarpaulin.

-*Robert James Waller, excerpt from "The Bridges of Madison County*

Literary genre: _____

Reason(s): _____

Task 3

Directions: Write two (3) forms of poetry from the choices: diamante, tanka, cinquain, epigram, epithat and haiku about your experiences of lockdown due to COVID-19 scare. Compose a title of your poem and identify its form. [eg. The Frontliners (Haiku)]. Write your verse in your notebook.

1.

2.

3.

*Rubrics

5 – Correct use of language/grammar; correctness of the verse used; sufficient use of words that describes lockdown; clarity of ideas; positive views in life

3 – Minor errors on language/grammar; correctness of the verse used; minimal use of words that describes lockdown; clarity of ideas; positive views in life

1– Major errors on grammar; no use of word regarding lockdown; clarity of ideas

POST-TEST

Directions: Now let us see how well you can compare and contrast the different genre forms by filling in the table below with the correct description of each form. On the third column, enumerate and write a brief description for each element. Write the answers in your notebook.

Major Genre Forms	Definition	Elements of Each Genre Form
Fiction		
Poetry		
Drama		

ASSIGNMENT

Literature had been given various meanings by various authors and writers from all over the world. In the same way, humans have also produced vast amounts of literature out of which some had perished while some have survived and had been handed down to us. In addition to these, mankind is also continuously creating literature which reflects the world that we have so that the present generation could also hand them down to the next. This body of literature does not only reflect the truth but also mirrors our aspirations, dreams, and longings.

If you could write something for the next generation, what would it be?
Publish your written output in your notebook.

*Rubrics

5 – Correct use of language/grammar; clarity of ideas; presence of words/expressions about the aspirations, dreams and longings of man; positive views in life

3 – Minor errors on language/grammar; clarity of ideas; presence of words/expressions about the aspirations, dreams and longings of man; positive views in life

1– Major errors on grammar; unclear presentation of ideas; absence of words/expressions about the aspirations, dreams and longings of man; views in life



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ANSWER KEY

Warming Up

1. Disagree
2. Agree
3. Agree
4. Agree
5. Agree
6. Disagree
7. Agree
8. Disagree
9. Disagree
10. Agree

Task 1

Answers vary.

Task 2

1. **Literary Genre:** Poem
Reasons: Answers vary.
2. **Literary Genre:** Play
Reasons: Answers vary.
3. **Literary Genre:** Fiction
Reasons: Answers vary.

Task 3

1. Answers vary.
2. Answers vary.
3. Answers vary.

Post-Test

Answers vary.

Assignment

Answers vary.