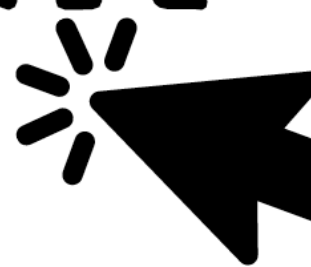


FROM INK TO LINR



In the digital expanse, narratives unravel,
Classics hold their place, timeless and firm.
Yet, the digital realm beckons, a gateway,
Inviting with inherent tales.

Classics, anchors of history's narratives,
Their wisdom resonates across vast epochs.
But the call resounds for diverse stories,
In literature's mosaic, authentic and varied.

Gone are the days of homogenous narratives,
Inclusion becomes the core of cherished tales.
The digital platform, an inclusive platform,
Where diverse voices find resonance.

For in this amalgamation of old and new,
Literature flourishes in myriad shades.
The classics offer guidance, yet new trails emerge,
Welcoming diverse voices, far and wide.

Title: From Ink to Link

An Open Educational (OER) Textbook for Intro to Literature, ENGL 220, at NDSCS

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From Ink to Link, compiled by Sybil Priebe

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Dedication

This textbook is dedicated to those who urged me to be my own person, to publish my own weird nonfiction stuff, to go back to grad school because “more education never hurt anyone,” and to the teachers who inspired me.

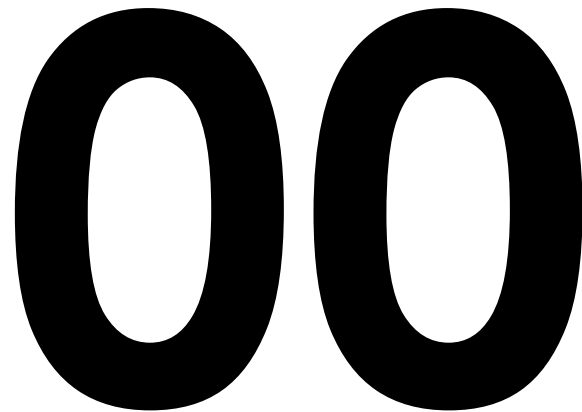
This is for my sisters, my cousins, my friends, my grandma Maxine, and Marcia Richman; this is for Kevin, Betsy, and Amy at NDSU.

This textbook was built with “young Sybil” in mind; the girl who loved to write and didn’t want to analyze what a bunch of dead white guys said. This book is for that student – the one who wants to digest the words, the phrases, the nuggets of ideas, and just let them live freely in her mind.

This textbook is an introduction to literature for those grad students who wanted to focus on linguistics and composition.

¹ Some pieces may be under a CC-BY-ND-SA license, which means they can be shared but not changed.

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Chapter Zero: Sampling

Before we dive into the pool of technicalities: definitions, categories, terminology, and history, let's just digest some literature. This chapter contains a sampling of literature you may not see in other textbooks of this sort.

Cherokee Cosmogonic Myths² / How the World Was Made

The earth is a great island floating in a sea of water, and suspended at each of the four cardinal points by a cord hanging down from the sky vault, which is of solid rock. When the world grows old and worn out, the people will die and the cords will break and let the earth sink down into the ocean, and all will be water again. The Indians are afraid of this. When all was water, the

² Public Domain snippets from the Compact Anthology of World Literature, Part 3. Compact Anthology of World Literature is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share-Alike 3.0 United States License. This title is a product of a Complete College Georgia grant.

animals were above in G.I.'l.t., beyond the arch; but it was very much crowded, and they were wanting more room. They wondered what was below the water, and at last D.yuni's., "Beaver's Grandchild," the little Water-beetle, offered to go and see if it could learn. It darted in every direction over the surface of the water, but could find no firm place to rest. Then it dived to the bottom and came up with some soft mud, which began to grow and spread on every side until it became the island which we call the earth. It was afterward fastened to the sky with four cords, but no one remembers who did this.

At first the earth was flat and very soft and wet. The animals were anxious to get down, and sent out different birds to see if it was yet dry, but they found no place to alight and came back again to G.I.'l.t.. At last it seemed to be time, and they sent out the Buzzard and told him to go and make ready for them. This was the Great Buzzard, the father of all the buzzards we see now. He flew all over the earth, low down near the ground, and it was still soft. When he reached the Cherokee country, he was very tired, and his wings began to flap and strike the ground, and wherever they struck the earth there was a valley, and where they turned up again there was a mountain. When the animals above saw this, they were afraid that the whole world would be mountains, so they called him back, but the Cherokee country remains full of mountains to this day.

When the earth was dry and the animals came down, it was still dark, so they got the sun and set it in a track to go every day across the island from east to west, just overhead. It was too hot this way, and Tsiska'g.l.', the Red Crawfish, had his shell scorched a bright red, so that his meat was spoiled; and the Cherokee do not eat it. The conjurers put the sun another hand-breadth higher in the air, but it was still too hot. They raised it another time, and another, until it was seven handbreadths high and just under the sky arch. Then it was right, and they left it so.

This is why the conjurers call the highest place G.lkw.'gine Di'g.l..'l.tiy..', "the seventh height," because it is seven hand-breadths above the earth. Every day the sun goes along under this arch, and returns at night on the upper side to the starting place.

There is another world under this, and it is like ours in everything—animals, plants, and people—save that the seasons are different. The streams that come down from the mountains are the trails by which we reach this underworld, and the springs at their heads are the doorways by which we enter it, but to do this, one must fast and go to water and have one of the underground people for a guide. We know that the seasons in the underworld are different from ours, because the water in the springs is always warmer in winter and cooler in summer than the outer air.

When the animals and plants were first made—we do not know by whom—they were told to watch and keep awake for seven nights, just as young men now fast and keep awake when they pray to their medicine. They tried to do this, and nearly all were awake through the first night, but the next night several dropped off to sleep, and the third night others were asleep, and then others, until, on the seventh night, of all the animals only the owl, the panther, and one or two more were still awake. To these were given the power to see and to go about in the dark, and to make prey of the birds and animals which must sleep at night. Of the trees only the cedar, the pine, the spruce, the holly, and the laurel were awake to the end, and to them it was given to be always green and to be greatest for medicine, but to the others it was said: "Because you have not endured to the end you shall lose your, hair every winter."

Men came after the animals and plants. At first there were only a brother and sister until he struck her with a fish and told her to multiply, and so it was. In seven days a child was born to her, and thereafter every seven days another, and they increased very fast until there was danger that the world could not keep them. Then it

was made that a woman should have only one child in a year, and it has been so ever since.



The Blind Man and The Talking Dog by Juliana Horatia Ewing³

There was once an old man whom Fortune (whose own eyes are bandaged) had deprived of his sight. She had taken his hearing also, so that he was deaf. Poor he had always been, and as Time had stolen his youth and strength from him, they had only left a light burden for death to carry when he should come the old man's way.

But Love (who is blind also) had given the Blind Man a Dog, who led him out in the morning to a seat in the sun under the crab-tree, and held his hat for wayside alms, and brought him safely home at sunset.

The Dog was wise and faithful—as dogs often are—but the wonder of him was that he could talk. In which will be seen the difference between dogs and men, most of whom can talk; whilst it is a matter for admiration if they are wise and faithful.

One day the Mayor's little son came down the road, and by the hand he held his playmate Aldegunda.

"Give the poor blind man a penny," said she.

³ From "Last Words: A Final Collection of Stories," by Juliana Horatia Ewing, 1891. *Project Gutenberg*.
<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/25710/pg25710-images.html> This work is in the public domain.

"You are always wanting me to give away my money," replied the boy peevishly. "It is well that my father is the richest man in the town, and that I have a whole silver crown yet in my pocket."

But he put the penny into the hat which the Dog held out, and the Dog gave it to his master.

"Heaven bless you," said the Blind Man.

"Amen," said the Dog.

"Aldegunda! Aldegunda!" cried the boy, dancing with delight "Here's a dog who can talk. I would give my silver crown for him. Old man, I say, old man! Will you sell me your dog for a silver crown?"

"My master is deaf as well as blind," said the Dog.

"What a miserable old creature he must be," said the boy compassionately.

"Men do not smile when they are miserable, do they?" said the Dog; "and my master smiles sometimes—when the sun warms right through our coats to our bones; when he feels the hat shake against his knee as the pennies drop in; and when I lick his hand."

"But for all that, he is a poor wretched old beggar, in want of everything," persisted the boy. "Now I am the Mayor's only son, and he is the richest man in the town. Come and live with me, and I will give the Blind Man my silver crown. I should be perfectly happy if I had a talking dog of my own."

"It is worth thinking of," said the Dog. "I should certainly like a master who was perfectly happy. You are sure that there is nothing else that you wish for?"

"I wish I were a man," replied the boy. "To do exactly as I chose, and have plenty of money to spend, and holidays all the year round."

"That sounds well," said the Dog. "Perhaps I had better wait till you grow up. There is nothing else that you want, I suppose?"

"I want a horse," said the boy, "a real black charger. My father ought to know that I am too old for a hobby-horse. It vexes me to look at it."

"I must wait for the charger, I see," said the Dog. "Nothing vexes you but the hobby-horse, I hope?"

"Aldegunda vexes me more than anything," answered the boy, with an aggrieved air; "and it's very hard when I am so fond of her. She always tumbles down when we run races, her legs are so short. It's her birthday to-day, but she toddles as badly as she did yesterday, though she's a year older."

"She will have learned to run by the time that you are a man," said the Dog. "So nice a little lady can give you no other cause of annoyance, I am sure?"
The boy frowned.

"She is always wanting something; She wants something now, I see. What do you want, Aldegunda?"

"I wish—" said Aldegunda, timidly, "I should like—the blind man to have the silver crown, and for us to keep the penny, if you can get it back out of the hat."

"That's just the way you go on," said the boy angrily. "You always think differently from me. Now remember, Aldegunda, I won't marry you when you grow big, unless you agree with what I do, like the wife in the story of 'What the Goodman does is sure to be right.'"

On hearing this, Aldegunda sobbed till she burst the strings of her hat, and the boy had to tie them afresh.

"I won't marry you at all if you cry," said he.

But at that she only cried the more, and they went away bickering into the green lanes.

As to the old man, he had heard nothing; and when the dog licked his withered hand, he smiled.

Many a time did the boy return with his playmate to try and get the Talking Dog. But the Dog always asked if he had yet got all that he wanted, and, being an honorable child, the boy was too truthful to say that he was content when he was not.

"The day that you want nothing more but me I will be your dog," it said. "Unless, indeed, my present master should have attained perfect happiness before you."

"I am not afraid of that," said the boy.

In time the Mayor died, and his widow moved to her native town and took her son with her.

Years passed, and the Blind Man lived on; for when one gets very old and keeps very quiet in his little corner of the world, Death seems sometimes to forget to remove him.

Years passed, and the Mayor's son became a man, and was strong and rich, and had a fine black charger. Aldegunda grew up also. She was very beautiful, wonderfully beautiful, and Love (who is blind) gave her to her old playmate.

The wedding was a fine one, and when it was over the bridegroom mounted his black charger and took his bride behind him, and rode away into the green lanes.

"Ah, what delight!" he said. "Now we will ride through the town where we lived when we were children; and if the Blind Man is still alive, you shall give him a silver crown; and if the Talking Dog is alive, I shall claim him, for to-day I am perfectly happy and want nothing."

Aldegunda thought to herself—"We are so happy, and have so much, that I do not like to take the Blind Man's dog from him;" but she did not dare to say so. One—if not two—must bear and forbear to be happy even on one's wedding day.

By-and-bye they rode under the crab-tree, but the seat was empty.

"What has become of the Blind Man?" the Mayor's son asked of a peasant who was near.

"He died two days ago," said the peasant. "He is buried to-day, and the priest and chanters are now returning from the grave."

"And the Talking Dog?" asked the young man.

"He is at the grave now," said the peasant; "but he has neither spoken nor eaten since his master died."

"We have come in the nick of time," said the young man triumphantly, and he rode to the church-yard.

By the grave was the dog, as the man had said, and up the winding path came the priest and his young chanters, who sang with shrill, clear voices—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

"Come and live with me, now your old master is gone," said the young man, stooping over the dog. But he made no reply.

"I think he is dead, sir," said the grave-digger.

"I don't believe it," said the young man fretfully. "He was an Enchanted Dog, and he promised I should have him when I could say what I am ready to say now. He should have kept his promise." But Aldegunda had taken the dog's cold head into her arms, and her tears fell fast over it.

"You forget," she said; "he only promised to come to you when you were happy, if his old master were not happier first; and, perhaps,——"

"I remember that you always disagree with me," said the young man, impatiently. "You always did do so. Tears on our wedding-day, too! I suppose the truth is that no one is happy."

Aldegunda made no answer, for it is not from those one loves that he will willingly learn that with a selfish and imperious temper happiness never dwells.

And as they rode away again into the green lanes, the shrill voices of the chanters followed them—"Blessed are the dead. Blessed are the dead."



The Last Bus Stop⁴

Zara watched as the last bus of the night rumbled down the empty street. She hesitated, clutching the worn-out ticket in her hand. It was a one-way ticket, just like her resolve to leave this town forever. She had spent too many years in the same place, surrounded by familiar faces and endless routine. Tonight, she wanted something different.

As the bus came to a halt, its doors creaked open, inviting her to step into the unknown. She took a deep breath and climbed aboard. The interior was dimly lit, casting long shadows over the empty seats. Zara chose one at the back, sinking into its worn cushion. The bus driver gave her a knowing nod before pulling away from the curb.

The city lights blurred into a kaleidoscope of colors as the bus sped down the deserted road. Zara's thoughts wandered to the life she was leaving behind. The monotonous job, the unchanging scenery, the unfulfilled dreams, and the unbearable weight of responsibility. She felt a pang of guilt, but it was overshadowed by a sense of liberation.

Her mind drifted to the crib she had left in the small, tidy nursery. She had stood there for what felt like hours, watching her baby's gentle rise and fall of breath. The soft coos and innocent eyes had been the only thing that kept her anchored for so long. But tonight, the anchor had become a chain she could no longer bear.

The bus journeyed through the night, stopping at desolate towns and forgotten highways. Zara drifted in and out of sleep, her dreams filled with visions of distant places and new beginnings. When she awoke, the first light of dawn was breaking through the horizon.

⁴ Created by a chatbot and edited. This is intended to be a flash fiction piece of 500 words.

The bus driver announced the final stop. Zara stepped off the bus, feeling the crisp morning air on her face. She looked around and saw a sign that read, "Welcome to Nowhere." It was a place she had never heard of, yet it felt like the right destination.

With renewed determination, Zara took her first steps into the unknown, leaving behind her past and embracing the possibilities of the future. She hoped, one day, the baby she left behind would understand her need to escape, even if she never could forgive herself.



ACTIVITIES, BATCH #ZERO:

- What are your initial thoughts on these pieces?
- How would you compare and contrast these pieces, if you knew absolutely nothing about literary analysis or how a story is told?
- If you had to pick THE BEST ONE from this chapter, which piece would “win” and why?

01

Chapter 1: Introduction, Definitions, and Analysis.

Literature⁵, in its broadest sense, is any written work. Etymologically, the term derives from Latin *litaritura/litteratura* “writing formed with letters,” although some definitions include spoken or sung texts. More restrictively, it is writing that possesses literary merit. Literature can be classified according to whether it is fiction or non-fiction and whether it is poetry or prose. It can be further distinguished according to major forms such as the novel, short story or drama, and works are often categorized according to historical periods or their adherence to certain aesthetic features or expectations (genre).

⁵ CC licensed content, Shared previously = Literature. Provided by: Wikipedia. Located at: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Literature#cite_note-44. License: CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike

A Little Bit of History

Taken to mean only written works, literature was first produced by some of the world's earliest civilizations—those of Ancient Egypt and Sumeria—as early as the 4th millennium BC; taken to include spoken or sung texts, it originated even earlier, and some of the first written works may have been based on a pre-existing oral tradition. As urban cultures and societies developed, there was a proliferation in the forms of literature. Developments in print technology allowed for literature to be distributed and experienced on an unprecedented scale, which has culminated in the twenty-first century in electronic literature.

More About Definitions in Historical Terms

Definitions of literature have varied over time. In Western Europe prior to the eighteenth century, literature as a term indicated all books and writing. A more restricted sense of the term emerged during the Romantic period, in which it began to demarcate “imaginative” literature.

Contemporary debates over what constitutes literature can be seen as returning to the older, more inclusive notion of what constitutes literature. Cultural studies, for instance, takes as its subject of analysis both popular and minority genres, in addition to canonical works.

Defining Literature⁶

In order for us to study literature with any kind of depth, first we must decide what constitutes literature. While works like *Grapes of Wrath* or *The Great Gatsby* or *Catch-22* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* are almost universally accepted as literature, other works are hotly debated, or included or excluded based on the context. For example, while most consider Toni Morrison's *Beloved* literature,

⁶ This page titled 1.1: What is Literature? is shared under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Heather Ringo & Athena Kashyap (ASCCC Open Educational Resources Initiative) .

others debate whether more recent publications such as David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* or Rupi Kaur's Instagram poetry⁷ constitute literature. And what about the stories told through tweets, like Jennifer Egan's "Black Box"? What about video games, like *Skyrim*, or memes, like Grumpy Cat?

People often throw their hands up in the air over such distinctions, arguing literature is subjective. Isn't it up to individual opinion? Anything can be literature; both experts and non-experts argue this.

At first glance, it could seem such distinctions are, at best, arbitrary. At worst, such definitions function as a means of enforcing cultural erasure.

However, consider a story about Kim Kardashian's plastic surgery in *People Magazine*. Can this be considered on the same level of literary achievement as *To Kill a Mockingbird*? Most would concede there is a difference in quality between these two texts. A blurb about Kim Kardashian's latest plastic surgery, most would agree, does not constitute literature. So how can we differentiate between such works?

Literature is Art, but with Words.

While the artist uses different colors, paintbrushes, mediums, canvases, and techniques, the writer uses different genres and literary techniques called **literary devices**. Just like different types of paint, paintbrushes, and artistic tools, there are literally hundreds of literary devices, but some of the most common are metaphor, simile, personification, and imagery.

Genre is the type or style of literature. Each genre has its own conventions. Literary genres include **creative nonfiction**, **fiction**, **drama**, and **poetry**. Works that are literary tend to masterfully use genre conventions and literary devices to create a world in the

⁷ <https://www.instagram.com/rupikaur/?hl=en>

mind of the reader. Works that are less literary tend to be for practical and/or entertainment purposes, and the writer dedicates less focused energy towards artfully employing literary devices.

However, just because a work is not as literary as another does not mean it cannot be enjoyed. Just like a stick figure or cartoon character might be perfectly fine if intended for a particular audience or purpose, readers can still enjoy *People Magazine* even though it is not of the same literary quality as *The Great Gatsby*.

Who Decides What is Literature?

Now that we have at least somewhat clarified the definition of literature, who decides what works are or are not literature? Historically speaking, kings, queens, publishers, literary critics, professors, colleges, and readers (like you!) have decided which works survive and which works do not.

As problematic as he was (historians feel he “invented racism”), Aristotle was possibly one of the first writers to attempt to decide what works fall into the category of literature, and what works do not. While Aristotle was most famous for his [sometimes troublesome] contributions to science and philosophy, he is also considered one of the first literary critics. A **literary critic** is a person who studies and analyzes literature. A literary critic produces scholarship called **literary criticism**.

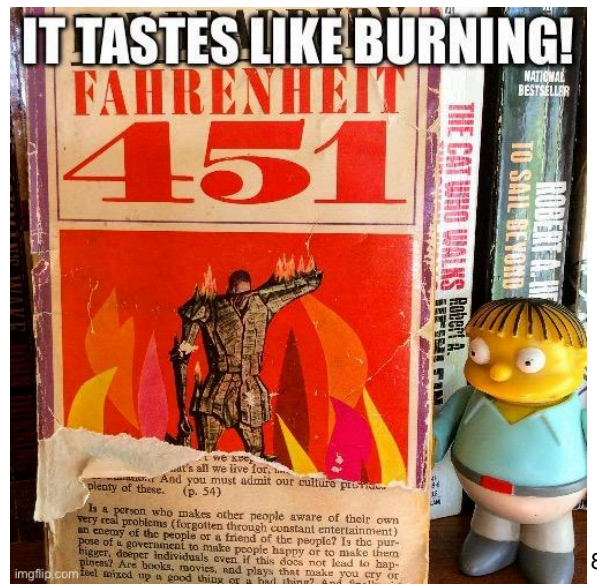
When a work is officially decided to constitute literature, it enters something called **the Canon**. Not to be confused with the large metal tube that shoots bombs popular in the 16th through the 19th centuries (cannon), the Literary Canon is a collection of works that are considered by the powers that be to constitute literature. A work that falls into this designation is called **canonical**.

Memes and Video Games: Today's Literature?

All this talk of thousands-of-years-old texts might seem out of touch. A lot of people think "old and boring," and literature are synonymous. Students are often surprised to hear that comic books and video games can arguably be considered literature, too. There are plenty of arguments to be made that comic books, such as *Maus* by Art Spiegelman (1991) or *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel (2006) are literature. Cutting edge literary scholars argue video games like *Kentucky Route Zero* by Cardboard Computer (2015) can be considered literary. There is also literature that is published in tweets, like Jennifer Egan's "Black Box" (2012). Some might even consider memes literature!

⋮ Question: Do you think memes can be literary? ⋮

A **meme** is an image or video containing cultural values or ideas, often represented through **allusion** (implied reference to another work, without naming that work or its author). Memes can spread rapidly through social media. Why? Because the best ones are #relatable; that is, they speak to a common human experience.



Usually, memes take the form of text superimposed on an image. This is done primarily through a literary device called **hyperbole**, or exaggeration for rhetorical effect. It conveys its message comically through certain conventions that come along with the meme genre, such as the syntactic structure. Through this use of image, text, format, and convention, meaning is conveyed with very few words. While some might dismiss memes as shallow, when you start to unravel the layers of meaning, they can actually be very complex and even, dare I say, literary!

The Iliad in four words:



⁸ Meme created by KOBoomer on the Meme Generator web site.

⁹ Meme created by Roadrunnerfromhell on the Meme Generator web site.

Not Literature?

Let's say you conclude that a meme, a gossip magazine, or the Twilight Series is not literary. Does that mean you have to feel guilty and give up reading it forever? Or that it is not "good"? No!

Just because a work is not literary does not mean it is "bad," that it does not have value, or that one cannot enjoy it. Indeed, there are plenty of examples of written works that are on the less literary side of the spectrum but are still fun and enriching to read.

One might want to view this like food. Some foods are nutrient-dense, like apples, and some foods are not nutrient-dense, like a candy bar. But both are fuel sources, and both are usually accessible, and both can be found in a basic food plan for any human; the same goes for literature.

This is all to say that whether a text is literary or not is not as important as the methods of analyzing texts. In fact, texts which were excluded from literature are often argued into the literary canon through such analysis. Part of what makes analyzing literature so fun is that it means the definition of literature is always up for debate! This is especially important given the history of the canon.

The Problem with the Canon

In an ideal world, literature would be celebrated purely based on its artistic merit. Well-written works would last, poorly-written works would wither from public memory. However, that is not always the case. Works often achieve public prominence or survive based on qualities unrelated to skill or aesthetics, such as an author's fame, wealth, connections, or acceptance by the dominant culture. William Wordsworth, for example, was named Poet Laureate of England and has been taught as one of the "Big Six" major Romantic-era authors ever since. Indeed, he is accepted as part of the Romanticism

literary canon. One would be hard-pressed to find a Literature anthology that does not feature William Wordsworth. However, how many people have read or heard of Dorothy Wordsworth, William Wordsworth's sister, who arguably depicted Romantic themes with equal skill and beauty? Or James Hogg, a Scottish contemporary of Wordsworth who was a lower-class shepherd? Similarly, while most readers have encountered F. Scott Fitzgerald or Edgar Allen Poe in their high school literature classes, how many have read **Frederick Douglass** in these same classes?

In short, all artistic skill (arguably) considered equal, why do some authors predominantly feature in the Canon while others do not?



Resources by Link:

- Aristototele's *Poetics*, Project Gutenberg, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1974/1974-h/1974-h.htm>

¹⁰ Meme created by memeprof75 on the Meme Generator web site.

- Sophocles' *The Oedipus Trilogy*, Project Gutenberg, <https://m.gutenberg.org/files/31/31-h/31-h.htm>



ACTIVITIES, BATCH #1.

1. Find a piece of paper or a whiteboard. On this piece of paper or whiteboard, write down as many works of literature that you can think of. Perhaps they are works you read in high school, works which have been made into films, or works you have been taught or told are literary masterworks. Try to think of at least 10, but a larger sample size is better. Once you are finished, continue to #2.
2. Alright, now look at your list. If you know the author of the literary texts you named, write their name next to the work. If you do not know the author, Google the information and write it down. Continue doing this until you have named the author of each work. Once you are finished, read #3.
3. Now, as uncomfortable as it may seem, label the gender/race/age/presumed sexual orientation of the authors you listed. After you have categorized them to the best of your ability, consider the following questions:
 - What percentage of the authors are male?
 - What percentage of the authors are white?
 - What percentage of the authors are heterosexual?
 - What patterns do you notice? Why do you think this is?

As a cultural relic, similar to art, many scholars suggest literature is a reflection of the society which produces it. This includes positive aspects of society (championing values such as love, justice, and good triumphing over evil), but it can also reflect negative aspects of society (such as discrimination, racism, sexism, homophobia, historical lack of opportunity for marginalized authors).

For example, enslaved Africans were often prevented from learning to read and write as a form of control. When Phillis Wheatley published her book of poetry, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773) she had to defend the fact that she wrote it, due to popularly held racist views that slaves were incapable of writing poetry. Later, **Frederick Douglass** wrote about how his enslavers banned him from reading and writing, as they realized "education and slavery were incompatible with each other" (Douglass). He later championed his learning to read and write as the means which conveyed him to freedom. However, even when trying to publish *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845) his publishers were forced to prove that it was, in fact, an enslaved person who wrote the story and not a white man who wrote it for him. Slave owners actively attempted to keep this book from circulation as it threatened the institution of slavery upon which they depended.

Indeed, to this day, Douglass' book continues to be banned in some prisons for its potential to incite revolution (Darby, Gilroy).

How could Black writers enter the canon en masse if they were not allowed to read or write? Or if they were forced to spend all of their waking hours working? And if those who had the means to read and write had to jump through absurd hoops just to have their works published? And if even those texts which were published were banned?

Similarly, throughout much of Western history, women have been discouraged from pursuing reading and writing, as it distracted from society's expectations for women to focus on motherly and household duties. Until the 1700s, women were not allowed to go to college. Even then, very few went: only the extremely wealthy. It was not until the 19th century that women attended college in representative numbers. Virginia Woolf wrote in *A Room of One's Own* that if there are fewer works of literature written by women, it is

only because society, historically, has not given women the time, education, funding, or space to do so. In this extended essay, she describes an imaginary sister of William Shakespeare who could have been just as great of a writer had she the same opportunities as her brother.

“I told you in the course of this paper that Shakespeare had a sister; but do not look for her in Sir Sidney Lee's life of the poet. She died young—alas, she never wrote a word. She lies buried where the omnibuses now stop, opposite the Elephant and Castle. Now my belief is that this poet who never wrote a word and was buried at the cross-roads still lives. She lives in you and in me, and in many other women who are not here tonight, for they are washing up the dishes and putting the children to bed. But she lives; for great poets do not die; they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh. This opportunity, as I think, it is now coming within your power to give her.”

Woolf argues that in our time those who have been excluded from literature can now join the canon by adding their voices. The inequity of representation in literature – which has arguably improved, but in many ways persists today – can be remedied if more people from a wide array of backgrounds and walks of life are empowered to study and create Literature. That is one reason why the current study of literature is so exciting. As a student and budding literary scholar, you have the power to influence culture through your reading and analysis of literature!

Throughout this class, you will get the opportunity to encounter many different voices and stories from all over the world. As you read the textbook, consider the stories which were omitted, why they were omitted, and what works of Literature you would include in this class if you could.

Why Read Literature?¹¹

In the age of memes, Twitter, YouTube, and streaming television services, literature might seem like a relic of the past. Indeed, fewer people are reading literature than ever.

"In 2022,¹² the percentage of adults who read at least one work of literature in the previous year fell significantly. A survey by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) revealed that only 46% of adults reported reading literature, down from 57% in 1982 when the NEA first started tracking this data. This decline is alarming, considering that the adult participation rate in reading novels or short stories fell to 17.6% (PublishersWeekly.com) (Test Prep Insight).

The situation among teenagers isn't much better. According to NPR, a recent poll showed that nearly half of 17-year-olds read for pleasure no more than one or two times a year—if at all. In a world dominated by digital entertainment like Netflix and TikTok, traditional literature struggles to compete. How many books have you read this year? How many poems? These questions are more pertinent than ever as we navigate this digital age."

But¹³ this is hardly a new problem if it is even a problem at all.

Consider the words of master-of-clapbacks Sir Philip Sydney, #throwback to the late 1500s and early 1600s. After the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg, many people saw the proliferation of novels and plays as morally poisonous. Talking heads of the time argued that poetry and literature were a waste of time, or "fake news" as some might call it today. They questioned

¹¹ Why Write About Literature sections adapted from "Writing About Literature Basics" from Commonsense Composition by Crystle Bruno of San Jose State University licensed CC BY-NC 4.0

¹² From ChatGPT.

¹³ Why Write About Literature sections adapted from "Writing About Literature Basics" from Commonsense Composition by Crystle Bruno of San Jose State University licensed CC BY-NC 4.0

the purpose of fictional works. Poet and diplomat Sir Philip Sydney responded with a scathing literary smack-down to the haters. He argued the poet has a special talent to create new, beautiful worlds that no other professional can claim, and that those who question the purpose of poetry have "earth-creeping" minds and are "momes" (a.k.a. fools, blockheads). He further stated that he hopes these momes never get "favor" (love) because they don't know how to write sonnets to woo their love interests and that they don't get an epitaph on their graves, because that is the poet's job. Ouch, harsh.

In today's world, it seems that Sidney would probably consider most people momes. After all, very few of us read or appreciate poetry regularly. Most of our reading and writing is done on the internet: in the forms of Facebook posts, memes, tweets, snapchats, Tik Tok videos, and viral news. In response to this trend, many famous authors and literary critics have stated that literature is dead (Breuklander). Indeed, if we define literature as only printed novels and poetry, perhaps it is, for all intents and purposes, dead. But... what if we were to define literature as Sidney did – a creation made from the "zodiac of [the poet's] own wit," improving upon nature itself through invention? Might some of today's internet media fall into that definition?

What if literature isn't dead after all... but thriving more than ever? What if we radically reconsider the parameters of literature? What if literature has just evolved from sonnets and novels to tweets and memes? In this textbook, we will explore how technology has blurred the lines between Literature and literature.¹⁴ We will question and explore the "usefulness" of literature in a world that encourages split-second attention spans. We will see how literature has solved problems in the past and explore how it can be used to solve problems in the future: medicine, a threat to the status quo, entertainment, activism, or boring stinky old piles of pages: what is literature to you?

¹⁴ Unsure why one is capitalized and the other isn't. Ideas?

No matter the reader, no matter the writer, no matter the genre, literature is a cultural relic, a manifestation of the human experience.

Thus, it can teach us things about our society and about ourselves we might not be able to learn from other types of media. It enables us to experience and discuss ideas from the safety of our armchairs, to project ourselves onto characters and environments, to explore worlds and lived experiences we otherwise would never have the opportunity to experience.

Additionally, data suggests reading literature benefits us in profound ways.

Benefits of Literature

Studies show reading literature may help

- promote empathy and social skills (Castano and Kidd)
- alleviate symptoms of depression (Billington, et al.)
- business leaders succeed (Coleman)
- prevent dementia by stimulating the mind (Thorpe)

These are just a few of the studied benefits of literature. As we continue to gain increasing complexity in terms of measuring brain activity and developing other tools to measure brain function, scientists may find more benefits.



Why Write About Literature?¹⁵

You might be asking yourself why you should bother writing about something you've read. After all, isn't creative writing more fun, journalistic writing more interesting, and technical writing more useful? Maybe, but consider this: writing about literature will let you exercise your critical thinking skills like no other style of writing will. Even if you don't want to pursue a career involving literature, you can use critical thinking and analysis in any field from philosophy to business to physics. More than being able to think critically, you need to be able to express those thoughts in a coherent fashion.

Writing about literature will allow you to practice this invaluable communication skill.

“Okay,” you say, “that's all good and well. But hasn't anything I have to say about a story already been said? So what's the point, then?” When you write your paper, you might end up saying something that has been discussed, argued over, or proposed by literary critics and students alike. However, when you write something, you present a point of view through your unique voice. Even if something has been said about a book many times, you can add something new to that discussion. Perhaps you can state an idea in simpler terms, or you want to disagree with a popular viewpoint. Even if you're writing to an instructor's prompt, your voice will make the paper unique.

How Do I Start?

To many of us, writing a response to something we've had to read sounds more than a little daunting. There are so many things to examine and analyze in a book, play, or poem. But before you decide that writing about writing just isn't for you, think about this – you already have many of the skills you need to write a good response to literature.

¹⁵ Why Write About Literature sections adapted from "Writing About Literature Basics" from Commonsense Composition by Crystle Bruno of San Jose State University licensed CC BY-NC 4.0

How many times have you heard about someone who watched a horror movie and yelled, “Don't go into the basement!” at the potential victim. Or maybe you've listened to a song and thought about how the lyrics described your life almost perfectly. Perhaps you like to jump up and cheer for your favorite team even if you're watching the game from home. Each time you do one of these things, you are responding to something you've seen or heard. And when you read a book, you likely do the same thing.

Have you ever read anything and sympathized with or hated a character? If so, you've already taken your first step in responding to literature.

However, the next steps are a little harder. You need to be able to put your response into writing so other people can understand why you believe one thing or another about a book, play, or poem. In addition, writing an essay based on how a story makes you think or feel is only one of many ways to respond to what you read. In order to write a strong paper, you will need to examine a text both **subjectively** and **objectively**. If you only write about your personal reaction to a book, there won't be much to support your argument except your word alone. Thus, you will need to use some facts from the text to support your argument. Rather than trying to evaluate every nuance of a text all at once, you should start with the basics: character and plot. From there, you can examine the theme of the work and then move on to the finer points such as the writing itself.

For instance, when determining how you want to analyze a piece of literature, you might want to ask yourself the following series of questions:

- Who are the characters?
- What are they doing?
- Why and how are they doing it?
- Do their actions relate to any broader topics or issues?
- How does the author convey this through their writing?

How Can We Analyze Literature?

Of course, answering these questions will only start your analysis. However, if you can answer them, you will have a strong grasp of the basic elements of the story. From there, you can go on to more specific questions, such as, “How does symbolism help illustrate the theme?” or “What does the author say about the relationships between characters through the dialogue he gives them?” However, before you can start answering detailed questions like these, you should look at the basic elements of what you're reading.

Common Elements of Fiction & Nonfiction

- Setting
- Characters
- Plot (story or play) or structure (poem)
- Tone/Mood
- Themes
- Symbolism and Figurative Language

As you work through each genre in this book, try to examine each of these devices and/or elements in each piece of literature you read.

Devices

Alliteration

Repetition of consonants, particularly at the beginning of words. Ex: It was the sweet song of silence.

Allusion

A reference or mention of something from history or the arts, nature, society, etc. Ex: Saying that someone's love affair was like Romeo and Juliet's.

Ambiguity

Inexactness.

Assonance

Repetition of similar vowel sounds within a word rather than similar sounds at the beginning or end of a word. Ex: "I'm reminded to line the lid of my eye."

Irony

Expressing meaning using language that signifies the opposite, for humorous or emphatic effect.

Metaphor

A direct comparison between two things. Ex: This classroom is as stale as a hospital.

Onomatopoeia

Words that imitate sounds like Bang! Or Meow!

Personification

Giving humanistic characteristics to non-humans. Ex: The dog nodded in agreement.

Rhythm

A strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.

Simile

A comparison using "like" or "as." Ex: That classroom is like a hospital.

Symbolism

The use of symbols to represent something.



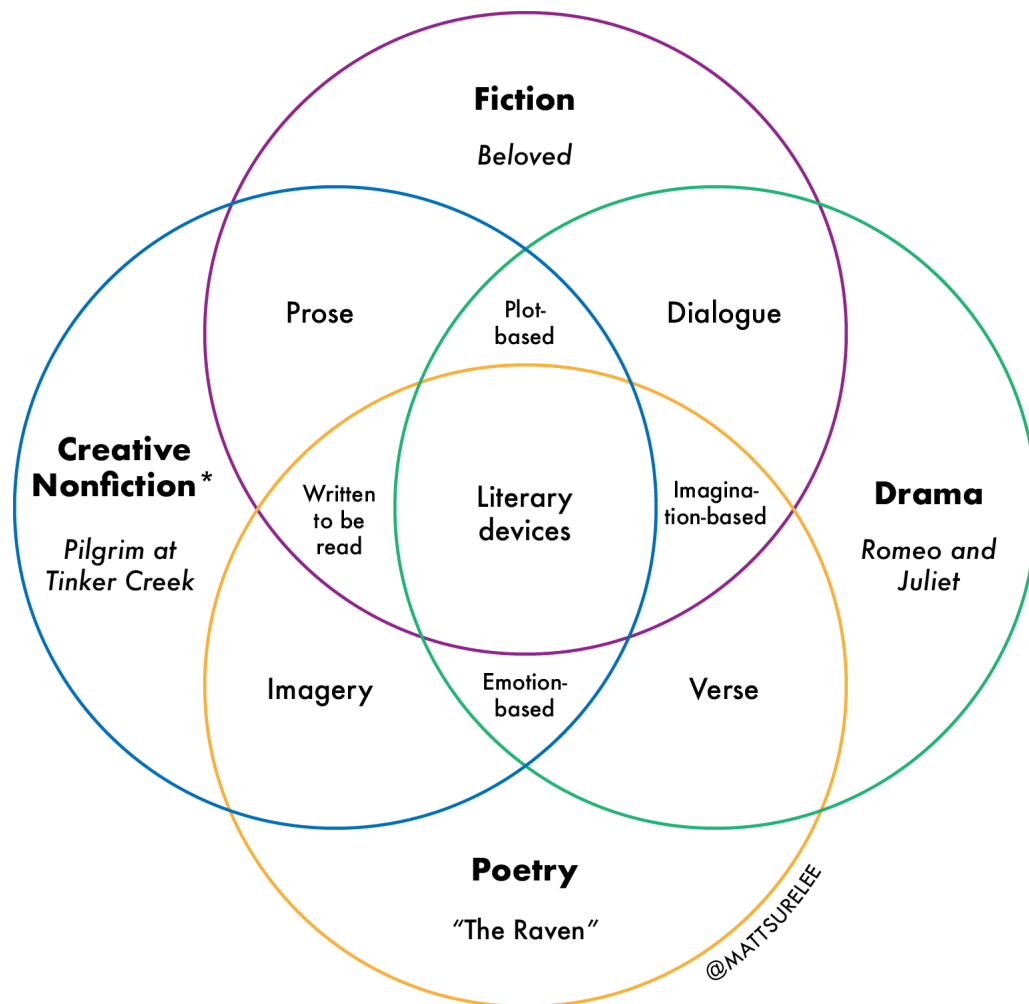
ACTIVITIES, BATCH #1.5:

1. Think about a recent meme you have seen, or your favorite meme of all time. Imagine explaining this meme to someone who has no idea what it means.
 - a. What is the message or idea behind the meme?
 - b. What cultural Reference points does it use to convey its message?
 - c. In what ways might this meme be considered literature?
 - d. How might this compare to a short poem, like a haiku?
2. Watch the TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story," by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to see the ways in which such misrepresentations are harmful. Then reflect on the following:
 - a. What "single stories" do you know?
 - b. What are the "single stories" people have told about you?
 - c. What story would you tell if you could?
 - d. What kinds of stories do you want to read?
3. Digital Storytelling Workshop: Students will create short digital stories using multimedia elements Instagram, Twitter, or memes. Then each student presents it, explaining the narrative choices made.
4. Scavenger Hunt / Collection: Students seek out stories and poems on social media (Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.) and share them with the class.
5. Take something you created for #3 above and analyze it for the devices and elements mentioned in this chapter. Or take something from #4 and do the same analysis.
6. As an individual or as a class, revise the Venn Diagram for the Four Major Genres with updated works and/or new genres.

The Literary Landscape: Four Major Genres¹⁶

In the landscape of literature, there are four major genres: poetry, drama, fiction, and creative nonfiction. While there are certain key recognizable features of each genre, these are not so much rules as they are tools, or conventions, the author uses. If we think of literature as its own world, it may help to think of genres more as regions with open borders, where there are no walls and that authors can freely move through if they desire. But, like any traveler, it helps you understand your place in the world if you know where you are located (or at least the "lay of the land"). It can also be interesting to analyze how certain texts break genre conventions. These major genres are briefly outlined in the following Venn Diagram.

¹⁶ This page titled 1.8: The Literary Landscape: Four Major Genres is shared under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Heather Ringo & Athena Kashyap (ASCCC Open Educational Resources Initiative) .



**must be true/factual*

"Literary Genres Venn Diagram" by [Matt Shirley](#) (2021) licensed CC-BY-SA. This image shows some of the differences and overlap between different genres.

02

Chapter 2: Literary Criticism

If the devices and elements mentioned in the previous chapter, this chapter is the deep end of the literary pool.

This chapter takes a deep dive into the analysis of literature. It is totally okay to read something just to read it, to digest it as recreationally as you wish. However, you may be asked – if this book is being used in a college course – to analyze what you are reading a few times. Luckily, there are MANY ways to analyze literature, so hopefully, you will be given a choice as to how you go about dissecting the words and pages and stories you're reading.

Literary Criticism¹⁷

The genre of literary interpretation is more specialized than most of the other genres addressed in this section, as suggested by the table below. People may discuss their reactions to literary works informally (at coffee houses, book clubs, or the gym) but the lion's share of literary criticism takes place more formally: in college classrooms, professional journals, academic magazines, and websites.

Students interpret literary works for English instructors or for students enrolled in English classes. In their interpretations, students may argue for a particular interpretation, or they may dispute other critics' interpretations. Alternatively, students may read a text with a particular literary theory in mind, using the theory to explicate a particular point of view. For example, writers could critique "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin from a feminist theoretical perspective.

Thanks to the Internet, some English classes are now publishing students' interpretations on websites. In turn, some students and English faculty publish their work in academic literary criticism journals.

Over the years, literary critics have argued about the best ways to interpret literature. Accordingly, many "schools" or "theories of criticism" have emerged. As you can imagine—given that they were developed by sophisticated specialists—some of these theoretical approaches are quite sophisticated and abstract.

Summaries of Theories

Below is a summary of some of the more popular literary theories. Because it is a summary, the following tends to oversimplify the

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theories. In any case, unless you are enrolled in a literary criticism course, you won't need to learn the particulars of all of these approaches. Instead, your teacher may ask you to take an eclectic approach, pulling interpretative questions from multiple literary theories.¹⁸

- [New Criticism](#): Focuses on "objectively" evaluating the text, identifying its underlying form. May study, for example, a text's use of imagery, metaphor, or symbolism. Isn't concerned with matters outside the text, such as biographical or contextual information.
 - Online examples: "[A Formalist Reading of Sandra Cisneros's 'Woman Hollering Creek'](#)" and "[Sound in William Shakespeare's 'Tempest': A Formalist Approach](#)" by Skylar Hamilton Burris
- Reader-Response: Criticism focuses on each reader's personal reactions to a text, assuming meaning is created by a reader's or interpretive community's personal interaction with a text. Assumes no single, correct, universal meaning exists because meaning resides in the minds of readers.
 - Online example: "[Theodore Roethke's 'My Papa's Waltz': A Reader's Response](#)" (PDF)
- Feminism: Criticism Focuses on understanding ways gender roles are reflected or contradicted by texts, how dominance and submission play out in texts, and how gender roles evolve in texts.
 - Online Example: "[The Yellow Wall-Paper': A Twist on Conventional Symbols](#)" by Liselle Sant, "[Kate Chopin as Feminist: Subverting the French Androcentric Influence](#)" by Jane Le Marquand
- New Historicism: Focuses on understanding texts by viewing texts in the context of other texts. Seeks to understand economic, social, and political influences on texts. Tend to broadly define the term "text," so, for example, the Catholic

¹⁸ Note: If you are interested in learning more about these theories, review either Skylar Hamilton Burris' "Literary Criticism: An Overview of Approaches" or Dino F. Felluga's "Undergraduate Guide to Critical Theory."

Church could be defined as a "text." May adopt the perspectives of other interpretive communities—particularly reader-response criticism, feminist criticism, and Marxist approaches—to interpret texts.

- Online example: "[Monstrous Acts and Little Murders](#)" by Jonathan Lethem
- Media Criticism: Focuses on writers' use of multimedia and hypertexts.
 - Online example: [The Electronic Labyrinth](#) by Christopher Keep, Tim McLaughlin, and Robin Parmar
- [Psychoanalytical Criticism](#): Focuses on psychological dimensions of the work.
- Marxist Criticism: Focuses on ways texts reflect, reinforce, or challenge the effects of class, power relations, and social roles.
 - Online example: "A Marxist/Feminist Reading of Shirley Jackson's 'The Lottery'" by Peter Kosenko
- Archetypal Criticism: Focuses on identifying the underlying myths in stories and archetypes, which reflect what the psychologist Carl Jung called the "collective unconsciousness."
 - Online example: "[A Symbolic Approach to Kate Chopin's 'The Awakening'](#)" by Skylar Hamilton Burris
- Postcolonial Criticism: Focuses on how Western culture's (mis)representation of third-world countries and peoples in stories, myths, and stereotypical images encourages repression and domination.
 - Online example: [Other Voices: The eJournal of Cultural Criticism](#)
- Structuralism/Semiotics: Focuses on literature as a system of signs where meaning is constructed in a context, where words are inscribed with meaning by being compared to other words and structures.
- Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction: Focuses, along with Structuralism, on viewing literature as a system of signs, yet rejects the Structuralist view that a critic can identify the

inherent meaning of a text, suggesting, instead that literature has no center, no single interpretation, that literary language is inherently ambiguous



Below are some of the questions invoked by popular literary theories. Consider these questions as you read a work, perhaps taking notes on your thoughts as you reread. You may focus on using one theory to "read and interpret" text or, more commonly, you may compare the critical concerns of different theories.

New Criticism/Formalism

- Character: How does the character evolve during the story? What is unique or interesting about a character? Is the character a stereotypical action hero, a patriarchal father figure, or Madonna? How does a character interact with other characters?
- Setting: How does the setting enhance tension within the work? Do any elements in the setting foreshadow the conclusion of the piece?
- Plot: What is the conflict? How do scenes lead to a suspenseful resolution? What scenes make the plot unusual, unexpected, suspenseful?
- Point of View: Who is telling the story? Is the narrator omniscient (all knowing) or does the narrator have limited understanding?

Reader-Response Criticism

How does the text make you feel? What memories or experiences come to mind when you read? If you were the central protagonist,

would you have behaved differently? Why? What values or ethics do you believe are suggested by the story? As your reading of a text progresses, what surprises you, inspires you?

Feminist Criticism

How does the story re-inscribe or contradict traditional gender roles? For example, are the male characters in "power positions" while the women are "dominated"? Are the men prone to action, decisiveness, and leadership while the female characters are passive, subordinate? Do gender roles create tension within the story? Do characters' gender roles evolve over the course of the narrative?

New Historicism Criticism

How does the story reflect the aspirations and conditions of the lower classes or upper classes? Is tension created by juxtaposing privileged, powerful positions to subordinated, dominated positions? What information about the historical context of the story helps explain the character's motivations? Who benefits from the outcome of the story or from a given character's motivation?

Media Criticism

How does the medium alter readers' interactions with the text? Has the reader employed multimedia or hypertext? What traditions from print and page design have shaped the structure of the text? In what ways has the author deviated from traditional, deductively organized linear texts?



Steps and Details

Powerful works of literature invoke multiple readings. In other words, we can all read the same story or poem (or watch the same movie or listen to the same song) and come up with different, even conflicting, interpretations about what the work means. Who we are reflects how we read texts. Our experiences inspire us to relate to and sympathize with characters and difficult situations. Have we read similar stories? Have we actually faced some of the same challenges the characters in the story face?

In addition, literary theories have unique ways to develop and substantiate arguments. Some theories draw extensively on the work of other critics, while others concentrate on the reader's thoughts and feelings. Some theories analyze a work from an historical perspective, while others focus solely on a close reading of a text.

Accordingly, as with other genres, the following key features need to be read as points of departure as opposed to a comprehensive blueprint:

Focus

Examine a subject from a rhetorical perspective. Identify the intended audience, purpose, context, media, voice, tone, and persona. Distinguish between summarizing the literary work and presenting your argument. Many students fall into the trap of spending too much time summarizing the literature being analyzed as opposed to critiquing it. As a result, it would be wise to check with your teacher regarding how much plot summary is expected. As you approach this project, remember to keep your eye on the ball: What, exactly (in one sentence) is the gist of your interpretation?

Development

You can develop your ideas by researching the work of other literary critics. How do other critics evaluate an author's work? What literary theories do literary critics use to interpret texts or particular moments in history? Reading sample proposals can help you find and adopt an appropriate voice and persona. By reading samples, you can learn how others have prioritized particular criteria.

Cite from the Work

Literary criticism involves close reading of a literary work, regardless of whether you are arguing about a particular interpretation, comparing stories or poems, or using a theory to interpret literature. Do not summarize the story. The purpose of the document is not to inform the readers, but to argue a particular interpretation. You only need to cite parts of the work that support or relate to your argument and follow the citation format required by your instructor (see Using and Citing Sources).

Below is an example from "Sample Essays for English 103: Introduction to Fiction," Professor Matthew Hurt. Note how the writer uses block quotes to highlight key elements and paraphrase and summarizes the original works, using quotation marks where necessary.

"...Twain offers a long descriptive passage of Huck and Jim's life on the raft that seems, at first glance, to celebrate the idyllic freedom symbolized by the river and nature. . . A close reading of this passage, however, shows that the river is not a privileged natural space outside of and uncontaminated by society, but is inextricably linked to the social world on the shore, which itself has positive value for Huck. Instead of seeking to escape society, Huck wants to escape the dull routines of life."

The passage abounds with lyrical descriptions of the river's natural beauty. For example, Huck's long description of the sunrise over the

river captures the peaceful stillness and the visual beauty of the scene:

"The first thing to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of dull line — that was the woods on t'other side — you couldn't make nothing else out; then a pale place in the sky; then more paleness, spreading around; then the river softened up, away off, and warn't black any more, but gray; . . . sometimes you could hear a sweep screaming; or jumbled up voices, it was so still, and sounds come so far; and by-and-by you could see a streak on the water which you know by the look of the streak that there's a snag there in the swift current which breaks on it and makes the streak look that way; and you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and the river, and you make out a log cabin in the edge of the woods, away on the bank on t'other side of the river, . . . then the nice breeze springs up, and comes fanning you from over there, so cool and fresh, and sweet to smell, on account of the woods and the flowers; . . . and next you've got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the song-birds just going at it!"
(129-130)

Here Huck celebrates the beauty of the natural world coming to life at the beginning of a new day. The "paleness" gradually spreading across the sky makes new objects visible which he describes in loving detail for the reader. The "nice breeze" is "cool and fresh" and "sweet to smell," and the world seems to be "smiling in the sun" as the song-birds welcome the new day.

However, Huck includes a number of details within this passage that would seem to work against the language of natural beauty. After describing the gradually brightening sky, Huck notes that "you could see little dark spots drifting along, ever so far away — trading

scows, and such things; and long black streaks — rafts." The sun rise reveals not only natural objects (the brightening sky, the "snag," the "mist"), but also brings into view man-made objects ("trading scows" and "rafts") that signify human society's presence in this natural environment. Similarly, Huck speculates that the picturesque "log cabin" on the distant shore is a "woodyard, likely, and piled by them cheats so you can throw a dog through it anywheres." Here the marker of human society takes on a sinister tone of corruption as Huck describes how unscrupulous wood sellers stack wood loosely to cheat their customers. Finally, although the breeze is "sweet to smell," Huck assures the reader that this isn't always the case: "but sometimes not that way, because they've left dead fish laying around, gars, and such, and they do get pretty rank."

These signs of society's presence on the river are largely negative. The woodyard is "piled by cheats" and the stacked fish pollute the "sweet" smell of the breeze. At this point, the opposition between "good nature" and "bad society" remains intact. The signs of human presence suggest a corruption of nature's beauty. In the paragraphs that follow, however, this opposition is subtly reversed. After Huck's account of the sunrise over the river, he describes how he and Jim watch the steamboats "coughing along up stream." But when there are no steamboats or rafts to watch, he describes the scene as "solid lonesomeness" (130). No songbirds, no sweet breezes. Without human activities to watch, the scene suddenly becomes empty and "lonesome," and nothing captures Huck's attention until more rafts and boats pass by and he can watch them chopping wood or listen to them beating pans in the fog.

Cite Other Critics' Interpretations of the Work

Criticism written by advanced English majors, graduate students, and literary critics may be more about what other critics have said than about the actual text. Indeed, many critics spend more time reading criticism and arguing about critical approaches than actually reading original works. However, unless you are enrolled in a literary

theory course, your instructor probably wants you to focus more on interpreting the work than discussing other critical interpretations. This does not mean, however, that you should write about a literary work "blindly." Instead, you are wise to find out what other students and critics have said about the work.

Below is a sample passage that illustrates how other critics' works can inspire an author and guide him or her in constructing a counter argument, support an author's interpretation, and provide helpful biographical information.

"In her critical biography of Shirley Jackson, Lenemaja Friedman notes that when Shirley Jackson's story "The Lottery" was published in the June 28, 1948 issue of the New Yorker it received a response that "no New Yorker story had ever received": hundreds of letters poured in that were characterized by "bewilderment, speculation, and old-fashioned abuse."¹ It is not hard to account for this response: Jackson's story portrays an "average" New England village with "average" citizens engaged in a deadly rite, the annual selection of a sacrificial victim by means of a public lottery, and does so quite deviously: not until well along in the story do we suspect that the "winner" will be stoned to death by the rest of the villagers."

Organization

The format for literary critiques is fairly standard:

- State your claim(s).
- Forecast your organization.
- Marshal evidence for your claim.
- Reiterate argument and elaborate on its significance.

In English classes, you may be able to assume that your readers are familiar with the work you are critiquing. Perhaps, for example, the

entire class is responding to one particular work after some class discussions about it. However, if your instructor asks you to address a broader audience, you may need to provide bibliographical information for the work. In other words, you may need to cite the title, publisher, date, and pages of the work (see Citing Sources). Literary critiques are arguments. As such, your instructors expect you to state a claim in your introduction and then provide quotes and paraphrased statements from the text to serve as evidence for your claim. Ideally, your critique will be insightful and interesting. You'll want to come up with an interpretation that isn't immediately obvious.

Style

Literary criticism is a fairly specialized kind of writing. Instead of writing to a general lay audience, you are writing to members of a literary community who have read a work and who developed opinions about the work — as well as a vocabulary of interpretation.

Following are some common words used by literary critics. More specialized terms can be learned by reading criticism or by referring to a good encyclopedia for criticism or writing, including the *Writer's Encyclopedia*:

- Protagonist: The protagonist is the major character of the story; typically the character must overcome significant challenges.
- Antagonist: The protagonist's chief nemesis; in other words, the character whom the protagonist must overcome.
- Symbols: Metaphoric language; see "'A Symbolic Approach to Kate Chopin's 'The Awakening'"
- Viewpoint: Stories are told either in the first-person or third-person point of view. The first person is limited to a single character, although dialog can let you guess at other characters' intentions. The third person allows readers inside the character's mind so you know what the character feels and thinks. Viewpoint can be "limited," where the character knows

less than the reader, or "omniscient," where the reader can hear the thoughts and feelings of all characters. Occasionally writers will use multiple character viewpoint, which takes you from one character's perspective to another.

- Plot: Plots are a series of scenes, typically moving from a conflict situation to a resolution. To surprise readers, authors will foreshadow "false plants," which lead readers to anticipate other resolutions. The term "denouement" refers to the unraveling of the plot in the conclusion.

Sample Thesis Statements

Below are some examples of "thesis statements" or "claims" from literary critiques:

- In "The Yellow Wallpaper," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the protagonist is oppressed and represents the effect of the oppression of women in society. This effect is created by the use of complex symbols such as the house, the window, and the wall-paper which facilitate her oppression as well as herself expression. ["The Yellow Wall-Paper": A Twist on Conventional Symbols" by Liselle Sant]
- "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Gilman is a sad story of the repression that women face in the days of the late 1800's as well as being representative of the turmoil that women face today. [Critique of "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Brandi Mahon]
- "The Yellow Wallpaper," written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is a story of a woman, her psychological difficulties and her husband's so called therapeutic treatment of her ailments during the late 1800s. . . Gilman does well throughout the story to show with descriptive phrases just how easily and effectively the man "seemingly" wields his "maleness" to control the woman. But, with further interpretation and insight I believe Gilman succeeds in nothing more than showing the weakness of women, of the day, as active persons in their own as well as society's decision-making processes instead of the

strength of men as women dominating machines. ["The View from the Inside" by Timothy J. Decker]

- In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain creates a strong opposition between the freedom of Huck and Jim's life on the raft drifting down the Mississippi River, which represents "nature," and the confining and restrictive life on the shore, which represents "society." ["All I wanted was a change': Positive Images of Nature and Society in Chapter 19 of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*" from Professor Matthew Hurt's "Sample Essays for English 103: Introduction to Fiction"]
- In Gabriel Garcia Marquez's short story, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," an unexpected visitor comes down from the sky, and seems to test the faith of a community. The villagers have a difficult time figuring out just how the very old man with enormous wings fits into their lives. Because this character does not agree with their conception of what an angel should look like, they try to determine if the aged man could actually be an angel. In trying to prove the origin of their visitor, the villagers lose faith in the possibility of him being an angel because he does not adhere to their ordered world. Marquez keeps the identity of the very old man with enormous wings ambiguous to critique the villagers and, more generally, organized religion for having a lack of faith to believe in miracles that do not comply with their master narrative. ["Prove It: A Critique of the Villagers' Faith in 'A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings'" from "Sample Essays for English 103: Introduction to Fiction," Professor Matthew Hurt]



ACTIVITIES, BATCH #2:

- Make a list of thesis statements you could use IF you were to write about your favorite TV shows/movies. Use a few of the criticisms from this chapter.

2.5

Chapter 2.5: Critical Reading

In order¹⁹ to formulate the kind of complex, analytical arguments that college professors want, you need to train your mind to examine, question, analyze and evaluate things you encounter in the world. This is called critical thinking, and it applies to pretty much everything you encounter in life: statements you hear in person, media you consume, events and phenomena you witness ... and texts you read. Annotating your readings will help you engage in critical reading and thinking practices.

¹⁹ From “Skimming is Not Enough.” Open English @ SLCC Copyright © 2016 by Jessie Szalay is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

You've probably heard teachers say that the best way to learn how to write is to read. I think that's true. But what does that mean? Reading novels taught me about pacing and maintaining a reader's interest; reading magazine articles taught me about starting pieces with attention-grabbing anecdotes; reading newspapers taught me about objectivity, tone, and the importance of clarity.

But when teachers say that you can learn a lot about writing by reading, they're talking about even deeper lessons. By being an engaged, critical, and inquisitive reader, you'll become a more engaged, critical, and inquisitive writer.

Critical reading is important in college because you will be assigned readings in almost every class you take. You will also be asked, often, to find your own sources, read them, and use them in your papers. But it's also important because even in our age of memes, TV, and podcasts, we still consume a very large amount of written material almost every day.

Plus, studies have shown that students who read actively and critically will better remember what they read (Mueller). Which means less time re-reading...

So how do you critically read? Here are the following core elements of critical reading:

- carefully considering and evaluating the reading
- identifying the reading's strengths and implications
- identifying the reading's weaknesses and flaws
- looking at the 'big picture' and deciding how the reading fits into the greater academic and/or cultural and historical context

Here are some strategies that will help you become an effective critical reader—which will help you become a better writer, and a more informed citizen of the world.

Here are some features of a text to pay attention to:

Preview the Text

Check out the abstract, introduction, table of contents, headnotes, or other prefatory material. I resisted reading book introductions for years, but one day during my sophomore year of college I decided to check one out—and it helped the rest of the reading click into place.

Who's This Writer, Anyway?

Find out who the author is. Check out their reputation, credentials, and look at the publication they are writing for. Sometimes the reading itself will include a biography or editor's note. Other times, a Google search will tell you a lot.

Contextualize

Look at the publication date. Do you know what was going on with the topic of the reading then? Placing a text in its historical, cultural, and biographical contexts can lead to better understanding and more insight. A piece about civil rights written in the 1960s has a different context and requires a different interpretation than a text about civil rights written in 2018.

Consider the Title and Subtitles

This can tell you a lot about what to expect, and what to look for, in your reading. It's especially true of scientific and social science studies.

While You Read

Just because you're probably sitting still while you read doesn't mean you're not being active. A good, critical reader will be consistently engaged and alert, noticing, thinking, and questioning as they read.

Ask Questions

As you read, don't just let the words wash over you. Constantly ask yourself questions like:

- Does this make sense?
- Why am I being asked to read this?
- What does this mean?
- Why is the writer drawing that conclusion?
- How might the writer's life have influenced this position or choice?
- How might the cultural, historical, and societal context have contributed to the writer's position on this?

These are general engagement and comprehension questions, but you will also have different questions to ask depending on your purpose and goals for reading.

Write down your questions, and your answers, if you have them. This gets to the next point . . .

Mark It Up

Get out a pen or pencil and start scrawling on the text. Whether it's a print-out or a book, it's okay to write on it (unless it's from the library. This is why your professors will ask you to buy books or print out readings). Underline things. Margins are your friend!

Some things that you might want to write about in the margins of your readings:

- **The Golden Line** – What line sticks out to you in the piece?
- Your emotional responses. If I loved a passage, I don't just make a heart. I write a little note about what I loved about it. Same thing if I hated it.
- Explications, illustrations, or elaborations on the text's theme.
- The text's thesis, evidence, and arguments and your evaluations of them.

- Symbolism and figurative language.
- Questions you have. Something doesn't make sense? Is one element of an argument left unconsidered? Not sure what the main point of a paragraph is? Not sure what a certain point has to do with the rest of the text? Unsure of what you're supposed to get out of a passage? Write it down! This can help you come back to it later.
- Challenges or affirmations of your beliefs.
- Patterns and repetitions. These might be recurring words, phrases, images, types of examples, types of evidence, or consistent ways of characterizing an issue or person. Ask yourself why the writer chose to repeat these things.

As you can probably guess, to effectively mark up a text, it can be helpful to...

Read Slowly

Take your time. Pause and go over a sentence or paragraph again if you don't understand it, or just to make sure you do. Look up words you don't know. Take a second and ask yourself the questions mentioned above. As with many tasks, doing reading well requires slower, intense concentration rather than speedy, superficial attention.

Summarize

If you're unsure of what you read, try summarizing it on a separate piece of paper. This forces you to take apart the information and arguments of the text, examine it, and put it back together in your own words. You can't do that well until you understand the text.

Keep an Open Mind

Let's say you got married at age 18 and are super happy—great for you! If you're reading a scientific study showing that marriages among young people are more likely to end in divorce, resist

resistance. Your perspective on this topic is valuable, but as you read, especially during your first reading, it is not your responsibility to rewrite the text. Rather, give the writer a fair chance to develop his or her ideas and read what is on the page, rather than what you wish was there.

Compare and Contrast Readings in This Class, Others, and Life

Ask yourself why you're reading this text now, at this point in the semester. What relationship—implicit or explicit—does it have with the other texts in the class? To the course goals? To your assignments?

Ask yourself if the reading changes the way you think about an issue you've heard about in your life. Why and how?

Ask yourself if there is a relationship to this reading and readings you've done in your other classes. One of the magical things about college is that your classes will sometimes speak to each other across campuses and semesters. The text you read for history class might help you see the text you read for economics in a totally new light. When that happens, you know you've learned something.

As you can see, critical reading is work. But it's fundamental, and, if done right, very fulfilling work that will help you engage with texts both in college and for the rest of your life.

03

Chapter 3: History

Literature²⁰ may refer to any number of poetic, dramatic, fictional or nonfictional works from anywhere in the world. When people think of Literature, they often picture dusty old libraries crammed full of leather bound books. They think of the English novelists of the 18th and 19th centuries or the ancient Greek dramatists. The mythology of Africa and the haikus of Japan are not often included in this rather limited view of what constitutes "Literature." That is the purpose of this book; to open up you, the reader, to literature through space and time.

²⁰ https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/History_of_Literature

Literature of the Ancient Mediterranean²¹

The written word has changed and shaped the history of the Ancient Mediterranean as history has changed and shaped it. Language first began in distant human evolution. The first words to be written down were simple, arising from cave art. These pictures became more advanced and capable of conveying more complex meanings. With trade and conquest, these alphabets spread and merged to form the recognizable systems of the ancient Mediterranean. Originally, they were used predominantly for recording commerce and deals that would otherwise risk being forgotten or manipulated. As empires grew larger and communication more difficult, writing was used to convey messages to large numbers of people or to give information to a distant party. Gradually, writing became more than just communication, but an art form, as literature developed. Writing has been a major influential force from the lives of the common man to the success of empires.

Spoken Language

It is impossible to know when and where spoken language began, not least because of ambiguity as to what defines it. Speculation about the larynx and the tongue shape give some indication of which of our ancestors may have been able to produce the range of sounds necessary for speech. A tentative estimate places the advent of spoken language with the Neanderthal at around 300 000BC. This advanced ability to communicate would have greatly improved the structure and tasks of primitive society.

Writing

The first known pictures were discovered in caves at Lascaux from c. 14 000BC. These were probably the ancient scribbles of a culture

²¹ "History of Literature/Literature of the Ancient Mediterranean." Wikibooks. 3 Oct 2022, 05:01 UTC. 6 Feb 2024, 22:20
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_Literature/Literature_of_the_Ancient_Mediterranean&oldid=4191120>.

seeking to express what they saw in a way clearer and more lasting than spoken words. Tablets from Mesopotamia in the 4th millennium BC engraved with images of livestock are thought to have been used as records of trade promises and deals. It is thought that writing grew from pictures, which became simplified and stylistic cuneiform with time and use. The letter A was originally symbolic of an ox or aleph in Phoenician. It was the first letter of the alphabet because to the ancients the ox symbolized strength and energy. Thus, the symbol came to represent these abstract ideas as well as a physical animal. Originally, the letter was a picture of a whole ox but through metonymy it came to be represented by only the head of an ox. This simplified into the Greek Alpha and the Latin A. This process of picture, symbol, letter formed all of the Greek and Latin alphabets.

A major step from these pictographs was the Egyptian initiative to make them represent sounds, often in the form of syllables, rather than ideas. This developed from acrophony: symbols for ideas or objects coming to represent the initial sound of that word. This change eliminated much of the ambiguity of symbols and gave writing the full complexity of speech. In the *Cratylus*, Plato speaks about writing as a form of imitation, as a representation of the spoken alphabet rather than visual elements. The first alphabetical scripts were developed from hieroglyphs in Egypt and Cuneiform in Uruk. From these systems, close to all of the modern alphabets evolved.



The distinctive "wedge letters of cuneiform

The Ancient Greek historian Herodotus wrote in the 5th century BC that the Greek alphabet arrived with the Phoenician settlement in BC. Plato traced the Phoenician letters back to the Egyptians, who legend states received it as a divine gift. Plato discusses the origins and development in his works *Cratylus* and *Phaedrus*. The changes in the shapes of the letters came from a variety of sources. One that can clearly be seen is the medium available. Cuneiform was mainly written with reed styli on clay tablets, and by necessity are made of wedge-shaped indents (cuneiform literally means “wedge letters”). Roman stone inscriptions used straight lines as well resulting in the blocky capitals that we use today. Another influence was ease of use. With time and employment, the letters became more stylized and removed from their original pictures and symbols. With trade and conquest, different writing systems were united and separated, merging two old alphabets into one, or changing with time isolated

from a parent system. This can be seen in the unification of Greek and Etruscan to produce the Latin alphabet. Thus, sprung the different alphabets of the Ancient Mediterranean as varied as spoken language.

In Society

Writing has served many different cultural functions. It is thought to have sprung from mundane necessities such as commerce and debt but when its power was realized, it quickly became the duty of scribes and those who had the time and wealth to afford education. In such cultures as ancient Rome, it became a social divider; those who could read could get a job high paying enough to afford to teach their children to read. Literacy was widespread in free males in 5th century Athens. In some cultures, such as Egypt, writing took on a mystical role, perhaps due to its perceived divine origins. Herodotus coined the term “hieroglyphs” from “hieros” meaning sacred. The Greek word for alphabet, stoicheia, also means “elements” and as such, the letters were considered the building blocks of the cosmic order. It also became a symbol of cultural unity; the entire area of what we now call “Ancient Greece” was a collection of separate city states united only by language.

As medium became more available and education more widespread, writing became a successful way of communication across long distances of space and time. In the Near East, writing came to be used for public monuments, declarations of military success, and legal codes. In Greece and Rome (famously Pompeii) many instances of graffiti have been found advertising services, declaring love, and even complaining about noise levels in the area. Writing also became vital for running a military campaign so that generals could report to each other about their location, resources, and plans. Letters from all over the Roman Empire detail both political and personal matters. This use of language as long-distance communication enabled great conquests and widespread control in the Ancient Mediterranean.

Another great development in the place of writing in society was its use in literature, an art form rather than a purely practical method. It is hard to define where exactly the difference lies in matters such as Biblical texts and Homer's epics, which are both religious and historical accounts as well as literary stories. One important aspect of literature is poetry. The Epic of Gilgamesh is an epic poem recorded in the 7th century BC in Babylonia about a hero-king who is thought to have lived in the 3rd millennium. More recent and famous are the works of Homer, the Odyssey and the Iliad. The ancient writers of Greece and Rome studied arts of rhythm, meter, and language techniques in great depth and covered topics of love, religion, and mythology among others. The literature of the ancient world served in education, entertainment, and determining social class.

The written word was shaped by the people of the ancient Mediterranean and in return has shaped their world. From its origins in pictures to the Golden ages of classical literature, it has been a part of daily life and decisive politics. Its development and influences can be traced throughout the Mediterranean.



ACTIVITIES, BATCH #3.

1. Literature and Technology Timeline: Student will collaboratively create a visual timeline showcasing the evolution of literature alongside technological advancements. Students should contribute the following to the timeline: key events, dates, works, authors, etc.
2. The Evolution of Storytelling in the Digital Age: Students will trace the historical progression of storytelling from oral traditions to digital mediums by creating an infographic.

04

Chapter 4: Poetry

Poetry, and discussion of it, has a long history.²² Early attempts to define poetry focused on the uses of speech in rhetoric, drama, song and comedy. Later attempts concentrated on features such as repetition and rhyme and emphasized the aesthetics which distinguish poetry from prose. From the mid-20th century, poetry has sometimes been more loosely defined as a fundamental creative act using language.

Poetry as an art form may predate literacy. Many ancient works, from the Vedas (1700–1200 BC) to the Odyssey (800–675 BC), appear to have been composed in poetic form to aid memorization and oral transmission, in prehistoric and ancient societies. Poetry appears among the earliest records of most literate cultures, with poetic fragments found on early monoliths, runestones and stelae.

²² History of Literature/Poetry." Wikibooks. 28 Dec 2023, 06:19 UTC. 6 Feb 2024, 22:18
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_Literature/Poetry&oldid=4353707>.



The Deluge tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh in Akkadian, circa 2nd millennium BC.

The oldest surviving poem is the Epic of Gilgamesh, from the 3rd millennium BC in Sumer (in Mesopotamia, now Iraq), which was written in cuneiform script on clay tablets and, later, papyrus. Other ancient epic poetry includes the Greek epics, Iliad and Odyssey, the Roman national epic, Virgil's Aeneid, and the Indian epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata.

The efforts of ancient thinkers to determine what makes poetry distinctive as a form, and what distinguishes good poetry from bad, resulted in "poetics" — the study of the aesthetics of poetry. Some ancient societies, such as the Chinese through the Shi Jing, one of the Five Classics of Confucianism, developed canons of poetic works that had ritual as well as aesthetic importance. More recently, thinkers have struggled to find a definition that could encompass formal differences as great as those between Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and Matsuo Bashō's Oku no Hosomichi, as well as differences in context spanning Tanakh **religious poetry, love poetry, and rap.**

Context can be critical to poetics and to the development of poetic genres and forms. Poetry that records historic events in epics, such as Gilgamesh or Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, will necessarily be lengthy and narrative, poetry used for liturgical purposes (hymns, psalms, suras and hadiths) is likely to have an inspirational tone, and elegy and tragedy are meant to evoke deep emotional responses. Other contexts include Gregorian chants, formal or diplomatic speech, political rhetoric and invective, light-hearted nursery and nonsense rhymes, and even medical texts.

Definition

Poetry²³ is easy to recognize but hard to define.

Let's start with Webster's definition: "The art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts." As lovely as that sounds, it may already say too much about this unique and unpredictable art form. Rhythm is important; it's perhaps the only element in poetry we can truly count on. Rhymes are optional, but some sort of rhythm to the reading of quality poetry will always almost exist.

We can experience poetry through our eyes or our ears. It is usually meant to excite pleasure, but it can also reflect sorrow or regret. That brings us to "beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts."

Poetry often contains these things, but sometimes it can just be silly and simple. So, while Webster's Dictionary defines poetry in specific words, it still may not include the full picture of what poetry is.

Poetry does not mean to limit us. Find poems you love and share them with classmates and friends. Discover your own meanings in

²³ "Choosing High Quality Children's Literature/Poetry." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 26 Feb 2013, 18:45 UTC. 18 Nov 2016, 16:47
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Choosing_High_Quality_Children's_Literature/Poetry&oldid=2492503>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

poetry and discuss those meanings without making them conform to an understood critical meaning. Poetry can be sweet or silly, short or long, fun, thoughtful, or personal. It can have more than one voice. Let poetry help you find connections in your life. Tie poetry into other areas. You could use a poem as an intro to a science report!²⁴

Reading Poetry²⁵

Here are some pointers for getting started:

1. Read full sentences (if they exist in the poem) without stopping at the end of the line.
1. Look up words you do not know and write their definitions on the page.
2. Note recurring ideas or images—color code these with highlighters for visual recognition as you look at the poem on the page.
4. Determine formal patterns. Is there a regular rhythm? How would you describe it? Can it be characterized by the number of syllables in each line? If not, do you note a certain number of beats (moments where your voice emphasizes the sound) in the line?
3. Are there rhyming sounds? Where do they occur?
5. What is the overarching effect of all these elements taken together?
6. What do you think is the message conveyed by the poem?

Devices & Forms

Poetry²⁶ uses forms and conventions to suggest differential interpretations of words, or to evoke emotive responses. Devices such as assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and rhythm may

²⁴ This might be a hidden bonus point? Write a poem about your recent science report and email it to the instructor.

²⁵ Bennett, Tanya Long, "Writing and Literature: Composition as Inquiry, Learning, Thinking, and Communication" (2018). English Open Textbooks. 15. <https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/english-textbooks/15>

²⁶ Wikipedia contributors. "Poetry." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 28 Nov. 2021. Web. 12 Dec. 2021.

convey musical or incantatory effects. The use of ambiguity, symbolism, irony, and other stylistic elements of poetic diction often leaves a poem open to multiple interpretations. Similarly, figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, and metonymy establish a resonance between otherwise disparate images—a layering of meanings, forming connections previously not perceived. Kindred forms of resonance may exist, between individual verses, in their patterns of rhyme or rhythm.

Forms of Poetry²⁷

Couplet

A pair of lines of verse. It usually consists of two lines that rhyme and have the same meter. Two words that rhyme can be called a couplet.

Example:

I did but saw her passing by.
But I shall love her till I die.

Ballad

A ballad²⁸ is a form of verse, often a narrative set to music. Ballads are often 13 lines with an ABABBCBC form, consisting of couplets (two lines) of rhymed verse, each of 14 syllables. Another common form is ABAB or ABCB repeated, in alternating eight and six syllable lines.

²⁷ "Choosing High Quality Children's Literature/Poetry." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 26 Feb 2013, 18:45 UTC. 18 Nov 2016, 16:47
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Choosing_High_Quality_Children's_Literature/Poetry&oldid=2492503>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

"Creative Writing in the EFL Classroom/Poems." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 30 Oct 2009, 20:50 UTC. 18 Nov 2016, 17:30
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Creative_Writing_in_the_EFL_Classroom/Poems&oldid=1650139>. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

²⁸ Wikipedia contributors. "Ballad." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 27 Oct. 2021. Web. 13 Dec. 2021. This text is available under the CC-BY-SA license.

Free Verse and Narrative

There is no fixed pattern, and it can, but does not have to, use rhyming words. Lyric poems focus on feelings and visualizations rather than on a story. Narrative poems tell a story.

Haiku

Usually about nature, this style from Japan consists of three unrhymed lines. The first and last line contain five syllables and the middle line has seven syllables. These are easy in theory to fill in the syllables, but it can be hard for the students to actually make them meaningful.

Limerick²⁹

A **limerick** is a form of verse, usually humorous and frequently rude, in five-line, predominantly anapestic trimeter with a strict rhyme scheme of AABBA, in which the first, second and fifth line rhyme, while the third and fourth lines are shorter and share a different rhyme.^[3] The following example is a limerick of unknown origin:

The limerick packs laughs anatomical
Into space that is quite economical.
But the good ones I've seen
So seldom are clean
And the clean ones so seldom are comical.

Another Example:

There was a young woman named Sybil
who had the notion to scribble.
She set out one pen
one that was very zen
And the ink, it decided to dribble.

²⁹ Wikipedia contributors. "Limerick (poetry)." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 11 Dec. 2021. Web. 12 Dec. 2021.

Sonnet

A sonnet is made up of fourteen lines of rhymed iambic pentameter. Iambic pentameter is a line made up of five beats. English sonnets have a rhyme scheme of abab cdcd efef gg. It is usually one stanza long. Here is an example of a sonnet by a student:

“Sonnet 1” by S. M. Prince³⁰

Oh, how this raucous crowd both cheers and sneers,
A tide of mirth unduly wrought on me,
‘Twas not my peerless wit nor jest I fear,
‘Twas not my prose which folk have come to see.

I come from forest pines which hide my form,
I grew out crooked, prodded but unbent,
My frozen boughs persist in seeking warmth,
My needles prick but leave a sapid scent.

If not for nimble fingers, rapt’rous song,
They’d call a lumberjack to cut me down,
Capricious folk claim I do not belong,
At worst, I’m useless and, at best, a clown.

But I am neither invalid nor fool;
I am the arbiter of truths most cruel.

Quatrain

A quatrain is a four-lined, rhyming poem or stanza. Quatrains have several possible rhyme schemes. The first is designed as two couplets joined together with the a a b b pattern. Other rhyme patterns are a b a b, a b b a, and a b c b.

³⁰ “Sonnet 1” by S.M. Prince licensed under CC-BY-NC-SA. Created for NDSCS English 211 course in the Spring of 2021.

Example: "Weather"

Evening red and morning gray (a)
Set the traveler on his way (a)
But evening gray and morning red (b)
Bring the rain upon his head (b)

Villanelle³¹

The villanelle³² is a nineteen-line poem made up of five triplets with a closing quatrain; the poem is characterized by having two refrains, initially used in the first and third lines of the first stanza, and then alternately used at the close of each subsequent stanza until the final quatrain, which is concluded by the two refrains. The remaining lines of the poem have an a-b alternating rhyme.



Examples via Ink

The Study by Hieu Minh Nguyen ³³

For the longest time, the only memories I had
of that year were of Little Billy from the third floor,
floating
dead in the pool & how angry the rest of the tenants

³¹ Wikipedia contributors. "Poetry." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 28 Nov. 2021. Web. 12 Dec. 2021.

³² Need an example? Check this page: <https://literarydevices.com/villanelle/>

³³ Hieu Minh Nguyen is an award-winning, "queer Vietnamese American poet based out of Minneapolis" ("[About](#)"). These poems originally appeared in [Not Here](#) (2018) and are used with permission and are licensed [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](#) by [Hieu Minh Nguyen](#) and [Coffee House Press](#). Found here: [https://human.libretexts.org/Courses/City_College_of_San_Francisco/Writing_and_Critical_Thinking_Through_Literature_\(Ringo_and_Kashyap\)/07%3APoetry_Readings/7.19%3ANGuyen_Hieu_Minh._The_Study_and_White_Boy_Time_Machine-_Override_\(2018\)](https://human.libretexts.org/Courses/City_College_of_San_Francisco/Writing_and_Critical_Thinking_Through_Literature_(Ringo_and_Kashyap)/07%3APoetry_Readings/7.19%3ANGuyen_Hieu_Minh._The_Study_and_White_Boy_Time_Machine-_Override_(2018))

were
when they drained & filled it with cement
& how that summer, the unbearable heat dragged its
endless skin
across our bones — memory is the funniest character in
this story:
when I think of that year, no one has a face — the first
memory
I had of being molested did not come until nine years
later.
At first I thought it was a dream, a movie, white noise
summoning a narrative through the static — if it's true
what they say about memory being a series of rooms
then behind some locked door: a wicked apothecary: her
fingers
trapped in jars, her hair growing like wild vines along
the walls.
Somewhere in this story I am nine years old
filling the loud hollows with cement to drown out the
ghost.
They say, *give us details*, so I give them my body.
They say, *give us proof*, so I give them my body.
If you cut me open, if you dissect me you will pull from
me:
a pair of handprints, a nine-year-old boy, fossilized.

White Boy Time Machine: Override by Hieu Minh Nguyen

No matter where we go, there's a history
of white men describing a landscape
so they can claim it. I look out the window
& I don't see a sunset, I see a man's
pink tongue razing the horizon.
I once heard a man describe the village

in Vietnam where my family comes from.
It was beautiful
a poem I would gift my mother
but somewhere in the pastoral I am reminded
a child (recently) was blown apart
after stepping on a mine, a bulb, I guess
blooming forty years later—
maybe it was how the poet said *dirt*
or maybe it was how he used fire
to describe the trees.

*I Hear America Singing by Walt Whitman*³⁴

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

³⁴ This poem is in the public domain.

Examples via Link

- “A Woman Speaks,” by Audre Lorde,
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42583/a-woman-speaks>
- “American Love Song,” by Lachlan Chu,
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/162472/american-love-song> {audio available on the site}
- “anyone lived in a pretty how town,” by e. e. cummings,
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/22653/anyone-lived-in-a-pretty-how-town> {audio available on the site}
- “I Sing the Body Electric,” by Walt Whitman,
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45472/i-sing-the-body-electric>
- “The Laws of Motion,” by Nikki Giovanni,
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48230/the-laws-of-motion>



ACTIVITIES, BATCH #4:

Look through the sites listed below and analyze any poem of your choice using the devices and forms described in this chapter. Try to find something you really connect to.

- <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>
- <https://allpoetry.com/>
- <https://poets.org/>

05

Chapter 5. Fiction and Flash Fiction

While definitions of fiction³⁵ often emphasize its fabricated nature as opposed to historical or other “factual” genres, most readers understand that truth can arise from fiction in its own special way. Think of your favorite short story or novel—what does it reveal to you about yourself?

How does it illuminate the human condition? While stories can convey a variety of “truths,” which to some extent depend on each reader’s identity and experience, we still seek in these narratives connections with characters and other readers. Up through the first part of the twentieth century, scholars often referred to these connections as “universal truths.” This term refers to experiences, feelings, and insights that are common to all people. Yet, events of the 1950s and 1960s raised questions about whether any

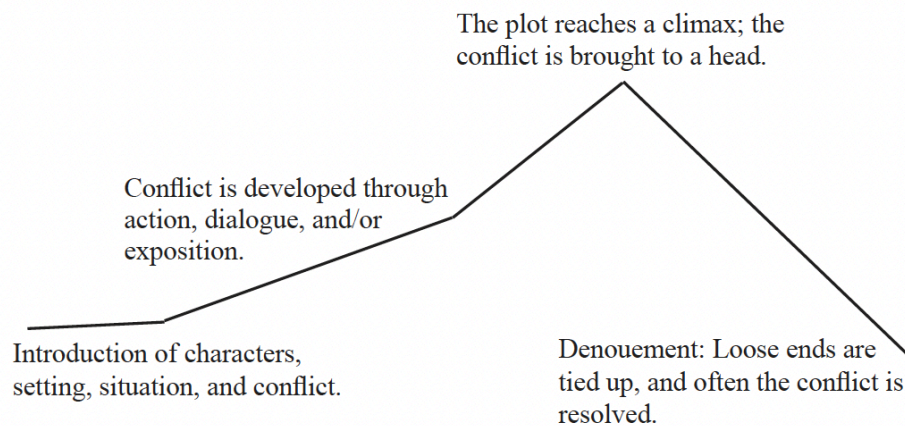
³⁵ Bennett, Tanya Long, "Writing and Literature: Composition as Inquiry, Learning, Thinking, and Communication" (2018). English Open Textbooks. 15. <https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/english-textbooks/15>

experience was truly universal. With the Civil Rights Movement came the understanding that people's experiences can vary wildly due to factors such as gender, class, ethnicity, and culture. Much to the surprise of many scholars (the vast majority of whom were, at the time, white, middle class, and male), not everyone could completely identify with Mark Twain's young protagonist Huckleberry Finn. For example, because of rigid social codes and physical risks unique to U.S. women, a young American female reader might not have the option of experiencing a physical journey like Huck's. In fact, it might be difficult for her even to imagine taking such a trip down the Mississippi River, since there is little to no evidence in history of a woman ever having done so. Even Huck's friend Jim, an escaped slave, is vulnerable in ways that Huck is not, as the two travel together. Readers of color might identify less with Huck's circumstances and more with Jim's. Even so, most readers can connect with Huck's inner conflict as he struggles between his obligation to follow the social rules taught to him as absolute morals and his own conscience, which tells him that Jim should not be subjected to slavery.

As a place where we can connect with one another as well as learn about ourselves, fiction indeed offers us a special brand of truth. Although history and philosophy pursue these goals as well, fiction is a narrative that is not bound to either historical events or scientific facts. The writer takes liberties with a fictional story, using his imagination to craft a plot that achieves the desired effect and meaning. The term narrative refers to the sequence of events in a story, often suggesting a cause-and-effect relationship among these events. A term that captures this concept more specifically, plot is defined as the sequence of events that develops the conflict and shapes the story. Rather than tell everything that might possibly happen to a character in certain circumstances, the writer carefully selects the details that will develop the plot, the characters, and the story's themes and messages. The writer engages in character development in order to develop the plot and the meaning of the story, paying special attention to the protagonist, or main character.

In a conventional story, the protagonist grows and/or changes as a result of having to negotiate the story's central conflict. A character might be developed through exposition, in which the narrator simply tells us about this person. But more often, the character is developed through dialogue, point of view, and description of this person's expressions and actions.

The traditional shape of a story is based on common conventions of Greek drama:



Lengths

- Flash fiction is usually 300-500 words; micro-fiction is under 300 words, typically.
- Most define a short story as a story that is under 7,500 words in length.
- Novellas can be defined as longer than a short story, yet shorter than a novel; novellas are typically 17,500 to 39,999 words long.
- Novels contain 40,000+ words.



Examples via Ink

“Trucker Vision” by Alisa Priebe³⁶

My glass eye is lima bean green. The real one is blue. I got a green glass eye to throw people off and it works. I don't declare eye color on my license. The eye makes babies cry and women gawk. The men say I should wear a patch. But I don't care. I like the reactions. It hardly looks real at all. The white defeated surface looks like that of a cue ball and the colors are dull and sad. It's a part of me, my crooked extension that hangs at attention and often bobbles about in the gaping hole of my face while I drive my truck.

One night, I was roaring along on a back road when I came upon a small town pub. I shouldn't be driving as it is, since I got this glassy eye it seems my depth perception is busted. I shouldn't be stopping at a bar either, since I am an alcoholic. Telling oversensitive alcoholics your problems, not being able to cry in your beer, and explaining a drunken night that took your eye never really appealed to me.

What appealed to me at that moment was an icy smooth beer. My real eye was especially heavy from the drive, but I forced myself awake long enough to get real good and drunk...just the way I like it.

I met two prostitutes, a cattle rancher, and a divorcee. I couldn't tell where I was anymore, but it felt like Vegas. Pinball lights, smoke, and smelly feet filled the air. I got a taste of whiskey every time I took a deep breath. It was like heaven and I didn't care now, if I died tonight or not. I didn't die.

After enough beer to intoxicate the small town and its passersby, hitting on the divorcee, grinding on the pinball machine, and taking

³⁶ This piece is licensed CC-BY-NC-ND by Alisa Priebe.

my eye out and rubbing it clean with my shirt for spectacle, I tripped into a hotel room with one working outlet and one working prostitute.

I shut my eye after the room took a couple of spins. The bed spun too, like a tilt-a-whirl, and the woman flung her hair like a black tornado above my flushed face. She was gorgeous, or at least the beer told me. I felt young and old at the same time. A drunken fever rushed through me and I shook to sleep as she got to her feet and left me to pass out alone.

I opened my eye. I wasn't dead and it was another morning marching me to it. There was a wretched sun stripe seeping through the dusty retarded shades of the window. It was singeing my good eye.

I never was quick on my feet after dirty sex and a night full of beer chugging.

I got up and pissed. I heard a hard noise similar to a "ploooosh", like a marble being dropped into a fish tank. I flushed the toilet. Then I looked in the mirror.

"The Ribbon" by Anonymous³⁷

She was beautiful in a strange, mysterious way. Her hair and her deep bottomless eyes were as black as the velvet ribbon around her neck. He planned to marry her before the next full moon rose in the autumn sky.

On their wedding, he watched her walked towards him up the long aisle. She was dressed in a white gown, a white veil, and carried a bouquet of white flowers. Even her face was ivory white. But below

³⁷ "How to Write an Essay/Free Response." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 2 Sep 2016, 21:20 UTC. 17 Sep 2019, 16:55
<<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=HowtoWriteanEssay/FreeResponse&oldid=3112781>>. Licensed under CC-BY-SA.

it, around the ivory neck, was the black velvet ribbon. He remembered staring at that ribbon as the strains of the wedding march brought his bride nearer to him. He remembered the curious and shocked looks on the faces of the wedding guests. But then his eyes met hers, and he was drowning in their bottomless darkness.

He didn't think of the velvet ribbon during the rest of his wedding day. It was a joyous time, and if people thought his wife was a bit strange, they kept that to themselves. That night, when they were alone, he saw that the ribbon was still there, still circling her lovely neck.

"Don't you ever take that ribbon from around your neck?" he asked, hoping his question was a needless one.

"You'll be sorry if I do," his wife answered, "so I won't."

Her answer disturbed him, but he did not question her further. There was plenty of time for her to change her ways

Their life together fell into a pleasant pattern. They were happy, as most newly married couples are. He found her to be a perfect wife... well, nearly perfect. Although she had a great number of dresses and wore a different one every day, she never changed the black velvet ribbon. This ribbon began to be the test of their marriage. When he looked at her, his eyes would inevitably fall to her neck. When he kissed her, he could feel the ribbon tightening around his own throat.

"Won't you please take that ribbon from around your neck?" he asked her time and time again.

"You'll be sorry if I do, so I won't." This was always her answer. At first it teased him. Then it began to grate on his nerves. Now it was beginning to infuriate him.

"You'll be sorry if I do."

"You'll be sorry if I do."

One day he tried to pull the ribbon off after she had repeated her answer, like a mechanical doll. It wouldn't come loose from her neck. He realized then, for the first time, that the ribbon had no beginning and no end. It circled her neck like a band of steel. He had drawn back from her in disgust that day. Things weren't the same with them after that.

At the breakfast table, the black ribbon seemed to mock him as he drank his suddenly bitter coffee. In the afternoon, outside, the ribbon made a funeral out of the sunlight. But it was at night when it bothered him the most. He knew he could live with it no longer.

"Either take that ribbon off, or I will," he said one night to his wife of only four weeks.

"You'll be sorry if I do, so I won't." She smiled at him, and then fell off to sleep.

But he did not sleep. He lay there, staring at the hated ribbon. He had meant what he said. If she would not take off the ribbon, he would.

As she lay sleeping and unsuspecting, he crept out of bed and over to her sewing box. He had seen a small, sharp scissors she kept there. It was thin enough, he knew, to slip between the velvet ribbon and her soft neck. Gripping the scissors in his trembling hands, he walked softly back to the bed. He came up to where she lay and stood over her. Her head was thrown back on the pillow, and her throat with the black velvet ribbon around it rose ever so slightly with her breathing.

He bent down, and with one swift movement, he forced the thin blade of the scissors under the ribbon. Then with a quick, triumphant snip, he severed the ribbon that had come between them.

The black velvet ribbon fell away from his wife's neck... her head rolled off the bed and landed on the floor with a thump. She was muttering, "You'll be sorry, you'll be sorry..."

Examples via Link.

Many of these examples are easy to Google, and perhaps your instructor will directly link to most of them from the LMS:

- “How to Date a Brown Girl (Black Girl, White Girl, or Halfie),” by Junot Diaz
- “Shout,” by Dagoberto Gilb
- “Reunion,” by John Cheever
- “A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings,” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- “Light,” by Lesley Nneka Arimah
- “The Lottery,” by Shirley Jackson
- “The Yellow Wallpaper,” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- “The Masque of the Red Death,” by Edgar Allen Poe
- “Girl,” by Jamaica Kincaid
- “Love is a Fallacy,” by Max Shulman



ACTIVITIES, BATCH #7:

You may be required to respond to all or some or none of these questions:

1. Pick out 3-5 phrases which you think are especially important to any of the stories in this chapter: briefly describe why you chose each. What questions about character or motivation or plot does this story leave in your mind?
2. Seek out a piece of fiction online, or even your own piece of fiction, or a sample from this chapter. Analyze the piece for these typical elements:
 - i. **Setting** - where does the story takes place? What do we know about this location? How is it described, and to what effect?

- ii. **Plot** - what happens in the story and in what order? How does the order of the events impact their meaning?
- iii. **Characters** - who are the people (or sometimes animals or other entities) in the story? What kinds of characters are they? How are they characterized?
- iv. **Figurative Language** - how does the author effectively use language as an artistic tool to render the story? What metaphors, similes, or descriptive imagery does the author use to make the story immersive, and why?



Pause: Fiction vs Nonfiction

Is all fiction literature? Is all nonfiction literature?³⁸

Fiction refers to literature created from the imagination. Mysteries, science fiction, romance, fantasy, chick lit, crime thrillers are all fiction genres. Whether or not all of these genres should be considered “literature” is a matter of opinion. Some of these fiction genres are taught in literature classrooms and some are not usually taught, considered more to be reading for entertainment. Works often taught in literature classrooms are referred to as “literary fiction” including classics by Dickens, Austen, Twain, and Poe, for example.

Like fiction, non-fiction also has a sub-genre called “literary nonfiction” that refers to literature based on fact but written in creative way, making it as enjoyable to read as fiction. You may not be aware of the many types of nonfiction we would study, such as biography, memoir or autobiography, essays, speeches, and humor. Of these literary nonfiction genres, they can be long like a book or series of books or short like an essay or journal entry. Some examples of these you are already familiar with, like *The Diary of Anne Frank* or *Angela’s Ashes* by Frank McCourt. These works of **literary nonfiction** have character, setting, plot, conflict, figurative language, and theme just like **literary fiction**.

Clarification: The test of categorizing a work between fiction and non-fiction is not whether there is proof the story is true, but whether it CLAIMS to be true. For example, someone writing a first-hand account of being abducted by aliens would be classified in the

³⁸ Contributors and Attributions, CC licensed content, Shared previously = Introduction to Literature (Nonfiction). Provided by: Extended Learning Institute of Northern Virginia Community College. Located at: <https://courses.candelalearning.com/zelixeng125/chapter/introduction-to-non-fiction/>. License: CC BY: Attribution

nonfiction section, meaning the author claims it really happened. Further, a story in which imaginary characters are set into real historical events is still classified as fiction.

06

Chapter 6. Nonfiction

Frederick Douglass' creative nonfiction³⁹ account of the horrors of slavery and his escape from it was so powerfully written that it is largely credited, along with Douglass' speeches, as helping end slavery and empower African-American citizens (*Ceasar*).

“I shut my ears, averted my eyes, turning instead to what I thought at the time was pain's antidote: silence. I was wrong... Silence feeds pain, allows it to fester and thrive. What starves pain, what forces it to release its grip, is speech, the voice upon which rides the story, this is what happened; this is what I have refused to let claim me.”

— Tracy K. Smith, *Ordinary Light*

³⁹ This page titled 2.1: What is Creative Nonfiction? is shared under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Heather Ringo & Athena Kashyap (ASCCC Open Educational Resources Initiative) .

Students encounter nonfiction every day. News stories, social media posts, and documentaries are all examples of nonfiction. Creative nonfiction is the literary arm of nonfiction.

What is creative nonfiction? According to the literary magazine [Creative Nonfiction](#), this fast-growing and increasingly popular genre is defined as: "true stories, well told" (Gutkind). That is, creative nonfiction stories depict real-life events, places, people, and experiences, but do so in a way that is immersive, so readers feel emotionally invested in the writing in a way they probably are not as invested in, say, a textbook or a more formal autobiography. While "nonfiction" (without the creative designation) tells true stories as well, there is less emphasis upon and space for creativity. If regular nonfiction were a person, it might say "just the facts, ma'am." Creative nonfiction, on the other hand, might ask "and what color were her eyes as the moonlight reflected off the ocean into them, and what childhood memories did that moment dredge up?"

The best creative nonfiction tells a true story in an artistic – or literary – way. This means that the story has certain elements, such as descriptive imagery, setting, plot, conflict, characters, metaphors, and other literary devices. Usually, a work of creative nonfiction is narrated in first-person, though sometimes it can be written in third-person. It can be more lyric and personal, like Annie Dillard's [nature essays](#), or representing important moments in history, like abolitionist Frederick Douglass' [The Narrative Life of Frederick Douglass](#) (1845) or Jo Ann Beard's ["The Fourth State of Matter."](#) They also might be more objective and scholarly, like many pieces of investigative journalism. Indeed, as long as humans have existed on this planet, we have been telling stories about our lives, and to make sense of our world.

To summarize the defining characteristics of this genre:

- True stories
- Prose (usually, though sometimes poetry)

- Uses literary devices/is more creative and artistically-oriented than "regular" nonfiction
- Often told in first person
- The narrator is often the author or a persona of the author, but not always

When reading a work of creative nonfiction, it is important to remember the story is true. This means the author does not have as much artistic freedom as a fiction writer or poet might, because they cannot invent events which did not happen. It is worthwhile, then, to pay attention to the literary devices and other artistic choices the narrator makes. Readers should consider:

- What choices were made here about what to include and what to omit?
- Are there repeating images or themes?
- How might the historical context influence this work?



Examples via Ink

“Las Espinas de mi Rosa” by M⁴⁰

Imagine growing up in the United States, being exposed to many ethnic groups and cultures, coming together and getting along with no issue or problem at all. Wouldn't that be amazing? If ALL races from many cultures came together and rose above with one another? Well here in this lovely country of The United States of America – shit like that does not fly by that easily. This is a snapshot of my story of being born on this soil of hatred, racism, sexism, in a misogynistic country. I hope to share this piece with you, the reader,

⁴⁰ Las Espinas de mi Rosa by M. is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International license. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>

the audience, whomever you are – please read and inhale what I am gifting to you. Writing this piece was an intense moment for me. My former professor at Minneapolis College asked me to write a piece about my run-ins with racism and hatred from others when I shared one of my stories from my past in class one time. It took a lot of courage and strength to write this, but I do hope this does give you an eye opener that racism is real and has been alive for centuries. I hope one day we do change this and put it to death and move on from it. No good comes from evil.

The first time that I am speaking of is my first encounter with racism. This is something I did not even know existed or heard of. This was something that did scar me for a very long, long time and my innocence was taken from me. Let me break it down for you what happened, this may shock and “wow” so just be aware. I was at a park, happily playing on the playground area and sliding the down slide over and over again, swinging back and forth as the air pushed me, each sway and a sun kiss each time I swayed forward. Just being a kid – with no worries or negative thoughts in the world *but something dark always interrupts the fairytale. This, the first time.*

I was playing on the playground and this girl that was my age approached me and asked if I wanted to play with her. I said yes because I was told to be nice and kind to those who are nice and kind toward me. I remember what she looked like and what she was wearing but her name is a blur to me. She was blonde, blue eyes like the water. I swear if you stared too long you might drown in them, pale and fair skin with a pink shirt and yellow and polka dotted shorts. She was cute and a fearless young girl. We played and played, laughing out loud like this could be the best day ever, but it turned for the worse. Her grandfather was an older man with blonde and white hair, pasty and burnt skin color, and blue eyes like the little girl's but his eyes had red veins in them. Like he hadn't slept for days and days or was mad as Hell at someone. He was mad-- at *me*. He told his granddaughter “they” had to go because it was getting dangerous. She looked around and pulled back from him. I

was looking around because I got uncomfortable with what was going on. It was sad seeing this girl dropping her face, and her smile disappearing. I was focusing on her and did not realize her grandfather pushed me away from her and called me names and spat on me.

I was numb. The girl began to cry and pushed her grandfather, which woke him up, realizing how badly he fucked up. I turned around and went to my Dad with spit and sadness drenched into my pores and soul. My father looked at me and wiped the spit off me and asked what happened and who was responsible. I kept my head down and did not want to talk but I found it in me to point at the old man. My father walked toward his direction. I remember my brothers running toward them. You could hear them arguing and yelling at each other. Next thing, my father pushed the old man over the playground and had his fist up but saw me looking at him and walked away. The little girl was crying and crying, and nothing made it right. The old man started to feel guilty and ashamed as the bystanders shook their heads at him and he looked at his granddaughter. That was the first time and day racism made its presence in my life. This is something that made me scared to talk to any other race other than my own but even my race was mean to me.

I lost faith in humankind at a young age and that should have not been the case. Kids learn from us. Kids can see what is going on and comprehend a little bit. Just a little bit could hurt that child for long time – like it did me and many others who experienced this at a young age. Many of you are wondering what happened afterwards. Well, we did not call the police, and the police did not show up. We simply left and did not go out for many weeks to parks, lakes, or malls. We simply avoided any area that White people were in. I would not talk to one or even look at them in the eye. I had a fear of them. I was scared to approach any kids or adults that were White. I struggled a lot in school, but I tried my hardest to not show it at home. My father felt powerless after the event. He started to

withdraw from everyone that was not family or close friends. He simply did not like to talk to anyone unless he had to.

My father told me a story about when he first to the United States in the '80s, and that was it was different. People were calmer, nicer, more welcoming, and simply did not mistreat you by the color of your skin. It just did not happen at all.

I had a hard time believing it because of my experience with it. He stated that during the Reagan Administration, he felt welcomed here. He was excited to come here and get all the opportunities that he could and provide for himself and his family back home. My father's story was very similar to my mothers' as well. She too came here during that era. They stated they never faced racism at all until my experience. I felt like there was some root of evil that was birthed hundreds of years ago but is now making its appearance again in this era. But it starts with one man, our "amazing leader" – Mr. Number 45 himself. I refuse to mention his name. It disgusts me to my very core.

When the 2016 Presidential Elections happened, it was saddening and shocking to see all the hatred, bigotry, homophobia, and racism be birthed again. It was sad to see where America was heading. We were going to a dead end – fast. Watching all the ridiculous and irrational candidates on both sides was funny and sad at the same time. I could not believe that these individuals could have a job that gave them power. The rest of the individuals were just as foolish as he was. 45's facial expressions would get to me. I wonder how his family could stand the sight of him. I wonder how anyone can? I always questioned what was so great about this man? There was nothing amazing about him at all. He did not seem like he was a man that could lead a company because he was bankrupt. But how did we let him be in charge of our country? I was devastated with the outcome of the elections.

When this man was running, all presentations at each state were heart wrenching to watch. I could not believe that people were there to support him! I was sad to see children and women there. This man nationally and internationally said, "GRAB THEM BY THE PUSSY." Like who the fuck says that shit? That is so nasty and not what a president would say. It's not their demeanor. This man has children of his own – daughters. What would make it okay for someone that is going to lead a nation to be taken seriously like that? What would make it okay for a nation to think this is funny and stand behind him? What would make it okay for someone to say bigoted and racist things where the minority population is growing? HOW? Can someone please to explain to us?

This man called Hispanics "criminals, rapists, and thugs" and said Middle- Eastern people should be banned. Everything was being reversed that the Obama administration was trying to do or get done. We are being oppressed and challenged under this administration. I felt targeted even though I am from here. I was being asked by people if I was born from here or if I had DACA because I am a minority. I was disgusted with both genders belittling me because I was shade darker than them. I was tired of being called names or of having people ask me if I enlisted to become documented; it pissed me the fuck off. I was scared to go out because of the possibility of encountering one of these mad people. I did not even want to speak my foreign language because I did not want to be targeted anymore; I was scared to take my child with me. I was sad that she came in the era where racism comes in all ages and shades. I was scared of it. I did not want her to be exposed to it while being out in public with me. I mean who would? Who would want to have kids in this time? It is not a time to be alive. It is not a time where progress is being made. It is not. I never felt so ashamed to be in the skin color that I am until I came to this college. I always felt so targeted before I came here. This school was a safe haven for me. Like it probably was for many others. I love everything about being a minority. Being Latina. I am a rose in the making and will

establish my roots deep in this world. For those of my own to carry it on.

45 will never silence me. He pushes me to be the hardest, strongest, and ambitious Latina. I promised my daughter that I will not let this man stereotype us and oppress us. I will rise above it all. The stereotypes, the statistics, and those who are believing that we are just “greasers that take everyone’s jobs,” – that was something that I could not stand hearing because no one was taking anyone’s job. My people would work the shit jobs that require hard work and long days. I remember my parents working these jobs before they got better jobs that they have now. When you go on the streets of the Twin Cities and the surrounding suburbs of these cities, you see **mainly** Caucasian men or women on these streets begging for money instead of a job. This is a fact that we never address at all, but we can acknowledge Hispanics coming into this country “stealing jobs and doing crime” here on the news, or wherever else. I never felt we were stealing jobs or doing crime – *some of us do but not all of us do*. Therefore, I feel we should not be stereotyped by these stigmas at all. It is rude and arrogant to do.

I always worked hard since I was sixteen-years-old because I got tired of depending on my hard-working parents, and I wanted to see what it was like to work and go make my own money. When I was a junior in high school, you think of the future a lot because there’s pressure in America to know what you want to do with yourself by the start and end of your senior year. At the beginning of senior year, there was a staff waiting at this board where all seniors are supposed to go and write down where they were going after high school. I did not have anything until I was the last to put on there that I was going to the military. Oh yes, I went off to the military – how chaotic and insane of me, right? I legit thought that I was going to be a badass and saving this country from our “enemies” overseas but in reality, our enemies are on this land of ours. Do not get me wrong, it was an amazing experience because I learned about

myself a lot and made a new family but there were some low and ugly parts of this world that I wish did not exist.

Let me fast forward you to the day that I met my new leader; he was pretty cool at first and seemed like he was going to care for me but as the years went on and on, he became more of a prick. An asshole. Of course, you cannot say a thing to your superiors because you are "*supposed*" to show respect to them, however, I do think you should give respect when it is earned. I mean isn't that how things should be? But as the 2016 Presidential Elections came around, I did see a whole new side to this individual that I did not like at all. I started to not like going there; I felt uncomfortable there. The family that I did make had a different side to them that I thought would never exist. I did not like this reality of these people as they would state their opinions of 45's speeches and how they *did* agree with him. I started to hear "I am not trying to offend you but....." That saying would irk and make my blood boil quickly. Hearing that did make me change my ways and views on those that would say and make excuses about 45's speeches, talks, and policies. Trust me---seeing and hearing the way these people would talk about him like he was some God was disturbing. "*He really cares about the people.*" Oh yeah? What people? Here is the best one yet, "*he is going to take care of the military and refund us a lot of money. He is going to give us a raise and better bonuses.*" I know what you are feeling, you just want to say "wow" or just want to laugh. Trust me, I laughed so hard in these people's faces. This was the nature that I was exposed to after this man was running for president and became president. I don't even acknowledge him as the president because that is something that he is *far* away from. A president is supposed to be a leader, a rational person, and someone who cares for those that help and build more opportunities in their homeland. The lovely individual that we are stuck with, is not; this man is filled with animosity, hatred, racism, and bigotry.

If I could go back and not enlist, I probably would if I knew what the future was going to hold. I wanted to go all out and prove to those

that I could become someone, and that, I still am doing. Do not get me wrong. I did meet some amazing individuals along this process, and it did teach me a lot about myself in this journey.

Another path of this journey of being exposed to racism happened recently at Target. Imagine joking and laughing in Spanish and turning to hear someone say, "why can't people learn the language here.?" Yes, that did happen to me. I still remember the old hag that said that to me. I was pretty disgusted and ashamed of the human race. I tell ya, I wanted to punch life and soul out of that waste of a life human being. A mother who had 3 kids with her watching this. They looked embarrassed and ashamed that their own birth giver said those wrenching words as they knew their mother fucked up at that moment right there. My mother, she is pretty old school and does not take shit from ANYONE. She was enraged and went to the lady and yelled at her where another elder woman, who witnessed this, stepped in and defended my mother. The woman told her she should be ashamed in herself as she is teaching her children how to hate and that is not good. The elder woman did handle this case pretty classy you should say. I would have never thought to hear someone step in and show someone their true ugly colors. As the older woman was defending my mother, the offender's husband came around the corner. He was confused and asked why his wife was being attacked. The older woman scolded him about his wife and the man looked embarrassed and grabbed the kids and left the store. Others looked at her in disgust as she just stood there in shame. The store manager came around the corner and asked her to leave. The lady asked and pleaded to finish her shopping and that she would not bother others; the manager refused and proceeded to tell her to leave and that they did not accept that type of behavior. The lady started to cry, stated that she was sorry, and left as we shook our heads at her. We hugged the old lady and thanked her for helping us out.

I felt so powerless in that moment. That my daughter was there to witness this animosity. I was pretty silent and quiet after that event. I

was very serious. I did little communication with my mother afterwards. My mother knew I was so upset and did not want to talk. I had no intentions anyway. I had no reason why I needed to speak anymore. I was scared to be scorned by another person for embracing my first language by using it. I feel like I'm seeing this happen everywhere else. Others feel as scared as I do to embrace who I am. Where I come from, I am not 100% American to the White culture. I wonder to myself, what is an American? Because when you think of it, America belongs to the Natives and Mexicans before the colonizers took it from them.

This is just a piece of my story to you. I hope you take these small stories and learn from them. Learn to love your neighbor and appreciate them for who they are. This does go a long way as well. Being evil and filled with hatred does not benefit you in the long run. I learned a lot in these obstacles that I came across and overcame. I became very resilient and open to those around me. Whether you are Black, Asian, White, etc. I appreciate you all and I hope you learn to spread love and good from one and another. I hope one day all groups will be able to reunite and become as one and will rise together.



Four Short Essays by Karen Anderson⁴¹

Death of a Neighbor

I am scanning the obituaries in the local paper when I see the name of a neighbor, someone who lived not far from me. I didn't know she

⁴¹ Karen Anderson is a writer who lives in Traverse City, Michigan. Her 30-year writing career has included journalism and marketing. These essays, which she wrote and read on her weekly feature on Interlochen Public Radio, are published in her collection, *Gradual Clearing: Weather Reports from the Heart*, Arbutus Press, 2017. *Six Short Essays by Karen Anderson* is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

was ill, and I feel strangely empty and sad. We weren't friends, really, but I knew her name and a little about her work and family. This is a small town, and if you live here long enough, you run into a lot of people. She and I said hello occasionally at the grocery store or library.

But while I gaze at her picture and read her obituary, I recall that I didn't like her. Which meant I would acknowledge her when we met but didn't stop to talk. Didn't make an effort to get better acquainted.

And when I try to remember *why* I didn't like her, I cannot think of a single reason. Whatever triggered my irritation was so insignificant, it has vanished. While the irritation remained. Now my sorrow about her death expands to include my own smallness, my petty grievances. I am ashamed to admit how these unexamined opinions linger—and limit my life.

Sometimes it's too late to make amends. I close the newspaper and sip my cold coffee. She was my neighbor and I never thought much about her until now. I can remember her jogging slowly down the street, her face flushed. A pretty woman.

Gradual Clearing

Under a gray sky, we load the canoe onto the truck, choosing to believe the forecast: "becoming partly sunny." But the gloomy weather suits my mood.

"You okay?" my husband asks.

"I feel sort of depressed," I say.

The wind is sharp as we push off into the Manistee River and I wish I'd worn long underwear. On this late fall day, the water is low but the colors are high. Red and orange and yellow, the oaks and maples stand along the bluffs, shining with their own light.

“Let’s stop on that island for coffee,” Daniel says, and we sit on a birch log to open the thermos. I hold the steaming cup close to my face and munch a piece of molasses cookie.

“No sun yet,” I say.

“I’m still glad we came,” he says.

Back in the canoe, I tie my bonnet under my chin. Around the next bend I see a brilliant red maple leaning far out over the river—the river that will eventually claim its life but now reflects its beauty. I want to have the courage to lean out over my death, I think. Over my life. To risk believing I am valuable and I belong. Right here, right now.

It’s mostly cloudy when we end our trip four hours later. As I look up, searching for blue, I feel a pleasant ache in my shoulders.

“How are you doing?” my husband asks.

“Gradual clearing,” I say.

Rental

When I left my first marriage, I moved into a small rental house with my ten-year-old daughter. The floors creaked and the windows leaked and the oven door wouldn’t close—but I loved the place. It felt cozy and funky and just the right size for my downsized life.

Then, after I’d lived there about six months, my landlord stopped by to tell me he had a buyer for the house. “But I like it here,” I said, “and I’m in the middle of a divorce.”

Frederik and I sat on the grass in the back yard and talked awhile and finally he stood up. “I went through a divorce,” he said. “I won’t sell the house.”

I stayed for five years, and figured out how to keep the oven door closed with a hanger and a rubber band. Also, how to be a single mom, a single woman. I grappled with guilt and grief and unintended consequences—losing extended family, people taking sides. A roller-coaster, a slog.

And if something went wrong with the house, I called my landlord. When he had to retrieve my pantyhose from the bathtub drain, Frederik laughed and said, “Not hard enough.”

When the birds in the attic turned out to be a battery in the smoke detector, he said, “Not hard enough.”

When a stray cat came to our back porch and my daughter wanted to keep it, he changed the rule about “No Pets.”

After we moved out, Frederik sold the house. I still drive by. There’s a stroller out front these days and a pot of red geraniums.

Togetherness

The way my husband fixes his breakfast toast has begun to annoy me. “You could save time if you toasted the second two pieces while you’re buttering the first two,” I tell him.

“I’m not trying to save time,” he says.

He also uses too much jam. Who needs so much jam? And who is this *shrew* inside my head? Hearing her familiar voice, I know it is definitely time. In fact, it is past time for my husband and me to enjoy a few days apart.

Marriage is the hardest relationship in the world, I think. Being a parent isn’t easy but the whole goal is to separate, for the child to grow up and leave.

The goal of a marriage is to grow up and *stay*. But sometimes the secret of staying is leaving for a little while. That's why I'm alert to the toast factor. When I start feeling annoyed by the way my husband eats his breakfast—or breathes in and out—I know it's time for some space.

Fortunately, he is planning a trip. And almost as soon as he is out of the driveway, I can feel myself falling in love again. A feeling I want to enjoy by myself for a few days.

Examples via Link

- “How to Become a Writer,” by Lorrie Moore
- TBD by students.



ACTIVITIES, BATCH #8:

1. Seek out a piece of nonfiction online, or even your own piece of nonfiction. Analyze the piece for these typical elements:
 - a. **Setting** - where does the story takes place? What do we know about this location? How is it described, and to what effect?
 - b. **Plot** - what happens in the story and in what order? How does the order of the events impact their meaning?
 - c. **Characters** - who are the people (or sometimes animals or other entities) in the story? What kinds of characters are they? How are they characterized?
 - d. **Figurative Language** - how does the author effectively use language as an artistic tool to render the story? What metaphors, similes, or descriptive imagery does the author use to make the story immersive, and why?

2. Pick out 3-5 phrases which you think are especially important to any of the stories in this chapter: briefly describe why you chose each. What questions about character or motivation or plot does this story leave in your mind?

07

Chapter 7: Drama

Like fiction, **drama**⁴²—sometimes referred to as a **play**—features characters caught up in a **plot**, or series of events in a storyline. Just like in fiction, the plot is the trajectory of the story. Plays and novels are actually very similar in this way. In fact, some plays have been based on novels, and novels on plays. Yet, whereas the narrator of a novel can spend pages painting a picture of the story's circumstances for the reader, a play is restricted to the space of the stage and the time frame of a couple of hours. This adds unique considerations for a **playwright**—or author who writes plays—to consider. What strategies are available to the playwright to ensure that the play successfully conveys its intended effects and themes? And how can we most clearly settle upon one definition of drama, considering it manifests in different permutations across cultures?

⁴² This page titled 8.1: What is Drama? is shared under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Heather Ringo & Athena Kashyap (ASCCC Open Educational Resources Initiative) .

African drama scholar Ruth Finnegan stressed that, when defining drama across cultures, "[m]ost important is the idea of enactment, of representation through actors who imitate persons and events" (486). In addition to this definition, plot, setting, dialogue, and action are probably the most clearly defining characteristics of drama as genre. These elements will be covered in greater detail in the Elements of Drama section.

A Very Brief History of Drama

Greece

Most historians agree Western drama originated in Greece as an evolution of religious ritual, probably around the 5th century BCE as an evolution of poetry and song (qtd. Miller 126-7). While more controversial, many scholars believe the first plays probably began when singers in a festival celebrating the Greek God Dionysus/Bacchus began acting out characters in worship songs (Miller 127). Eventually, this developed into increasingly elaborate productions, growing from one actor to several, incorporating props and costumes. By the 4th century BCE, drama had become a valued cultural practice in Greece and was in fact considered a civic duty that would help Greek society remain rational through the purgation of negative emotion.

India

Some scholars contend drama did not begin in Greece, as popularly assumed, but in India. Or perhaps that drama was not necessarily a spreading phenomena, but a simultaneous evolution in both India and Greece. Regardless, around the same time of the origins of Greek drama arose the Sanskrit Indian *prakarana* (Walker 7). *Prakarana* is a play in five acts. This *prakarana* theatre is widely regarded to have begun the spread of drama in the East in the same way Greek drama spread through the West.

Common Genres of Drama

- **Comedy:** This is probably the first drama subgenre; comedy traditionally features lower-class characters, emphasizes silly or bawdy themes, and often ends in marriage.
- **Tragedy:** Tragedy depicts a protagonist's downfall due to his or her own tragic flaw, or **hamartia**. Readers can usually recognize a tragedy by its noble characters, elevated language (iambic pentameter), and scenes of suffering and death. They almost always feature death or many deaths and/or a funeral.
- **History:** Recreates a historically significant event. May include elements of comedy, tragedy, or romance.
- **Romance:** Usually focuses on love between characters

Distinguishing Features of Drama

- Meant to be performed rather than read
- Emphasis on dialogue, character, and stage direction
- May include elements of music, dance, art, poetry, and prose
- Usually fictional, though may include nonfiction or be inspired by true stories or historical events



Example via Ink

Title: The Literary Café⁴³

INT. LITERARY CAFÉ - DAY

The Literary Café is a cozy, book-filled space with mismatched furniture and soft lighting. People sit at tables, sipping coffee and reading, while others browse the shelves or chat with friends.

⁴³ Created by a chatbot.

SARAH

*enters the café, looking around with a smile. She approaches the counter where **MIKE**, the barista, is making drinks.*

SARAH

Hey, Mike! What's new today?

MIKE

Hey, Sarah! We've got a fresh batch of pastries and a special on our literary-themed drinks. How about a "Mocha Melville" or a "Shakespearean Latte"?

SARAH

Hmm, I'll take the Mocha Melville. And do you have any copies of "Moby-Dick" lying around? I've been meaning to dive into it again.

MIKE

Sure thing! Let me grab that for you.

Mike disappears behind the counter and returns with a copy of "Moby-Dick," handing it to Sarah.

MIKE

Here you go. Enjoy your coffee and happy reading!

SARAH

Thanks, Mike! You're the best.

Sarah takes her drink and book, finding a cozy corner to settle into. She takes a sip of her coffee and opens "Moby-Dick," getting lost in the world of Melville's classic tale.

CUT TO:

INT. LITERARY CAFÉ - LATER

*Sarah is still engrossed in her book when **JOHN**, a fellow café regular, approaches her table.*

JOHN

Hey, Sarah! What are you reading today?

SARAH

Hey, John! I'm diving back into "Moby-Dick." It's such a timeless classic, don't you think?

JOHN

Absolutely. Melville's writing is like a literary voyage. Mind if I join you?

SARAH

Of course not! The more, the merrier.

John pulls up a chair, and the two friends continue reading in companionable silence, surrounded by the warmth and comfort of the Literary Café.

FADE OUT.

Examples via Link.

You might need the digital version of the textbook to access these, or they might show up within a Google Search, too:

- [Project Gutenberg Plays](#)
- [Middlesex Community College Collection](#)
- [WikiCommons Scripts and Screenplays](#)
- "Ruined," by Lynn Nottage
- "Disgraced," by Ayad Akhtar
- ["A Doll's House"](#), by Henrik Ibsen
- "Trifles," by Susan Glaspell
- "The Importance of Being Earnest," by Oscar Wilde



ACTIVITIES, BATCH #7:

- Add more to the history of drama with a timeline and more details to the backgrounds in more countries, etc.

- Seek out your own drama pieces in the form of TV shows and/or movies; which ones qualify for each category and why?
 - Comedy
 - Tragedy
 - History
 - Romance

Chapter 8. Other Genres

No, we aren't covering this list in the next few chapters but LOOK at all of the subcategories! Whoa!

Fiction:

Novel
Novella
Short Story
Flash Fiction
Microfiction
Epistolary
Experimental Fiction
Fantasy
Science Fiction
Historical Fiction
Mystery
Thriller
Romance
Horror
Adventure
Satire
Humor
Dystopian

Drama:

Play
Tragedy
Comedy
Farce
Melodrama
Tragicomedy
Absurdist Drama
Historical Drama
Musical
Monologue
Dialogue
Soliloquy

Poetry:

Epic Poetry
Narrative Poetry
Lyric Poetry
Sonnet
Haiku
Villanelle
Ode
Elegy
Ballad

Free Verse
Concrete Poetry
Limerick
Ghazal
Tanka
Sestina
Acrostic

Non-fiction:

Essay
Memoir
Biography
Autobiography
Travel Writing
Journalism
Literary Criticism
Literary Theory
Philosophy
History
Science Writing
Nature Writing
Self-Help
Speeches
Letters
Diaries

Hybrid Forms:

Graphic Novel
Visual Poetry
Prose Poetry
Creative Non-fiction
Experimental Literature
Interactive Fiction
Hypertext Fiction
Digital Literature

Children's Literature:

Picture Books
Early Readers
Chapter Books
Middle Grade Fiction
Young Adult Fiction

Genre Fiction:

Crime Fiction
Western
Romance
Science Fiction
Fantasy
Horror
Mystery
Thriller
Historical Fiction
Adventure

Classical Literature:

Greek and Roman
Classics
Medieval Literature
Renaissance Literature
Victorian Literature
Romanticism
Realism
Modernism
Postmodernism

World Literature:

African Literature
Asian Literature
Caribbean Literature
Latin American Literature
Middle Eastern Literature
Native American
Literature
Oceanian Literature
South Asian Literature
European Literature

Digital Literature:

E-books
Web Novels
Interactive Fiction
Hypertext Fiction
Twitterature
Blogging
Social Media

8A

Chapter 8a. Children's Literature + YA

Definition:⁴⁴

The *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* notes that "the boundaries of genre... are not fixed but blurred." Sometimes, no agreement can be reached about whether a given work is best categorized as literature for adults or children. Some works defy easy categorization.

Classification:

Children's literature can usually be divided into categories, either according to genre or the intended age of the reader.

⁴⁴ Wikipedia contributors. "Children's literature." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 3 Jun. 2019. Web. 22 Jun. 2019. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

BY GENRE

A literary genre is a category of literary compositions. Genres may be determined by technique, tone, content, or length. According to Anderson, there are six categories of children's literature (with some significant subgenres):

- Picture books, including concept books that teach the alphabet or counting for example, pattern books, and wordless books
- Traditional literature, including folktales, which convey the legends, customs, superstitions, and beliefs of people in previous civilizations. This genre can be further broken into subgenres: myths, fables, legends, and fairy tales
- Fiction, including fantasy, realistic fiction, and historical fiction
- Non-fiction
- Biography and autobiography
- Poetry and verse

BY AGE CATEGORY

The criteria for these divisions are vague, and books near a borderline may be classified either way. Books for younger children tend to be written in simple language, use large print, and have many illustrations. Books for older children use increasingly complex language, normal print, and fewer (if any) illustrations. The categories with an age range are these:

- Picture books, appropriate for pre-readers or children ages 0–5
- Early reader books, appropriate for children ages 5–7. These are often designed to help children build their reading skills
- Chapter books, appropriate for children ages 7–12
 - Short chapter books, appropriate for children ages 7–9
 - Longer chapter books, appropriate for children ages 9–12
- Young adult fiction, appropriate for children ages 12–18



Example via Ink

“Christmas Morning” from The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams

For a long time he lived in the toy cupboard or on the nursery floor, and no one thought very much about him. He was naturally shy, and being only made of velveteen, some of the more expensive toys quite snubbed him. The mechanical toys were very superior, and looked down upon every one else; they were full of modern ideas, and pretended they were real. The model boat, who had lived through two seasons and lost most of his paint, caught the tone from them and never missed an opportunity of referring to his rigging in technical terms. The Rabbit could not claim to be a model of anything, for he didn't know that real rabbits existed; he thought they were all stuffed with sawdust like himself, and he understood that sawdust was quite out-of-date and should never be mentioned in modern circles. Even Timothy, the jointed wooden lion, who was made by the disabled soldiers, and should have had broader views, put on airs and pretended he was connected with Government. Between them all the poor little Rabbit was made to feel himself very insignificant and commonplace, and the only person who was kind to him at all was the Skin Horse.

The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others. He was so old that his brown coat was bald in patches and showed the seams underneath, and most of the hairs in his tail had been pulled out to string bead necklaces. He was wise, for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break their mainsprings and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into

anything else. For nursery magic is very strange and wonderful, and only those playthings that are old and wise and experienced like the Skin Horse understand all about it.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

"I suppose *you* are real?" said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse might be sensitive. But the Skin Horse only smiled.

Example via Link

- *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams and William Nicholson
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

- *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
- Click over to Project Gutenberg and search for Children's Literature: <https://www.gutenberg.org/>
- TBD by students.

8B

Chapter 8b. Fantasy + Sci-Fi

What is the difference between fantasy⁴⁵ and science fiction⁴⁶? At first glance, it can seem like a simple question. Science fiction often takes place in a dystopian society sometime in the future and contains elements of advanced technology. A fantasy story, on the other hand, is usually set in the fantasy realm and includes mythical creatures and supernatural powers. Though the similarities between these two genres are readily apparent, there are more similarities and crossovers between the two genres than first meets the eye.

Fantasy⁴⁷ as a genre has even older and more tangled roots than Sci-Fi, since it utilizes the oldest source material human culture created: myth, legend, folklore, ritual, and religion. Maybe that is

⁴⁵ This category is covered in the next chapter, so this quote helps to explain the differences.

⁴⁶ Written by the MasterClass staff. "Science Fiction vs. Fantasy: How Are Science Fiction and Fantasy Distinct?" <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-are-science-fiction-and-fantasy-distinct>

⁴⁷ Sci-fi & Fantasy Anthology by Whatcom Community College is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

why comprehensive scholarly fantasy anthologies are so hard to find, scholars don't know quite what to put in them.

Differences between fantasy and earlier fantastic works⁴⁸

Even the most fantastic myths, legends and fairy tales differ from modern fantasy genre in three respects:

- Modern genre fantasy postulates a different reality, either a fantasy world separated from ours, or a hidden fantasy side of our own world. In addition, the rules, geography, history, etc. of this world tend to be defined, even if they are not described outright. Traditional fantastic tales take place in our world, often in the past or in far off, unknown places. It seldom describes the place or the time with any precision, often saying simply that it happened "long ago and far away." (A modern, rationalized analog to these stories can be found in the Lost World tales of the 19th and 20th centuries.)
- The second difference is that the supernatural in fantasy is by design fictitious. In traditional tales the degree to which the author considered the supernatural to be real can span the spectrum from legends taken as reality to myths understood as describing in understandable terms more complicated reality, to late, intentionally fictitious literary works.
- Finally, the fantastic worlds of modern fantasy are created by an author or group of authors, often using traditional elements, but usually in a novel arrangement and with an individual interpretation. Traditional tales with fantasy elements used familiar myths and folklore, and any differences from tradition were considered variations on a theme; the traditional tales were never intended to be separate from the local supernatural folklore. Transitions between the traditional and modern modes of fantastic literature are evident in early Gothic novels, the ghost stories in vogue in the 19th

⁴⁸ Wikipedia contributors. "History of fantasy." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 17 Nov. 2021. Web. 9 Dec. 2021.

century, and Romantic novels, all of which used extensively traditional fantastic motifs, but subjected them to authors' concepts.

By one standard, no work created before the fantasy genre was defined can be considered to belong to it, no matter how many fantastic elements it includes. By another, the genre includes the whole range of fantastic literature, both the modern genre and its traditional antecedents, as many elements which were treated as true (or at least not obviously untrue) by earlier authors are wholly fictitious and fantastic for modern readers. But even by the more limited definition a full examination of the history of the fantastic in literature is necessary to show the origins of the modern genre. Traditional works contain significant elements which modern fantasy authors have drawn upon extensively for inspiration in their own works.

Science fiction⁴⁹ became popular when Mary Shelley published *Frankenstein*⁵⁰ in 1818 and has become a diverse genre in books and film.



Example via Ink

⁴⁹ Wikihow contributors. "How to Write Science Fiction." Wikihow. 29 May 2019. Web. 22 June 2019. <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Science-Fiction>. Text available under Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

⁵⁰ A snippet of this piece can be found in Sybil's OER textbook for creative writing; the book is called Write or Left.

*Chapter 5 of Frankenstein by Mary Shelley*⁵¹

IT WAS on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! — Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, continued a long time traversing

⁵¹ “Shelley, of course, started the modern genre of science fiction with her famous novel, and introduced a whole new mythology into human thought.” – This commentary comes from the *Sci-fi & Fantasy Anthology* by Whatcom Community College; it is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

my bed chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain: I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed: when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch — the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped, and rushed down stairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited; where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished he was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment; dreams that

had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Morning, dismal and wet, at length dawned, and discovered to my sleepless and aching eyes the church of Ingolstadt, white steeple and clock, which indicated the sixth hour. The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum, and I issued into the streets, pacing them with quick steps, as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view. I did not dare return to the apartment which I inhabited, but felt impelled to hurry on, although drenched by the rain which poured from a black and comfortless sky.

I continued walking in this manner for some time, endeavouring, by bodily exercise, to ease the load that weighed upon my mind. I traversed the streets, without any clear conception of where I was, or what I was doing. My heart palpitated in the sickness of fear; and I hurried on with irregular steps, not daring to look about me:-

“Like one who, on a lonely road,
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.”

Continuing thus, I came at length opposite to the inn at which the various diligences and carriages usually stopped. Here I paused, I knew not why; but I remained some minutes with my eyes fixed on a coach that was coming towards me from the other end of the street. As it drew nearer, I observed that it was the Swiss diligence: it stopped just where I was standing, and, on the door being opened, I perceived Henry Clerval, who, on seeing me, instantly sprung out. “My dear Frankenstein,” exclaimed he, “how glad I am to see you! how fortunate that you should be here at the very moment of my alighting!”

Nothing could equal my delight on seeing Clerval; his presence brought back to my thoughts my father, Elizabeth, and all those scenes of home so dear to my recollection. I grasped his hand, and in a moment forgot my horror and misfortune; I felt suddenly, and for the first time during many months, calm and serene joy. I welcomed my friend, therefore, in the most cordial manner, and we walked towards my college. Clerval continued talking for some time about our mutual friends, and his own good fortune in being permitted to come to Ingolstadt. "You may easily believe," said he, "how great was the difficulty to persuade my father that all necessary knowledge was not comprised in the noble art of bookkeeping; and, indeed, I believe I left him incredulous to the last, for his constant answer to my unwearied entreaties was the same as that of the Dutch school-master in the Vicar of Wakefield: — 'I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek, I eat heartily without Greek.' But his affection for me at length overcame his dislike of learning, and he has permitted me to undertake a voyage of discovery to the land of knowledge."

"It gives me the greatest delight to see you; but tell me how you left my father, brothers, and Elizabeth."

"Very well, and very happy, only a little uneasy that they hear from you so seldom. By the by, I mean to lecture you a little upon their account myself. — But, my dear Frankenstein," continued he, stopping short, and gazing full in my face, "I did not before remark how very ill you appear; so thin and pale; you look as if you had been watching for several nights."

"You have guessed right; I have lately been so deeply engaged in one occupation that I have not allowed myself sufficient rest, as you see: but I hope, I sincerely hope, that all these employments are now at an end, and that I am at length free."

I trembled excessively; I could not endure to think of, and far less to allude to, the occurrences of the preceding night. I walked with a quick pace, and we soon arrived at my college. I then reflected, and

the thought made me shiver, that the creature whom I had left in my apartment might still be there, alive, and walking about. I dreaded to behold this monster; but I feared still more that Henry should see him. Entreating him, therefore, to remain a few minutes at the bottom of the stairs, I darted up towards my own room. My hand was already on the lock of the door before I recollected myself I then paused; and a cold shivering came over me. I threw the door forcibly open, as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the other side; but nothing appeared. I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty; and my bedroom was also freed from its hideous guest. I could hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen me; but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy, and ran down to Clerval.

We ascended into my room, and the servant presently brought breakfast; but I was unable to contain myself. It was not joy only that possessed me; I felt my flesh tingle with excess of sensitiveness, and my pulse beat rapidly. I was unable to remain for a single instant in the same place; I jumped over the chairs, clapped my hands, and laughed aloud. Clerval at first attributed my unusual spirits to joy on his arrival; but when he observed me more attentively he saw a wildness in my eyes for which he could not account; and my loud, unrestrained, heartless laughter frightened and astonished him.

“My dear Victor,” cried he, “what, for God’s sake, is the matter? Do not laugh in that manner. How ill you are! What is the cause of all this?”

“Do not ask me,” cried I, putting my hands before my eyes for I thought I saw the dreaded spectre glide into the room; “he can tell. — Oh, save me! save me!” I imagined that the monster seized me; I struggled furiously, and fell down in a fit.

Poor Clerval! what must have been his feelings? A meeting, which he anticipated with such joy, so strangely turned to bitterness. But I

was not the witness of his grief, for I was lifeless, and did not recover my senses for a long, long time.

This was the commencement of a nervous fever, which confined me for several months. During all that time Henry was my only nurse. I afterwards learned that, knowing my father's advanced age, and unfitness for so long a journey, and how wretched my sickness would make Elizabeth, he spared them this grief by concealing the extent of my disorder. He knew that I could not have a more kind and attentive nurse than himself; and, firm in the hope he felt of my recovery, he did not doubt that, instead of doing harm, he performed the kindest action that he could towards them.

But I was in reality very ill; and surely nothing but the unbounded and unremitting attentions of my friend could have restored me to life. The form of the monster on whom I had bestowed existence was forever before my eyes, and I raved incessantly concerning him. Doubtless my words surprised Henry: he at first believed them to be the wanderings of my disturbed imagination; but the pertinacity with which I continually recurred to the same subject, persuaded him that my disorder indeed owed its origin to some uncommon and terrible event.

By very slow degrees, and with frequent relapses that alarmed and grieved my friend, I recovered. I remember the first time I became capable of observing outward objects with any kind of pleasure, I perceived that the fallen leaves had disappeared, and that the young buds were shooting forth from the trees that shaded my window. It was a divine spring; and the season contributed greatly to my convalescence. I felt also sentiments of joy and affection revive in my bosom; my gloom disappeared, and in a short time I became as cheerful as before I was attacked by the fatal passion.

"Dearest Clerval," exclaimed I, "how kind, how very good you are to me. This whole winter, instead of being spent in study, as you promised yourself, has been consumed in my sick room. How shall I

ever repay you? I feel the greatest remorse for the disappointment of which I have been the occasion; but you will forgive me.”

“You will repay me entirely if you do not discompose yourself, but get well as fast as you can; and since you appear in such good spirits, I may speak to you on one subject, may I not?”

I trembled. One subject! what could it be? Could he allude to an object on whom I dared not even think?

“Compose yourself,” said Clerval, who observed my change of colour, “I will not mention it, if it agitates you; but your father and cousin would be very happy if they received a letter from you in your own handwriting. They hardly know how ill you have been, and are uneasy at your long silence.”

“Is that all, my dear Henry? How could you suppose that my first thoughts would not fly towards those dear, dear friends whom I love, and who are so deserving of my love.”

“If this is your present temper, my friend, you will perhaps be glad to see a letter that has been lying here some days for you; it is from your cousin, I believe.”

Example via Ink / Link

- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- “All Summer In A Day,” by Ray Bradbury
- “Those Who Walk Away from Omelas,” by Ursula K. LeGuin
- “The Three Infernal Jokes” by Lord Dunsany⁵²
- Click over to Project Gutenberg and search for Sci Fi or Fantasy Literature: <https://www.gutenberg.org/>
- TBD by students.

⁵² A snippet of this piece can be found in Sybil’s OER textbook for creative writing; the book is called Write or Left.

8C

Chapter 8c. Horror

Horror⁵³ is a genre of fiction that is intended to disturb, frighten or scare. Horror is often divided into the sub-genres of psychological horror and supernatural horror, which are in the realm of speculative fiction. Literary historian J. A. Cuddon, in 1984, defined the horror story as "a piece of fiction in prose of variable length... which shocks, or even frightens the reader, or perhaps induces a feeling of repulsion or loathing." Horror intends to create an eerie and frightening atmosphere for the reader. Often the central menace of a work of horror fiction can be interpreted as a metaphor for larger fears of a society.

Prevalent elements include:

- ghosts, demons, vampires, monsters, zombies, werewolves, the Devil, serial killers, extraterrestrial life, killer

⁵³ From Wikipedia. This page was last edited on 23 May 2024, at 09:05 (UTC).

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toys, psychopaths, sexual deviancy, rape, gore, torture, evil clowns, cults, cannibalism, vicious animals, the apocalypse, evil witches, dystopia, and human-made or natural disasters.



Example via Ink

“The Shivering Skin” by Anonymous⁵⁴

Excerpt of Journal, Unknown Author, Written in 1874

The following is an account on which the circumstances may be found to be unbelievable. I express my deepest condolences with Peter Kregg’s family members or friends or anyone who knew him who has happened to come across this document. Peter Kregg was my associate. We had attended the same school of medicine in New Hampshire. At first, he came off as an odd fellow, those of you who know him know that he liked to keep to himself unless you were somehow beneficial to his studies. Over the years I grew to appreciate his work from afar. I noticed his diligence and endless perseverance to keep up his work regardless of the obstacles or unfortunate circumstances that somehow were constantly thrown into his path. Eventually, this admiration could no longer suffice my curiosity and I approached him after one of our early morning lectures. It seemed that he chose to ignore me, but I persisted that he respond and allow me to participate as an assistant in his studies and various experiments. After what seemed to be weeks – or months – of pestering, Kregg gave in to my desires.

⁵⁴ Discovered on the *Anonymous Authors Fandom* web site:

https://anonymous-authors.fandom.com/wiki/The_Shivering_Skin

Their community content is available under CC-BY-SA unless otherwise noted.

Starting as an assistant with Gregg held many similarities to enrolling in a new school of medicine. Gone were the methods of practice on examining cadavers and studying the anatomy of the human body. Phosphorous liquids that glowed an unnatural red and strange jars of blue dust filled my days of study. I never once asked Gregg what medicines or resources he used throughout our experiments out of the fear that he may forbid me to participate in any further activity.

For those of you whose minds are beginning to wander away from my vague ramblings, let me interlude to briefly explain what it was that Gregg and I were studying:

- The integumentary system of the human body was our prime subject. The purpose was to take skin, which is the largest and one of the most important organs in the human body and attempt to reanimate the dead tissue. We did not want to start with cadavers or dead subjects yet, just dead skin. If we were able to reinvigorate the skin cells and bring life back, we would be one step closer to finding a solution to death.
- The effect of temperature on the skin was another essential experiment. One of its functions is to regulate body temperature by sweating when hot and shivering when cold. We concluded that if we were going to try and experiment on the skin in the humid chambers of the Library's West Tower, the skin could produce sweat and get out of our grip. It is difficult to explain when I state that the skin could get out of our grip.

Gregg believed and I should have agreed with him, that the skin could become sentient. He hadn't the faintest idea of the effects of his formula on human skin, so he took every precaution. Due to the skin's tendency to produce sweat to cool down in hot temperatures, we decided it would be safer to experiment in the archives located in the library basement.

We took to action at once. Gregg sent me on a supply run throughout the school. I became drowsy due to sleep loss from the constant raiding of university classrooms night after night. Eventually, I hoarded enough supplies to carry out the experiment. I met Gregg in the bowels of the library at two in the morning. All of the lights had been blown out, so I had to carry my own lantern. As I stepped deeper and deeper into the blackness, I felt an urge of excitement. The excitement could not be exactly attributed to one emotion or the other. I felt inspired; I felt nervous; I felt frightened. The worst of it came when I had reached the door to the archives. I held the lantern at my side, illuminating everything within a ten meter radius. I could not bring myself to move. Whatever lay in store for me and my future was beyond that door. This was the night I would either be deemed a part of scientific advancement or of catastrophic insanity. Right then, the door swung open to reveal a disgruntled Gregg standing in the dark. Light flickered off his eyes and in the most ironic way, created a sinister appearance. My paralysis broke and I followed Gregg through the archives until we reached the small table in which he had set up the equipment. A small wooden table, roughly six feet long and two feet wide lay next to his collection of liquids and powders. On the table, lay a cadaver. I noticed a miniscule patch of skin had been removed, just above the elbow.

The skin in which Gregg had cut out of the body sat on a stool. Nails were driven into each corner of the square to keep it on the wooden surface. A small candle sat nearby and I placed my lantern next to it. The combined light from both sources created just enough luminance for Gregg to work, but not for me. Gregg told me to stand by and watch. He handed me the journal in which I am writing this document and to record my observations.

I watched as Gregg took a razor and very carefully removed the hair from the skin. Any remaining hair was plucked out with a pair of tweezers. The purpose of this action was to remove any particles which clung to the hair resting on the flesh's surface. This hair

caught these particles and protected the skin, but once there was no hair, the skin was vulnerable.

Kregg set down the tweezers and picked up a small syringe. He stuck it into one of his many vials of colored liquid and filled it to roughly halfway. The receptors on my skin alerted my body of the temperature and I shivered; it was cold in the archives and my hair stood up on end. It did not stand on end from the temperature however, but the sight before me. Kregg slowly stuck the syringe in the skin and just gave a small dosage of his formula.

Nothing occurred. Sweat dropped from Kregg's brow despite how cold it was. A single drop landed on the patch of skin. Suddenly, it began to convulse. The outside of the skin bubbled and the sweat glands released what little sweat was left in the skin. The sebaceous glands that produce oil released what little oil was left. It all came out at once and made a thin, liquid membrane on top of the skin. Then it stopped.

Kregg began to furiously whisper in great frustration. I asked him what had happened, if the skin had been alive. Kregg explained that the skin had been alive, yet it believed that a harmful chemical or bacteria was trying to enter the body. It was of a kind the skin had not dealt with before, so it released everything it had to fight it off. Kregg began to shuffle. The main issue in the first trial was that there was not enough skin for cell life to last long enough.

Without hesitation, Kregg filled up the syringe completely. He spun around and bent over the cadaver. I could not see what he was doing until he moved around to the other side of the cadaver. He was injecting the formula in various points throughout the corpse! I meant to speak up, but my cowardice and natural hesitation got the best of me. I could only look on in horror. No precautions had been made, not a single restraint lay on the corpse. We did not know how a large section of skin would react from such a large dosage.

The body began to convulse. Kregg stepped back. I peered closer. It was not the body that convulsed with such violence, but the skin. A horrifying ripping sound began to slowly fill the room. The skin was

tearing itself from the cadaver. Gregg could not move. I only saw the back of his head and his frozen body. A loud humming filled the room. It buzzed and rang in my ears. I felt my bones shake. The more it continued, the lower it got. I realized it was not a humming, but the skin moaning. The skin continued to moan until it completely tore itself from the body. It flopped up and fell to the floor, continuing to flail helplessly. Gregg slowly bent down and reached out to pick it back up. The skin latched onto his arm.

Gregg screamed. I could not move. The skin slowly crawled up his body and began to take his form. His screaming became more and more frenzied. I could not stand the sight or sounds before me. I quickly picked up my lantern that lay next to the work table and threw it at Gregg. He stepped towards me, limbs flailing, engulfed in flames. The screaming became a high pitched howl. The thing that was Gregg stepped back and knocked over a crate of old documents. The crate went up in flames and so did the shelf that held it. The banshee-like wail refused to cease and something gave in. My instinct of excitement and survival told me to run. I had no light by which to guide me, but I ran.

I felt myself exit the archives as the warm air from the corridor blew into my face. I fumbled through the dark, hearing cries of hate and pain not too far behind me. I arrived at the stairs to the main level of the library. Quickly, I ascended. I could not waste a single second. Once I reached the top of the stairs, I realized I could not let this creature, this abomination reach the outside world. Despite how I had set it afire, it still came. The cries grew closer as I saw the flickering flames bounce off the stairwell walls. It ascended the corner. I grabbed the nearest large object I could find. It was a chair. I lifted the chair above my head and aimed for the monstrosity. For a brief moment, I made eye contact with the creature. I hoped to see a troubled Gregg, begging for mercy, but all I saw was disgust and a fierce hatred. I threw the chair at the beast and it fell backwards down the stairs.

The flames from the archives caused a section of the library not too far from me to collapse. The building's destruction was now inevitable. I ran out the doors and into the university courtyard. The flaming building lay behind me; my scientific ambition lay behind me. I swore to write this down, despite how illogical and fearsome it may seem. I swore to document what happened. I planned to take off running into the night. I set a new goal to run, to run from science and the horrors of whatever that flesh became.

The more I live on the road though, the hungrier I get. I stare at my frail, dirty hands and think back to the mess they took part in. I think to how the skin rebelled and fought for its life. It became a new creature of unspeakable terror. I think to how my hands have skin on them as well. My entire body is covered in skin. My entire body is covered in horror.

Example via Link

- Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" is produced by the Marxist Internet Archive and released under a public domain license.⁵⁵
- "The Monkey's Paw", an 18th century tale by William Wymark Jacobs about three terrible wishes granted by a mystical monkey's paw.
- "The Tell-Tale Heart", master horror writer Edgar Allan Poe's psychologically disturbing short story of murder and haunting.
- Anything by Stephen King. He has written over 200 short stories and uses many different techniques to scare his readers.
 - While there are many lists of his greatest horror stories, read "The Moving Finger" or "The Children of the Corn" to get a sense of King's style.
- Contemporary writer Joyce Carol Oates also has a famous horror story called "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" that uses psychological terror to great effect.

⁵⁵ <https://pressbooks.online.ucf.edu/worldliteratureanthology/chapter/lu-xun-diary-of-a-madman/>

- Modern non-standard horror, like Stephen Milhauser's "The White Glove," uses the horror genre to tell a coming-of-age story.
- Click over to Project Gutenberg and search for Horror: <https://www.gutenberg.org/>



ACTIVITY, BATCH #8:

Take this following story, "The Haunting of Willow House" written by a chatbot and conduct one of the following options: a) Compare and contrast it to any of the other examples listed, b) Analyze what is right and wrong about it in a report with in-text citations/highlighted annotations, or c) Revise the story to "improve it," based on what you've learned about literary analysis.

The Haunting of Willow House⁵⁶

In the quiet town of Oakwood, nestled among towering trees and rolling hills, stood an old Victorian mansion known as Willow House. Abandoned for decades, its weathered facade loomed ominously over the overgrown garden, casting long shadows that seemed to whisper secrets of the past.

Legend had it that Willow House was cursed, haunted by the restless spirits of its former inhabitants. Tales of eerie apparitions, ghostly wails, and unexplained phenomena had spread throughout the town, shrouding the mansion in a veil of dread.

One stormy night, a group of adventurous teenagers dared each other to spend the night in Willow House, eager to uncover the truth behind the rumors. Armed with flashlights and trembling nerves,

⁵⁶ Created by ChatGPT.

they crept through the overgrown garden and pushed open the creaking front door.

Inside, the air was thick with dust and decay, and the floorboards groaned beneath their feet. As they explored the darkened corridors and dilapidated rooms, they felt an icy chill seep into their bones, and a sense of unease washed over them.

Suddenly, a blood-curdling scream echoed through the house, sending shivers down their spines. Panicked, they stumbled over each other in the darkness, desperate to escape the malevolent presence that lurked within.

But the doors were locked, the windows barred shut, trapping them inside the nightmare. As they huddled together in terror, the shadows seemed to come alive, twisting and contorting into grotesque shapes that whispered dreadful promises of doom.

With nowhere left to run, they huddled in the grand foyer, clutching each other tightly as the walls began to close in around them. The ancient floorboards groaned under the weight of unseen footsteps, and the air grew thick with the stench of decay.

And then, as suddenly as it had begun, the horror ceased. The storm outside subsided, and a faint light filtered through the dusty windows, banishing the darkness that had engulfed Willow House.

With trembling hands, the teenagers pushed open the front door and stumbled out into the pale light of dawn, their hearts still pounding with fear. As they looked back at the mansion looming behind them, they knew they would never forget the terror that had unfolded within its walls.

For Willow House was not just a haunted mansion—it was a gateway to the darkest depths of the human soul, a place where nightmares became reality and the sins of the past came back to

haunt the living. And though they had escaped with their lives, they knew that some horrors could never truly be left behind.

As they walked away from Willow House, they vowed never to speak of what they had witnessed that fateful night. But deep down, they knew that the memory of the haunting would stay with them forever, a chilling reminder of the darkness that lurked just beyond the edge of their world.

And so, the legend of Willow House lived on, whispered in hushed tones by those who dared to speak its name. For in the heart of Oakwood, the mansion stood silent and watchful, its secrets buried deep within its walls, waiting for the next unsuspecting soul to uncover its dark and twisted legacy.

8D

Chapter 8d. Humor

Humor⁵⁷ demands close attention to language at all levels.

In comedy, it's not word choice, but the hunt for the choicest word. And sentences must be tightly woven to serve as the fuse that carries the spark right to an ending that blows readers away. And maybe even enlightens them.

On a much larger scale, humor requires vivid descriptions, dazzling metaphors, splendid speech acts, and the skillful interrelation of such elements.

There are three theories of humor: incongruity (putting together what doesn't fit leads to fits of laughter), superiority (seeing others slip on bananas is appealing), and relief (comedy as the jocular discharge

⁵⁷ Snippet from = Theune, Michael. "Excellent Academic Writing Must Be Serious." *Bad Ideas About Writing*. Edited by Cheryl E. Ball and Drew M. Loewe. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Libraries, Digital Publishing Institute, 2017. CC-BY.

of subconscious energies). So, clearly, though initially it may seem incongruous to teach humor while teaching academic writing, such writing—edgy, engaged, careful and powerful—will be superior to so much of what’s come before it. And what a relief that will be!



Example via Ink

“Snow White, Take II” by Megan Guenther⁵⁸

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a princess. She was hot⁵⁹. Apparently everybody in the kingdom thought so, too, because they fawned over her in an extreme display of celebrity-fever. They oohed and ahed over her porcelain skin, even going so far as to nickname her “Snow White.” Because that’s cool. Under their breath, the townspeople declared quietly and between themselves that Snow White was the “fairest of the fair.” She was sweet, and pretty, and everyone loved her, and life couldn’t have been more wonderful. There was only one teensy weensy glitch.

Her step-mother, the queen. This chick was insanely jealous of Snow White. Like, would-attempt-murder jealous⁶⁰. Only, she was queen, so dirtying her own hands over that little matter was well and truly beneath her. However, hiring a hit-man wasn’t. So she did that. Queeny⁶¹ did not consult her magic mirror over this dilemma, as she knew her mirror would advise against it. She consulted her mirror every morning with the same intense reverence some grandfathers reserve for their daily newspaper. Every single morning without fail

⁵⁸ “Snow White, Take II” by Megan Guenther is licensed under CC-BY-NC-SA. It was created for NDSCS English 211 in the Spring of 2021.

⁵⁹ Love the bluntness.

⁶⁰ What great little sidebars!

⁶¹ Great nickname!

she'd ask the mirror, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" And her mirror would have liked to have said, "Well I can tell ya who's *off* the wall, toots, and you bet your britches it ain't me." But instead he'd sigh and tell her she was the best, by poll of about three or so more than the princess (though he decided not to tell her the last part). He was glad the queen never asked who the sweetest person was because that would have sharply ended his career as royal advisor.

Day after day the queen would ask the same question, and day after day it was taking longer and longer for the poor mirror to find creative ways of disclosing the ever-narrowing gap between her and her step-daughter. One day the gap closed for good as the last loyal and blind peasant kicked the bucket and the queen was no longer getting pity points. The mirror was finally able to report with thinly-veiled glee that the princess was now the most beautiful girl in all the kingdom, by consensus of literally everyone with working eyeballs⁶². The queen became super upset by this revelation and decided that the only way to regain her status as an attractive older woman was to have the kid bumped off. So she ordered a huntsman to take the girl into the forest, rip out her heart, and then bring it back in a little jewelry box for the queen to keep. Which is exactly what a normal person would request. Except the hit-man somehow had more of a conscience than this fruitcake, since he brought Snow White into the forest and proceeded to explain that her step-mom was planning to have her murdered and that Snow White should probably just hit the road and not plan to come back.

Understandably, this sort of news hits a little hard, so Snow White started to run through the woods, terrified and alone, trying to figure out what was to become of her. Now, in all honesty, death was most likely what was going to become of her until some woodland creatures decided to step in and save the day. As woodland creatures do. They led her to this tiny little cabin in the middle of the

⁶² I adore the sass/snark throughout!

woods which was empty and by all appearances abandoned, so Snow White checked the front door, found it unlocked, and decided to just go ahead and make herself at home. Because breaking and entering is okay when a little birdy tells you to⁶³.

So there they were, all singing and doing the dishes, birds and a doe sweeping out the place, raccoons and turtles hanging out the wash, and it's just a party all up in there. And after it was all over the princess was a little exhausted, (hallucinating will do that) and decided to go take a nap. She conked out across seven little beds upstairs, which was strange, since the fact that nobody was home during the day surely meant it was free real estate. It's at this point in our story that seven little dwarves show up. Because even fairytales need to be inclusive⁶⁴.

These seven old and short dudes with names matching the most commonly-felt emotions came home to find their house much, much cleaner than they left it and with a surprising variety of small animals inside, which naturally freaked them out a little bit, so they tip-toed upstairs to see what else had happened while they were at work. There they found this chick had taken over their beds and was out for the count. Rather than do anything, they just sort of stared at her while she slept until she woke up. Which she did, and when she woke up she was quite forgivably alarmed at these tiny intruders to her new house. Upon the explanation that this domain was not her own private property but rather was to be shared collectively, she was apparently ecstatic with the idea of her new roommate situation and proceeded to make them all dinner. The duration of the rest of the evening was rather jovial. As the days went by, this whole situation became fairly convenient for everyone. Snow White had a rent-free living situation, and these little guys had a live-in maid who cooked and cleaned for them, as well as helped them to establish more frequent and careful hygiene practices⁶⁵. This continued for

⁶³ Again, the sidebars are fantastic.

⁶⁴ Bingo!

⁶⁵ Hee hee.

some time, until our villain of the story, Ms. Queen discovered the well-hidden secret of her hit-man and mirror.

One day, as the Queen preened before that poor mirror and asked him to tell her once again who was the most beautiful thing in all the land, the mirror had to declare honestly that since Snow White had not, in fact, kicked the bucket, bought the farm, cashed in, or any other analogy for having her life abbreviated, she was still the fairest of them all. Including the queen. Based on past experience, we should be able to tell pretty accurately what happens next. The queen rolled up her sleeves and decided, “Well, they always say, ‘if you want a job done right, you gotta do it yourself.’” So she dug out her cauldron, set the flame on “medium,” then poured in a bunch of various obscure liquids and stirred well to combine. Her dipped apples were her specialty, so she decided to make some for the exiled princess as a housewarming gift. Then she disguised herself as a creepy old witch, (because who would ever know the difference, right?) boxed up the apples, and set off for the forest.

Meanwhile, Snow White was happily singing away while she did the daily housework. The birds and forest animals were gathered around to listen to her, as she was just so enchanting and trusting that everything that saw her or heard her automatically fell in love. This was what the wicked stepmother was counting on, as she hobbled into the woods with her basket of totally unsuspecting apples. Somehow the Queen actually managed to find the little cabin, too. I mean, that part was really just glossed over entirely if I remember right. Like, the forest seemed pretty dense and deep, and if that house was all the way in the middle, how in the world did she make it there from the castle in one day? Where was the part where she stopped and tried to ask a turtle for directions? One way or another, she showed up at the Seven Dwarves’ house and announced her arrival by knocking on the window, of all things. Snow White opened it and was charmed by the old lady peddling apples, so she accepted a proffered one, took a bite, and BOOM! Dead as a doornail. Or so the Queen thought. So she happily

toddled back to her castle, and the mirror once again was forced to say that she was the fairest of them all, and life was grand. For the queen.

For the company of little dudes arriving home that evening, however, life was about to have another very large surprise in the form of their housekeeper and roommate lying dead on the floor and all the woodland creatures mourning her. Which was unfortunate, to say the least, and they were so distraught over the fact that they were going to have to remind themselves to wash their own hands again that they built Snow White an above-ground crypt with a glass top so they and anyone passing by would be able to see how beautiful she was. Apparently nobody noticed that she was still breathing to some extent, but, ya, know. Whatever.

So there they all were. Deer, rabbits, turtles, skunks, perhaps a goldfish or two, and some birds and raccoons for good measure were all gathered around Snow White's coffin with the seven little men, grieving the loss of their beloved princess. Tears swept down everyone's faces and snouts while sobs shook the forest trees which now also have feelings because I said so. Do I know that it's Disney accurate? Well, do you know that it's *not*?? And they're all sad, and crying, and everything is depressing until who should ride up but some dude out for an afternoon galavant on a horse through the woods for no apparent reason whatsoever! He saw this dead girl, and everyone so sad and upset around her coffin, and thought to himself, 'Whoa. She's hot. I should kiss her. That would be respectful and also would probably make everyone feel better.' So this little necrophiliac⁶⁶ took off the glass lid covering Snow White, leaned over this by-all-accounts dead person, and planted a wet one on her lips. Now, to someone who's not actually as dead as people thought they were, that would be somewhat surprising.

⁶⁶ Yep, call him what he was.

Since Snow White's indefinite hibernation was so rudely disrupted by this guy macking on her, she sat up. Which did not, for some reason, seem to have the same effect on the dwarves and forest friends as it would have on me. Everyone was just delighted that her royal hotness was alive and well after all, and Snow White was delighted to find that the random stranger who had broken the spell of the Wicked Witch was actually a handsome prince with daddy's money and a sweetheart smile. So she allowed him to scoop her up onto his prancing steed, and with a goodbye wave to all her woodland friends and a kiss on top of each of the seven little bald dudes' heads, she and her hot stranger rode off into the distance. Presumably to get married and live more-or-less happily ever after.

The End, I guess.

Example via Link

- Click over to Project Gutenberg and search for Humor: <https://www.gutenberg.org/>
- TBD by students.



ACTIVITY, BATCH #9:

Take the following story, created by a chatbot, and make it much funnier than it is.

The Great Cake Catastrophe⁶⁷

In the quaint little town of Sugarville, there was no event more eagerly anticipated than the annual baking competition. And this year, the stakes were higher than ever, with the coveted Golden Spatula up for grabs and bragging rights on the line.

⁶⁷ Created by ChatGPT.

Among the contestants was Mildred Muffin, the town's resident baking enthusiast and self-proclaimed queen of confections. With her trusty apron tied snugly around her waist and her oven mitts at the ready, Mildred was determined to claim victory once and for all.

But as she prepared to unveil her masterpiece—a towering three-tiered cake adorned with swirls of frosting and sprinkles galore—disaster struck. In her haste to add the final touch—a delicate sugar sculpture of a unicorn—Mildred accidentally knocked over a jar of rainbow-colored icing, sending it cascading down the sides of her creation in a sticky, technicolor waterfall.

Gasps echoed through the room as spectators watched in horror as Mildred's masterpiece transformed into a whimsical, albeit slightly messy, work of art. But instead of despairing, Mildred simply shrugged and flashed a mischievous grin.

"Looks like we've got ourselves a rainbow cake!" she declared with a twinkle in her eye, earning a round of applause from the crowd. Undeterred by the mishap, Mildred proudly presented her creation to the judges, who couldn't help but chuckle at the unexpected turn of events. And when it came time for tasting, they were pleasantly surprised to find that Mildred's rainbow cake was not only a feast for the eyes but a delight to the taste buds as well.

In the end, Mildred may not have won the Golden Spatula, but she had won something far more valuable—the admiration and respect of her fellow bakers, who applauded her for turning a potential disaster into a delicious triumph.

And as she basked in the glow of her newfound fame, Mildred couldn't help but chuckle at the memory of the Great Cake Catastrophe, a tale she knew would be retold in Sugarville for years to come.

8E

Chapter 8e. Mystery

Elements to watch for in a typical mystery:⁶⁸

- A crime of some sort, usually a murder.
- A sleuth or detective.
- A criminal.
- Clues that the writer will drop along the way for the sleuth to find.
- The other elements* of a short story include: location (or setting); time period; dialogue; character development.

Readers will often be tasked with determining the crime and its resolution. Most often, mystery stories are centered around a crime of some sort.

⁶⁸ Heavily edited from: “How to Write a Mystery Short Story,” Co-authored by Lucy V. Hay; Last Updated: December 29, 2022. WikiHow. <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Mystery-Short-Story> CC-BY-NC-SA 3.0 License

*The elements above need to be realistic, detailed, and filled with compelling characters. In addition, the sleuth should be described well, and readers should consider motives, emotions, and keep track of clues. Readers should note that these pieces are essential in figuring out the crime and its conclusion.



Example via Ink

13: A Hot Pursuit⁶⁹

‘Hello, Smith,’ said Professor Fordney as he opened the door.

‘What’s up?’

‘Uncle Fred’s house has been robbed. He had some negotiable bonds in the library safe and told me to stick close to home until he returned from New York.’

‘Were they stolen?’ interrogated Fordney.

‘I’m afraid so. I was up in my bedroom about twenty minutes ago when I heard a noise. I rushed downstairs just in time to see a man dash out of the library. I ran after him and, as I passed the door, I noticed the safe was open, so I suppose he got the bonds. He jumped into a waiting automobile and I trailed him in my car which, fortunately, was standing in front of the house, but he got away from me.’

‘Did you get his license number?’

‘No. Couldn’t see it. When I lost him in the traffic, I drove right over here.’

‘Didn’t you keep the house locked while you were upstairs?’

‘Yes, but the burglar chiseled open a cellar window.’

‘Well, let’s go over and have a look,’ suggested Fordney.

When they reached the Smith home, they found the bonds gone.

⁶⁹ From “Minute Mysteries,” by H.A. Ripley, 1932. Project Gutenberg.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/50603/pg50603-images.html> This work is in the public domain.

‘Did you lock the front door when you ran out of the house?’
‘Why—er,’ replied Smith nervously, ‘the door locks automatically. I don’t know what Uncle Fred will say when he gets back.’
‘He’ll say plenty if you tell him the story you told me,’ interrupted the Professor. ‘I suggest you put the bonds back.’

⋮ Where did Smith make his incriminating slip? ⋮

14: A Question of Identity

Professor Fordney and three of his friends were enjoying their weekly ‘get together’ at the University Club.
‘Professor,’ said Patrie, ‘tell us something about that Yelpir murder case you were working on.’
‘Well, gentlemen,’ he replied, in his retiring manner, ‘as you know, Yelpir’s affairs were common knowledge, and the fact that several women had reasons to wish him dead complicated matters a bit. His body was found in his study, which opened on to a corridor. At the other end of the corridor and directly opposite it a staircase led to the servants’ quarters above.
‘Diana Lane, a house guest of Mrs. Yelpir at the time of the murder, was questioned, and she appeared nervous. She insisted, however, that she had been in her room at the time Yelpir was slain.
‘Nora, a servant, testified that, as she was descending the stairs leading from the servants’ quarters, at midnight, she saw Diana 28Lane, wearing her famous emerald pendant and dressed in an enticing black negligée, walk down the lighted corridor to Yelpir’s room. She said she followed a minute later and heard Diana and Yelpir violently quarreling. She returned to the servants’ quarters and, as she opened the door of her room, she heard a shot.
‘In the face of such evidence, Miss Lane admitted having gone to the study at the time, but protested her innocence, declaring she had remained only a minute.
‘While Miss Lane was acquitted, you know, her reputation was not above reproach. Even so, I knew without further investigation that Nora’s testimony was maliciously false.’

How did the Professor know?

Examples via Link

- Multiple works by Agatha Christie.
- *Crime & Punishment*, by Dostoyevsky.
- *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle.
- *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe* by Edgar Allan Poe.
- Click over to Project Gutenberg and search for Mystery:
<https://www.gutenberg.org/>
- TBD by students.



ACTIVITY, BATCH #10:

Take the piece created by a chatbot below and ask yourself what could make it more mysterious. Feel free to revise it yourself! What elements does it contain and what elements is it missing?

The Whispering Painting⁷⁰

Ethan always felt a strange connection to the painting in his living room, a vibrant garden with a hidden path leading to a mysterious door. Inherited from his grandmother, it was said to hold secrets for those who listened.

One evening, he heard whispers from the painting. "Follow your path," it murmured. "Embrace your truth."

Ethan had known he was gay for years but feared coming out. The whispers continued, gentle yet insistent. "There is love waiting for you, acceptance beyond the door."

⁷⁰ This is considered micro-fiction, since it's around 150 words.

With tears in his eyes, Ethan decided he could no longer live in fear. The next day, he told his best friend, who embraced him with support. Gradually, he opened up to others.

As the days passed, Ethan felt at peace. The whispers grew quieter, satisfied their message had been received. The hidden path symbolized his journey to authenticity. Ethan whispered his thanks, feeling the lightness in his heart.

8F

Chapter 8f. Romance

In addition to the typical fiction/nonfiction elements, a specific romance element⁷¹ to watch for is a focus on a particular sort of romantic story. For example, a romance set in 1930s West Virginia or during WWI is a historical romance; a romance between a ghost and a woman is paranormal romance. Writers of romance typically try to put their own spin on the romantic formula,* so readers may want to keep an eye on that as well.

* In romance, there is a “tried and true” formula: girl meets boy, girl loses boy, girl gets boy. To make romance novels stand out, writers should put their own spin or approach on the formula, so the story feels fresh and engaging. They may have the girl meet a girl, or a boy meet a boy, which would fit in the queer romance genre. Or they may have the girl meet a boy in another universe or time period.

⁷¹ Edited from “How to Write Romance Novels,” by Stephanie Wong Ken, MFA; updated May 17, 2024. Wikihow. <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-Romance-Novels>



Example via Ink

“The Red Light Reflected in Her Eyes” by Anonymous⁷²

When I look into her eyes, I do not see my reflection. No one sees a reflection in her eyes. Her eyes consume all and reveal to others what they are at the core.

When I look deep into her eyes, am I really just a red light deep down? All of my soul, my essence, my body, my personality, the flaws, the perfections, the traits, the ambitions, the goals, the weak, the strong, the beautiful, and the ugly are represented not through my reflection, but through a red light.

I am not red, for I am a human being. Red is not my skin tone, red is not my name, red is not my face. Why red?

She does not tell me why, but only continues to stare at me with that gleamy, red glow. She must know what has happened to me within the past two weeks. I have fallen. There was a flight of stairs going up a mountain. I had tried my best to climb, I even had fun at certain points while doing so, but then I slipped on an ice patch and fell. I fell down to the second to last step.

I was still on the stairwell, but I had to nearly start all over. Not only did I have to start over, I still have to wait for the ice to melt. It is cold

⁷² Discovered on the Anonymous Authors Fandom web site:

https://anonymous-authors.fandom.com/wiki/The_Red_Light_Reflected_in_Her_Eyes Their community content is available under CC-BY-SA unless otherwise noted.

where I am. There isn't any chance of the ice melting soon. Red will keep me warm, but it cannot feed me, it cannot help me rest, it cannot satisfy my thirst. Red will only keep me warm in this cold patch.

One may ask how I got to this cold patch and I can tell them it was actually an accident. I had been walking along my usual trail in the park, when a young girl ran up to me.

"There is a new trail opened west of here!" The girl shouted.

I had seen the child before, yet she had never spoke to me and I had never spoken to her. Before I had a chance to ask her if it was worth the trip, she had ran off, only leaving me with the curiosity and desire to hike the trail. I accepted the challenge and began my trek. At the bottom of the stairs, I realized this would be a difficult journey and not one I could do within a day nor a week. I could possibly climb every step over the course of one month--maybe two.

Now here I am. It is midnight. I am cold, waiting for the ice patch to melt so I may continue my journey to the top of the stairs. I do not know whether I am sleeping or if I am awake, but this beautiful woman appeared to me. She had gradually materialized at such a steady pace that I did not notice her as I adjusted to my surroundings. It was only when she spoke did I first notice her.

"Why do you make yourself suffer waiting for the ice to melt? Why don't you leave and come back in the summer when the ice is gone and you have the energy to move on?" She asked.

This had not occurred to me. Perhaps she was right. She moved closer towards me and I saw the reflection in her eyes. It was not me, nor the stairs. It was a red light. Then my senses came together and I had the logic I had sought after this whole time.

She is right. I shouldn't be waiting here. I am being blinded by impulses and the willpower to do what I desire most without thinking first. With that, I stand up, walk over to the woman, and kiss her. As I kiss her, she disappears.

I wake up the next morning feeling revived and healthier. The ice has not melted a single drop since last night. I stand up, grab my bag, and turn back the way I came. I head down the stairs, knowing that one day I will return. It may be weeks or months from now, but I will reach my way to the top.

Examples via Link

- *Outlander* by Diana Gabaldon
- *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E.L. James
- *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer
- *Off Campus* by Amy Jo Cousins
- *The Notebook* by Nicholas Sparks
- Click over to Project Gutenberg and search for Romance:
<https://www.gutenberg.org/>
- TBD by students.



ACTIVITY, BATCH #11:

Take the chatbot creation below and either analyze how it could become a romance piece or actually revise it yourself to make it a short romantic story, based on the elements we've learned in this textbook.

*The Time Traveler's Dilemma*⁷³

Mia had always been fascinated by the concept of time travel. When she stumbled upon an old pocket watch at a flea market, the vendor's cryptic smile and whispered, "It works," piqued her curiosity. She bought it without hesitation, eager to see if the claims were true.

Back home, she wound the watch and set the time to the exact moment she wanted to revisit—five years ago, the day she had lost her best friend, Henrik, in a car accident. As she pressed the button on the side, a strange sensation washed over her, and the world around her blurred.

When she opened her eyes, she was standing on the sidewalk, watching her past self and Henrik crossing the street. Panic set in as she realized the car was just moments away. She ran towards them, shouting a warning, but her voice seemed to go unheard.

Desperate, she reached out and grabbed Henrik's arm, pulling him back just as the car sped past. They both stumbled to the ground, and Mia's past self stared at her in shock. Before she could explain, the pocket watch began to glow, pulling her back to the present.

Mia found herself in her living room, clutching the watch tightly. She frantically searched her phone for any sign of Henrik. To her relief, his number was still saved. She dialed it, and after a few rings, his familiar voice answered.

"Hello?"

"Henrik! It's Mia. I just... I needed to hear your voice."

Henrik chuckled. "It's been a while, Mia. What's up?"

Tears of joy streamed down her face as she realized she had changed the past. "I just wanted to say thank you. For... being my... friend."

⁷³This is considered a Flash Fiction piece of about 500 words.

"You're welcome, Mia. Anytime."

As she hung up, Mia knew that she had been given a second chance. The pocket watch sat on the table, a reminder of the extraordinary power she held. But she also knew that with great power came great responsibility.

Mia decided to use the watch sparingly, only to help others in dire situations. She spent her days researching historical events and planning carefully to avoid causing any unintended consequences. She became a silent guardian, righting wrongs and saving lives, all while keeping her secret safe.

Years passed, and Mia grew older. The pocket watch remained a constant companion, its power never fading. She had saved countless lives and changed history in small, meaningful ways. But as she neared the end of her life, she knew it was time to pass the watch on to someone else.

She found a young woman named Lily, who reminded her of herself—curious, brave, and kind-hearted. Mia handed the watch to Lily, explaining its power and the responsibility that came with it.

Lily accepted the watch with a determined smile, ready to continue Mia's legacy. As Mia watched her go, she felt a sense of peace, knowing that the world was in good hands.

And so, the time traveler's journey came to an end, but the watch's story was far from over.

09

Chapter 9. Global Voices

To emphasize further the aim of this particular book to include non-white voices and stories, here are a few additional pieces to read, digest, and reflect upon.

Examples via Ink

This poem was shared on Twitter by Vinay R Krishnan on March 6, 2024:



Vinay Krishnan @vinayrkrishnan · 8h

new poem

there's laundry to do and a genocide to stop

there's laundry to do and a genocide to stop. I have to eat better and also avoid a plague. my rent went up \$150. I'll need to pick up more shifts. Twenty people died in Rafah this morning and every major news outlet is stretching the limits of passive voice to suggest whole families may have leaped up through the air at missiles that otherwise had the right of way. I just got a notification that my student loan payments are starting up again and my phone isn't charged. My cousin got COVID for a fourth time and can no longer work or walk or even feed himself. The person across from me on the L train seems to fashion themselves a punk rock revolutionary, but they're not wearing a face mask, and that's the kind of cognitive dissonance that makes me want to steal batteries. Fascists keep winning primaries for both parties, and I think I gained a few pounds. The CDC just announced there are no more speed limits on highways, and I think this Ativan is finally hitting. The NYPD farmer's market only sells bad apples, have you heard that one? Listen it's warm today, too warm for March. But I don't have time to think through the implications because there's laundry to do and a genocide to stop.

CHAPTER I from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave; Written by Himself⁷⁴

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of unhappiness to me even during childhood. The white children could tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege. I was not allowed to make any inquiries of my master concerning it. He deemed all such inquiries on the part of a slave improper and impertinent, and evidence of a restless spirit. The nearest estimate I can give makes me now between twenty-seven and twenty-eight years of age. I come to this, from hearing my master say, some time during 1835, I was about seventeen years old.

My mother was named Harriet Bailey. She was the daughter of Isaac and Betsey Bailey, both colored, and quite dark. My mother was of a darker complexion than either my grandmother or grandfather.

My father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I ever heard speak of my parentage. The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I

⁷⁴ From Project Gutenberg. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/23/pg23-images.html#link2HCH0001> This work is in the public domain.

know nothing; the means of knowing was withheld from me. My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age. Frequently, before the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it, and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child is placed under the care of an old woman, too old for field labor. For what this separation is done, I do not know, unless it be to hinder the development of the child's affection toward its mother, and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child. This is the inevitable result.

I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night. She was hired by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journeys to see me in the night, travelling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. She was a field hand, and a whipping is the penalty of not being in the field at sunrise, unless a slave has special permission from his or her master to the contrary—a permission which they seldom get, and one that gives to him that gives it the proud name of being a kind master. I do not recollect of ever seeing my mother by the light of day. She was with me in the night. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone. Very little communication ever took place between us. Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived, and with it her hardships and suffering. She died when I was about seven years old, on one of my master's farms, near Lee's Mill. I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial. She was gone long before I knew any thing about it. Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of her death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger.

Called thus suddenly away, she left me without the slightest intimation of who my father was. The whisper that my master was my father, may or may not be true; and, true or false, it is of but little consequence to my purpose whilst the fact remains, in all its glaring odiousness, that slaveholders have ordained, and by law established, that the children of slave women shall in all cases follow the condition of their mothers; and this is done too obviously to administer to their own lusts, and make a gratification of their wicked desires profitable as well as pleasurable; for by this cunning arrangement, the slaveholder, in cases not a few, sustains to his slaves the double relation of master and father.

I know of such cases; and it is worthy of remark that such slaves invariably suffer greater hardships, and have more to contend with, than others. They are, in the first place, a constant offence to their mistress. She is ever disposed to find fault with them; they can seldom do any thing to please her; she is never better pleased than when she sees them under the lash, especially when she suspects her husband of showing to his mulatto children favors which he withholds from his black slaves. The master is frequently compelled to sell this class of his slaves, out of deference to the feelings of his white wife; and, cruel as the deed may strike any one to be, for a man to sell his own children to human flesh-mongers, it is often the dictate of humanity for him to do so; for, unless he does this, he must not only whip them himself, but must stand by and see one white son tie up his brother, of but few shades darker complexion than himself, and ply the gory lash to his naked back; and if he lisp one word of disapproval, it is set down to his parental partiality, and only makes a bad matter worse, both for himself and the slave whom he would protect and defend.

Every year brings with it multitudes of this class of slaves. It was doubtless in consequence of a knowledge of this fact, that one great statesman of the south predicted the downfall of slavery by the inevitable laws of population. Whether this prophecy is ever fulfilled or not, it is nevertheless plain that a very different-looking class of

people are springing up at the south, and are now held in slavery, from those originally brought to this country from Africa; and if their increase do no other good, it will do away the force of the argument, that God cursed Ham, and therefore American slavery is right. If the lineal descendants of Ham are alone to be scripturally enslaved, it is certain that slavery at the south must soon become unscriptural; for thousands are ushered into the world, annually, who, like myself, owe their existence to white fathers, and those fathers most frequently their own masters.

I have had two masters. My first master's name was Anthony. I do not remember his first name. He was generally called Captain Anthony—a title which, I presume, he acquired by sailing a craft on the Chesapeake Bay. He was not considered a rich slaveholder. He owned two or three farms, and about thirty slaves. His farms and slaves were under the care of an overseer. The overseer's name was Plummer. Mr. Plummer was a miserable drunkard, a profane swearer, and a savage monster. He always went armed with a cowskin and a heavy cudgel. I have known him to cut and slash the women's heads so horribly, that even master would be enraged at his cruelty, and would threaten to whip him if he did not mind himself. Master, however, was not a humane slaveholder. It required extraordinary barbarity on the part of an overseer to affect him. He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slaveholding. He would at times seem to take great pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-clotted cowskin. I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember any

thing. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it.

This occurrence took place very soon after I went to live with my old master, and under the following circumstances. Aunt Hester went out one night,—where or for what I do not know,—and happened to be absent when my master desired her presence. He had ordered her not to go out evenings, and warned her that she must never let him catch her in company with a young man, who was paying attention to her belonging to Colonel Lloyd. The young man's name was Ned Roberts, generally called Lloyd's Ned. Why master was so careful of her, may be safely left to conjecture. She was a woman of noble form, and of graceful proportions, having very few equals, and fewer superiors, in personal appearance, among the colored or white women of our neighborhood.

Aunt Hester had not only disobeyed his orders in going out, but had been found in company with Lloyd's Ned; which circumstance, I found, from what he said while whipping her, was the chief offence. Had he been a man of pure morals himself, he might have been thought interested in protecting the innocence of my aunt; but those who knew him will not suspect him of any such virtue. Before he commenced whipping Aunt Hester, he took her into the kitchen, and stripped her from neck to waist, leaving her neck, shoulders, and back, entirely naked. He then told her to cross her hands, calling her at the same time a d——d b——h. After crossing her hands, he tied them with a strong rope, and led her to a stool under a large hook in the joist, put in for the purpose. He made her get upon the stool, and tied her hands to the hook. She now stood fair for his infernal purpose. Her arms were stretched up at their full length, so that she stood upon the ends of her toes. He then said to her, "Now, you d——d b——h, I'll learn you how to disobey my orders!" and after

rolling up his sleeves, he commenced to lay on the heavy cowskin, and soon the warm, red blood (amid heart-rending shrieks from her, and horrid oaths from him) came dripping to the floor. I was so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight, that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over. I expected it would be my turn next. It was all new to me. I had never seen any thing like it before. I had always lived with my grandmother on the outskirts of the plantation, where she was put to raise the children of the younger women. I had therefore been, until now, out of the way of the bloody scenes that often occurred on the plantation.

9A

Chapter 9a. Literature + Social Justice

Article: Cat in a Spat: Scrapping Dr. Seuss Books is Not Cancel Culture⁷⁵

Let's start by putting aside the bugbear that it is even possible to "cancel" children's author Dr Seuss.

As Philip Bump wrote yesterday in The Washington Post, *No one is 'cancelling' Dr Seuss. The author, himself, is dead for one thing, which is about as cancelled as a person can get.*

Laying aside a multimillion-dollar publishing business, tattered copies of Dr Seuss books clutter children's bedrooms around the globe. Parents still grapple nightly with the tongue-twisters of Fox in Socks, Horton Hears a Who! or Hop on Pop, and try their best to keep their eyes open through a 20th reading of Green Eggs and Ham.

However, on Tuesday (what would have been Dr Seuss's 117th birthday), the company that protects the late author's legacy announced its plan to halt publishing and licensing six (out of more than 60) Dr Seuss books.

Few would know some of the discontinued titles, like McElligot's Pool and The Cat's Quizzer. However, many will recognise If I Ran the Zoo and And to Think That I Saw it on Mulberry Street, which have been criticised for racist caricatures and themes of cultural dominance and dehumanisation.

In If I Ran the Zoo, young Gerald McGrew builds a "Bad-Animal Catching Machine" to capture a turbaned Arab for his exhibit of "unusual beasts".

⁷⁵ Kate Cantrell, Lecturer in Writing, Editing, and Publishing, University of Southern Queensland & Sharon Bickle, Lecturer in English Literature, QLD rep for Australian Women's and Gender Studies Association, University of Southern Queensland; This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license: CC-BY-ND. 03 March 21.

“People will stare,” Gerald marvels, “And they’ll say, ‘What a sight!’”. Chinese “helpers” with “eyes at a slant” hunt exotic creatures in the mountains of Zomba-ma-Tant.

A reading recorded for Dr Seuss Day in 2019, removes the racist taunt. Instead of helpers who “wear their eyes at a slant”, the helpers “all wear such very cool pants”.

Nevertheless, pervasive racial imagery and subservient typecasting remain. That doesn’t mean Dr Seuss books should — or can — be scrapped altogether. Instead, these books present an opportunity to build awareness and teach young readers about history and context.

Censorship in children’s titles

Children’s books are among those most often banned or censored. In this case, removing the Dr Seuss titles recognises that he was writing in a time and place when racial stereotyping was commonplace and frequently the focus of humour.

Elsewhere, controversy over golliwogs as racist caricatures was confrontingly played out in Enid Blyton’s Noddy stories. In her original telling of In the Dark, Dark Wood, Noddy is carjacked by three golliwogs who trap him, strip him naked, and leave him crying. “You bad, wicked golliwogs!” Noddy says. “How dare you steal my things!”

Similarly, in the first edition of Roald Dahl’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, the Oompa-Loompas are African pygmies who have been “rescued” by Willy Wonka and enslaved in his factory. When Charlie says, “But there must be people working there,” Grandpa Joe responds, “Not people, Charlie. Not ordinary people, anyway.”

In his political cartoons, which appeared in a New York newspaper in the early 1940s, Dr Seuss ran the gamut of racist depictions, from

African-American people as monkeys to Japanese characters with yellow faces and “rice paddy” hats.

In the now-suspended The Cat’s Quizzer, there is “a Japanese” depicted in conical hat and stereotypical dress. On Mulberry Street, a Chinese man with bright yellow skin wears geta shoes and carries a bowl of rice.

In early editions, the caption underneath reads “A Chinaman who eats with sticks”. In 1978, over 40 years after the book was first published, the character’s skin tone and braid were changed. The caption was changed from “Chinaman” to “Chinese man”.

If I ran the library ... by today’s standards

Dr Seuss’s work contains racism and xenophobia, but should we judge him by today’s standards?

Children’s literature has always been subject to socio-historical shifts. It is a product of its time and the context in which it is created. Viewed through the changing lens of history, childhood itself is an unstable concept.

In other words, it is impossible to separate children’s literature from the ideological structure of our world, and from the particular historical moment in which it is produced.

While Dr Seuss’s best-loved characters — the Cat in the Hat, Horton the elephant, the Grinch — have earned their place in the canon, what we should be concerned about is the question of diversity in children’s literature.

We know from numerous studies that white children dominate children’s books, with talking animals and trains outnumbering the representations of First Nations, Asian, African and other minority groups.

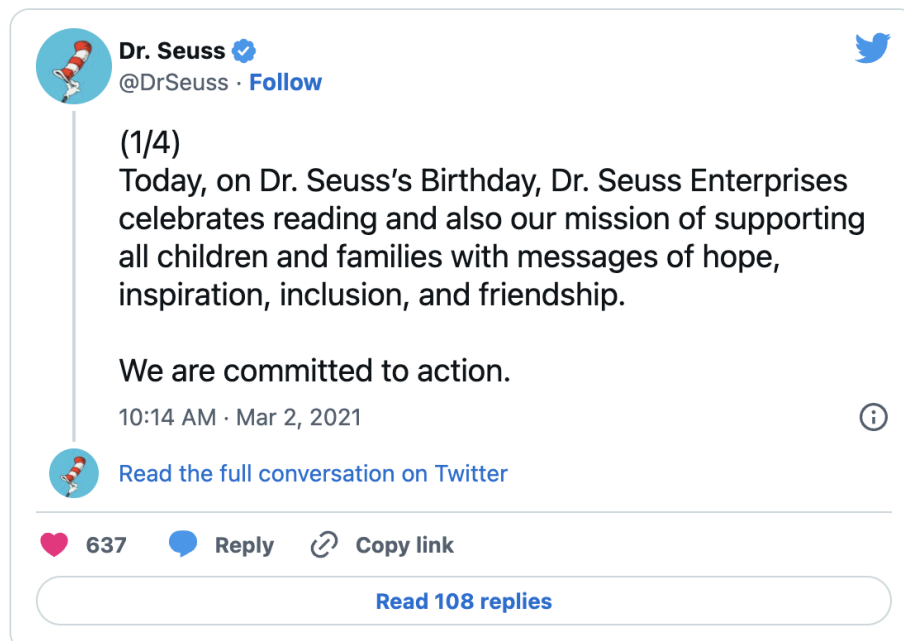
No quick fixes

Although never perfect, other beloved children's literature series have sought solutions to similar dilemmas.

Enid Blyton's stories have been continuously revised since the 1990s. Noddy is now carjacked by goblins, and, in the Faraway Tree series, Dame Snap replaces Dame Slap, with Fanny and Dick getting a makeover as Frannie and Rick.

More recently, Richard Scarry's books were updated to depict Daddies cooking and Mummies going to work, while the latest film adaptation of *The Witches* cast actor of colour Jahzir Bruno as the boy protagonist.

Not surprisingly, queer representation in young adult fiction is still problematic, with most queer stories authored by writers who do not identify as queer.



On one level, the decision to discontinue half a dozen Dr Seuss books because “they are hurtful and wrong” seems a simple gesture (and one with relatively small financial impact). Racism permeates the Dr Seuss catalogue, including The Cat in the Hat’s origins in blackface minstrel performances. Like Dr Seuss’s Yertle, it’s turtles all the way down.

Instead, finding meaningful ways to contextualise these historical aspects for young readers today might be a better focus, rather than withholding a few and letting more prominent titles slide by.

Kids and teens, like adults, need to see themselves in the books they read, and young white readers need to see other cultural groups as something more than illegal, or violent, or criminal.

As children’s literature expert Perry Nodelman notes: “Stories structure us as beings in the world”. In the same week a Lowy study found one in five Chinese Australians have been threatened or attacked, it could not be more important to invest in an inclusive future for our kids.



QUESTIONS AND AN ACTIVITY, BATCH #12:

Reflect on the following questions.

- Have you read a banned book?
- “Books don’t brainwash. They represent ideas.” (Jason Reynolds in June 2022 on a CNN segment about book bans) Is this true or false? Why?
- Why do we need to protect children’s innocence?
- How can we have uncomfortable conversations?
- “Not surprisingly, queer representation in young adult fiction is still problematic, with most queer stories authored by writers

who do not identify as queer.” What do you make of this statement?

Activity: Seek out more articles like this one and analyze what they have to say about controversial topics.

stories unplugged:

AN INTRODUCTION TO
LITERATURE IN THE DIGITAL
AGE



Image created by Canva.

10

Chapter 10: The Link After the Ink

Here's where we get to the LINK part of "From Ink to Link."
Whoa.

Literature in the Digital Era

Definitions⁷⁶

Hyperlink: usually shortened to link, is a directly followable reference within a hypertext document

Hypertext: text, displayed on a computer, with references (hyperlinks) to other text that the reader can immediately follow, usually by a mouse click or keypress sequence

Whether you realize it or not, hypertext has affected the daily lives of average people. Anyone that uses the internet or checks email is

⁷⁶ "Digital Rhetoric/Hypertexts and Hyperlinks." Wikibooks. 14 Jun 2017, 23:22 UTC. 28 Feb 2024, 21:21
<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Digital_Rhetoric/Hypertexts_and_Hyperlinks&oldid=3231728>.

affected. Hypertexts and hyperlinks are now a part of society and used on a daily basis.

A Brief History

Hypertexts originally emerged as electronic stories. Some of the more prominent articles cover hypertextual layouts and navigation. While some initial concerns about hypertext stories included the fear of forgetting the novel, the last ten years has proven this fear to be false. Problems of navigation and cohesion on the other hand are still relevant to discussion.

An Emerging Technology

As an emerging technology, theories and standards for hypertexts are still a work in progress.

When considering the possibilities the future holds for hypertext it is pertinent to also consider the beginnings of hypertext. In "*Hypertext and Beyond*" Jesse Woods discusses the early ideas of hypertext which were made possible by Vannevar Bush in 1945. He had proposed a machine, memex, for displaying and organizing information in a non-linear form. It would be a true digital library. Bush's theories were before computers had been feasible, and it was his ideas which were studied by early computer pioneers. With constant change in technology and our abilities to communicate authors are following up with new idea for telling their stories.

While initial theories were based on stories and electronic novels, the changes to the internet over the last ten years has created a new environment for all types of hypertexts to thrive. Elements of hypertexts can be found in blogs, wikis, and basically every webpage. Web 2.0 (or possibly Web 3.0) has allowed hypertextual characteristics to become a part of everyday Web use.

Connections to Digital Rhetoric

A hypertext is one of many virtual platforms for [digital rhetoric](#). Hypertexts are the reason behind the success of digital rhetoric. The theories, concepts, and environments created by hypertexts have nurtured the designs, styles, and methods of digital rhetoric.

Examples

1. The best example of a true hypertext is Wikipedia. Wikipedia is a co-authored site that allows users to write, edit, comment, and annotate. A user can enter the site through any page, and they can exit at any page. There is no set beginning or end, and a user can move through the seemingly unending site by using navigation links, searches, or in-text links.
2. The original hypertexts were electronic stories and novels.



Blogs as Literature⁷⁷

In this nugget, we explore the evolving landscape of literature in the digital age, with a particular focus on blogs as a form of literary expression. We delve into the ways in which blogs blur the lines between traditional and contemporary forms of writing, challenging conventional notions of what constitutes literature. Through analysis and examples, we examine the unique characteristics of blogs, their impact on storytelling and communication, and their role in shaping modern literary discourse.

In the digital era, where information flows freely and boundaries between mediums blur, the landscape of literature is undergoing a profound transformation. At the forefront of this revolution are blogs—online platforms that have democratized the written word, giving voice to millions of individuals across the globe.

⁷⁷ Created by ChatGPT.

Unlike traditional forms of literature, which are often bound by constraints of publication and distribution, blogs offer a limitless canvas for self-expression. From personal diaries to political commentary, from travel journals to poetry collections, blogs encompass a vast array of genres and styles, reflecting the diversity of human experience in the 21st century.

What sets blogs apart from other forms of writing is their immediacy and interactivity. With a few clicks of a button, bloggers can publish their thoughts and ideas to a global audience, inviting feedback and dialogue in real-time. This dynamic exchange between writer and reader blurs the distinction between author and audience, transforming the act of storytelling into a collaborative endeavor.

But perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of blogs is their accessibility. No longer confined to the elite circles of academia or the publishing industry, anyone with an internet connection can become a blogger, sharing their stories and perspectives with the world. This democratization of literature has given rise to a new generation of voices, challenging traditional power structures and amplifying marginalized narratives.

Yet, despite their democratizing potential, blogs are not without their critics. Skeptics argue that the proliferation of amateur content dilutes the quality of literary discourse, leading to a digital cacophony of noise and distraction. Others lament the loss of editorial oversight and gatekeeping functions, fearing the erosion of critical standards and intellectual rigor.

But to dismiss blogs as mere ephemera overlooks their profound cultural significance. In an age marked by fragmentation and polarization, blogs serve as a vital forum for dialogue and debate, bridging divides and fostering empathy across boundaries of geography, ideology, and identity.

In conclusion, blogs are not just a reflection of contemporary culture—they are shaping it. As we navigate the ever-changing landscape of literature in the digital age, we must recognize the transformative power of blogs to inspire, inform, and connect us in ways we never thought possible. For in the vast expanse of the blogosphere, the future of literature is being written one post at a time.

It's all just reading and writing, so why bother with these things?⁷⁸

Technology changes so fast that it's hard to keep up: blogs, wikis, Facebook, twitter, and you can bet that there's more coming. Why bother trying to keep up when it's all just reading and writing? Print books, paper and pencil, and maybe some word processing—shouldn't that be enough of the basics to prepare students? The simple answer is no.

No, those basics are not enough. New technologies have extended and enhanced the definition of meaningful literacy practice. Texts are produced, distributed, and received in new ways. For students to be considered fully literate, they must develop skills to find, select, comprehend, evaluate, and compose information using new technology (Larson, 126). The skills students need to master reading online are different than the skills they need to read and retain information from a print text. Writing for wikis, blogs, and traditional paper require different voices, different understandings of audience, and different types of referencing. Students should have practice switching between these different types of writing with guidance, feedback, and support from a teacher.

“Electronic technologies are changing the forms by which people communicate with each other and understand the world. Changes in

⁷⁸ "K-12 School Computer Networking/Chapter 17." Wikibooks. 11 Aug 2022, 09:29 UTC. 28 Feb 2024, 16:53 <https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=K-12_School_Computer_Networking/Chapter_17&oldid=4090111>.

technology have and will continue to change the nature of literacy practices in society, and the cognitive and social skills needed to be considered fully literate” (MacArthur, 248).

Bottom line, we can compare incorporating digital literacy skills in the classroom to teaching a man to fish. Omitting these important skills from the classroom is equivalent to telling a man that a thing called a fish can be caught and lives in the ocean (which the man may or may not have experience sailing but has definitely seen on TV). One man will clearly succeed and the other is likely to starve. Students need to be exposed to these communication technologies in an environment that lets them practice and develop important new skills. The basic skills have changed and students need to master new skills to be considered fully literate and to grow into effective communicators.

Adding to the Basics, not Replacing Them

In making the argument that basic literary skills have changed, it is important to stress that these changes do not replace tried-and-true literacy practice. Some people view digital forms of reading and writing as a threat to the hierarchy that places print books and academic writing at the top. But it's not a case of pushing the king off the top of the hill. New literacies can be, and often are, intertwined with traditional literacy practices (Larson, 122). Learning with technology does not replace or diminish current standards. Remember after all, “writing itself is a technology” (MacArthur, 248) and it's continuously being updated. Learning with new communication technologies actively engages students in important literacy practices and prepares students for the new ways that texts are produced and received.

Digital technologies have broadened the definition of literacy and require practice and development of skills that support and build on traditional academic literacies. Incorporating these technologies into classrooms is necessary for developing fully literate students. As

educators and technical coordinators in schools, we must strive to encourage the connection of new and traditional literacies in the classroom while making time for activities that involve on-screen reading and for-screen writing.



Example via Ink

College Blog⁷⁹

Blog Post 1: "Roommate Woes: Tales from the Dormitory"

Hey there, fellow college comrades! Let's talk about the trials and tribulations of sharing a room with someone who drives you up the wall. Yep, I'm talking about roommates. Don't get me wrong, living on campus has its perks, but when you're stuck with a roommate who thinks cleanliness is optional and has a penchant for blasting music at 3 AM, well, let's just say it's not all rainbows and butterflies. Stay tuned for some juicy roommate horror stories and tips on how to survive dorm life with your sanity intact!

Blog Post 2: "Boss from Hell: Surviving the Workplace Nightmare"

Hey everyone, it's your resident office warrior here, back with another tale from the trenches of corporate America. Today, let's talk about bosses. Specifically, bosses who make your life a living hell. From micromanaging every aspect of your work to scheduling impromptu meetings during your lunch break, dealing with a crazy boss can feel like navigating a minefield. But fear not, dear readers, for I've got some survival strategies up my sleeve that will help you keep your cool and conquer the chaos of the corporate world.

Blog Post 3: "Roommate Rant: When Sharing Space Goes Wrong"

Hey guys, it's me again, coming to you live from the land of perpetual frustration, also known as my dorm room. Today's topic?

⁷⁹ Created by ChatGPT.

Roommate drama, because apparently, my roommate missed the memo about common courtesy. From leaving dirty dishes in the sink for days on end to inviting their entire squad over for a late-night study session (read: party), living with this person is like playing a never-ending game of roommate roulette. Stay tuned as I dish out the details on my latest roommate escapade and maybe even share some passive-aggressive notes I've been brainstorming.

Blog Post 4: "Boss Battles: Navigating Office Politics 101"

Hey folks, it's me again, your friendly neighborhood office warrior. Today, let's talk about the joys of navigating office politics with a boss who seems to have it out for you. From assigning you impossible tasks with unrealistic deadlines to taking credit for your ideas in front of the entire team, dealing with a difficult boss can feel like you're stuck in a never-ending game of corporate cat-and-mouse. But fear not, dear readers, for I've got some battle-tested strategies to help you outmaneuver even the trickiest of bosses and emerge victorious in the workplace battlefield.

Blog Post 5: "Roommate Revenge: Getting Even Without Getting Mad"

Hey guys, it's me again, your friendly neighborhood dorm-dweller. So remember how I said my roommate was driving me up the wall? Well, I've decided it's time to take matters into my own hands and unleash some sweet, sweet revenge. But before you start picturing elaborate pranks involving buckets of glitter and whoopee cushions (although let's be real, that does sound tempting), I've come up with some more subtle ways to get back at my roommate without stooping to their level. Stay tuned as I unveil my master plan for roommate retaliation and maybe even share some tips on how to keep your cool when living with someone who tests your patience on a daily basis.



ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS, BATCH #13.

1. Seek out current examples of hypertext and share them with the class.
 2. Literature and Tech Blog Series: Students start their own blog series where they explore the fusion of literature and technology, each focusing on a different aspect discussed in this chapter.
 3. Social Media as a Literary Medium: Investigate how social media platforms have become spaces for literary expression. Discuss the impact of microblogging, storytelling apps, and collaborative writing in the digital realm. Explore works that blend traditional genres with technological themes.
 4. Emerging Technologies and Future Possibilities: Look ahead to the potential impact of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence on literature. Imagine the future of storytelling in a technologically advanced world. Discuss how technology – specifically AI (artificial intelligence) – has influenced the development of new literary genres. Consider the ethical implications of technology in storytelling. Discuss issues such as privacy, authenticity, and digital ownership.
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11

Chapter 11. Other Topics

LITERATURE AND POP CULTURE

Cultural References: Literature often incorporates references to popular culture⁸⁰ phenomena such as music, movies, television shows, and celebrities. These references serve to anchor the story in a specific cultural context, making it relatable and resonant to readers familiar with the referenced pop culture icons. Conversely, pop culture references in literature can also shape and influence societal perceptions and interpretations of literary works.

Exploration of Contemporary Issues: Both pop culture and literature serve as mediums for exploring contemporary social, political, and cultural issues. Whether it's through novels, short stories, graphic

⁸⁰ Content generated by ChatGPT and lightly edited.

novels, or poetry, authors use literature to comment on and critique aspects of pop culture such as consumerism, celebrity worship, technology, and social media. Conversely, pop culture often draws inspiration from literary works, adapting classic stories and themes to resonate with modern audiences.

Adaptations and Remixes: Literature frequently inspires adaptations and remixes in pop culture, with classic novels and plays being reimagined in various forms such as films, television series, video games, and musicals. These adaptations not only introduce literary classics to new audiences but also reinterpret them through different mediums and artistic visions. Conversely, pop culture influences the evolution of literary genres and styles, with authors incorporating elements of popular culture into their storytelling to appeal to contemporary audiences.

Celebrity Authors and Influencers: The rise of celebrity authors and influencers blurs the lines between pop culture and literature, with public figures leveraging their fame to publish books and engage with audiences on literary platforms. These celebrity-authored books often attract widespread attention and media coverage, contributing to the cross-pollination of pop culture and literature. Conversely, literature can also serve as a platform for pop culture influencers to share their personal stories, insights, and experiences with their fan base.

Fan Culture and Fandom: Pop culture fandoms often extend beyond their original medium to engage with related literary works such as tie-in novels, fan fiction, and literary analyses. Fan culture creates a symbiotic relationship between pop culture and literature, with fans actively participating in the creation and interpretation of stories through online communities, conventions, and fan events. This convergence of pop culture and literature fosters a sense of community and creativity among fans, enriching the cultural landscape with diverse perspectives and interpretations.



LITERATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Ecological Themes: Literature often explores ecological themes⁸¹ such as environmental degradation, conservation, and human interaction with the natural world. Through characters' experiences and dilemmas, authors raise awareness about environmental issues and prompt readers to consider their relationship with the environment. These themes encourage reflection and dialogue about the importance of protecting and preserving the Earth's ecosystems.

Environmental Justice: Some literary works address issues of environmental justice, exploring the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens among different communities. These works shed light on environmental racism, class disparities in access to clean air and water, and the disproportionate impacts of pollution on marginalized groups. Through storytelling, authors advocate for environmental equity and social change.

Nature Writing: A genre known as nature writing celebrates the beauty and wonder of the natural world through prose, poetry, and essays. Nature writers observe and reflect upon the intricacies of the environment, sharing their insights and experiences with readers. Through vivid descriptions and lyrical language, nature writing fosters a deeper appreciation for the Earth's wonders and inspires stewardship of the environment.



LITERATURE AND FOOD

⁸¹ Content generated by ChatGPT and lightly edited.

Symbolism and Metaphor: In literature, food⁸² often serves as a symbol or metaphor for deeper themes and emotions. For example, a shared meal may symbolize unity and community, while a forbidden fruit may represent temptation or desire. Authors use food metaphorically to convey complex ideas and evoke visceral reactions in readers.

Cultural Representation: Food in literature provides insight into cultural practices, traditions, and identities. By describing cuisines, cooking techniques, and dining customs, authors paint vivid portraits of diverse cultures and societies. Food becomes a lens through which readers can explore the richness and diversity of human experiences across different time periods and geographical locations.

Character Development: The way characters interact with food can reveal important aspects of their personalities, backgrounds, and relationships. A character's food preferences, cooking abilities, and dining habits can provide clues about their socioeconomic status, cultural heritage, and emotional state. Food becomes a vehicle for character development, allowing authors to deepen their portrayal of fictional personas.

Setting and Atmosphere: Descriptions of food and meals contribute to the setting and atmosphere of literary works, creating sensory-rich environments that immerse readers in the story. Whether it's a sumptuous banquet in a medieval castle or a humble family dinner in a small-town kitchen, food details enhance the texture and ambiance of literary scenes, making them more vivid and immersive.



LITERATURE AND MINDFULNESS

⁸² Generated by ChatGPT.

Literature's connection to mindfulness⁸³ lies in its ability to foster introspection, empathy, and awareness of the present moment. Through the exploration of characters' thoughts, feelings, and experiences, literature prompts readers to reflect on their own lives and cultivate mindfulness in various ways:

Themes of Presence and Awareness: Many literary works explore themes of presence, awareness, and mindfulness, encouraging readers to pay attention to the details of the narrative and the subtleties of human interaction. This focus on the present moment can help readers develop mindfulness in their everyday lives.

Narrative Reflection: Engaging with literature can be a form of reflective practice, prompting readers to contemplate life's deeper questions and ponder their own values, beliefs, and experiences. This reflective process encourages mindfulness by encouraging readers to be present with their thoughts and emotions.

Escapism and Relaxation: Literature provides an opportunity for readers to escape from the stresses of daily life and immerse themselves in imaginary worlds. This act of reading can be a form of relaxation and mindfulness, allowing readers to focus on the present moment and temporarily set aside their worries and anxieties.



LITERATURE AND GAMING

Fanfiction⁸⁴ within gaming communities is a vibrant and diverse form of creative expression where fans write stories set in the worlds of their favorite video games or featuring characters from those games. Here are some key aspects to consider:

⁸³ Generated by ChatGPT.

⁸⁴ Generated from ChatGPT.

- **Exploration of Game Worlds:** Fanfiction allows gamers to delve deeper into the settings, lore, and characters of their favorite games. Writers can expand upon existing storylines, create alternate universes, or explore untold narratives within the game's universe.
- **Character Development:** Fanfiction provides an opportunity for gamers to develop and explore the personalities, motivations, and relationships of beloved game characters in more depth than may be possible within the confines of the game itself. Writers can imagine backstories, interpersonal dynamics, and character arcs that resonate with fans.
- **Community Engagement:** Writing and sharing fanfiction fosters a sense of community among gamers who share a passion for the same game or game franchise. Fanfiction websites, forums, and social media platforms provide spaces for writers to connect, share their stories, receive feedback, and collaborate with fellow fans.
- **Creative Freedom:** Fanfiction offers gamers creative freedom to experiment with storytelling techniques, explore different genres, and envision scenarios that may diverge from the canonical storyline of the game. Writers can explore themes, tropes, and narrative structures that resonate with them personally.
- **Filling Narrative Gaps:** Fanfiction can address unanswered questions, unresolved plotlines, or gaps in the narrative of a game. Writers may seek to provide closure, offer alternative interpretations, or explore what-if scenarios that enrich the gaming experience for themselves and other fans.
- **Crossing Over with Other Media:** Fanfiction often crosses over with other forms of media, such as literature, film, television, and anime. Gamers may draw inspiration from a wide range of sources and incorporate elements from different media into their fanfiction, resulting in unique and imaginative storytelling hybrids.

- **Respect for Canon:** While fanfiction allows for creative reinterpretation of game worlds and characters, many writers strive to maintain fidelity to the original source material and respect the canon established by the game developers. Writers may conduct research, analyze game lore, and consult with other fans to ensure their fanfiction aligns with the established universe.

Overall, fanfiction within gaming communities serves as a dynamic outlet for creativity, storytelling, and community engagement, allowing gamers to further immerse themselves in the worlds they love and contribute their own narratives to the ongoing discourse surrounding their favorite games.



Gaming ex: Legends of the Last Guardian⁸⁵

In the realm of Elysium, where magic and mystery intertwine, a lone guardian stood watch over the ancient ruins of Azura. Clad in armor forged from dragon scales and wielding a sword imbued with the power of the elements, the guardian was tasked with protecting the sacred artifacts hidden within the temple's depths.

But as darkness descended upon the land and whispers of an ancient evil spread like wildfire, the guardian knew that their greatest challenge was yet to come. For lurking in the shadows was a malevolent force known only as the Shadowlord, a being of pure darkness whose sole purpose was to plunge Elysium into eternal night.

Determined to thwart the Shadowlord's nefarious plans, the guardian embarked on a perilous quest to gather the legendary artifacts scattered across the land. With each artifact recovered,

⁸⁵ Created by ChatGPT.

their power grew, and their resolve hardened, until they were ready to face their ultimate foe in a final showdown for the fate of Elysium.

Joined by a band of brave companions—each with their own unique abilities and skills—the guardian journeyed through treacherous forests, towering mountains, and ancient ruins, battling fierce monsters and solving intricate puzzles along the way.

But the Shadowlord was not so easily defeated, and as the guardian drew closer to their enemy's lair, they found themselves faced with increasingly deadly challenges and heart-wrenching betrayals. Yet through sheer determination and unwavering courage, they pressed on, knowing that the fate of Elysium depended on their success.

And so, on the eve of the final battle, the guardian stood before the gates of the Shadowlord's fortress, their companions at their side and the weight of the world on their shoulders. With a defiant roar, they charged into battle, their swords clashing with the darkness as they fought to restore light to a world on the brink of oblivion.

In the end, it was not just the guardian's strength or skill that saved Elysium, but their unwavering belief in the power of hope and friendship. For in a world consumed by darkness, it is the bonds forged in the fires of adversity that shine the brightest, illuminating the path to a brighter tomorrow for all who dare to dream.



ACTIVITIES, BATCH #14:

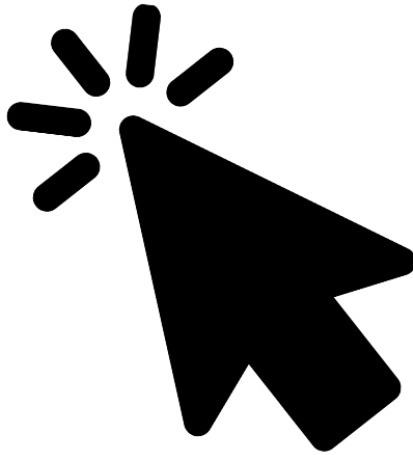
1. Look at the sub-chapters on Mindfulness, Food, Pop Culture, and the Environment one more time. Add content⁸⁶ that explains how they are connected to Literature: write your own examples and/or find links to cool things.

⁸⁶ This might be a final project for your course.

2. Pop Culture References in Literature Scavenger Hunt: Create a list of literary works and ask students to identify and analyze instances of pop culture references within them. Students can search for references to music, movies, TV shows, and celebrities, discussing how these references contribute to the cultural context and themes of the works.
3. Adaptation Analysis: Have students compare and contrast a literary work with its adaptation into a different medium (e.g., book-to-film adaptation, graphic novel-to-TV series). Students can analyze how the adaptation translates pop culture elements from the original text and examine the effectiveness of the adaptation in conveying the story's themes and messages.
4. Celebrity Author Study: Assign readings by celebrity authors or influencers who have published books or essays. Students can research the author's background, examine their literary style and themes, and discuss how their status as a public figure influences their writing and reception within popular culture.
5. Fan Culture Discussion: Facilitate a discussion on fan culture and fandom surrounding popular literary works. Students can explore fan communities, fan fiction, fan art, and fan theories related to books, movies, TV shows, or video games. Encourage students to reflect on the ways in which fan culture intersects with and influences the reception and interpretation of literature.
6. Pop Culture Literary Analysis Essay: Assign students to write an analytical essay that examines a literary work through the lens of pop culture. Students can choose a novel, short story, or poem and analyze how it reflects or responds to contemporary pop culture trends, references, or themes. Encourage students to support their analysis with textual evidence and critical insights.
7. Literature and Food Discussion Circle: Organize a discussion circle on literature and food, focusing on texts that explore the cultural, social, and symbolic significance of food. Students

can discuss how food imagery, rituals, and metaphors contribute to the thematic resonance of the assigned readings and share personal anecdotes or cultural perspectives related to food.

8. Literature and the Environment Film Screening: Organize a film screening of documentaries or film adaptations that explore environmental issues and nature themes. After the screening, facilitate a discussion on how film adaptations represent ecological themes compared to their literary counterparts. Students can analyze the visual storytelling techniques, cinematography, and narrative choices used to convey environmental messages.



Chapter 12: Activities & Projects

The activities in this chapter may or may not be used by the instructor. There are quite a few activities embedded within each chapter already, but just in case students/teachers need more ideas, here they are!

Consistent Daily and Weekly Work⁸⁷

- **Fake Book Cover:** Students will create the cover of a book they would hypothetically write; feel free to use templates on Canva.com or your own images. These will most likely be uploaded to the LMS/Blackboard for viewing by online and f2f students.
- **Terminology Tidbits:** Seek out terms you are unfamiliar with and keep a list of their definitions.
- **Collaborative Annotation:** Putting comments or questions on a document with your classmates as you read something. Video here: bit.ly/collaborative-annotation-GD

⁸⁷ Compiled by Sybil Priebe, CC-BY-NC.

- **Chapter Summary:** A funky worksheet where you summarize and reflect on the content of a particular chapter. Link here: <https://bit.ly/chpt-read-summary>
- **Participate in Discussion Board / Student-Led Discussions (SLD):** Whether in class or in an online discussion board, students will ask the questions of each other and start the conversation; there should be minimal teacher interaction.
- **Notes on Reading, Share Favorite Line:** Students should come to class prepared to share their favorite line from the chapter or reading for the day. They should also be able to explain why they like their line and ask their classmates questions about the lines they chose.
- **Timeline Creations, Together:** Via Canva, we'll edit a timeline together as a class whether we are in class together or working online on our own time.
- **Peer Review, a.k.a. Workshops:** Drafts of projects are shared on paper or online and TAG feedback is given. TAG handout here: <https://bit.ly/TAG-feedback-handout>

Possible In-Person and Online Activities⁸⁸

Here are some activities each cohort could do, both separately and together, to learn the material in each chapter:

Online Asynchronous Cohort:

1. **Discussion Forums:** Utilize online discussion forums where students can engage in asynchronous discussions about the assigned readings. Pose questions related to key themes, characters, and literary techniques to prompt critical thinking and analysis.
2. **Virtual Book Clubs:** Organize virtual book club meetings using video conferencing platforms where students can discuss assigned readings in small groups. Encourage them to share their interpretations, insights, and reactions to the texts.

⁸⁸ Created and edited from ChatGPT.

3. **Online Quizzes or Polls:** Create online quizzes or polls to assess comprehension and reinforce key concepts from the readings. These interactive activities can be self-paced and provide immediate feedback to students.
4. **Writing Assignments:** Assign reflective writing tasks where students respond to prompts related to the readings. Encourage them to analyze specific passages, explore character motivations, or compare different literary works.
5. **Multimedia Projects:** Allow students to express their understanding of the readings through multimedia projects such as video presentations, podcasts, or digital storytelling. This encourages creativity and caters to different learning styles.
6. **Peer Review Sessions:** Facilitate peer review sessions where students exchange feedback on each other's written assignments or creative projects. This promotes collaboration and improves writing skills.

In-Person Cohort:

7. **Small Group Discussions:** Divide students into small groups for in-person discussions about the assigned readings. Encourage them to analyze passages, debate interpretations, and share their perspectives on the texts.
8. **Literary Analysis Workshops:** Conduct interactive workshops where students practice literary analysis skills through close reading activities, character mapping exercises, or thematic exploration tasks.
9. **Socratic Seminars:** Organize Socratic seminars where students engage in deep, open-ended discussions about the assigned readings. Encourage active participation, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue.
10. **Dramatic Readings:** Arrange dramatic readings of select passages or scenes from the assigned readings, allowing students to bring the texts to life through performance. This enhances comprehension and fosters appreciation for the language and style of the literature.

11. **Field Trips or Guest Speakers:** Plan visits to local literary events, museums, or author readings, or invite guest speakers such as authors, scholars, or poets to enrich students' understanding of the course material.

Activities for Both Cohorts (Online and In-Person):

12. **Literature Circles:** Implement literature circles where students in both cohorts read and discuss different texts in small groups. They can share their insights and interpretations asynchronously online or synchronously during in-person sessions.
13. **Collaborative Projects:** Assign collaborative projects that require students from both cohorts to work together, leveraging online communication tools and collaborative platforms. This fosters teamwork and cross-cohort interaction.
14. **Online Office Hours:** Offer virtual office hours where students from both cohorts can seek clarification, discuss course material, or receive feedback from the instructor. This provides additional support and promotes engagement.
15. **Virtual Author Q&A Sessions:** Organize virtual Q&A sessions with authors or experts related to the course material, allowing students from both cohorts to participate and ask questions.
16. **Peer Feedback Groups:** Establish peer feedback groups comprising students from both cohorts, where they can exchange feedback on assignments, share resources, and support each other's learning journey.

More Progressive Activities

Let's delve deeper into progressive activities for each cohort; here are more activities for the online asynchronous cohort:

Literary Podcast Creation: Assign students to create their own literary podcasts where they analyze and discuss assigned readings, exploring themes, characters, and literary techniques. This

encourages creativity and allows students to engage with the material in a format they may find more relatable and enjoyable.

More Activities for the In-Person Cohort:

- **Immersive Theater Performances:** Collaborate with local theater groups or drama departments to organize immersive theater performances based on course readings. Students can participate in or attend these performances, experiencing literature in a dynamic and interactive way.
- **Literary Escape Rooms:** Design literary-themed escape rooms where students solve puzzles, decipher clues, and uncover hidden meanings related to the assigned readings. This hands-on, immersive experience encourages critical thinking and teamwork.
- **Augmented Reality Literature Walks:** Create augmented reality (AR) literature walks around campus or local literary landmarks, where students use AR-enabled devices to interact with digital overlays, multimedia content, and contextual information related to the course readings.
- **Literary Hackathons:** Organize literary hackathons where students collaborate to develop innovative digital projects, apps, or interactive experiences inspired by the course readings. This encourages interdisciplinary collaboration and allows students to apply their creativity and technical skills in a literary context.

Nontraditional Activities

More Nontraditional Activities for the Online Asynchronous Cohort:

1. **Literary TikTok Challenges:** Encourage students to create short TikTok videos inspired by the course readings. They can summarize key themes, perform dramatic readings, or create visually engaging interpretations of literary passages. This taps into the popularity of social media platforms and allows students to express their creativity in a modern format.

2. **Digital Story Mapping:** Use online mapping tools like Google Earth or StoryMapJS to create interactive digital maps that chart the settings, locations, and events from the course readings. Students can collaboratively annotate the map with textual excerpts, images, and multimedia content to explore the spatial dimensions of literature.
3. **Virtual Reality Literature Tours:** Provide access to virtual reality (VR) platforms or immersive experiences that transport students into the worlds of the course readings. They can explore virtual environments, interact with characters, and engage with narrative elements in a fully immersive 3D environment.
4. **Literature-Based Podcast Club:** Facilitate a literature-based podcast club where students listen to and discuss podcasts that analyze or reinterpret classic literary works. They can explore podcasts that offer diverse perspectives, critical insights, and contemporary interpretations of the course readings.
5. **Digital Book Sculptures:** Task students with creating digital book sculptures using 3D modeling software or online sculpting tools. They can visually represent key scenes, characters, or themes from the course readings, experimenting with form, texture, and composition in a digital medium.

More Nontraditional Activities for the In-Person Cohort:

1. **Literary Escape Room Challenge:** Set up an in-person literary escape room challenge where students solve puzzles, decode clues, and unlock literary secrets related to the course readings. This hands-on, interactive experience promotes teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills.
2. **Live Action Role-Playing (LARP) Workshops:** Organize live action role-playing (LARP) workshops where students immerse themselves in the worlds of the course readings by assuming the roles of characters and participating in

- interactive storytelling adventures. This experiential learning approach encourages empathy, creativity, and improvisation.
3. **Book Art Collaborations:** Collaborate with local artists or art organizations to facilitate book art workshops where students repurpose old books or literary materials to create unique art pieces inspired by the course readings. They can explore techniques such as book folding, collage, or mixed media to reinterpret literary themes visually.
 4. **Literary Food Tasting Events:** Host literary food tasting events where students sample foods and beverages inspired by the course readings. They can explore historical recipes, cultural cuisines, and symbolic foods mentioned in the texts, fostering a multisensory appreciation for literature and culinary arts.
 5. **Interactive Theater Performances:** Partner with theater companies or improv troupes to stage interactive theater performances based on the course readings. Students can participate as audience members, engage in role-playing exercises, and influence the outcome of the narrative through interactive voting or decision-making.



Fiction Project⁸⁹

This assignment is due by _____ and should be 500+ words. Please submit via LMS.

In this essay you will present a personal reaction, opinion, or analysis of one or more short stories. You can choose any of the

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stories in the textbook, but it might help if you choose one of the stories we discuss in class.

- Analyze in depth a particular short story. You can talk about the structure, the meaning, symbolism, the way it connects to the writer's life, or any other aspect of the story that inspires you.
- Compare two stories by different authors, either contemporaries (who were writing at the same time) or authors who lived in different eras. Compare the structure, themes, use of language or anything else that strikes you. Do certain themes such as love and death remain constant? How is the message relevant today?
- Write a short story inspired by one of the stories in the textbook. If you choose this option you will need to write a page (200-250 words) explaining what inspired you in the original story, and how you have used it to create a new work.

A first draft or written description of your idea is due by _____ for peer review. The final paper is due by _____.

At the bottom of the project, please write a letter of self-assessment to your instructor, indicating which grade you earned on the project based on the following levels:

A –The essay is interesting, original, and focused. It is easy to follow, has a clear beginning, middle and end and sticks to the point. The writing shows comprehension of work we have studied in class.

B— Paper is mostly consistent and interesting but lacks focus in parts or is difficult to follow. The writing shows some comprehension of work we have studied in class.

C— Paper is somewhat consistent and has some points of interest but is mostly confusing. The writing shows little comprehension of work we have studied in class.

D — Paper shows some effort but either doesn't use textbook material or does not make sense.

F— There is no paper.

Poetry Project⁹⁰

This assignment is due by _____ and should be 750-800 words. Please submit via Blackboard. Please include MLA in-text citations and a list of Works Cited.

In this essay you will present a personal reaction, opinion, or analysis of one or more poems. You can choose any of the poems in the textbook, but it might help if you choose one of the poems we discuss in class. You can choose any of the following options for this assignment:

- Analyze in depth a particular poem. You can talk about the structure, the meaning, the appearance on the page, the symbolism, the way it connects to the writer's life, or any other aspect of the poem that inspires you.
- Compare two poems by different authors, either contemporaries (who were writing at the same time) or poets who lived in different eras. Compare the structure, themes, use of language or anything else that strikes you. Do certain themes such as love and death remain constant? Do historical poets express messages that are relevant today?
- Choose several works by a particular poet and talk about what binds them together. What is it about the voice of individual writers that makes them recognizable? What do you like or dislike about the poet you have chosen? What themes does this poet work with and how does this relate to their life?
- Write a poem inspired by one of the poems in the textbook. If you choose this option you will need to write a page (200-250

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words) explaining what inspired you in the original poem, and how you have used it to create a new work.

- Compare classical poetry forms to newer poetry forms such as spoken word, erasure poems, found poems, or rap. Compare the structure, method of presentation, audience, and purpose.
- Maybe you don't like poetry and don't relate to any of the works we have looked at so far. Write an opinion piece stating why you feel this way. Use examples, citing sections from poems we have looked at. The Oxford English Dictionary defines poetry as "Literary work in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by the use of distinctive style and rhythm." If the literary works called poems don't appeal to you, what—for you—epitomizes these qualities of beauty, intensity and emotion?

A first draft or written description of your idea is due by _____ for peer review. The final paper is due by _____.

At the bottom of the project, please write a letter of self-assessment to your instructor, indicating which grade you earned on the project based on the following levels:

A —The essay is interesting, original, and focused. It is easy to follow, has a clear beginning, middle and end and sticks to the point. The writing shows comprehension of work we have studied in class.

B— Paper is mostly consistent and interesting but lacks focus in parts or is difficult to follow. The writing shows some comprehension of work we have studied in class.

C— Paper is somewhat consistent and has some points of interest but is mostly confusing. The writing shows little comprehension of work we have studied in class.

D — Paper shows some effort but either doesn't use textbook material or does not make sense.

F— There is no paper.

Research Project⁹¹

This assignment is due by _____ and should be 700-800 words. Please submit via Blackboard.

In this research paper you will create a structured essay containing a unique thesis relating to one of the genres we have studied: poetry, fiction, or drama.

You can use one of your prior essays as a basis for this paper, or you can start with a new idea. Whichever genre you choose to write about, show a way that the work or works you discuss is/are relevant to you. You can show this by discussing theme, language, environment, character, relationship, or any topic that you are passionate about in relation to the texts we have discussed.

You will use proper MLA formatting for this text with at least 5 in-text citations. The most important sources for this essay are:

1. The source material
2. Your response to the source material
3. Respected opinions about the source material.

Please include a list of Works Cited at the end of the paper.

A first draft or written description of your idea is due by _____ for peer review. The final paper is due by _____.

Rubric

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A – Paper has a clear thesis that is followed through. The essay makes sense, is interesting and has a clear conclusion, and uses proper MLA citations.

B— Paper is mostly consistent and interesting but lacks focus in parts, and has mostly correct citations.

C— Paper is somewhat consistent and has some points of interest but is mostly confusing, and has either no or very few citations.

D — Paper shows some effort but either doesn't use textbook material or does not make sense.

F— There is no paper.

Textbook Project⁹²

Take the chapters on Mindfulness, Food, Pop Culture, and the Environment and ADD to them. Add content that explains how they are connected to Literature. Write your own examples. Find links to cool things. This project may done in groups or two or three, perhaps. You could also create a new chapter! What topics are not covered in this textbook and should be?

You'll then use this self-evaluation rubric on your final product:

Self-Evaluation Rubric⁹³

1. Integration of Literature with Themes:

A: The project effectively integrates themes of mindfulness, food, pop culture, OR the environment with examples from literature, demonstrating a clear understanding of how these topics intersect with literary works.

B: The project somewhat integrates themes with examples from literature, but connections may be unclear or lacking depth.

C: The project attempts to integrate themes with examples from literature, but connections are weak or inconsistent.

⁹² Created by Sybil Priebe, CC-BY.

⁹³ Edited from ChatGPT.

D: The project demonstrates little to no integration of themes with examples from literature, with minimal understanding of how these topics relate to literary works.

2. Creativity and Originality:

A: The project demonstrates creativity and originality in exploring connections between literature and themes, offering unique insights and engaging content.

B: The project shows some creativity and originality but may rely heavily on conventional approaches or lack innovative ideas.

C: The project lacks significant creativity or originality, with ideas that are largely derivative or unoriginal.

D: The project lacks creativity and originality, with content that is uninspired or derivative of existing sources.

3. Collaborative Effort (for group projects):

A: The group effectively collaborates to create a cohesive project, with each member contributing to research, content creation, and presentation.

B: The group demonstrates some collaboration, but there may be uneven participation or communication issues.

C: The group struggles to collaborate effectively, with limited participation from some members and challenges in coordinating efforts.

D: The group exhibits minimal collaboration, with little to no participation from some members and significant discord or conflict.

4. Quality of Presentation and Engagement:

A: The project is well-presented, engaging, and effectively communicates ideas to the audience, utilizing multimedia elements and interactive components where appropriate.

B: The project is adequately presented and engages the audience to some extent but may lack polish or cohesion in its delivery.

C: The project presentation is lacking in polish or engagement, with content that may be disorganized or difficult to follow.

D: The project presentation is ineffective or unengaging, failing to effectively communicate ideas to the audience or maintain their interest.

Presentation for Last Day of Class (or before)⁹⁴

Your presentation should be approximately five minutes in duration. It can be a short play, a poetry reading, a short story reading, a video, a song, or a multimedia presentation. Please check your idea with me first.

Your final presentation will be an original work in one of the literary genres we have studied, either Poetry, Drama, Fiction or Research.

Your original work can be about the class as a whole, about something of note that happened during the semester, or about one or more of the works that we studied.

This assignment can be completed as a group project or as a solo work. You can schedule your five-minute presentation for any Friday during the semester.

If you work as a group, your members should make an agreement about how often you will communicate and/or rehearse. If you work solo, you will make an agreement with yourself. Your signed agreements are due by _____. The presentation can be scheduled for any Friday from _____ until _____.

Rubric

A –The presentation is interesting, entertaining, and shows focus. It relates to work we have studied and/or class conversations.

B— The presentation is mostly interesting, entertaining, and is mostly focused.

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C— The presentation is somewhat interesting, entertaining, but the focus is not clear.

D — The presentation shows little preparation or is presented without any effort or conviction. F— There is no presentation.

End-of-Semester Self-Reflection⁹⁵

Due _____ ; no minimum or maximum word count.

Write a self-reflection describing how well this class incorporated the learning outcomes, and how you responded to them throughout the four essays:

- Fiction
- Poetry
- Drama
- Research.

Also discuss how the course learning outcomes relate to the class presentation and in-class readings and discussions. We will be writing short self-reflections every few weeks to help you build towards your final self-reflection.

Course Learning Outcomes	Measurement
To read, study, evaluate, and appreciate literature (literary criticism)	
To analyze genres of fiction, drama, and poetry by examining their basic elements	
To analyze literature using a variety of critical approaches/lenses	
To discuss the interpretations of literature with others in various written formats	

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To examine human diversity as presented in literature	
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Incomplete Activity, Batch #X:

Take the chatbot piece below and... use it to talk about devices and elements in fiction or use it to analyze the criticisms or tweak it to fit any of the subchapters – horror, humor, mindfulness, etc.

*Alex's Journey*⁹⁶

Alex felt overwhelmed, their mental health unraveling with each passing day. One evening, desperate for relief, they started journaling. The act of writing down their thoughts brought unexpected clarity and calm.

Encouraged by this small victory, Alex began reading stories from diverse perspectives. They discovered characters who faced similar struggles and found strength in their journeys. Each page turned became a step towards understanding and healing.

As weeks passed, Alex's journal entries shifted from despair to hope. The words of others had stitched their fragmented mind back together, guiding them towards a brighter, more resilient self.

⁹⁶ This is considered micro-fiction; it's about 100 words.

Appendix & Conclusion

Writing Tips via Link.

You will need the digital version of the textbook to access these sites:

MLA Citations, Works Cited Page

MLA Citations, In-Text Citations

Rhetorical Devices

Rhetorical Situation (with diagram)

Literary Devices and Literary Terms

Alternatives to “very”

Introductions and Conclusions for Humanities

Writing About Poetry (Purdue Owl)

Elements of Poetry (flashcards)

Here are some tips on writing from writers:

Writing Advice from Famous Authors

Fourteen Writing Tips From Ann Lamott

Ten Tips for Writers from Margaret Atwood

The Shapes of Stories by Kurt Vonnegut

Jay Shetty on Pressure

Conclusion

Thank You to these sites for their content and creative assistance:

- Canva (for the book cover, etc.)
- Wikipedia, Wikibooks
- Libretext

Sybil Priebe, a college writing instructor in the upper Midwest, compiled this textbook for her students. She loves books, bicycles, and blasphemy. She can be reached at: sybilannpriebe@gmail.com

**In the realm of bits and screens, stories
sprout,
Classics stand tall, echoing tales of yore.
But the digital canvas, an open door,
Welcomes all voices, diverse and more.**

**Classics, timeless anchors of a bygone age,
Their wisdom lingers, a legacy's stage.
Yet, the call resounds for a varied choir,
In literature's fabric, each thread to
admire.**

**No longer bound by a whitewashed lore,
Inclusion reigns, narratives soar.
Digital spaces, a melting pot,
Where diverse tales find a sacred spot.**

**Blend of ancient lore and modern threads,
Literature thrives, where the spectrum
spreads.
Guidance from classics, but the path
unfolds,
Welcoming all voices, the tales untold.**

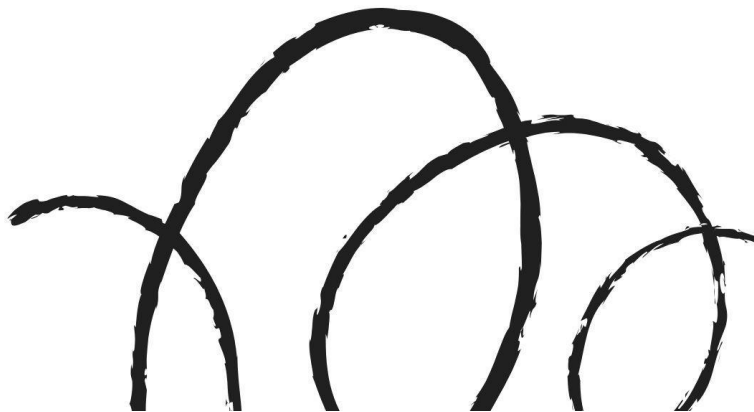


Image created using a chatbot and Canva.