

A christmas carol: an example of classical literature

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Different people have varying opinions on what literature is, but what is it really? Literature has one correct definition, despite what other people think and say. If something is to be considered literature, then it must meet three main criteria. The piece of writing must have profound meaning, universal appeal, and must be timeless.

A good example of literature is the book, *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens. This book can be classified as literature because it meets the three main criteria. Obviously, this book is timeless because it was published in the 1840's and is still popular today, and it also has a universal appeal, because people of all ages read it and it has become a classic Christmas story. *A Christmas Carol's* profound meaning is that becoming a better person will make life more enjoyable for you and for everyone else around you. This book worked as a great example of literature because it easily met all of the criteria.

There are several reasons why this definition of literature – writing that has profound meaning, a universal appeal, and is timeless – is correct. Literature is a specific genre of writing. If a piece of writing does not meet all of the three criteria for literature, then it would fall into some other genre because the three criteria make literature the unique genre that it is. If a piece of writing did not have profound meaning, then it could still have a universal appeal and be timeless, but it could fall into almost any other genre because profound meaning is a big part of what makes literature what it is, and helps with the universal appeal. If a piece of writing is not timeless, then it is not literature because that means that it doesn't have a universal appeal either,

and if it doesn't have a universal appeal, then that may mean that it doesn't have a very profound meaning. As I said before, the book, *A Christmas Carol*, is a good example of literature because it clearly meets all of these criteria. A piece of writing cannot be considered literature if it does not meet all three criteria, no matter what the circumstance.

Someone could disagree with this definition of literature. They could argue that literature is anything that is worth remembering. They could say that writing doesn't need a universal appeal or a profound meaning, or even need to be timeless. They could say that all writing needs is to be worth remembering. The key word there is worth. They would say that writing that is going to be remembered is literature, they would say that writing that is worth remembering is literature. There are several problems with that definition. What is worthy of remembrance? What do people consider that to be? One person could say that something is worth remembering, while another person could say that it's complete garbage. That's not writing with universal appeal. A person could look at a piece of writing with no meaning at all and say, "That's worth remembering." Someone could even find a piece of writing that almost no one has ever even heard of and say, "That's worth remembering." That's not timeless writing. Writing cannot be considered literature if almost no one has ever heard of it, if there isn't a universal appeal to it, or if there's no meaning. A book of any genre could be worth remembering to someone, but that doesn't make it literature; someone thinking that it's worth remembering doesn't make any difference at all. That definition of literature is too unstable.

Someone could also argue that literature is any famous writing that has been around for a long time. For example, there is a famous book called *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott that has been around since the 1860's. It's about "the lives and loves of four sisters growing up during the American Civil War." Even though this book is famous and has been around for a long time, it does not have a universal appeal because it's what many people call a "chick-flick" book. In other words, no man or boy that I know would want to read this book because it was written for a female audience. Just because a piece of writing has been around for a long time and is famous, doesn't mean that it's literature. All that this definition tells you is that the book is timeless, not if it has profound meaning and a universal appeal. Also, a book doesn't have to be around for a long time to be timeless. A book published today meeting all three of the necessary criteria could be literature. This definition is too generalized.

Literature is writing that has profound meaning, has universal appeal, and is timeless. If a piece of writing does not meet all three of these criteria, then it cannot be considered to be literature. That is the one true definition of literature.