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Literature (from Latin litterae (plural); letter) is the art of written work and can, in some circumstances, refer exclusively to published sources. The wordliterature literally means " things made from letters" and the pars pro toto term " letters" is sometimes used to signify " literature," as in the figures of speech" arts and letters" and " man of letters. " Literature is commonly classified as having two major forms—fiction and non-fiction—and two major techniques—poetryand prose.

Literature may consist of texts based on factual information (journalistic or non-fiction), as well as on original imagination, such as polemical works as well asautobiography, and reflective essays as well as belles-lettres. Literature can be classified according to historical periods, genres, and political influences. The concept of genre, which earlier was limited, has broadened over the centuries. A genre consists of artistic works which fall within a certain central theme, and examples of genre include romance, mystery, crime, fantasy, erotica, and adventure, among others.

Important historical periods in English literature includeOld English, Middle English, the Renaissance, the 17th Century Shakespearean and Elizabethan times, the 18th Century Restoration, 19th Century Victorian, and 20th Century Modernism. Important political movements that have influenced literature includefeminism, post-colonialism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, post-modernism, romanticism, and Marxism. Literature's three main divisions When most people speak of literature they may be talking about short stories, novels, poems, verse, odes, plays, tragedies, even limericks. This wide variety of terms describing types of literature, at first, appears overwhelming. However figuring all of this out is simplified when you take into account that the menagerie of types begins with three major paradigms: prose, poetry, and drama.

## Prose

Prose is derived from a Latin root word, prosa, that means " straightforward" (other scholars argue that the root for " prose" is proversa oratio, which means " straightforward discourse. " Prose is generally defined as direct, common language presented in a straightforward manner. A victim of identity by negation, prose is frequently defined as " that which is not poetry. Prose demonstrates purposeful grammatic design in that it is constructed strategically by the author to create specific meaning. Prose also contains plot and the attendant narrative structures of plot. In most cultures, prose narrative tends to appear after aculturehas developed verse. Prosegenres are many and varied, ranging fromsciencefiction to romance. The major generic divisions of prose are: \* novel - A lengthy fictional prose narrative. \* novella - A fictional prose narrative ranging from 50 to 100 pages, most common in science fiction and detective fiction. \* short story - a brief fictional prose narrative. anecdote - A very brief account of some interesting, usually humorous, event.

## Poetry

Poetry, from the Greek poetes which means " doer" or " creator," is a catch-all term that is applied to any form of rhythmical or metrical composition. While poetry is considered to be a subset of verse (and also considered to be superior to verse) both are rhythmical/metrical. What distinguishes poetry from verse is its " imaginative quality, intricate structure, serious or lofty subject matter, or noble purpose. " Most culture's first serious literary works are poetry (In Western tradition, we need look only as far as Homer and Hesiod).

The purposes of poetry are said to include:

* A didactic purpose, meaning that it aims to instruct the reader.
* Unique insight that is not available in other genres.
* To provide pleasure to the reader.
* To uplift the reader to some higher insight or meaning.

## Drama

Drama, is simply a work that is written to be performed on stage by actors. From the Greekdran, meaning " to do," drama is thought to have developed from ancient religious ceremonies. For instance, Greek comedy is traced to ancient fertility rites.