

IDHAYA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, KUMBAKONAM



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1. SHORT STORIES

Definitions

A short story is a piece of prose fiction that typically can be read in one sitting and focuses on a self-contained incident or series of linked incidents, with the intent of evoking a "single effect" or mood. Key characteristics of the short story include its length, limited number of characters, subject matter, and tendency to begin 'in medias res', which is Latin for 'the middle of things'

A short story typically takes the form of a brief fictional work, usually written in prose. The earliest precursors to the short story can be found in the oral storytelling tradition, as well as episodes from ancient Mediterranean epics, such as 'The Epic of Gilgamesh' and Homer's 'Iliad.'

The true masters at combining the five key elements that go into every great short story: character, setting, conflict, plot and theme.

Characteristics

Length: Short stories typically range from 1,600 to 20,000 words.

Although authors and critics have debated the length of the short story throughout literary history, most agree on a minimum of 1,600 and a maximum of 20,000 words. In his own contribution to the debate, **Edgar Allen Poe** suggested that a short story should take 30 minutes to two hours to read.

Subject: Short stories usually focus on a single subject or theme.

Subjects or themes may range from something as mundane as a daily errand or as thrilling as a ghost tale. A single, easily contained plot is one of the hallmarks of the short story and helps shape its other characteristics.

'In medias res': Short stories usually take place in a single setting and begin 'in medias res', which means 'into the middle of things' in Latin.

In general, short stories tend to begin and end abruptly, with little to no prior information and no major lapses in time. As they involve just one plot line and are limited in word length, there is little room or need for the extended developments we frequently find in novels.

Limited number of characters:

Due to the limitations of the genre, short stories typically focus on just one or a couple characters.

As short stories usually cover such brief periods of time, even a single character may never be fully developed. However, historical examples, like some of Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales,' may find interesting ways of involving many different people, as we'll discuss next.

Examples

While "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" is certainly one of the most famous examples of short stories, other tales such as Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Lottery Ticket" by Anton Chekhov also fall into this category.

2.PICARESQUE NOVEL

The picaresque novel (Spanish: picaresca, from pícaro, for "rogue" or "rascal") is a genre of prose fiction that depicts the adventures of a roguish, but "appealing hero", of low social class, who lives by his or her wits in a corrupt society.

Thomas Nash is credited with writing the first picaresque novel in English (1594): The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton.

Main features of the Picaresque Novel

- Generally episodic.
- Not woven into a single, coherent plot.
- Lacks a sophisticated plot.
- Lacks psychologically complex or developing characters.
- A first-person narrative.

- Relates the adventures of a rogue or low-born adventurer (Spanish pícaro).
- Main character is unaffected by prevailing social codes.
- It provides an ironic or satirical survey of the hypocrisies and corruptions of society.

Picaresque novels incorporate several defining characteristics: satire, comedy, sarcasm, acerbic social criticism; first-person narration with an autobiographical ease of telling; an outsider protagonist-seeker on an episodic and often pointless quest for renewal or justice. The behavior of a picaresque hero or heroine stops just short of criminality. Carefree or immoral rascality positions the picaresque hero as a sympathetic outsider, untouched by the false rules of society.

- A picaresque narrative is usually written in first person as an autobiographical account.
- The main character is often of low character or social class. He or she gets by with wits and rarely deigns to hold a job.
- There is little or no plot. The story is told in a series of loosely connected adventures or episodes.
- There is little if any character development in the main character. Once a pícaro, always a pícaro. His or her circumstances may change but these rarely result in a change of heart.
- The pícaro's story is told with a plainness of language or realism.
- Satire is sometimes a prominent element.
- The behavior of a picaresque hero or heroine stops just short of criminality. Carefree or immoral rascality positions the picaresque hero as a sympathetic outsider, untouched by the false rules of society.

EXAMPLES:

- Joseph Andrews by Henry Fielding,
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain.

3.HISTORICAL NOVEL

Historical fiction is a literary genre in which the plot takes place in a setting located in the past. Although the term is commonly used as a synonym for the **historical novel**, a **novel** that has as its setting a period of **history** and that attempts to convey the spirit, manners, and social conditions of a past age with realistic detail and fidelity (which is in some cases only apparent fidelity) to **historical** fact. **Walter Scott** is the father of historical novel in English literature.

An essential element of historical fiction is that it is set in the past and pays attention to the manners, social conditions and other details of the depicted period.^[1] Authors also frequently choose to explore notable historical figures in these settings, allowing readers to better understand how these individuals might have responded to their environments.

7 Elements of Historical Fiction:

Characters, dialogue, plot, conflict, theme, setting, and world building. While every story succeeds or disappoints on the basis of these elements, historical fiction has the added challenge of bringing the past to life. Historical fiction is a literary genre that reconstructs past events in fictional **stories**. Common characteristics of this writing genre are the inclusion of historical events or historical people, invented scenes and dialogue, as well as authentic and believable details.

CHARACTERISTICS:

SETTING:

The setting is considered the most important element in Historical Fiction.

-Time: an authentic period in history

-Place: a real historical place

CHARACTERS:

The characters all behave in realistic ways. All of the characters may be fictional, or some may be real while others are fictional. The character also may be fictitious but based on a person who actually lived.

CONFLICT:

The main characters are involved in a conflict or dilemma that is realistic to the time period.

PLOT:

The plot is based on real events that are mixed with fictional events. These events make sense to the time period and have a solution to the problem at the end.

DESCRIPTION:

Descriptions of the characters, events and places are very vivid. Any historic information that may be unfamiliar to the reader is explained by the writer.

DIALOGUE:

Words spoken by the characters reflect the knowledge and thoughts of the people in that time period.

EXAMPLES:

- Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814),
- Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1865–69).

4.SENTIMENTAL NOVEL

The sentimental novel or the novel of sensibility is an 18th-century literary genre which celebrates the emotional and intellectual concepts of *sentiment*, *sentimentalism*, and *sensibility*

The sentimental novel is poetry or prose fiction of the 18th literary genre in contrast the rationalism of Augustan literature. One of the characteristics of this kind of literature is its extreme emotion. It tries to give to the reader an optimistic point of view about human nature and humanity. *Sentimental Journey* by Laurence Sterne was the most important book in this genre (1768).

A subgenre of sentimental novel was domestic novel or conduct novels. It is set in a domestic world. There are satirical works and gothic works. An example of satirical works is *Shamela* by Fielding. He is being satirical with *Pamela* by Richardson. Jane Austen is also satirical in her book "*Sense and Sensibility*". It is a satire of sentimental novel

Sentimental novels relied on emotional response, both from their readers and characters. They feature scenes of distress and tenderness, and the plot is arranged to advance both emotions and actions.

The reader needs to care about the story and the characters. That is the primary purpose of fiction writing. Sentimentality can kill a reader's connection to the characters before it even begins. But it can also forge a connection.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Sentimentalism asserted that over-shown feeling was not a weakness but rather showed one to be a moral person.

The literary work often featured scenes of distress and tenderness, and the plot was arranged to advance emotions rather than action.

Sentimentalism in literature was also often used as a medium through which authors could promote their own agendas—implored readers to empathize with the problems they are dealing with in their books.

EXAMPLES:

- Samuel Richardson's sentimental epistolary novel "Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded" (1740) had great literary influence.

5. GOTHIC NOVEL

Definition of Gothic Fiction

The term Gothic fiction refers to a style of writing that is characterized by elements of fear, horror, death, and gloom, as well as romantic elements, such as nature, individuality, and very high emotion.

Gothic fiction, which is largely known by the subgenre of Gothic horror, is a genre or mode of literature and film that combines fiction and horror, death, and at times romance. Its origin is attributed to English author Horace Walpole, with his 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto*.

10 key elements of Gothic literature

- Gothic elements include the following:

- Set in a haunted castle or house.
- A damsel in distress.
- An atmosphere of mystery and suspense.
- There is a ghost or monster.
- The weather is always awful. ...
- Dreaming/nightmares.
- Burdened male protagonist.
- Melodrama
- Death
- The beast within.

Characteristics of the Gothic Novel

The term Gothic novel broadly refers to stories that combine elements from horror and romanticism. The Gothic novel often deals with supernatural events, or events occurring in nature that cannot be easily explained or over which man has no control, and it typically follows a plot of suspense and mystery.

Here is a list of some common elements found in Gothic novels:

- Gloomy, decaying setting (haunted houses or castles with secret passages, trapdoors, and other mysterious architecture)
- Supernatural beings or monsters (ghosts, vampires, zombies, giants)
- Curses or prophecies
- Damsels in distress
- Heroes
- Romance
- Intense emotions

EXAMPLES:

The Castle of Otranto by Horace Walpole (1764) This is the novel that started it all. ...

- Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (1818)

- Bleak House by Charles Dickens (1853)

6.SCIENCE FICTION

Science fiction (sometimes shortened to **sci-fi** or **SF**) is a genre of speculative fiction that typically deals with imaginative and futuristic concepts such as advanced science and technology, space exploration, time travel, parallel universes, and extraterrestrial life. It has been called the "literature of ideas", and often explores the potential consequences of scientific, social, and technological innovations.

Science fiction is a genre of **fiction** in which the stories often tell about **science** and technology of the future. It is important to note that **science fiction** has a relationship with the principles of **science**—these stories involve partially true- partially fictitious laws or theories of **science**. **Science fiction** (abbreviated SF or **sci-fi** with varying punctuation and capitalization) is a broad genre of **fiction** that often involves speculations based on current or future **science** or technology. **Science fiction** is found in **books**, art, television, films, games, theatre, and other media.

Common Characteristics of Science Fiction?

Science fiction is often called the “literature of ideas.” Sci-fi novels include a wide variety of futuristic concepts. Since they’re so imaginative, anything is possible, especially in soft sci-fi novels. A sci-fi novel can be about space, time travel, aliens, or time-traveling aliens in space.

Regardless of the setting and characters, all sci-fi stories are complex, contain nuanced detail, and explore larger themes and commentary—sometimes satirically—about society beneath the surface.

The classic elements of a science fiction novel include:

- Time travel
- Teleportation
- Mind control, telepathy, and telekinesis
- Aliens, extraterrestrial lifeforms, and mutants

- Space travel and exploration
- Interplanetary warfare
- Parallel universes
- Fictional worlds
- Alternative histories
- Speculative technology
- Interplanetary warfare
- Parallel universes
- Fictional worlds
- Alternative histories
- Speculative technology

EXAMPLES:

- Brave New World by Aldous Huxley, 1984 by George Orwell and The War of the Worlds by H. G. Wells.

7.DETECTIVE FICTION

Detective fiction is a genre of writing where a **detective** works to solve a crime. The audience **is** challenged to solve the crime by the clues provided before the **detective** reveals the answer at the end of the novel. ... Oftentimes, it seems like the perfect crime.

Detective fiction is a subgenre of crime fiction and mystery fiction in which an investigator or a detective—either professional, amateur or retired—investigates a crime, often murder.

What are the elements of detective fiction?

The traditional **elements** of the **detective story** are: (1) the seemingly perfect crime; (2) the wrongly accused suspect at whom circumstantial evidence points; (3) the bungling of dim-witted police; (4) the greater powers of observation and superior mind of the **detective**; and (5) the startling and unexpected denouement

What are the six requirements of a good detective story?

- Detective must be memorable (interesting Quirky clever etc.)
- crime must be significant.
- murderer must be worthy opponent (clever, battle of wits)
- all suspects (even guilty one) must be introduced early in story.
- all clues discovered by detective introduced early.
- Solution must appear obvious when revealed.

Characteristics of a Detective Story

- First, the crime must be significant, worthy of the attention it receives.
- Second, the detective must be in some way a memorable character. He or she must be very intelligent, of course, unusually clever and observant, but also quirky, possessing perhaps some odd idiosyncrasies that distinguish him or her
- Third, along with an exceptional detective, there must be an outstanding opponent, a criminal clever enough to be a match for the hero. Solving the crime can't be too easy. Fourth, because a large part of the attraction of a detective story is the opportunity for the reader to try to figure out the solution along with the detective, all suspects of the crime must be introduced early in the story, and Fifth, all clues the detective discovers must be made available to the reader also.
- Finally, at the end of the story, the solution must seem obvious, logical, possible. The crime must not have resulted from accident or supernatural intervention, and the detective must be able to explain all aspects of the case in a reasonable way. A fine detective story should meet each one of these standards.

EXAMPLES:

- The Maltese Falcon, Dashiell Hammett.
- The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, Stieg Larsson.
- And Then There Were None, Agatha Christie.

7.SOCIAL AND PROLETERAIN NOVEL

The **social novel**, also known as the **social problem** (or **social protest**) **novel**, is a "work of fiction in which a prevailing social problem, such as gender, race, or class prejudice, is dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel".^[1] More specific examples of social problems that are addressed in such works include poverty, conditions in factories and mines, the plight of child labor, violence against women, rising criminality, and epidemics because of overcrowding, and poor sanitation in cities.

The proletariat are members of the working class. The proletarian novel is a subgenre of the novel, written by workers mainly for other workers. It overlaps and sometimes is synonymous with the working-class novel,^[7] socialist novel,^[8] social problem novel (also problem novel or sociological novel or social novel),^[9] propaganda or thesis novel,^[10] and socialist realism novel.

The proletarian novel may comment on political events, systems and theories, and is frequently seen as an instrument to promote social reform or political revolution among the working classes. Proletarian literature is created especially by communist, socialist, and anarchist authors. It is about the lives of poor, and the period 1930 to 1945 in particular produced many such novels. However, there were works before and after these dates. In Britain the term working class literature, novel etc. is more generally used. The intention of the writers of proletarian literature is to lift the workers from the slums, by inspiring them to embrace the possibilities of social change or a political revolution. As such it is a form of political fiction.

The novel that, like Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854), presents the lives of workingmen or other members of the lower orders is not necessarily an example of proletarian fiction. The category properly springs out of direct experience of proletarian life and is not available to writers whose background is bourgeois or aristocratic.

Examples: Dicken's, David Copperfield, John Steinbeck's, *Of Mice and Men*.

8.STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS NOVEL

In literature, **stream of consciousness** is a method of narration that describes happenings in the flow of thoughts in the minds of the characters. It is a style of writing developed by a group of writers at the beginning of the 20th century. It aimed at expressing in words the flow of characters' thoughts and feelings in their minds. The technique aspires to give readers the impression of being inside the minds of the characters.

The Stream of Consciousness

Characteristics:

1. 'Every thought tends to be part of a personal consciousness'
2. 'With each personal consciousness thought is always changing'
3. 'Within each personal consciousness thought is sensibly continuous'
4. 'Consciousness always appears to deal with objects independent of itself'
5. 'It is interested in some parts of these objects to the exclusion of others, and welcomes or rejects all the while'

Salient Features

The salient features of stream of consciousness are as follows:

- Description of the continuous flow of unspoken thoughts or perceptions of the character.
- The character's thoughts and feelings are depicted as overheard in the mind or addressed to oneself.
- Chiefly concerned with the subjective description of life.
- The flow of a character's thoughts often appears without a coherent structure or cohesion.
- Use of informal and colloquial language.
- Abandonment of conventional rules of syntax and punctuation.
- Use of the cinematic device of montage, i.e., the shift of thoughts randomly from one thing to another.
- **EXAMPLES:**
 - James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922), Samuel Beckett, *Molloy* (1951) and Virginia Woolf, *The Lighthouse*.