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Department of English

Literary texts

First Year/ Gs 4, 5, 3

**Literary Genres: Prose**

**Definition of Prose:** Unlike poetry, Prose is a form of language that has **no formal metrical structure**. It applies a natural flow of speech, and **ordinary grammatical structure** rather than rhythmic structure. The significant unit being **the sentence** rather than the line.

**Normal every day speech is spoken in prose** and **most people think and write in prose form**.  Prose comprises of **full grammatical sentences** which consist of **paragraphs** and favors **clear, straightforward language.**

Prose is also the common language used in **newspapers, magazines, literature, encyclopedias, broadcasting, philosophy, law, history, the sciences** and many other forms of communication.

**Example of Prose Form**

“The woods look lovely against the darkness and as I gaze into the mysterious depths of the forest, I feel like lingering here longer.  However, I have pending appointments to keep and much distance to cover before I settle in for the night or else I will be late for all of them.”

**Example of a Poetry Verse**

“The woods are lovely, dark and deep.  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.”

* From *“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” written by Robert Frost.*

The above paragraph is conveying a similar message but it is conveyed in **ordinary language**, without a **formal metrical structure**.

**Some Common Types of Prose**

* **1. Nonfictional Prose: A literary work that is mainly based on fact although it may contain fictional elements in certain cases. Examples are biographies and essays.**
* **2. Fictional Prose: A literary work that is wholly or partly imagined. Examples are novels.**

**\* Heroic Prose: A literary work that may be written down or recited and employs many of the expressions found in oral tradition. Examples are legends and tales.**

**\* Prose Poetry: A literary work which exhibits poetic quality using emotional effects and**[**imagery**](https://literarydevices.net/imagery/)**but are written in prose instead of**[**verse**](https://literarydevices.net/verse/)**.**

**Types of Prose Fiction:**

**1. The novel:** It**can be defined as an extended work of prose fiction. It derives from the Italian novella , which was a short piece of prose. The novel has become an increasingly popular form of fiction since the early eighteenth century, though prose narratives were written long before then. The term denotes a prose narrative about characters and their actions in what is recognisably everyday life. This differentiates it from its immediate predecessor, the romance, which describes unrealistic adventures of supernatural heroes. The novel has developed various sub-genres:**

* **In the epistolary novel the narrative is conveyed entirely by an exchange of letters. (e.g.**[**Samuel Richardson**](http://www2.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/intranet/englishbasics/ProseTypes.htm)**, *Pamela*.)**
* **The historical novel takes its setting and some of the (chief) characters and events from history. It develops these elements with attention to the known facts and makes the historical events and issues important to the central narrative. (e.g.**[**Charles Dickens**](http://www2.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/intranet/englishbasics/ProseTypes.htm)**, *A Tale of Two Cities*)**
* **The bildungsroman (novel of education) is a type of novel originating in Germany which presents the development of a character mostly from childhood to maturity. This process typically contains conflicts and struggles, which are ideally overcome in the end so that the protagonist can become a valid and valuable member of society.** [**James Joyce**](http://www2.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/intranet/englishbasics/ProseTypes.htm)**, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.**
* **The social novel, also called industrial novel or Condition of England novel, became particularly popular between 1830 and 1850 and is associated with the development of nineteenth-century realism. As its name indicates, the social novel gives a portrait of society, especially of lower parts of society, dealing with and criticizing the living conditions created by industrial development or by a particular legal situation (the poor laws for instance). Well-known examples are:**[**Charles Dickens**](http://www2.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/intranet/englishbasics/ProseTypes.htm)**, *Oliver Twist*.**
* **Science fiction is a type of prose narrative of varying length, from short-story to novel. Its topics include quests for other worlds, the influence of alien beings on Earth or alternate realities; they can be utopian, dystopian or set in the past. Common to all types of science fiction is the interest in scientific change and development and concern for social, climatic, geological or ecological change (e.g.** [**H.G. Wells**](http://www2.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/intranet/englishbasics/ProseTypes.htm)**, *The Time Machine*).**

1. **Short Story: A short-story is a piece of prose fiction marked by relative shortness. The plot may be comic, tragic, romantic, or satiric. It may be written in the mode of fantasy, realism or naturalism.**