





Writer : Kamala Wijeratne

Editorial Assistants : Malini Suwaris  
Philomina Perera

Editor : G.B. Wanninayake

Illustrations : Daya Kalamulla

Design and Layout : **Mahinda Rajapaksha**  
H. K. Prabhath Charaminda

Course Development: K.A. Piyatissa

Course Production : R.B.A. Jayasekera

Supervision : Dr. S.D.L. Amaragunasekera



# Introduction to Literature

DEPARTMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Contents	Page
0.0 Introduction .....	3
1.0 Objectives .....	3
2.0 Pre-test .....	4
Part I	
3.0 The Difference between Literature and other Types of texts .....	5
Part II	
4.0 Various Types of Literary Texts .....	8
5.0 Summary .....	25
6.0 Post-test .....	26
7.0 Assignments .....	29
8.0 Answers .....	30



## 0.0 Introduction

This is an introduction to a subject you have not studied in detail before. You may have read stories and poems. But you may have read them merely for relaxation and enjoyment. You may not have studied them as literature. You will both learn and enjoy what we do here. The subject we hope to study in this module is Literature in English. Not only will you learn to read books and poems which are accepted as literary texts, you will also learn to appreciate and judge them. The syllabus in the literature that you are going to study has poetry and drama, short stories and novels. This module introduces you to this subject. So enjoy yourself.

## 1.0 Objectives

After studying this module, you will be able to:-

- \* define what literature is and learn the various terms used in learning and teaching literature.
- \* identify various literary forms and recognize the characteristics of prose, poetry and drama.
- \* Lay the foundation for reading and appreciating literary texts and develop critical thinking.
- \* Use the terms you learn in literature in your own discussions about literature in your classroom teaching.
- \* Develop a positive attitude to literature.
- \* Speak and write about literature with confidence.



In your daily reading you may have read different types of texts. Let us do a small test now to see whether you can recognize a literary text from other types of texts.

## 2.0 Pre-test

Read the three texts given below and try to understand the aim of each writer and state whether the writer's intention is to (a) educate the reader (b) give information and attract the reader (c) arouse the interest and feelings in the reader. Write your answer in the space provided at the end of each text.

### Text I

*"Poets have pointed it in words, artists in pictures. The scenery of Wales stamps itself indelibly in the memory, whether you are here for three days or three months. It is not all of a piece either; the Welsh Landscape is as varied and subtle as the colours in a Portrait by an old Master."*

*The mountains of Snowdon and its surrounding peaks soaring 3,000 feet and more, are etched boldly against the sky. Further south, Plynlimon is less spectacular. Yet this grassy escarpment is the source of five rivers and rises over 2,000 feet. So do the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains, whose smooth flanks make ideal walking country".*

(The writer's intention in this text is .....)

### Text II

*"Of the glacial features to be seen within Great Langdale, some are the direct cause of ice-action and some the after effects of ice. The truncated spurs give a wide U-shaped Valley with a clear view up a considerable length unlike valleys with interlocking spurs. There are several cirques of which Stickle Tarn is the most vivid example within this area. Stickle Ghyll well illustrates a hanging valley with a well-marked nick point. The lack of cross-valley moraines suggests there was a final lowering of the ice-level rather than a slow retreat".*

(The writer's intention in this text is .....)

### Text III

*"The small locomotive engine, No. 4 came clanking, Stumbling down from Selston with seven full wagons. It appeared round the corner with loud threats of speed, but the colt that*



it startled from among the gorse, which still flickened indistinctly in the raw afternoon out - distanced it at a canter. A woman, walking up the railway line to Underwood, drew back into the hedge, held her basket aside, and watched the footplate of the engine advancing. The trucks thumped heavily past, one by one, with slow inevitable movement, as she stood insignificantly trapped between the jolting black wagons and the hedge; then they curved away towards the coppice, where the withered oak leaves dropped noiselessly, while the birds pulling at the scarlet hips beside the track made off into the dusk that had already crept into the spinney".

(The writer's intention in this text is .....)

Check your answers with those given at the end of the module

I am sure you have got all your answers correct. Let us think a little more about the texts to make you go into (a) little more detailed examination of the texts; (b) to help you to understand the differences between a literary text, and other texts (we can use the word nonliterary texts for these). Let us now read Part I which shows you the difference.

## PART I

### 3.0 The Difference between Literature and other types of texts.

The extracts that you read for the pre-test describe various parts of Britain - the first one a part of Wales, the second Great Langdale and the third an area around Nottingham. But you may have noticed that the intentions of the writers are different.

If you read text I you will notice that there are expressions like "Whether you are here for three days or three months" and "Whose smooth flanks make ideal walking country". A big effort is made to persuade you to visit the place. The advantages of visiting the place are thrust on your mind, so that you would go along with the writer.

The language you use to talk about art is carefully used here, 'stamps itself indelibly' 'colours in the portrait by an old master'. But it is used for the sake of commerce, to persuade the reader to visit the place. So clearly this extract comes from a travel document, an advertisement by a travel agency to attract holiday makers.



Text II contains information that is useful, although it also describes a place. The writer is making certain observations and seems to be educating the reader. There is specialised language use here eg. **truncated spurs, U-Shaped valley, Cirques, hanging valley, nick point** and cross valley moraines. The information that is communicated would be useful to a student of structural geography or geology but not to ordinary people. The extract comes from a book of Science, a textbook on structural geography. The language is the language of Science.

Text III is more like extract I but the aim is clearly not to attract the reader to the place described. On the other hand, you will feel as if something is going to happen here. There is a feeling of expectation generated - a predictive quality. For example you understand immediately that the 'colt' (young horse) and the 'woman' react in two different ways to the locomotive engine. Read the lines;

'The woman stood insignificantly trapped between the jolting black wagons and the hedge' and  
'the horse outdistanced it at a canter'

The writer seems to want to say something in the future about the woman, the horse and the engine. **What you find here in this extract is the background to a story. Therefore it is a literary text.** The language in it is affective. The content too appeals to the reader naturally unlike text I and II. Now that you have seen the differences between other texts (non-literary texts) and literary texts let us prepare a list of those differences:

- \* The content in a literary text is naturally interesting to the reader.
- \* It appeals to his emotions.
- \* The language in a literary text is emotive - it appeals to the feelings.
- \* It has a predictive quality.
- \* The intention of the writer of a literary text is to create new situations. He holds the interests of the reader by this means.
- \* A writer of a non-literary text informs and sometimes persuades the reader to accept what it says.
- \* The language could be scientific or descriptive, in such a text.



You have understood the difference between literary and non-literary texts. Now let us try to define what literature is;

What is Literature?

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines literature as:

- i. 'Writings whose value lies in beauty of form or emotional effect'
- ii. 'realm of letters'
- iii. Writings of a country or period.

The above definition would make you think that literature is written texts. This is not always the case, as you will understand from the module on narrative poetry. Literature can be oral too passed from mouth to mouth, like folk poetry.

But to go back to our definitions, you will notice that there are broad as well as narrow ways of looking at literature. For example, the third one is very broad because it includes all writing of a country or period. The second one is narrow because it implies that literature is writings of highly educated or highly intelligent people (Letters mean educated writing).

Many people would take the first as the best definition: 'Writings of value, which have beauty of form or emotional effect'. This means that literature is expression of beautiful ideas and thoughts in a way that appeal to people.

Now that you have seen how literary texts are different from other texts and have read a number of definitions of literature do the following checklist to check your understanding. You must read the statements and tick the right answer in the boxes;

### Checklist I

Read the statements and tick the right answer in the boxes.

- i. Literature is different to other texts in the way it appeals to the feelings of the reader. ☐ Yes/No
- ii. The language of brochures is somewhat similar to the language in literary texts. ☐ Yes/No
- iii. The aims of advertisements and literary texts are different. ☐ Yes/No
- iv. The aims of scientific texts and literary texts are similar. ☐ Yes/No



- v. The most accepted definition of literature is that literature is the writings of highly educated people.

Yes/No

Check your answers with those given at the end of the module

- vi. Literature must have beauty of form and must appeal to the emotions.

Yes/No

Now we can go on to Part II and look at various types of literary texts. Are you happy with what you have learnt so far?

## PART II

### 4.0 Various Types of Literary Texts

Traditionally literature is divided into 3 forms ie.

- i. poetry
- ii. prose
- iii. drama

Prose is further divided into,

- i. novel
- ii. short story

Poetry looks different and has to be read in a special way, which is different to the way you read prose. A poem has both meaning and form and is arranged in lines on a page. Prose is arranged in paragraphs.

Drama is different from both poetry and prose. It is arranged in the form of dialogue.

Since poetry is the oldest form of literary text, and since we have more poems than prose or drama to study, let us try to understand what a poem is and how one should read poetry.

#### 4.1 Poetry

Earlier you were told that a poem is arranged in lines on a page. Read the following two lines of poetry by the English poet - Robert Burns;

*The White moon is setting behind the white wave  
And time is setting with me, O!*

You will see that the two lines end on the cry placed at the end of the second line. The rhythm drags as a result of the exclamation which seems to have burst out of the writer as a



result of the realization that the passing of time is similar to the passing away of his own life. The various elements or parts of the poem relate very closely to each other. This is what W.B. Yeats, a great English poet has said about the way the various parts of the poem relate to each other:

*'When the moon and the wave and whiteness and setting time and the last sad cry come together, they create an emotion which can't be created by any other arrangement of colours and sounds and forms!'*

From this statement you could see that a poem is a unity made up of a number of elements.

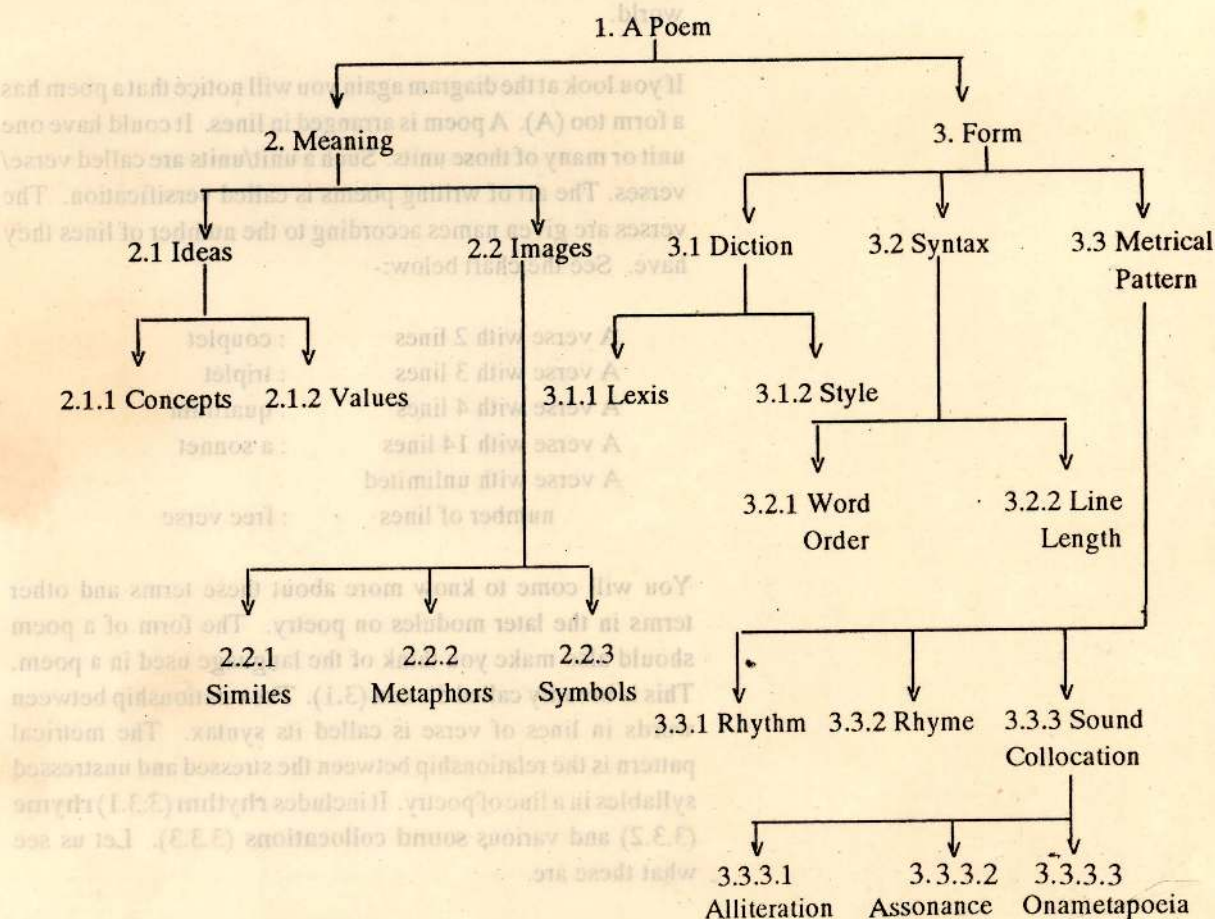
## Elements of a Poem

Broadly the elements of a poem are:

- i. meaning
- ii. form

They are also called Sense and Sound. Diagram 1 will help you to understand it better.

Diagram 1





The various elements are numbered.

To begin with the broader aspects, a poem has an idea (2.1) and tries to communicate it to the reader. To do this he uses images (2.2). Images are word pictures. These could be simple adjectives or more complex pictures like similes (2.2.1) and metaphors (2.2.2)

**A Simile** compares one object with another eg. the daffodils are like stars that is in the milky way (William Wordsworth's Daffodils)

**A metaphor** is an implied Simile. "He (The eagle) clasps the crag with crooked hands." (Tennyson's) A picture of an evil or wicked person is created.

**A symbol** is an extended metaphor.

The idea in a poem is a concept or value (attribute). These concepts and values are related to the deepest experiences of men and women. That is why some people think that a poem should communicate a deep moral truth. In other words they expect a poem to say something important about life and the world.

If you look at the diagram again you will notice that a poem has a form too (A). A poem is arranged in lines. It could have one unit or many of those units. Such a unit/units are called verse/verses. The art of writing poems is called versification. The verses are given names according to the number of lines they have. See the chart below:-

A verse with 2 lines	: couplet
A verse with 3 lines	: triplet
A verse with 4 lines	: quatrain
A verse with 14 lines	: a sonnet
A verse with unlimited number of lines	: free verse

You will come to know more about these terms and other terms in the later modules on poetry. The form of a poem should also make you think of the language used in a poem. This is broadly called diction (3.1). The relationship between words in lines of verse is called its syntax. The metrical pattern is the relationship between the stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. It includes rhythm (3.3.1) rhyme (3.3.2) and various sound collocations (3.3.3). Let us see what these are.



**Rhyme** This is usually used for the occurrence of the same sound pattern (stressed vowels and consonants and other following vowels) at the end of a line;

*Rain, rain go to Spain*

*Rain a while and come back again*

When a poet does not use the same sound but something close to it, it is called **Slant rhyme**.

**Rhythm** is the beat or pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry (verse). The rhythm could be slow or fast, according to the meaning a poet wants to convey. See the following lines;

*'The waves beneath him crawls,  
and like a thunderbolt he falls'*

(From the Eagle)

The first line is slow. its rhythm is slow, highlighting the meaning of crawls. The second line is fast suggesting the meaning of thunderbolt falls'.

**Sound collocations**

There are other sound collocations eg. alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia.

**Alliteration**

Repetition of initial consonants  
eg. *White wave*

**Assonance**

Repetition of vowel sounds  
eg. *beam and lean*

**Onomatopoeia**

Imitation of the sound of a bird, animal or phenomenon.  
eg. *hiss* and *bang*  
(hiss - the sound of a serpent,  
bang - the sound of a cracker).

To round off this discussion let us look at the two lines of poetry from Robert Burns once again;

*'The white moon is setting behind the white wave  
And time is setting with me O.!*

What makes these two lines of poetry, different from ordinary human conversation or ordinary composition?



Firstly there are word pictures or images: white moon, white wave and Time! The images create new meaning (a context of situation) because the way the writer uses language (diction) in the text. The writer establishes a parallel in the two lines. The words (syntax) have been used to stress the similarity;

White moon is setting

Time is setting

The parallel tells us that the writer is not merely observing a beautiful sight. The setting moon suggests the passing of time, the end of the life span of a human being. The setting time is personalised with 'with me'. The speaker in the poem is affected and he cries out in sadness because he realizes that his life is drawing closer to death. We too feel the agony of that cry, because there is something common to all of us (universal) in the idea he conveys. The adjectives 'white' moon and 'white' wave become more meaningful in the light of this understanding. White is the colour of death and sadness. As a result the idea takes a more general form. It is the **theme** of the poem:

- / // - / - / - / . //  
The White Moon is setting, behind the white wave

- // - // - / - //  
And Time is setting with me O!

**\*\* Please refer to your Phonology Module here\*\***

From your Phonology you know that a dash is a low sound and a stroke is a high sound.

Notice how certain syllables are heightened by the stressed syllables.

/ // / // / //  
eg. White Moon, White Wave, Time and O.

Notice also that the second line is slowed down by the rhythm. The first line shows the writer's reaction to the visual picture (moon setting). The second is the realization or reflection about the first. The thought comes late, the reflex action faster. The eye is quicker than the mind.

The discussion above should have made you aware of the many elements in a poem; (i) ideas (theme) (ii) pictures (images) (iii) beat (rhythm) (iv) number of lines (versification) and (v) the attitude of the writer (tone). This last



would be discussed in later modules on poetry. The various components come together to create a new context of situation - a new meaning. In this poem the poet tells us that life is impermanent and death is the end product of life. By making us respond to it deeply he makes us also share in that experience.

So far I have spoken about the parts of a poem. Before we conclude this part, it would be good if we can look at a definition which will make you look at a poem as a whole.

Look at the following;

A poem is -

i. a metrical composition of elevated character.

ii. elevated composition in verse or prose.

(The Concise Oxford Dictionary)

The word elevated is important here. It means valuable and rare in idea and form. The first one is a narrower definition than the second. It is the more acceptable one for us in this section. It takes into consideration the form that we discussed as being a part of poetry. The second definition is a broader one and suggests the 'exalted' or creative richness that we associate with poetry. Any writing which has this quality could be called poetry. But for our purpose here the first one is the more relevant.

Now you have learnt a number of terms which are generally applicable to literature but are specially applicable to poetry. These are rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, stressed syllable, unstressed syllable, versification. Let us see how many words you can understand and remember. Let us do the following checklist;

## Checklist 2

Mark with a tick [✓] if the following statements are correct in the following checklist and put a cross [X] if they are wrong;

i. The theme is the idea or ideas the writer wants to communicate to the reader. ☐

ii. Images are pictures the writer uses to express his theme/themes. ☐

iii. A poem with fourteen lines is called a sonnet. ☐

iv. The sound pattern in a poem is called its metrical structure. ☐



v. Rhythm is another word for beat ☐

vi. Images create a new context of situation. ☐

vii. One must also consider the length of the lines in considering the meaning of a poem ☐

Check your answers with those given at the end of the module

Now that we have studied about poetry and done that checklist, I am sure you have confidence in this area.

In this section you have looked at one form of literature. Now let us look at another form. We call this form **prose**.

## 4.2 Prose

You may be more familiar with prose as most of the books you read is prose. Text books, essays and even letters are prose.

In literature prose is divided into a number of categories. Two of these are novels and short stories. Broadly they are called prose fiction. First let us look at the novel.

### 4.2.1 The Novel

To look at what a novel is let us look at the definition of a novel;

*'Fictitious prose narrative of volume and length portraying characters and actions representative of real life in continuous plot'.*

(The Concise Oxford Dictionary)

There are a number of important features which we could notice from this definition;

- i. Fictitious prose narrative - Fictitious means it is not true. Prose means the form of prose. Narrative is a story. It means an imagined story written in prose.
- ii. Representative of real life - the characters and situations are close to life.
- iii. In continuous plot.

The incidents and actions are related in time and space in a cause and effect relationship.

Even this explanation may not help you to understand what we really mean by a novel. The best way to recognize and understand what a novel is, is for you to read a novel.



## Activity 1

Read the Village in the Jungle by Leonard Wolf or its translation in Sinhala or Tamil. (get it from your study centre) Tick off with a right (✓) if you agree with the following statements;

In the Book you have read -

- i. From beginning to end there was a story ☐
- ii. The story could have happened in real life ☐
- iii. It was a true story ☐
- iv. It held your interest from beginning to end. ☐
- v. The characters seemed to be real people ☐
- vi. The story made you think of life deeply and in a new manner. ☐

If you have agreed with i, ii, iv, v and vi you have read a novel.

As in the poem, the novel has various parts or aspects. Let us look at these now. Firstly let us look at what we mean by plot and try to understand the difference between the story and plot.

## The Plot of a Novel

From your reading experience you would have observed that a novel has a story. A story is a narrative of events arranged in time sequence. The plot is contained in the story. The plot could be explained by examining the following aspects that a novel has;

- i. a selection of events arranged in time
- ii. events which appeal to your feelings
- iii. events that lead to other interesting and exciting events.
- iv. events that have a cause and effect relationship.

Let us do an activity for you to understand what plot is.

## Activity 2

Look at the following chart. Fill in the columns with the information you got from reading The Village in the Jungle - I am giving you 3 examples.

Chart

Event	Reason	Result
Babehami takes back Silindu's chena	Babehami dislikes Silindu	Silindu becomes poorer



Fernando comes to Beddegama	To improve his business	He employs Babun
Fernando is attracted to Punchi Menike	Punchi Menike is pretty	He plots with Babehami to get rid of Babun
Babun is taken to prison	-----	-----
Silindu kills Babehami	-----	-----
Hinnihami leaves Punchirala	-----	-----

Check your answers with those given at the end of the module

You have learnt two new terms which are associated with the novel - plot and story. Let us understand a few more;

## The Background or Setting of a Novel

There is an obvious link between characters and their setting in a novel. There are many different backgrounds and settings eg. historical, fantastic, ordinary, rural and urban. The setting could be the past, present or even the future. The author of a novel will sometimes make a character react to his setting or he will use a setting to reflect on the mood or feelings of the character.

## Characters

Characters are the people in a novel. Characters are found in many literary texts eg. short story, the drama and even in narrative poetry. Characters do things and things happen to them. In a good novel, the characters must be interesting, intriguing, consistent, convincing, complex and realistic. They must be believable. Broadly characters could be divided into 4 types;

- i. Those who are used for decoration and enjoyment.
- ii. Those that pass information to others.
- iii. Those who listen to pass on information to others. Here the main characters are given a reason to tell their story.
- iv. Those characters through whom the writer states his views about people or situations.



These four types of characters are either flat or rounded characters. The latter do a number of functions and change from time to time or develop with the story. These are usually the **main (Major) characters** in a novel. The flat characters do only one function - They show a certain trait or oddity (funny behaviour) and don't change. In the Village in the Jungle, PUNCHI MENIKA and SILINDU are rounded characters, NANCHOHAMY is a flat character. The flat characters play only **minor roles** in a novel.

Authors reveal characters through:

- i. What they say about themselves
- ii. What other characters say about them
- iii. The reactions of other characters
- iv. The reaction of the characters to certain situations
- v. What the narrator or 'author' says about them
- vi. The reaction of the characters to their environment
- vii. Their physical features and build
- viii. Their manner of dress
- ix. Their accent or social position
- x. Their education
- xi. Their habits and mood

## Theme

You are already familiar with this concept because we have already come across this word in our discussion of the parts of a poem. We will elaborate it further here. In a novel, there could be many ideas or themes.

Very often these ideas relate to our awareness and experience of the problems and difficulties of life. Theme must not be confused with the story. In the 'Village in the Jungle' how **Silindu becomes a criminal is the story. How he exhibits human behaviour is the theme.**

In many stories you find that the writer is making a comment or observation about life. For example in The Village in the Jungle, we see the struggle of human beings to survive in a hostile (unfriendly) environment. In this struggle, man is proved to be more cruel than nature. This is another theme in the Village in the Jungle.



## Style

Each novel has its own style. Style means how writers use words and how they combine words to create atmosphere, convey mood, arouse emotions, describe places, create characters and convey ideas etc. Style comprises the following elements;

- i. Diction - Choice of words (meaning, association of words, rhythm and images)
- ii. Imagery - The technique of calling up pictures. It suggests atmosphere and meaning. We have seen how this happens in a poem.
- iii. Sentence variety - Different sentence lengths ensure the effectiveness of the paragraph, both by keeping the passage lively and creating a mood.
- iv. Tone - the writers' attitude to his subject and his audience. You can talk about the tone of a poem and a drama as well.

When we began our discussion about prose we said that prose fiction could be divided into two broad types - the novel and the short story. We have looked at the aspects of a novel and tried to distinguish it from poetry. Now let us try to understand what a short story is.

### 4.2.2 The Short Story

The short story shares many features with a novel but is different to a novel in a number of ways. One of the most important differences is its length. A short story has to be short so that the reader could read it to a finish without a break. Short stories vary in size from one or two pages to about fifty or sixty.

Let us look at some of the elements which are common to both the novel and short story. These are :-

- |               |                       |                          |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| i. the story  | iii. characterisation | v. setting or background |
| ii. the theme | iv. plot              | vi. style                |

But a short story is different to a novel in a number of ways. Let us put these differences into a chart. The examples given in them are taken from the short stories in your syllabus.



## Difference between novel and short story.

### Novel

### Short story

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>i. A novel deals with a longer stretch of time than a short story. It could span a life time and stretches even across generations.</p>            | <p>A short story covers only a limited period of time and concentrates around one main situation.</p>   |
| <p>ii. A novel has a number of plots and/or subplots, developing many themes.</p>   | <p>A short story has one single main plot which develops through a series of tightly controlled &amp; connected incidents built around a theme.</p>   |
| <p>iii. A novel has a large number of major and minor characters who interact with each other through a considerable period of time.</p>              | <p>A short story has only a limited number of major characters, supported by a few minor characters. The Major characters show opposing or conflicting behaviour. eg. Nicholas &amp; Aunt in the Lumber Room; Nene &amp; Okeke in Marriage is a Private Affair.</p> |
| <p>iv. In a novel there are a number of conflicting situations and characters developed over a period of time.</p>                                    | <p>In a short story, the conflict is central to its theme and organisation and develops very quickly to a climax (or critical point).</p>   |
| <p>v. The action (or the story) spreads into related and inter-related situations, making it necessary to develop more characters and situations.</p> | <p>The short story condenses its action and flows quickly and smoothly towards the critical point and its conclusion.</p>   |
| <p>vi. A novel covers a variety of human experiences and a complexity of situations. Through these means it comments on life.</p>                     | <p>A short story reveals a small segment of life but comments on life through this segment.</p>   |



Now let us see whether you remember what you have read in this section. Let us do Checklist 3.

### Checklist 3

Read each statement and mark with a right [✓] if it is correct and a wrong [X] if it is incorrect.

- i. The broad term used to describe the Novel and the Short Story is prose fiction. ☐
- ii. A novel differs from a short story mainly by its length. ☐
- iii. What is common to both novel and short story is plot. ☐
- iv. The two main types of characters in a novel or short story are flat and rounded characters. ☐
- v. The cause and effect relationship between the actions in a novel is called its plot. ☐
- vi. Another word for theme is idea. ☐
- vii. The style in a novel or short story means how writers use words and how they combine words to create atmosphere etc. ☐
- viii. The background of the Village in the Jungle is historical. ☐

Check your answers with those given at the end of the module

Let us now highlight the main points we have learnt in this section before we go on to the next section.

The second literary form is prose. But prose is a very broad term and can cover all non-metrical forms of writing. (Please refer to the section on poetry that you have studied before.) Our concern was not with the whole of prose writing but with prose fiction. There are two types of prose fiction-the novel and short story. They have similarities as well as differences eg. both have a story running through the text. There is plot as well as character. Both have a central idea or theme which give them unity and cohesion. Background and style are other features that the novel and short story have in common. A short story however, is much shorter than a novel and deals with a limited span of life. This means that the life experience that one finds in a short story is limited. It has limited plot and character. Both novels and short stories have some conflict or conflicts. But one becomes more aware of the conflict within the short story. The movement of the story or action in a short



story is also faster and reaches its conclusion in a more lineal fashion. A short story has a theme/themes, but it cannot be developed in space and time as in a novel. However, it makes up for it by its intensity and use of images and background to the fullest effect.

Now that you have studied poetry and prose let us proceed to the next section, which is drama.

### 4.3 Drama

Drama is different from both poetry and prose, although it uses many of the features that we attributed to prose and poetry. For example, drama also uses plot and character to communicate its message about the human situation. One difference between drama and the other two forms is that drama extends beyond the written text. It has a performance aspect to it, in addition to the written text. The latter is called the **dramatic script** or the **text of the play**. It is acted on a stage, where actual human beings take on the characters. As a result a drama has both a visual (seeing) as well as an auditory (hearing) aspect. In poetry and prose you think of a readership only. But in drama you think of a readership as well as an **audience**, because you could read the drama script and see the performance of the play.

Let us look at a definition as before, to see whether we can pick out the most outstanding features of a drama.

**'drama is a set of events having the unity and progress of a play leading to catastrophe or consummation'**

(The Concise Oxford Dictionary)

Let us go into a little more detail;

**'set of events'** - as in the novel and short story you will find the elements of a story in a drama. There will be at least an incident or a series of incidents connected to time and space.

**'unity and progress of a play'** - unity refers to unity of time, place and theme and the forward development or action of the play.

**leading to catastrophe or consummation -**

Catastrophe is misfortune or death - This is usually the feature in the kind of play we call tragedy. Consummation is the realization of objectives. This is usually the feature in the type of play we call comedy.



From the above definition, (you would have noticed) that the following aspects could be gathered about drama.

- i. A drama has a story or narrative of some kind,
- ii. The end could be happy or sad depending on the type of play.
- iii. It has a forward moving quality or action. This of course includes dialogue or verbal interaction. The narrative is given life by characters following each other.

There is a feature which is not mentioned here but suggested in the words catastrophe and consummation - that is **conflict**. There is a saying; 'No conflict, no drama'. Catastrophe results because there is conflict. Consummation results as a result of the conflict being removed. Conflict could be external or internal, between two people or two forces. External conflict could be between two human beings; that is - it is physical. Internal conflict is generally, within a person, a struggle between two impulses eg. truthfulness and deceit, generosity and meanness, envy and charity, humanity and devilishness. Conflict could also be symbolic. For example the conflicts in 'Macbeth' are symbols of the struggle between the forces of evil and the forces of good in man.

As you may have noticed drama is divided into two main types; **tragedy and comedy**.

**Tragedy** - To most people tragedy means a drama which has a sad ending. But this is not a complete description. Aristotle has said that tragedy dramatises the conflict between the **vitality of the single life**, and the laws or limits of life'. The **tragic hero goes beyond the standards to which normal rational people adhere and does some fearful deed which destroys him**. In the drama you are going to read for the examination, the hero, Macbeth commits crime after crime, until he kills the innocent young children of Macduff. This turns everyone against him and he has to fight for his life. In tragedy we see humanity pushed to the extreme, in his agony and grief, the hero enters a world that few people know, and reveals greatness.

### Comedy

In comedy, the hero/heroine realizes his/her happiness within civilized and accepted social norms. Comedies are of two types -

- i. satiric comedy
- ii. romantic comedy



Satire means **ridicule**. In literature a person is ridiculed to show what the right or acceptable behaviour is. Satire is used in all forms of literature but is specially effective in drama.

In Satiric Comedy the emphasis is on the people who obstruct the happiness of the hero/heroine. These roles/characters are subjected to ridicule because they are rigid unbendable people who think only they are right and act mechanically instead of genially to the ups and downs of life. Very often the plot is resolved by the younger, brighter people winning over the older, rigid people. The Twelfth Night is a good example. Comedy was supposed to reform folly (foolishness) or vice by laughing at it. In Twelfth Night, Malvolio, the housekeeper of Olivia the heroine, is a stern man who can't like anyone. Before the play ends Malvolio is punished for his 'joyless' hypocrisy.

In Romantic Comedy, the emphasis is on two people, who gain the sympathy of the audience, as they face various obstructions in realizing their happiness. Finally the obstructions are removed and they unite (The MidsummerNights' Dream is a romantic comedy).

We have looked at the two forms of drama in a general kind of way. Let us look at the specific differences under the headings of (i) Protagonist (hero) (ii) ending, (iii) audience response.

#### Differences between Tragedy and Comedy.

Comedy	Tragedy
i. <b>Protagonist</b> (The main character or hero of the play) succeeds in the end. He overcomes all obstacles and realizes his objectives	The hero is doomed and he accepts his'doom without fear.
ii. The series of events which make up the drama has a happy ending.	The drama ends in tragedy.
iii. The audience responds with joy and laughter.	The audience responds with 'fear' and 'pity'.



## Features of a Drama

There are six features of significance in a play. They are plot, stagecraft, the dialogue, characterisation, the theme/themes and the overall impression. You are familiar with plot, characterisation and theme.

Let us look at the others eg. stagecraft and dialogue and discuss some more terms used in drama.

### Stagecraft

However well one may read the text one cannot appreciate a drama until you see it on the stage. The reader of the drama text (the script) must visualize the performance of the play on the stage. That is the reader must become a member of an audience. He must imagine how the play would look on the stage. The stage directions you get in the play help you sometimes. Stagecraft also involves awareness of features like costumes and stage props (objects used on the stage, which help the audience to imagine the situation, location etc.)

### The Speeches or dialogue

A play progresses through the verbal interactions or speeches of the characters. Dialogue also involves such features as facial expression and gesture which are so much a part of communication. Sometimes a character speaks to himself (soliloquy) when he wants to communicate how he feels.

You may find the following terms useful as well :-

### Narrator

In certain dramas, you get a character, who narrates and/or comments on the action of the play. He provides background history, bridges over parts which have to be understood by the audience and generates attitudes.

### Irony

Irony is not only a matter of words. There is an irony of events as well. Irony is generally the relationship established between two contradictory utterances linked together. The relationship of events linked in this way is called irony of situation or dramatic irony. For example in Macbeth, Macbeth is overconfident when he hears the predictions of the witches for the second time (Act) They say that no 'woman born' person could kill him. This was interpreted to mean that no human being could kill him. He becomes very proud and



uncaring. Finally Macduff, who had been born in an unusual way (he had been taken out alive from his dead mother) kills him. Macduff is not born in the normal way. Hence there is irony, as a result of the barrier between prediction and interpretation.

There are other terms. These would be explained in the module on Drama.

Let us do the following checklist to see how much you can remember about the section on drama.

#### Checklist 4

Mark with a right [✓] if the statement is correct.

- i. Drama is different to the novel and short story because it is enacted on a stage. ☐
- ii. There are two main types of drama. ☐
- iii. Tragedy ends in catastrophe. ☐
- iv. Conflict is central to all drama. ☐
- v. The tragic hero acts like other human beings. ☐
- vi. Irony could be at the level of word or event. ☐

Check your answers with those given at the end of the module.

I am sure you have got all your answers correct. Now let us summarise what you have studied in this module.

### 5.0 Summary

In this module, we have tried to understand what literature is and the various concepts and terms used in talking and writing about literature.

Literature is defined, broadly as 'writings of a country and period'. But in our learning context, literature is writing whose value lies in beauty of form or emotional effect. This kind of writing is divided into three categories or types; poetry, prose and drama.

Poetry is 'a metrical composition of elevated character'. It has sound and meaning. A poem creates a context of situation through its ideas or themes, imagery, language (diction) and metrical structure or form. The context of situation expands meaning and creates new meanings.



Prose is generally divided into two types of writing - the novel and short story. They are similar in certain ways in their content. For example, both have theme, character, background, plot and style. A novel is a longer work and covers a broader range of experience. A short story is limited in space and time.

Drama is a set of events having the unity and development of a play, leading to catastrophe or realization of objectives. Drama is different from poetry and prose in that it is performed. Stagecraft is a vital aspect of drama. Drama is mainly of two types, tragedy and comedy. The differences between tragedy and comedy are found in the following features:

- i. the hero of the play
- ii. the ending of the play
- iii. the feelings roused in the audience, by the play.

The hero in a tragedy, 'the tragic hero', goes beyond the behaviour that normal, rational people will permit themselves and suffers disaster. He is doomed from the beginning and accepts his fate without hesitation. Because of this a tragedy ends in sadness. The audience reacts with fear and sorrow. Certain features are common to all three forms eg. plot, theme, character. Some features are of special value in drama eg. dialogue or speech or verbal interaction through which the action develops. Stagecraft is the other.

You have completed studying this module. Let us see how much you have understood. Let us do this test.

## 6.0 Post-test

1. underline the correct response to complete each of the following statements.

i. Literature can be defined as (i) writings which have a particular form (ii) writings that appeal to the emotions, (iii) writings that provides descriptive informations, (iv) writings that have beauty of form and appeal to the emotions.)

ii. The Village in the Jungle is (i) a historical novel, (ii) a romantic novel, (iii) a detective novel, (iv) a realistic novel.

iii. An English poem traditionally has (i) two to four lines, (ii) six lines, (iii) Four lines, (iv) Seven lines.

iv. The ending in a comedy is (i) sad, (ii) ironical, (iii) happy, (iv) uncertain



- v. Drama and novel have one feature in common. This is (i) characterisation, (ii) the happy ending, (iii) death of the hero, (iv) stagecraft
- vi. The feature that distinguishes a novel from a short story is (i) the plot, (ii) the theme, (iii) length of the text, (iv) style
- vii. The main difference between poetry and prose is (i) the rhythm, (ii) style, (iii) metrical structure, (iv) images
- viii. Tragedy is different to comedy in (i) its theme, (ii) its text, (iii) its ending, (iv) its characters.

2. Read the following texts and answer the questions given below.

#### Text I

- Morag: Dead?
- Cambell: What is that ?
- Morag: Is he dead ?
- Cambell: Oh, it's you. I'd forgotten you were there
- Morag: Is he dead ?
- Cambell: Not yet, But if you'll look through the window presently you'll see him gotten ready for death.

#### Text II

The six cars stopped. Two book-keepers moved from car to car.

" Want to work?"

Tom answered "Sure, but what is this?"

"That's not your affair. Want to work?"

"Sure we do"

"Name?"

"Joad."

"How many men?"

"Four"

"Women?"



"Two"  
 "Kids"  
 "Two"  
 "Can all of you work?"  
 "Why - I guess so."

### Text III

Do houses carry the weight  
 of the lives lived in them,  
 crack and grow old with  
 their unbearable burden of love, desire  
 and grief, and them submit to death  
 by a marauder's hand  
 taking with them their secrets?

- i. Categorise the above texts into poetry, prose and drama

Text I :- .....

Text II :- .....

Text III :- .....

- ii. Do the following activities related to each text.

#### In the first text

- How many characters are involved in the situation?
- What are their names?
- Who is 'he'?
- to whom is he closer? To Morag or Campbell?
- What is Campbell's attitude to 'he'?

#### In the second text

- What is the situation or context?
- How many people are talking here?
- How is this conversation different to the one in text I?
- From where is this text taken? What clues do you have here?



### In the third text

- (a) What is the weight that houses carry in them?
- (b) who is a marauder?
- (c) What are the images used here?
- (d) What context of situation is created here?

Now that you have completed studying this module. Your achievement in studying this will be assessed through the Assignment. There are three Assignments here. You have to do only one of them as assigned by your tutor. Do that Assignment and submit it to Distance Education Regional Centre.

## 7.0 Assignments

### Assignment 1

1. Read the following poem and the extract of prose. Show how one is different to the other:

(a) Weavers, weaving at break of day  
Why do you weave a garment so gay?  
Blue as the wing of halcyon wild,  
We weave the robes of a new-born child.

(b) The postmaster took up his duties  
first in the village of Ulapur.  
Though the village was small, there  
was an indigo factory near it, and  
the proprietor, an Englishman, had  
managed to get a post office established.

### Assignment 2

2. Define literature and discuss the various forms of literature.

### Assignment 3

3. Pick out the features which are common to all three forms of literature out of the following list and write short notes on four of them:

Theme, imagery, characterisation, plot, style, simile, irony, versification.



## 8.0 Answers

### Pre-test

#### Answer to question on Text I

The writer's intention in this text is to give information and attract the reader.

#### Answer to question on Text II

The writer's intention in this text is to educate the reader.

#### Answer to question on Text III

The writer's intention in this text is to arouse interest and feelings in the reader.

### Checklist I

i.	<u>Yes</u>	No
ii.	<u>Yes</u>	No
iii.	<u>Yes</u>	No
iv.	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
v.	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
vi.	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>

### Checklist 2

i.	(✓)
ii.	(✓)
iii.	(✓)
iv.	(✓)
v.	(✓)
vi.	(✓)
vii.	(✓)

### Activity 2

Babun is taken to prison	Babehami accuses him of stealing his jewellery	Punchimenika is left alone
Silindu kills Babehami	Babehami has plotted the crime against Babun and Punchimenika	Silindu becomes a murderer
Hinnihami leaves Punchirala	Punchirala has taken Hinnihamy by force	Punchirala plots against Hinnihamy's family



### Checklist 3

- i. (✓)
- ii. (✓)
- iii. (✓)
- iv. (✓)
- v. (✓)
- vi. (✓)
- vii. (✓)
- (viii. (X)

### Checklist 4

- i. (✓)
- ii. (✓)
- iii. (✓)
- iv. (✓)
- v. (X)
- vi. (✓)

### Post-test

- 1. i. ( vi )
- ii. ( iv )
- iii. ( iii )
- iv. ( iii )
- v. ( i )
- vi. ( iii )
- vii. ( iii )
- viii. ( iii )

- 2. i. Text I - Drama
- Text II - Prose
- Text III - Poetry

### ii. Activities: Text I

- (a) three
- (b) Morag, campbell and 'he'
- (c) 'he' is the character the audience can't see.  
He is going to be killed.
- (d) to Morag. (She is the one who feels anxious about him. (Campbell seems to be uncaring about 'his' death)
- (e) He looks forward to 'his' death.



### Activities: Text II

- (a) A family is looking for employment.
- (b) Two
- (c) It stops at the end of the exchange as far as the reader is concerned. The one in text I makes the reader look forward to the next event.
- (d) Probably from a novel. There has been a situation before this. This is only a scene in the middle. The story will go on.

There is also the expository sentence at the beginning; The six cars stopped. Two book-keepers moved from car to car. It is not a stage direction. It is a little bit of description which describes the situation.

### Activities: Text III

- (a) the lives lived in them
- (b) A robber - someone who takes by force.  
It destroys the house
- (c) 'houses', 'marauder', (houses) cracking growing old.
- (d) a situation where a robber plunders a place.





**DISTANCE TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES**

PRINTED BY A.J. PRINTS - DEHIWELA