

## POWERPOINT PRESENTATION # 2 (For Eighth Grade)

### THE GENRES OF LITERATURE

Forms of literature refers to the different categories of literary composition in relation to their content, tone, and technique used. It is a very loose term and encompasses many different categories.

These all fall under the 3 main forms. They are:

- Prose
- Poetry
- Drama

Prose refers to writing distinguished from poetry by its greater variety of rhythm and its closer resemblance to the patterns of everyday speech. The word prose comes from the Latin *prosa*, "meaning straightforward".

Poetry, the oldest literary form, from the Greek "ποίησις", *poiesis*, a "making" or "creating") is a form of art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to, or in lieu of, its ostensible meaning.

Drama refers to a literary form involving parts written for actors to perform. It comes from a Greek word meaning "action", drawn from the (Classical Greek *δράω*), "to do". Dramas can be performed in various media: improvisation, live performance, radio, film and-or television - and nowadays web chat.

Now each of these are divided into further "genres" ... some of these may fall under one of the 3 main forms, some under 2, and some even under all 3 of them. For example: The genre 'essay' falls under 'Prose'; the genre 'epic' under 'Poetry'; but the genre 'satire' can either be Prose, Poetry, or Drama.

The main thing to remember is that there are 3 main forms - Prose, Poetry, and Drama. All the rest are genres that can be listed under one, or more than one main forms.

All this is nice and dandy but... the thing is that **genre** also refers to something else in literature.

It is a term for fictional works (novels, short stories) written with the intent of fitting into a specific literary genre in order to appeal to the fans of that genre. In contemporary fiction-publishing, *genre* is an elastic term used to group works sharing similarities of character, theme, and setting—such as mystery, romance, or horror—that have been proven to appeal to particular groups of readers. Genres continuously evolve, divide, and combine as readers' tastes change and writers search for fresh ways to tell stories.

As noted, there are different ways of labeling and defining fiction genres. Following are some of the main fiction genres (or sub-genres) as they are used in contemporary publishing:

## Fictional Genres

### Action-adventure

appealing mainly to male readers, feature physical action and violence, often around a quest or mission set in exotic or forbidding locales such as jungles, deserts, or oceans. The conflict typically involves commandos, mercs, terrorists, smugglers, pirates, and the like. Stories showcase technology, weapons, and other hardware. Tom Clancy's works could easily fit here.

### Crime

stories, centered on criminal enterprise, are told from the point of view of the perpetrators. They range in tone from lighthearted "caper" stories to much darker plots involving organized crime or incarcerated convicts.

### Fantasy

quite similar to science fiction, often features stories set in fanciful, invented worlds or in a legendary, mythic past. The stories themselves are often epics or quests, always involving magic in various degrees. The extraordinary event within are always explained in terms of the magical. The enormous popularity of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* novel, C. S. Lewis' Narnia, and J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels demonstrates the wide appeal of this genre.

### Gothic/Horror

aims to evoke some combination of fear, fascination, and revulsion in its readers. This genre, like others, continues to evolve, recently moving away from stories with a religious or supernatural basis to ones making use of medical or psychological threats.

### Mystery

technically involving stories in which characters try to discover a vital piece of information which is kept hidden until the climax, is now considered by many people a synonym for detective fiction. The standard novel stocked in the mystery section of bookstores is a whodunit.

### Romance

is currently the largest and best-selling fiction genre in North America and Japan. It has produced a wide array of sub-genres, the majority of which feature the mutual attraction and love of a man and a woman as the main plot, and have a happy ending. Romance is also the growing up or the journey of a young being.

## **Science fiction**

is defined more by setting than by other story elements. With a few exceptions, stories set out of Earth or in the future qualify as science fiction. Within these settings, the conventions of almost any other genre may be used. The extraordinary event within are always explained in scientific or pseudo-scientific terms as opposed to magical. Sub-genres of science fiction include: alternate history , futuristic, hard-science fiction, space opera, cyber-punk, and science fantasy.

## **The Thriller**

is a story intended to evoke strong feelings of suspense and danger, usually involving a high-stakes hunt, chase, or a race against time. Thrillers often involve espionage, crime, medicine, or technology. Sub-genres of thriller fiction often overlap with detective and action-adventure fiction.

## **Western**

is defined primarily by being set in the American West in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and secondarily by featuring heroes who are rugged, individualistic horsemen (cowboys). Other genres, such as romance, have subgenres that make use of the Western setting. The current understanding nowadays is that the western should fit under the action genre.

## **Alternative/Other genres**

Though not as widely acknowledged as works of genre fiction, less conventional genres like comic books (super-hero fiction) and video games very often follow certain narrative patterns and conventions which make them appeal to selected audiences. These should now be classified as either fantasy or science accordingly.

## **Crossover works**

A fact that can't be overlooked is that most of the most current published material out there doesn't belong to just one genre. In order to appeal to a wider audience and to explore new narrative possibilities genres usually overlap to a lesser or greater extent. Most work could easily belong to two or more genres.