

**MODUL INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE
(PBI 321)**



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REVIEW

A. Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students are expected to be able to identify, classify, and elaborate the meaning of literature, its history of literature, and its elements.

B. Explanation

What is literature?

Literature is writings which interpret the meanings of nature and life, in words of charm and power, touched with the personality of the author, in artistic forms of permanent interests. It is a product of life and about life. It uses language as medium. It can be an **imaginative literature** or **“literature of power”** which includes poems, short stories, novels, and plays. It interprets human experience by presenting fictitious persons, incidents, or situations, not by actual truths about particular event. The other one is **non-fiction** or **“literature of knowledge”** that covers biographies and essays which presents actual facts, events, experiences and ideas.

History of literature

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD (THE EARLIEST TIME – 1066)

- **Social Background**:- the making of England; the invasion of Roman Empire in the 4th AD; the attacks of Vikings etc.
- **Literature**:- Beowulf, the earliest literature, the national epic of the Anglo-Saxon, one of the striking features- the use of alliteration.
- **Epic** – A long narrative poem in elevated style presenting characters of high position in a series of adventures which form an organic whole. The earliest epic: Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey.

- **Alliteration** – In an alliterative verse, certain accented words in a line begin with the same consonant sound. A classic example is:
 - **"She sells seashells by the sea-shore."**
 - **"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers."**

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD (1066 – 15TH CENTURY)

- **Social Background**:- the Norman Conquest under William
- **Literature**:- Langland; English Ballad; Romance; Chaucer.
- **Langland** – Piers the Plowman and allegory.
- **Ballad** – a story told in song.
- **Romance** – a long composition sometimes in verse, sometimes in prose, describing the life and adventures of a noble hero.
- **Chaucer** – the father of English poetry; Introduction of the rhymed stanza of various types in poetry; the first great poet who wrote in the English literature.

ENGLISH RENAISSANCE (15TH AND 16TH CENTURY)

- **Social Background**:- the weakening of nobility and the rising bourgeoisie (middle class society); the new monarchy; the Reformation and the weakening of the power of church
- **Literature**:- Renaissance; Humanism; Drama.
- **Renaissance** – The Renaissance marks the translation from the medieval to the modern world; it means rebirth or revival of letters;
- **Humanism** – keynote of the Renaissance; emphasis on the dignity of human beings and the importance of the present life.
- **Drama** – The highest glory of the English Renaissance with Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson.

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD (THE TURN OF THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY)

- **Social Background**:- two important revolutions – the French Revolution of 1789 – 1794 and the English Industrial Revolution.
- **Literature**:- The Romantic Period is an age of poetry; Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats are the major Romantic poets; prose writers and novelists.

- **Romanticism:-** It designates a literary and philosophical theory which tends to see the individual as the very center of all life and all experience. It also places the individual at the center of art, making literature most valuable as an expression of his or her unique feelings and particular attitudes. Nature is not only the major source of poetic imagery, but also provides the dominant subject matter: Romantics also tend to be nationalistic.

CRITICAL REALISTIC PERIOD (THE MID AND LATE 19TH CENTURY)

- **Social Background:-** the struggle between workless and capitalists;
- **Literature:-** Fiction is the highest achievement
 - Dramatic Monologue – In a dramatic moment or crisis, the characters are made to talk about the lives, and about their minds and hearts. In listening to those one-sided talks, readers can form their own opinions and judgments about the speaker's personality and about what has really happened.
 - Naturalism – Literature must be true to life and exactly reproduce real life, including all the details without any selection. Naturalists usually write about the lives of the poor and oppressed, or the 'slum life'.
 - Critical Realism – were all concerned about the fate of the common people. Their truthful picture of people's life and bitter and strong criticism of the society had done much in awakening the public consciousness to the social problem and in the actual improvement of society.

THE MODERN PERIOD (THE 20TH CENTURY)

- **Social Background:-** the gap between the rich and the poor; the postwar economic dislocation and spiritual disillusion, the rise of all kinds of philosophical ideas – Karl Marx's Scientific Socialism, Darwin's Theory of Evolution
- **Literature:-** Modernism rises out of skepticism and disillusion of capitalism, takes the irrational philosophy and the theory of psychoanalysis as its theoretical base.

What is poetry?

Poetry is sound and meaning of words that are combined to express feelings, thoughts, and ideas. The poet chooses words carefully and usually written in lines.

Its elements include:

Rhythm

- **Rhythm** is created by the pattern of **stressed and unstressed syllables** in a line or verse

Sounds

- Writers love to use interesting **sounds** in their poems. After all, poems are meant to be heard. These sound devices include:
 - Rhyme: words that end with the same sound
 - Repetition: occurs when poets repeat words, phrases, or lines in a poem
 - Alliteration: repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words
 - Onomatopoeia: uses words that sound like their meaning
- **Imagery** is the concrete representation of a sense impression, feeling, or idea that triggers our imaginative.
- **Form** is the way a poem looks. It can be
 - Lines-the way poems are written, may or may not be sentences
 - Stanza-lines of poetry are grouped this way (looks like a paragraph)

What is drama?

A Drama is a story written to be performed in front of audiences. Dramas are usually performed in a theater or on a stage. There are three types of drama elements; literary element, technical element, and performance element.

Literary Elements

1. Plot

The order of events occurring in a play make its plot.

2. Character

A play has a personality of its own and a set of principles and beliefs.

3. Story Organization

The structure of the story comprises the way in which it is dramatized.

4. Dialogue

The story is narrated to the audiences through the interaction between the play's characters, which is in the form of dialogs.

5. Setting

The time and place where a story is set is one of its important parts.

6. Monologue

A monologue is a long speech made by one person.

7. Conflict

The internal or external struggle between opposing forces, ideas, or interests that create dramatic tension.

Technical Elements

1. Scenery

The scenery is theatrical equipment such as curtains, backdrops, and platforms to communicate the environment.

2. Costumes

The clothing and other items an actor wears to help him or her “become” the character.

3. Props

Props are any article other than costumes or scenery used as part of a dramatic production. An example might be a table on the stage.

4. Sound and Music

This element includes the use of sounds and rhythm in dialogs as well as music compositions that are used in the plays.

5. Make-up

Make-up is the use of costumes, wigs and body paint to transform an actor into a character.

Performance Elements

1. Acting

Acting is how speaking and moving help to create characters.

2. Speaking

Speaking is vocal expression, projection, speaking style and diction.

3. Non-verbal Expression

Non-verbal expression includes gestures, facial expressions, and movement.

C. Exercise

1. What is drama and what are its characteristics?

D. Answer Key

1. Drama may be defined as a mode of storytelling enacted by live performers before an audience. The Greek root of the word drama literally means "action happening before the eyes." In this sense, the drama differs from fiction in that the plot, characters, and setting must all be conveyed to the audience with the limitations of space and time inherent in this form. While a novel may stretch its plot across a nearly infinite length of time or pages and fill its story with as many characters as necessary, a play must simplify its structure to be enjoyed and understood within an audience's practical attention span and within the limited resources of a particular physical space. Because of these constraints placed upon the playwright, drama was prized as one of the highest forms of art by the Ancient Greeks.

The characteristics of drama are literary element, technical element, and performance element. **Literary element** means what is needed to write a script or story. It involves **script, plot, character, story organization, setting, dialogue, monologue, and conflict**. **Technical elements** means what is needed to produce a play. It covers **scenery, costumes, props, sound and music, and make-up**. The last one is **performance element**. It is about what do the actors do on stage to make a character come alive. Its elements are acting, speaking, and non-verbal Expression.

E. References

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