Lecture Three: Prose Narrative

*Lesson Plan
1-Introduction
2-Definition and Types of Prose
3-Difference between Prose and Poetry
4- Key Features of Prose Narrative
5- Prose Narrative Types
6- Evaluation
*Lesson Objectives:
-To Define the genre of prose and to distinguishing between the three types.
-To identify the features of prose narrative (characters, setting, plot, …) correctly.
-To Classify textual extracts as either prose narrative, argumentative or descriptive based on structural and stylistic features.
-To Analyze how characterization differs in prose narrative, poetry and drama using guided examples.
*Keywords
Prose narrative, novel, novella, short story, character, plot, setting, point of view.

1-Introduction

Unlike poetry which is a kind of literature where the aesthetic and rhythmic characteristics of language are used to convey meaning, prose is a primary type of literature whose vocabulary is syntactic, with a spontaneous flow of speech rather than a metrical structure. The prose is used in writing novels, short story collections, biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, articles, travel books, academic essays, glossaries, manuals, and so on.

The word (Prose) is used to define any sort of writing that does not fit a recognized poetical form. But not all prose is a like, there is almost endless variety in the way we express ourselves in writing. We should hardly expect a novel to be written in lexical terms, or a scientific text-book to contain lengthy descriptions of the countryside. In each case, the style of the way that it has been written in, must be adapted to suit the subject matter

2-Definition and Types of Prose

Prose is used to define any sort of writing that does not fit a recognized poetical form. But not all prose is alike: there is almost endless variety in the way people express themselves in writing.

1- **Narrative** is a type of prose that tells a story by variety characters, events or ideas, the action described within the text and the reader is carried along quickly by a number of events which occur in rapid succession.

2- **Descriptive** prose is static text. The writer describes what scenes, objects, people, or even a person's feelings looks like by giving details: clothes, hair, cheekbones, eyes, etc.

3- **Argumentative** is about ideas, not about actions or objects. A problem is presented and often the author draws conclusions from his argument, giving his view of the question that he is discussing

3-Difference between Prose and Poetry

1. Prose is a type of literature in which the language is used in its natural and organic form. Poetry is a type of literature that employs the aesthetic and rhythmic characteristics of language to convey meaning.

2. Prose is not concerned with rhyme or rhythm. Poetry is concerned with rhyme and rhythm, which are vital elements of a poem.

3. In Prose, the concepts are written in sentences, which are then organized into paragraphs. Poetry is composed of lines that are organized into stanzas.

4. In Prose, the vocabulary is more grammatical and natural. In Poetry, the language is metaphorical and rhythmical.

5. Most Prose can be comprehended with only one reading. Understanding the content of a poem may require more than one viewing.

4-Key Features of Prose Narrative

a-Narrative Structure (Plot): A prose narrative is organized around a **structured sequence of events**. The plot typically follows:

- **Exposition** – introduction of characters, setting, and initial situation
- **Rising action** – development of conflict and complications
- **Climax** – turning point or moment of highest tension
- **Falling action** – consequences of the climax
- **Resolution (Denouement)** – closure of the narrative

Narrative prose often follows linear chronology, but modern fiction may use **non-linear structures**, flashbacks, or fragmented timelines.

b- Narrator and Point of View: The story is mediated through a **narrative voice**, which determines perspective and reliability. Point of view shapes reader interpretation and thematic depth. Common types include:

- **First-person narrator** (participant in the story)
- **Second-person narrator**(addressing the reader)
- **Third-person limited** (restricted to one character's consciousness)
- **Third-person omniscient** (all-knowing narrator)

c-Characters: Prose narratives center on **fictional personae** who drive the action. Characters may be:

- **Protagonist** – central figure
- **Antagonist** – opposing force
- **Flat characters** – limited traits
- **Dynamic characters** – undergo change
- **Static characters** – remain unchanged

Characterization can be **direct** (explicit description) or **indirect** (revealed through action, speech, and thought).

d- Setting: Setting refers to the **time, place, and socio-cultural environment** of the narrative. Setting often contributes to mood and thematic resonance. It may function as:

- A realistic backdrop
- A symbolic space
- A reflection of psychological states (pathetic fallacy)

e-Theme: The central idea or underlying message explored in the narrative. Themes are not directly stated but emerge through narrative development. Themes may concern: Identity, Power, Morality, Alienation, Social conflict, Love, death, freedom, etc.

f- Conflict: Conflict generates narrative momentum. Without conflict, narrative tension collapses. It may be:

- **Internal** (psychological struggle)
- **External** (character vs. character, society, nature, fate)

g- Language and Style: Prose narrative employs: Descriptive language, Dialogue, Figurative language (metaphor, simile, etc), Narrative pacing, Stream of consciousness (in modern fiction) Style varies according to genre (realist, modernist, postmodern, etc.).

h- Narrative Techniques: Common techniques include: Foreshadowing, Flashback, (analepsis), Flashforward (prolepsis), Irony, Symbolism, Interior monologue**.** These techniques enhance complexity and reader engagement.

5- Prose Narrative Types: Prose narrative appears in different forms:

- ✓ Novel
- ✓ Novella
- ✓ Short story

a-The novel

The novel is a genre of fiction, and fiction may be defined as the art, through the writer word, representation of human life. The novel is not a short story in prose; instead, it is actually on extensive and illustrated account of series of events that happened right through the life of a character. It is an in-depth and all-inclusive autobiography of a character in the novel. Novel is a mirror which reflects the picture of a thing put against it. Novel is a piece of prose fiction of a reasonable length. However, not all novels are written in prose, there are novels in verse.

The Italian word novella, which means "a little new thing," is the source of the English word novel. The novella is a type of anecdote that dates back to the 14th C. The novel has replaced poetry and drama as the most significant form of English literature since the Victorian era. Although the novel is a genre that resists precise definition, the following definitions do exist: A short piece of prose fiction known as a novel has a limited length.

The prose narrative can take many different forms, including the novel. The novel is the only bright book of life, according to D. H. Lawrence. A novel is not overly chaotic; It is at least 20,000 words long of narrative prose. Whatever the meaning of the novel may be, it is clear that it depicts the author's time perfectly. The Novel's Elements There are a number of parts that make up a novel. It has many forms like: the Bildungsroman, Psychological novels, historical novels, Gothic novels, Epistolary novels, Detective and sentimental novels and novels of manners, etc

b-The Novella:

What does the term "novella" mean? A narrative work of fiction that is shorter than a novel, but longer than a short story," is the definition of a novella. Fiction is prose literature that depicts fictitious events and characters. The Italian word "novella," which is the feminine form of the word "novello" and means "new," is the source of the English word "novella."A novella is a narrative piece of fiction that is between a short story and a novel in length and complexity. The novella:

- ✓ is a narrative work of fiction.
- ✓ is written in prose (ordinary form) rather than in metrical form, as with poetry.
- ✓ can be read in one or two sittings.
- ✓ has fewer conflicts and subplots than a full-length novel.
- ✓ usually is not divided into chapters.
- ✓ averages between 60-120 pages in length.
- ✓ typically is between 17,500 and 40,000 words.
- ✓ may be published digitally or in print.
- ✓ typically focuses on a single plotline.
- ✓ usually centers on one (or a few) main character(s).
- ✓ is more complex than shorter works such as a short story, but is less complex than a full-length novel.

c- The Short Story:

A short story is a piece of fiction that is typically written in prose and typically follows a narrative structure. A short story usually only has a few characters and focuses more on setting the mood than on the story's plot.

It is a fictional work that focuses on themes and shows the conflicts between the characters. In most cases, the shortest stories may not exceed two or three pages. Yet, there are longest ones additionally like D. H. Lawrence's St Mawr which rushes to north of a few pages. There are many different kinds of literature, and a short story is one of them. It is a brief story in

the broadest sense of the term. It is a structure or a class having its own. H. E. Bates asserts that a short story can be anything the author describes.

Short stories tend to be less complex than novels. Usually, a short story will focus on only one incident, has a single plot, a single setting, a limited number of characters, and covers a short period of time. In longer forms of fiction, stories tend to contain certain core elements of dramatic structure: **exposition** (the introduction of setting, situation and main characters); **complication or turning point** (the event of the story that introduces the conflict); **rising action, crisis** (the decisive moment for the protagonist and their commitment to a course of action); **climax** (the point of highest interest in terms of the conflict and the point of the story with the most action); **resolution or denouement** (the point of the story when the conflict is resolved); and moral.

Some people believe that writing a short story is an easy matter, or at least easier than writing the novel, Jeremy Hawthorn conceives the opposite: "A relatively short work can be given a complex unity through the use of means other than those involving the intricacies of plot development. The picture is one of a number of symbolic 'moments' in the work which draw various threads together in a masterly way." (1997: 73). Writing a short story might be more complex and delicate than writing other literary types.

d- Novels, Novellas and Short Stories

1-Novellas Vs. Novels

As well as being various lengths, novellas and books can vary essentially with regards to intricacy. Novellas typically have fewer subplots and conflicts than novels, but both novels and novellas can have complex plots. Short novels are another name for novellas. While novels typically have multiple primary characters, novellas typically (though not always) concentrate on a single character. Novellas are not typically divided into chapters, as is the case with novels. Novels and novellas are both published as separate works. Novels and novellas can be published either as printed books or as electronic books, or both. When compared to novellas, novels typically receive more consideration from traditional publishers.

2- Novellas vs. Short Stories

The length of a novella or short story is the most obvious difference between the two, but it's not the only difference. Because of the expanded length of a novella, this sort of work

requires fundamentally more noteworthy person improvement and plot improvement than a brief tale. These are typically included in an anthology of short stories by multiple authors or in a collection of stories by the same author. In digital format, they can also be published independently.

6-Evaluation

a-Short Test: Fill in the gaps with the provided words

Narrator, dialogue, acts, scenes, spectacle, performance, chapters, imagination, stage, monologue

1. In prose narrative, events are usually presented through a …………………………
2. Drama is divided into ……………………….. and ………………………….
3. Prose narratives are typically organized into ………………………………
4. In drama, the story develops mainly through ………………………. between characters.
5. The visual elements of a play, such as costumes and lighting, are called ………………….
6. Drama is written for ………………………… on the ………………………
7. When reading prose narrative, the reader relies on ………………. to visualize the setting.
8. A long speech delivered by one character in a play is called a ………………………..

b-Global Task: Choose one of the following questions and write a paragraph

1-Discuss the role of the narrator in prose narrative.
Explain how the choice of narrative voice (first-person, third-person limited, omniscient) influences the reader's understanding of characters and events.
2-Analyze the importance of plot structure in prose narrative.
Show how exposition, rising action, climax, and resolution contribute to coherence and suspense in a story.
3-Examine how characterization is developed in prose narrative.
Discuss the difference between direct and indirect characterization and explain how they contribute to psychological depth.
4-Explain the function of setting in prose narrative.
Analyze how time and place influence mood, character behavior, and thematic development.
5-Discuss the role of conflict in shaping a prose narrative.
Distinguish between internal and external conflict and explain how they generate narrative tension.
6-Analyze the relationship between theme and narrative technique in prose fiction.
Explain how devices such as symbolism, irony, or foreshadowing reinforce the central theme