

## Understanding

# Non-Fiction Genres

*There are many different genres of text. Take a moment to think about the text you're reading and you'll be able to make some predictions about how it will deliver its messages.*

Genre	Features	Thinking Jobs
Journalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspires to be “objective,” presenting multiple sources and sides to a story</li> <li>May feature a “delayed lede.” Some articles begin with an anecdote and don’t present a claim until a few paragraphs after the start.</li> <li>Claims are often made by sources, not by the author directly.</li> <li>Headlines are often written by people other than the author. They usually, but not always, reveal the claim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What’s the opening claim? Does it appear immediately?</li> <li>What sides are presented in this article? Are any missing or not presented until late in the article?</li> <li>Which sources seem the most credible? What do they claim?</li> <li>Where are claims stated in the text? Are they stated directly or provided by a source?</li> </ul>
Biography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Profiles a notable or historic figure so that readers can better understand their motivations and accomplishments.</li> <li>May be biased. These texts can selectively focus on certain aspects of a person’s life, picking and choosing the moments that make its point about the type of person they were. Sometimes these texts leave out events that are unflattering to the subject.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do I already know about this time period/person? How might it affect my understanding of the text?</li> <li>What events were chosen in this text? What do they reveal about the subject?</li> <li>What does the author want readers to think/feel about the subject?</li> <li>Is it possible there are other aspects to this story? What could these gaps reveal?</li> </ul>
Memoir/ Auto biography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above, but memoir/autobiography is written by the source themselves. They focus on a single person’s POV, so they are biased.</li> <li>These are types of narrative non-fiction, so should be read for themes.</li> </ul>	
Expository Non- Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This non-fiction is designed to teach readers about an issue.</li> <li>Often reads like a “textbook” and sounds authoritative.</li> <li>May include subheadings and info-graphics (e.g. charts, maps) to guide the reader.</li> <li>Good expository non-fiction has lots of research and sources behind it, but these sources sometimes aren’t named.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the primary claim and sub-claims in this document?</li> <li>What claims do the info-graphics make and how do they connect to the text?</li> </ul>
Narrative Non- Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This type of nonfiction presents factual information in a narrative style.</li> <li>Because it uses narrative structure and techniques to convey its messages, it is typically read for themes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does reading for the characterization, changes, conflicts and craft reveal about the themes in this text?</li> </ul>
Speeches/ Persuasive Essays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually come from the POV of a single person, designed to convince an audience they are correct or call them to action.</li> <li>Given with a specific audience in mind.</li> <li>Even if we agree with the speaker, that doesn’t mean the text is persuasive.</li> <li>Some texts rely on manipulating readers (e.g. through emotional appeals) instead of convincing us with logic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do I already know about this time period, the speaker, the audience, or the purpose/occasion? How might that affect my understanding of the text?</li> <li>What are the claims and sub-claims of this text?</li> <li>How sound is this argument?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the text use enough relevant evidence to support its claims?</li> <li>Does the text consider and refute counterarguments?</li> <li>Is this text relying on emotional appeals or generalizations, rather than evidence?</li> </ul> </li> <li>When I see the text make a claim, what is it doing to make its case? (e.g. is it providing an anecdote, citing an expert, offering an analogy, etc.)</li> </ul>

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Literary Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literary fiction often makes multiple claims about life, society, or humanity.</li> <li>Even though literary fiction writes about a specific case, it's often designed to make broader points about universal topics (love, growing up) or conflicts (freedom v. safety, youth v. experience).</li> <li>Usually literary fiction will resolve or attempt to resolve the main conflicts in the text. Themes can often be found by scrutinizing how the conflict is resolved.</li> <li>Setting and figurative language often take on additional importance – offering clues to themes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have I read for the 4 C's: characterization, conflict/resolution, change, and craft? How do these contribute to potential themes in the text?</li> <li>Have I considered how story elements (setting, motifs, secondary characters, changes in the protagonist) might contribute to potential themes?</li> <li>What does the author's diction (word choice) reveal about their potential themes?</li> </ul>
Mystery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often centers on a crime (e.g. theft, murder).</li> <li>There is often a criminal and a heroic detective/crimefighter.</li> <li>The text may present a false clue (called a "red herring") to mislead readers about "whodunnit."</li> <li>Usually there is a twist ending where the truth is revealed.</li> </ul>	<p>Thinking jobs or literary fiction, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do I know about each of the characters?</li> <li>Who appears suspicious? Who seems too "squeaky clean"?</li> </ul>
Historical Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is set in history and based on real events, but details and characters are fiction.</li> <li>May involve fictional accounts of famous figures.</li> <li>Like literary fiction, geared to make a statement about society or humanity, not just the period of history in which it is set.</li> <li>May only tell aspects of a historical event.</li> </ul>	<p>Thinking jobs for literary fiction, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do I already know about this time period? How might it affect my understanding of the text?</li> <li>What aspect of history is the author highlighting for readers and why?</li> <li>Whose point of view is featured in this text? Who is left out?</li> </ul>
Dystopian Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portrays a possible future (or past) world similar to our own. Even if the world seems functioning at first, it is quickly revealed to be a nightmare future.</li> <li>Is often warning about some aspect of current society/culture (e.g. reliance on technology, power of the government) by showing what would happen if it is allowed too much power.</li> </ul>	<p>Thinking jobs for literary fiction, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the "rules" of this world?</li> <li>What aspect of the real world are exaggerated?</li> <li>What might this text be warning against?</li> </ul>
Allegory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A text that works as a symbolic story, where characters and setting represent things like political figures, religious systems or philosophical viewpoints.</li> <li>In an allegory, events or characters may represent aspects of our own world.</li> </ul>	<p>Thinking jobs or literary fiction, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What might the various aspects in this text symbolize? What message is it sending?</li> </ul>
Science Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portrays a futuristic world or one that imagines new technology.</li> <li>Often explores humanity or moral dilemmas despite having a future or alien setting.</li> </ul>	<p>Thinking jobs or literary fiction, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What can we learn about our world by examining the conflicts in this one?</li> </ul>
Fantasy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portrays an imaginary world, often drawing from mythology about the medieval period (e.g. magic, knights).</li> <li>Often involves a quest or struggle against a greater evil.</li> <li>The elements of fantasy are almost completely made up, but often the characters portray real human struggle.</li> </ul>	<p>Thinking jobs or literary fiction, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What can we learn about our world by examining the conflicts in this one?</li> </ul>