

Categories and Descriptions

POETRY (grades 3-12)

What is Poetry? The language of the imagination and feelings. Prose explains, and poetry sings, but it doesn't have to rhyme. Poetry is precise, concrete, fresh, memorable, and magical. A poem, like food, can feed us. It can be a peach, a pizza, a taco, or a four-course meal. But it can also be popcorn or a candy bar. Always, poetry uses words as ingredients to let us taste, touch, see, smell or hear something in the world as if for the first time.

FICTION (grades 3-12)

What is Fiction? The art of storytelling. To build a good story, a writer needs: plot, characters, place or setting, point of view, dialogue, action and conflict. When we read a good story we're pulled into another world and leave this one far behind. We travel to different places in our imagination, and when we return, we often see our world with new eyes.

NON-FICTION (grades 5-12)

What is Creative Non-fiction? An essay with real events and people that mattered or changed you—the day your pet chicken died, that summer your best friend moved away. Characters, settings, and events are true. The writer decides the best way to grab our attention, how to start, what elements of poetry to add as spice—images, metaphor, simile—and what elements of fiction to add zing—characters, place, dialogue. This genre is popular because we read it and think, "Wow, this really happened to someone else, but I feel like I was there!"