

Definition of Fiction

Etymologically, the word fiction has been derived from Latin word “*fictus*” that means, “to form”. However, in literature, Merriam Webster defines it as, “literature in the form of prose, especially novels, that describes imaginary events and people.”

In fact, it is one of the two branches of literature along with non-fiction. This particular branch of literature consists of stories, novels, and dramas based on made up and fabricated stories and characters. Fiction contains certain symbolic and thematic features known as literary merits. In other words, fiction narrates a story, which aims at something bigger than merely a story. In this attempt, it comments on something significant related to social, political or human related issues.

Fiction may base on stories on actual historical events. Although fictitious characters are presented in a fictitious setting in stories and novels, yet they may have some resemblance with real life events and characters. Writers alter their characters very skilfully when they take them from actual life.

Examples of Fiction from literature

Example #1

Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll is a good example of fiction. The story narrates various adventures of the main character, Alice, in a fictitious land full of incredible creatures and events. Alice has to go through certain magical experiences in the wonderland. According to the story, one day, while reading book, Alice grows bored, and notices a rabbit. She follows it when it goes into a hole. When peeping through it, she loses her balance and falls into it. She floats down slowly into the hole and observes everything around her. Then

she enters the wonderland, and witnesses a number of weird stuff. This entire magical detail is fabricated and imaginary, which make it a good fiction to enjoy.

Example #2

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Another ample example to portray fiction is, *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen. It is one of the most famous English novels as well. Unlike the previous example, it is set in a real life-like-setting. All characters are humans, while no magical or weird event takes place in this novel. All the characters and the whole story of the novel is a made-up narrative. Everything is the outcome of Jane Austen's imagination. She not only presents the issues of the contemporary life faced by middle class families, but also daily preoccupations of the common people. The novel presents a good fiction of actual life of nineteenth century.

Example #3

Hamlet by William Shakespeare

The play "Hamlet" by William Shakespeare is another befitting example of a fiction that helps understand it. The story of the play moves around the main character, Prince Hamlet. He is informed by the Ghost of his father that his uncle murdered his father, King Hamlet, and married his wife and Hamlet's mother, Queen Gertrude. The Ghost elicits a promise from Hamlet that he will avenge his murder and kill the murderer. This becomes Hamlet's dilemma. He vows to kill his uncle but delays it on one or the other pretext. Overall, the story is all about the intrigues and plots, which happen inside the royal castle of Elsinore in Denmark. The story may have some connection with the real life events and characters, yet it is completely a fabricated story created by Shakespeare to entertain the Elizabeth audience of that time.

Function of Fiction

The function of fiction is to entertain, educate and inspire the readers and the audience. Literature in general and fiction in particular is capable enough to sweep our emotions. Therefore, fiction presents an 'experience' before the readers that is beyond their daily lives. It provides them an insight into the life of the characters, their manners, vicissitudes and events related to them. It also is used to point out the flaws and drawbacks of a society, race and nation in a manner that it does not touch the boundary of stricture or criticism. Rather, fiction points out drawbacks and then suggests solutions for the individuals and the nations alike. To sum up, fiction can also provide a vent to our pent-up emotions such as hatred, anger and dislike but in a very light manner without pointing out specific individuals or groups.