



All

SEMINAR 4 Literature

Task 1 – *Some thoughts on literature*

Read the following quotations, then choose one and discuss your thoughts about it with a partner. Be prepared to share your views with the class.

1. “The man who does not read books has no advantage over the man that cannot read them.” Mark Twain (1835-1910) U.S. humorist, writer, and lecturer.
2. “Reading is equivalent to thinking with someone else's head instead of with one's own.” Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) German philosopher.
3. “A good novel tells us the truth about its hero; but a bad novel tells us the truth about its author.” Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) British journalist, novelist and poet.
4. “In science read the newest works, in literature read the oldest.” Edward G Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873) British politician, poet and critic.
5. “Literature does not exist in a vacuum. Writers as such have a definite social function exactly proportional to their ability as writers. This is their main use.” Ezra Pound (1885-1972) American poet, critic and intellectual.
6. “There is no robber worse than a bad book.” Italian proverb.
7. “The books that everybody admires are those that nobody reads.” Anatole France (1844-1924) French writer.

Task 2 - *Discussion questions*

1. How would you define the word “Literature”? What springs to mind?
2. Does it have to be written down in order to be considered literature, or can traditional oral tales be considered literature?
3. Do you consider both works of fiction and non-fiction to be “literature?” Why or why not?
4. Are there certain written works or certain authors whose works you wouldn't consider to be “literature?” Why or why not?
5. Why do people study literature? Is there any value in teaching it to everyone or should its study be reserved for those who are interested in it?



Task 3 - Decoding

Fill in the blank exercises can be difficult if you do not understand all the words that have been given to you. However, this task can be made easier if you can determine the type of word (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, etc.) that you have and the type of word needed in the sentence. Read the following poem and put this concept into action:

“Jabberwocky”

by Lewis Carroll (1871)

1. 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

2. "Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

3. He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

4. And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,

Came whiffing through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

5. One, two! One, two! and through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

6. "And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

7. 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Carroll, Lewis. "The Jabberwocky." <http://www.jabberwocky.com/carroll/jabber/jabberwocky.html> viewed 31.1.2011

Carroll invented many of the words in this poem, and we still don't know what all of them mean. However, based on what you know about sentence structure and word forms, you should be able to find the following:

1. In the first stanza,
a) six verbs
b) four adjectives
c) four nouns

2. In the second stanza,
a) five verbs
b) two adjectives
c) six nouns

3. In the fourth stanza,
a) five verbs
b) two adjectives
c) five nouns



Task 4 – Fill in the blanks

Read the following text about the meaning of fact and fiction and fill in the missing words. Apply the concept discussed in Task 3, if you are unsure of any words.

A 1. _____ is a made-up story. This definition covers a lot of territory. It includes the homemade lies we tell to protect ourselves from annoying 2. _____, and the casual jokes we hear and re-tell as polite (or impolite) conversation, as well as great visionary works of literature like Milton's *Paradise Lost* or the Bible. Because a story is 3. _____ does not mean it 4. _____ truth. The relation between fact and fiction is by no means as simple as one might think; and, since it is very important to an understanding of fiction, it must be 5. _____ with some care. In ordinary conversation, fact is 6. _____ with reality and truth, while fiction, on the other hand, is tied to unreality and lies. Fact still means for us quite 7. _____ a thing done, while fiction has never lost its meaning of a thing made.

A thing done has no real 8. _____ once it has been done. It may have 9. _____, and there may be many records that point to its former existence (think of WWI, for example); but once it is done its existence is finished. A thing made, on the other hand, exists until it 10. _____ or is destroyed. Once it is finished, its existence begins (think of a story about WWI, such as *Im Westen nichts Neues* by Erich Maria Remarque). Fact, finally has no real existence, while fiction may last for centuries.

We can see this rather strange relation between fact and fiction more 11. _____ if we consider one place where the two come together: the place we call history. The word history itself originally comes from a Greek word meaning inquiry or investigation, but it soon 12. _____ the two meanings that interest us here: on the one hand, a history can mean things that have happened; on the other, it can refer to a 13. _____ version of things that are supposed to have happened. That is, history can mean both the events of the 14. _____ and the story of these events: fact and fiction. What begins as an 15. _____ must end as a story. Fact, in order to survive, must become fiction. Seen in this way, fiction is not the opposite of fact, but its 16. _____.

Adapted from "The Elements of Fiction." *Elements of Fiction: Third Canadian Edition*. Ed. Robert Scholes and Rosemary Sullivan. Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 1994. 3-18.

acquired
associated
clearly
complement

considered
consequences
decays
existence

fiction
investigation
lacks
literally

made-up
past
recorded
scrutiny



Task 5 - Literary Terms

Look at the list of literary terms below and match them to their definitions.

1. antagonist	6. falling action	11. personification	16. setting
2. climax	7. imagery	12. plot	17. simile
3. conflict	8. irony	13. point of view	18. stanza
4. denouement	9. metaphor	14. protagonist	19. symbolism
5. exposition	10. narrator	15. rising action	20. theme

- a. Words and phrases that vividly recreate a sound, sight, smell, touch, or taste for the reader by appealing to the senses.
- b. Typically found at the beginning, this is where the characters and setting are introduced and the plot begins to unfold.
- c. This refers to the central idea of a work of literature that the writer wishes to convey about the subject.
- d. This occurs when an inanimate object, animal, or idea is given human qualities or characteristics.
- e. This is the point when the action reaches a turning point and interest and intensity reach their peak and usually involves an important decision, discovery, or event which influences the final outcome of the story.
- f. This includes the time and place in which a story unfolds.
- g. This includes the series of events that make up a story.
- h. The vantage point from which the writer tells the story, usually from the first person or third person.
- i. The use of symbols in literature to convey meaning.
- j. The unit into which lines of poetry are divided, it is the equivalent of a poetic paragraph.
- k. The point after the climax where the action begins to drop off and the events of the plot become clear or are explained in some way, leading toward the end of the story.
- l. The person who “tells” the story. This is not necessarily the same person as the author.
- m. The main character in a story, often, but not always, portrayed as a hero or good person.
- n. This is when the loose ends are tied up as the story comes to an end.
- o. The difference between what is expected and what actually happens. **Note - The 1995 Alanis Morissette song on this subject does not actually contain any examples of this.*
- p. The character or force with which the main character conflicts, often, but not always, portrayed as a villain
- q. As the conflict or conflicts develop and the characters attempt to resolve those conflicts, suspense builds.
- r. A struggle or clash between opposing characters, forces, or emotions. Without this, most stories would never go anywhere.
- s. A figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two things.
- t. A figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two things using the words “like” or “as”.

Adapted from “Common Literary Terms Defined.” http://www.thewritingtutor.biz/quick_reference_guides/litterms-common.php#Metaphor
viewed 30.01.2011



Task 6 – Reading and Analyzing

Read the fairy-tale below, keeping in mind the literary terms you have just learned, as even in simple children's stories, the standard elements of story-writing can be found.

The Three Bears

collected by Joseph Jacobs

ONCE upon a time there were Three Bears, who lived together in a house of their own, in a wood. One of them was a Little, Small, Wee Bear; and one was a Middle-Sized Bear, and the other was a Great, Huge Bear. They each had a pot for their porridge, a little pot for the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and a middle-sized pot for the Middle Bear, and a great pot for the Great, Huge Bear. And they each had a chair to sit in; a little chair for the Little, Small, Wee Bear; and a middle-sized chair for the Middle Bear; and a great chair for the Great, Huge Bear. And they each had a bed to sleep in; a little bed for the Little, Small, Wee Bear; and a middle-sized bed for the Middle Bear; and a great bed for the Great, Huge Bear.

One day, after they had made the porridge for their breakfast, and poured it into their porridge-pots, they walked out into the wood while the porridge was cooling, that they might not burn their mouths, by beginning too soon to eat it. And while they were walking, a little old Woman came to the house. She could not have been a good, honest old Woman; for first she looked in at the window, and then she peeped in at the keyhole; and seeing nobody in the house, she lifted the latch. The door was not fastened, because the Bears were good Bears, who did nobody any harm, and never suspected that anybody would harm them. So the little old Woman opened the door, and went in; and well pleased she was when she saw the porridge on the table. If she had been a good little old Woman, she would have waited till the Bears came home, and then, perhaps, they would have asked her to breakfast; for they were good Bears — a little rough or so, as the manner of Bears is, but for all that very good-natured and hospitable. But she was an impudent, bad old Woman, and set about helping herself.

So first she tasted the porridge of the Great, Huge Bear, and that was too hot for her; and she said a bad word about that. And then she tasted the porridge of the Middle Bear, and that was too cold for her; and she said a bad word about that, too. And then she went to the porridge of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and tasted that; and that was neither too hot nor too cold, but just right; and she liked it so well that she ate it all up: but the naughty old Woman said a bad word about the little porridge-pot, because it did not hold enough for her.

Then the little old Woman sat down in the chair of the Great, Huge Bear, and that was too hard for her. And then she sat down in the chair of the Middle Bear, and that was too soft for her. And then she sat down in the chair of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too hard, nor too soft, but just right. So she seated herself in it, and there she sat till the bottom of the chair came out, and down she came, plump upon the ground. And the naughty old Woman said a wicked word about that, too.

Then the little old Woman went upstairs into the bed-chamber in which the three Bears slept. And first she lay down upon the bed of the Great, Huge Bear; but that was too high at the head for her. And next she lay down upon the bed of the Middle Bear, and that was too high at the foot for her. And then she lay down upon the



bed of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too high at the head nor at the foot, but just right. So she covered herself up comfortably, and lay there till she fell fast asleep.

By this time the Three Bears thought their porridge would be cool enough, so they came home to breakfast. Now the little old Woman had left the spoon of the Great, Huge Bear, standing in his porridge.

‘Somebody has been at my porridge!’

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice. And when the Middle Bear looked at his, he saw that the spoon was standing in it, too. They were wooden spoons; if they had been silver ones, the naughty old Woman would have put them in her pocket.

‘Somebody has been at my porridge!’

said the Middle Bear in his middle voice.

Then the Little, Small, Wee Bear looked at his, and there was the spoon in the porridge-pot, but the porridge was all gone.

‘Somebody has been at my porridge, and has eaten it all up!’

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Upon this the Three Bears, seeing that someone had entered their house, and eaten up the Little, Small, Wee Bear’s breakfast, began to look about them. Now the little old Woman had not put the hard cushion straight when she rose from the chair of the Great, Huge Bear.

‘Somebody has been sitting in my chair!’

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And the little old Woman had squatted down the soft cushion of the Middle Bear.

‘Somebody has been sitting in my chair!’

said the Middle Bear, in his middle voice.

And you know what the little old Woman had done to the third chair.

‘Somebody has been sitting in my chair and has sat the bottom out of it!’

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.



Then the three Bears thought it necessary that they should make further search; so they went upstairs into their bed-chamber. Now the little old Woman had pulled the pillow of the Great, Huge Bear out of its place.

'Somebody has been lying in my bed!'

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And the little old Woman had pulled the bolster of the Middle Bear out of its place.

'Somebody has been lying in my bed!'

said the Middle Bear, in his middle voice.

And when the Little, Small, Wee Bear came to look at his bed, there was the bolster in its right place, and the pillow in its place upon the bolster; and upon the pillow was the little old Woman's ugly, dirty head — which was not in its place, for she had no business there.

'Somebody has been lying in my bed — and here she is!'

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

The little old Woman had heard in her sleep the great, rough, gruff voice of the Great, Huge Bear; but she was so fast asleep that it was no more to her than the roaring of wind or the rumbling of thunder. And she had heard the middle voice of the Middle Bear, but it was only as if she had heard someone speaking in a dream. But when she heard the little, small, wee voice of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, it was so sharp, and so shrill, that it awakened her at once. Up she started; and when she saw the Three Bears on one side of the bed, she tumbled herself out at the other, and ran to the window. Now the window was open, because the Bears, like good, tidy Bears as they were, always opened their bed-chamber window when they got up in the morning. Out the little old Woman jumped; and whether she broke her neck in the fall; or ran into the wood and was lost there; or found her way out of the wood, and was taken up by the constable and sent to the House of Correction for a vagrant as she was, I cannot tell. But the Three Bears never saw anything more of her.

Adapted from Jacobs, Joseph. *English Fairy Tales*. London: David Nutt, 1890.
<http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/authors/jacobs/english/3bears.html> viewed 30.1.2011

Based on the definitions of literary terms found in Task 5, identify:

- a) the protagonist(s)
- b) the antagonist(s)
- c) the setting
- d) the exposition
- e) the rising action
- f) the climax
- g) the denouement
- h) the example(s) of personification



Task 7 - Grammar and Poetic Terms

Correct the following sentences. There are several different types of mistakes, such as prepositions, articles, subject-verb agreement, etc, though there is not more than **one mistake** per sentence.

1. The repetition of the same or similar sounds at the beginning of words are called alliteration.
2. A ballad is a poem that tells story similar to a folk tale or legend and often has a repeated refrain.
3. On a poem, a pair of lines that are the same length and usually rhyme and form a complete thought is called a couplet.
4. Homer wrote two of the most famous epic poems, who are titled the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.
5. When poetry is compose of either rhymed or unrhymed lines that have no set meter, the poet is using free verse.
6. Meter is the arrangement of a line of poetry to the number of syllables and the rhythm of accented (or stressed) syllables.
7. A foot is not just founded at the end of a leg, it exists in poetry as two or more syllables that together make up the smallest unit of rhythm in a poem.
8. One of the harder words to spell in english, onomatopoeia refers to words that imitate sounds like *buzz or hiss*.
9. Poets sometimes use words that look alike when their written, but don't sound the same when they're spoken to create rhyme.
10. Poems are often inspirated by the poet's feelings.

Adapted from "Glossary of Poetry Terms." <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0903237.html> viewed 30.1.2011