



**NEERAJ®**

# **UNDERSTANDING PROSE**

## **B.E.G.E.- 141**

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**Sample Preview  
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# QUESTION PAPER

June – 2024

(Solved)

## UNDERSTANDING PROSE

**B.E.G.E.-141**

**Time: 3 Hours ]**

**[ Maximum Marks: 100**

**Note:** Answer any **five** questions. All questions carry equal marks.

**Q. 1. Write short notes on any two of the following:**

**(a) Descriptive prose.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 2, 'Descriptive Prose'.

**(b) Art and craft of diary writing.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-13, Page No. 117, Q. No. 3.

**(c) Travelogue as a literary form.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-16, Page No. 139, 'Introduction' and Page No. 142, Q. No. 1.

**(d) Differences between a simile and a metaphor.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 5, 'Simile and Metaphor'.

**Q. 2. Critically analyse the theme of Nehru's 'The Quest of Man'.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 133, 'Theme'.

**Q. 3. Write a note on the cultural divide between the North and the South as seen in Atkin's Travels by a Lesser Line.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-16, Page No. 141, 'Theme: Understanding the Text'.

**Q. 4. Give a pen-portrait of Queen Victoria as seen in Strachey's biography.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-12, Page No. 101, 'Portrait of Victoria'.

**Q. 5. Orwell's views on Imperialism are clearly seen in his essay 'Shooting an Elephant'. Discuss with examples.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-7, Page No. 64, Q. No. 1, Page No. 60, 'The Expository Mode', 'Similes', 'Metaphors' and 'Imagery'.

**Q. 6. Give a detailed character sketch of the mother from the story 'Mother'.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-6, Page No. 51, 'Mother' and Page No. 53, Q. No. 2.

**Q. 7. Describe the circumstances that made Kincaid believe that her culture and history were inferior to that of the colonizers.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-8, Page No. 71, Q. No. 1 and Q. No. 2.

**Q. 8. Narrate Pip's first visit to Miss Havisham stressing on the theme of decay that he saw there.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-3, Page No. 27, Q. No. 3 and Q. No. 4.

**Q. 9. Russell has created an effective picture of upper class life in Victorian Britain. Discuss with examples from his Autobiography.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-11, Page No. 91, 'Discussion', Page No. 93, Q. No. 3 and Q. No. 5.



# QUESTION PAPER

December – 2023

(Solved)

## UNDERSTANDING PROSE

**B.E.G.E.-141**

**Time: 3 Hours ]**

**[ Maximum Marks: 100**

**Note: Attempt any five questions. All questions carry equal marks.**

**Q. 1. Write short notes on any two of the following:**

**(a) Expository prose.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 3, 'Expository Prose'.

**(b) Differences between biography and autobiography.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-9, Page No. 75, Q. No. 7.

**(c) Origin of letter-writing.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 131, 'Letter Writing - A Historical Perspective'.

**(d) Figures of speech.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 4, 'Figures of Speech'.

**Q. 2. Why does Iona pour out his history to the mare in Chekhov's story 'Misery'?**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-5, Page No. 44, Q. No. 3 and Page No. 42, 'Discussion'.

**Q. 3. Examine Kincaid's essay 'On Seeing England for the First Time' as a personal essay reflecting her anger against the English.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-8, Page No. 65, 'Introduction', Page No. 69, Q. No. 2 and Q. No. 3, Page No. 71, Q. No. 1 and Q. No. 2.

**Q. 4. How were Gandhi's days spent in Calcutta as given in his autobiography?**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-10, Page No. 84, Q. No. 5 and Page No. 83, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 5. Discuss Anne Frank's Diary as a literary work.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-13, Page No. 114, 'Anne Frank's Diary as a Literary Work'.

**Q. 6. How were Queen Victoria and Prince Albert different? Why did the English aristocracy disapprove of Albert?**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-12, Page No. 101, 'Portrait of Albert', 'Portrait of Victorian' and Page No. 103, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 7. Write a critical appreciation of Margaret Laurence's speech "My Final Hour".**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-14, Page No. 130, Q. No. 5, Page No. 124, Q. No. 6 and Q. No. 7.

**Q. 8. Summarize the main ideas given in Nehru's 'The Quest of Man'.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 137, Q. No. 1 and Q. No. 3 and Page No. 138, Q. No. 4.

**Q. 9. What does the comment "Be strong before people, only weep before God", from the short story "Mother", show about the mother's character?**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-6, Page No. 53, Q. No. 2 and Q. No. 3 and Page No. 51, 'Mother'.

■ ■

# Sample Preview of The Chapter

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# UNDERSTANDING PROSE

## VARIETIES OF PROSE



### Understanding Prose : An Introduction

#### INTRODUCTION

The word 'prose' is derived from the Latin term 'prosus' meaning 'direct' or 'straight'. Thus, prose in direct writing is of three kinds: Descriptive, Narrative and Expository. The words have two kinds of meanings denotative and connotative. The literary forms of prose are short story, novel, essay, biography and autobiography. They have their own characteristics. Figures of speech enhance the attraction of a prose writing. Main figures of speech are: simile, metaphor, image, symbol, personification, metonymy, synecdoche, apostrophe, hyperbole and litotes.

#### CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

#### PROSE AND POETRY

Prose is the most typical form of language, applying ordinary grammatical structure and natural flow of speech rather than rhythmic structure (as in traditional poetry). Prose is reciprocal to poetry. While there are critical debates on the construction of prose, its simplicity and loosely defined structure has led to its adoption for the majority of spoken dialogue, factual discourse as well as topical and fictional writing. It is commonly used, for example, in literature, newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias, broadcasting, film, history, philosophy, law and many other forms of communication.

Novels, essays, short stories, and works of criticism are examples of prose. Other examples include: comedy, drama, fable, fiction, folk tale, hagiography, legend, literature, myth, narrative, saga, science fiction, story, theme and tragedy.

Prose lacks the more formal metrical structure of verse that is almost found in the traditional poetry. Poems often involve a meter and/or rhyme scheme. Prose, instead, comprises full, grammatical sentences, which

then constitute paragraphs and overlook aesthetic appeal. Some works of prose do contain traces of metrical structure or versification and a conscious blend of the two literature formats is known as prose poetry. Similarly, any work of verse with fewer rules and restrictions is known as free verse. Verse is considered to be more systematic or formulaic, whereas prose is the most reflective of ordinary (often conversational) speech. On this point Samuel Taylor Coleridge requested, jokingly, that novice poets should know the "definitions of prose and poetry; that is, prose, –words in their best order; poetry, –the best words in their best order." In Molière's play *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, Monsieur Jourdain asked for something to be written in neither verse nor prose. A philosophy master replied that "there is no other way to express oneself than with prose or verse," for the simple reason being that "everything that is not prose is verse, and everything that is not verse is prose."

**Difference between Prose and Poetry:** The difference between prose and poetry can be understood very clearly by the help of French critic Paul Valery's idea of prose and poetry. So what was his idea? Actually Valery compared prose to walking and poetry to dancing. We understand that whenever we walk we have a purpose in mind. We don't walk just for the sake of walking. Even if we walk without any intention to reach any destination, then also we are walking to improve our health as an exercise. The idea is to say that walking is not done without any purpose. One should keep in mind that here, we are actually discussing an ordinary prose and a literary prose. Ordinary prose is what Valery compared to walking. So when we write, we write it for a purpose. There could be endless possibilities of purposes like passing information, giving orders, making someone do something that we want him/her to



do, etc. Therefore, we can say that in an ordinary prose the matter of concern is the message of the content. The message of the content is not the primary concern as far as literary prose is concerned. Here, what matters is also the use of language, presentation of emotions, characters, themes, the use of style and so on.

On the other hand, we are not concerned at all with the information or instruction any dance is to provide us. We watch a dance performance because we like it, we enjoy it. Every time we go and watch a dance performance. The idea of dance is enjoyment and not information. That is why we can go over and over and watch an already watched dance performance without getting bored but same cannot be said for ordinary prose intending to give some information. We cannot go over and over through an already read informative piece unless we are sure that every time we read we will find something new, which does not happen with an ordinary prose, because with this we enter into the world of literary prose which is due for the discussion. But the case of poetry and literary prose is different. Here, we have something which we call favourite piece, which we can read so many times and still claim that we want to read more. But with an ordinary prose once the meaning has been taken we would not like to go through it again, we would not like our time to be wasted in something which we already know. So we can say now that in literary prose and poetry the importance does not reside alone on what is being said but also on the medium of what is being said. Though, it would be difficult to address a direct question that what is more important form or the content, it is inevitably agreeable that both are an integral part of literary writing and together they give a sense of completeness which we usually appreciate in literary pieces, and content which makes a literature great.

We can once again understand with the help of dancing. In a performance of dance, from the very starting, every gesture holds equal importance. And it would be absurd to say that this particular gesture was more important than the others or that this one was not all important. All the gestures in a performance contribute in the completeness of a performance. In the similar way in literary prose or poetry every single word has its own importance and it contributes equally in the total effect of the work. Just as during the dance distinguishing the dancer from the dance is impossible similarly in a literary work distinguishing between the effect of message from the effect of medium is impossible. Many of us might have seen paraphrases of

poems, but important it is to remember that paraphrase of a poem is not a poem. We can summarize a novel but it's not the novel. The meaning of poem is what we understand every time we go through it. The meaning might change every time we read it, there it is impossible to say that one has exhausted this very poem. Usually a literary piece has different layers of meaning. These layers of meaning are achieved by the writer who works through suggestion, allusions, imagery and other literary devices. But one must not think that the use of literary device will make a work literary. It does not quite happen. What also matters that how these devices are used? How the writer has made everything contribute towards the final effect of the piece? Every time we read it, we get new meaning. We get new aesthetic pleasure.

### Denotation and Connotation

The relationship between words and meanings is extremely complicated, and belongs to the field of semantics. For now, though, what you need to know is that words do not have single, simple meanings. Traditionally, grammarians have referred to the meanings of words in two parts: Denotation – a literal meaning of the word; Connotation – an association (emotional or otherwise) which the word evokes.

For example, both “woman” and “chick” have the denotation “adult female” in North American society, but “chick” has somewhat negative connotations, while “woman” is neutral.

In other words, Connotation and Denotation are two principal methods of describing the meanings of words. Connotation refers to the wide array of positive and negative associations that most words naturally carry with them, whereas denotation is the precise, literal definition of a word that might be found in a dictionary.

### VARIETIES OF PROSE

Prose is mainly of three kinds: (i) Descriptive Prose, (ii) Narrative Prose, (iii) Expository Prose.

**1. Descriptive Prose:** Descriptive writing describes things as they are or as they appear to be. It can be the description of a person or a landscape or an event. The descriptive writing shows us things as they are or were seen or heard or imagined by the describer. It deals mainly with events. A good description presents the writer's observation in vivid details. It has an atmosphere of its own. Through the description, the author tries to narrate what she/he has seen or imagined.

Here, is a description of Mr. Squeers in Charles Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39).

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Mr. Squeers' appearance was not pre-possessing. He had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favour of two. The eye he had was unquestionably, useful, but decidedly not ornamental: being of a greenish grey, and in shape resembling the fan-light of a street door.

**2. Narrative Prose:** A narrative is a description of events. It may deal with external or internal events.

**(i) Internal Events:** Internal events mean the thoughts, feelings and emotions of individuals.

**(ii) External Events:** Narrative writing tries to recreate an actual experience or an imaginary one. It is in a way that we are able to experience it mentally. Narratives can deal with the facts or fiction.

**(a) Narrative Facts:** Autobiographies, biographies, histories are narratives of fact.

**(b) Narrative Fiction:** The short story and novel come under the category of narrative fiction.

When we narrate a story we concentrate on the sequence of events. It is the action that grips the attention of the reader. The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are examples of narrative writing. In narration action, characters and setting are woven into a pattern to make it interesting. Rudyard Kipling mentioned the ingredients of a narrative in the following verse.

I keep six honest-serving men  
They taught me all I know:  
Their names are What and Why and When  
And How and Where and Who

Thus, the ingredients of narrative are as under:

- (i) What happens?
- (ii) Why does it happen?
- (iii) When does it happen?
- (iv) How does it happen?
- (v) Where does it happen?
- (vi) To whom does it happen?

All these questions are answered satisfactorily in a narrative.

**Extract from Charles Dickens' Novel *Oliver Twist* (1837):** Here, we shall read about the trial of the Artful Dodger when he is produced in court on charges of pick-pocketing.

"It was indeed Mr. Dawkins, who, shuffling into the office with the big coat-sleeves tucked up as usual, his left hand in his pocket and his hat in his right hand, preceded the jailer, with a rolling gait altogether indescribable, and taking his place in the dock, requested in an audible voice to know what he was placed in that' ere disgraceful situation for.

'Hold your tongue, will you?' said the jailer.

'I'm an Englishman, ain't I?' rejoined the Dodger; 'where are my privileges?'

'You'll get your privileges soon enough,' retorted the jailer, 'and peper with'em?'

**3. Expository Prose:** Expository writing deals in definition, explanation or interpretation. It includes writing on science, law, philosophy, technology, political science, history and criticism.

Exposition is a form of logical presentation.

- (i) Its primary object is to explain and clarify.
- (ii) It presents details concretely and exactly.
- (iii) Expository writing explains.

People take interest in expository writing that can be read as literature. The following is a piece of expository prose:

"In the leg there are two bones, the tibia and fibula. The tibia or shin-bone is long and strong and bears the weight of the body. The fibula or splint bone is an equally long but much slenderer bone, and is attached to the tibia as a pin is to a brooch.

(Leonard Hill, *Manual of Human Physiology*)

### FORMS OF PROSE

Dividing the prose in three categories, i.e., descriptive, narrative and expository is not precise at all. To say these categories are quite broad in sense that they do not cover the preciseness of classification of prose. We do now understand all three broad classifications of the prose so let us now look at different forms of prose. Some of the forms of the prose are novel, short story, essay, letter, travelogue, biography, diary, speeches and autobiography.

**Short Story:** There is no single acceptable definition of a short story. We can say only that it is short, has a plot and characters and has a beginning, a middle and an end. It is 'a relatively short narrative designed to produce a single dominant effect containing the elements of drama'. A short story is not a novel in an abridged form. Instead, a short story is complete in itself. Short story has the following characteristics:

- (i) In a short story there is completeness in a few pages.
- (ii) The characters and incidents are sketched in a few effective strokes.
- (iii) A short story has intensity and a singleness of purpose.
- (iv) The aim of a good short story is to make the reader feel, to make him/her enter into the experience of the characters.

**Novel:** By novel, we usually mean a piece of fiction, written in prose and of a certain length.

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Main characteristics of a novel are as under:

- (i) A novel is a picture of life as viewed by the writer.
- (ii) It has a story which tells us what happened and a plot which tells us how it happened.  
**E.M. Forster** explained: The King died and the Queen died' is a story. 'The King died and then the Queen died of grief' is a plot.
- (iii) The plot and characters in a good novel leave a lasting impression on the reader.
- (iv) It gives us an insight into the world and ourselves.
- (v) It is full of vitality and humanity.
- (vi) It appeals to human sensibilities.
- (vii) The style varies from one novelist to another.

**Novel versus Short Story:** We can distinguish between a short story and a novel. A good short story is like a small garden. A fine novel is like a forest.

**Essay:** The word 'essay' is derived from the French word *essai* or attempt. It "attempts" to throw some light on the subject under discussion. An essay is of moderate length.

There are two kinds of essays as under:

- (a) Informal or personal essay, and
- (b) Formal essays.

These are explained as under:

**(a) Informal Essay:** In an informal essay, there are the following features:

- (i) We can say anything we like. It should be interesting and pleasing to the reader.
- (ii) It is written in a light style.
- (iii) Its purpose is to delight the reader.
- (iv) The style is generally familiar and conversational.
- (v) It tries to inform, persuade or entertain the reader.

**(b) Formal Essay:**

- (i) A formal essay is a serious one.
- (ii) It weighs, evaluates and judges.
- (iii) It discusses the merits and the demerits of the topic in question.
- (iv) The style is objective and serious.
- (v) A good essay is balanced, thoughtful and not biased.
- (vi) The judgement is based on facts.

### Biography and Autobiography

**Biography:** A biography is the story of the life of an individual. It has the following characteristics:

- (i) It tries to project an objective picture of the life of a particular person.

- (ii) It avoids the temptation either to praise too much or to be too severe and critical.

- (iii) The writer selects the salient features of a particular life and gives them a shape.

- (iv) It tries to make the reader share the hopes, the fears, the interests and aspirations of that person.

**Autobiography:** An autobiography has the following features:

- (i) In autobiography, the writer attempts to reveal selected experiences of his/her own life in retrospect.

- (ii) The picture presented in it is subjective.

- (iii) It presents the events and impression of the past as recollected by the writer while writing the autobiography.

- (iv) It cannot be a complete account of one's life as he has future to live in.

The autobiographies of Gandhiji and Nehruji are good examples of this form of autobiographies.

### FIGURES OF SPEECH

Let us now go ahead and look into some of the figures of speech commonly used by authors. One thing which is important to remember that identification of figures of speech is important but it is not the end, one should also learn to know that why writer has used this specific figure of speech.

A figure of speech is the use of a word or words diverging from its usual meaning. It can also be a special repetition, arrangement or omission of words with literal meaning, or a phrase with a specialized meaning not based on the literal meaning of the words in it, as in idiom, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, or personification. Figures of speech often provide emphasis, freshness of expression, or clarity. However, clarity may also suffer from their use, as any figure of speech introduces an ambiguity between literal and figurative interpretation. A figure of speech is sometimes called a rhetorical figure or a locution.

Not all theories of meaning have a concept of "literal language". Under theories that do not, figure of speech is not an entirely coherent concept.

Rhetoric originated as the study of the ways in which a source text can be transformed to suit the goals of the person reusing the material. For this goal, classical rhetoric detected four fundamental operations that can be used to transform a sentence or a larger portion of a text: Expansion, abridgement, switching and transferring.