

WHAT IS LITERATURE?

- Comes from the Latin literae/litera which means “an acquaintance to letters”.
- It refers to the body/collection of work
- It also refers to the representation of what the body/collection of works is about.

KINDS OF LITERATURE:

1. Oral tradition – pieces which do not have written evidences or accounts; passed on from generation to generation.
2. Written collection – pieces which have written form, evidence or account; published and distributed.

FORMS OF LITERATURE:

1. Prose – language is straight-forward; conversational in tone
2. Poetry – language is figurative; melodic in tone

DIVISIONS OF LITERATURE:

1. Fiction – product of one’s imagination
2. Non-fiction – purely factual in nature

IMPORTANCE OF LITERATURE:

1. Studying literature is like looking at the mirror of life where man’s experiences, his innermost feelings and thoughts are reflected.
2. Through literature, we learn the culture of people across time and space.
3. We understand not only the past life of a nation but also its present.
4. Moreover, literature serves as an enormous information base
5. It is a mirror of life and it has life itself.

STANDARDS OF GOOD LITERATURE:

1. Artistry – aesthetic value
2. Style – author-centered; presentation of the piece
3. Intellectual value – for the mind
4. Suggestiveness – for the emotion
5. Spiritual value – for the spirit
6. Universality – mass appeal; transcends the bounds of race/color/gender/etc
7. Timelessness – transcends the bounds of time

LITERARY APPROACHES:

1. Formalistic or Literary Approach
Literature is viewed intrinsically, independent of the author, age, or any other extrinsic factor. The study of the selection is more or less based on the so-called “literary elements”.
2. Moral or Humanistic Approach
Literature is viewed to discuss man and its nature. It presents man as essentially rational; that is, endowed with intellect and free will; or that the piece does not misinterpret the true nature of man. The approach is close to the “morality” of literature, to questions of ethical goodness or badness.

3. Historical Approach

Literature is seen both as a reflection and product of the times and circumstances in which it was written. It operates on the premise that the history of a nation has telling effects on its literature and that the piece can be better understood and appreciated if one knows the times surrounding its creation.

4. Sociological Approach

Literature is viewed as the expression of man within a given social situation which is reduced to discussions on economic, in which men are somewhat simplistically divided into haves and have nots, thus passing into the “proletarian approach” which tends to underscore the conflict between the two classes. The sociological approach stresses on social “relevance”, social “commitment,” contemporaneity, and it deems communication with the reader important.

5. Cultural Approach

Literature is seen as one of the manifestations and vehicles of a nation’s or race’s culture and tradition. It includes the entire compels of what goes under “culture” – the technological, artistic, sociological, ideological aspects; and considers the literary piece in the total cultural milieu in which it was born. The thrust is to make full use of the reciprocal function between culture and literature. The approach is one of the richest ways to arrive at the culture of people and one of the most pleasurable ways of appreciating the literature of people.

6. Psychological Approach

Literature is viewed as the expression of “personality,” of “inner drives” or “neurosis”. It includes the psychology of the author, of the characters, and even the psychology of creation. It has resulted in an almost exhausting and exhaustive “psychological analysis” of characters, of symbols and images, of recurrent themes, and others.

7. Impressionistic Approach

Literature is viewed to elucidate “reacting- response” which is considered as something very personal, relative and fruitful. Unconditioned by explanations and often taking the impact of the piece as a whole, it seeks to see how the piece has communicated.