

What kind of writer/reader are you?

Writing styles are as distinct as personality traits—and debates about which way of writing is “best” can often be just as volatile. Where one writer might luxuriate in the complexities and varieties of the lexicon, another might prefer to tell it like it is in the most familiar way possible. Such was the case, in fact, with celebrated novelist [William Faulkner](#), who famously griped that his contemporary, [Ernest Hemingway](#), “had never been known to use a word that might send his reader to the dictionary.” Hemingway retorted, “Does he really think big emotions come from big words? He thinks I don’t know the ten-dollar words. I know them all right. But there are older and simpler and better words, and those are the ones I use.” It’s neither productive nor accurate to argue over whether or not there can even be a “best” style of writing, but it is certainly entertaining to figure out which one we most prefer.

<http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2012/08/american-writers-thesaurus-quiz/>

I believe the concept of telling good writing from bad is subjective. Of course, there are clues that most can agree on: grammar, spelling, story, accessible theme, does it emotionally impact you or change your life in some small way? And how do we take into account taste in genre, style, voice, etc. There are classics that I personally find abhorrent: Joyce's "Ulysses" is one, whereas I read Shakespeare for fun! There are best sellers I find tedious at best, and fantasy genre novels I reread over and over.

... as I said, subjective.

*Literary fiction is a term used to distinguish certain fictional works that possess commonly held qualities that constitute literary merit. **Genre works** are written with the intent of fitting into a specific literary genre ... **Literary fiction** may fit within a classification of market fiction, but also possesses generally agreed upon qualities such as "elegantly written, lyrical, and ... layered" that appeals to readers outside genre fiction. Literary fiction has been defined as any fiction that attempts to engage with one or more truths or questions, hence relevant to a broad scope of humanity as a form of expression.*

[Nancy Pearl, Now Read This: A Guide to Mainstream Fiction](#), Libraries Unlimited, 1999, 432 pp. (1-56308-659-X)

"Literary fiction", then, is not a genre, but an accolade... a cross-genre description of merit. Novels from all genres (yes, even fantasy and romance) have been declared "literary fiction". Bearing that in mind, let's go on a voyage of discovery.

Pick ONLY the one or two genres you read most from the list below.

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Action | <input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy | <input type="checkbox"/> Romance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical | <input type="checkbox"/> Science Fiction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comedy | <input type="checkbox"/> Horror | <input type="checkbox"/> Thriller |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime /Detective | <input type="checkbox"/> Mystery | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult |

Why do you read this/these genres? What do you get from them? Be specific. Think emotional or intellectual response, exciting, fun, challenging, escapism, heart pounding, satisfying, etc.

Which of these same genres have you always thought you would/or have disliked?

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical | <input type="checkbox"/> Science Fiction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comedy | <input type="checkbox"/> Horror | <input type="checkbox"/> Thriller |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime /Detective | <input type="checkbox"/> Mystery | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult |

Why do you NOT read this/these genres? Why do you avoid them? Be specific.

Name one book that you remember had an enormous impact on you. Yes, just one... you can add more later if you want. Why did it effect you so much and how?

Is there one book you've read that was outside your normal genre that surprised you when you really enjoyed it? Which book and what did you enjoy about it?

When you're reading, are you drawn more to characters or plots? And why?

When you read, do you read for enjoyment, or do you find yourself analysing the text as you go, or a mixture of both? Please explain.

You turn the page and are faced with a full page of... which would you rather?

___action

___dialogue

___description

Why?

How do you / handle / react to / feel about / the other two types? Why?

Now, **as a writer** - not a reader - which genre do you write in? Pick one or two ONLY

- | | | |
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Is this the same genre/s you read? Y N Comment on this.

Now that we've journeyed through the wonderful world of fiction/creative non-fiction via our likes and dislikes, let me ask... How do you tell a good piece of writing from a bad one? AND in what way are you qualified to do so?