

Non-Fiction Terms



What is Nonfiction?

- Nonfiction is writing that primarily deals with **real** people, events, and places. It has a basis in fact, not fiction.





Purpose

Nonfiction writing is written with a purpose; the “purpose” is the reason an author writes a piece.

Some reasons authors write nonfiction are:

- To inform
- To entertain
- To persuade
- To earn money



Kinds of nonfiction writing

Nonfiction writing can be:

- Expository
- Descriptive
- Persuasive
- Narrative

Narrative - narration

- a kind of writing that tells a true story about a person, event or place. Sometimes this kind of nonfiction can be written in the first person, but it always involves research on the writer's part.



Expository - exposition

- nonfiction that explains, gives information, defines, or clarifies an idea (e.g., science or history text, cookbook, literary analysis, newspaper article). The reader may or may not have prior knowledge about the topic being discussed – making a fluff-and-jelly sandwich? – so research is essential.





Descriptive - description

- a kind of writing that is intended to create a mood or emotion, or to re-create a person, place, thing, or event. Descriptive nonfiction employs all five senses to help the reader get a visual image of what the writer is trying to describe. Sensory language, rich details, and figurative language are usually used.

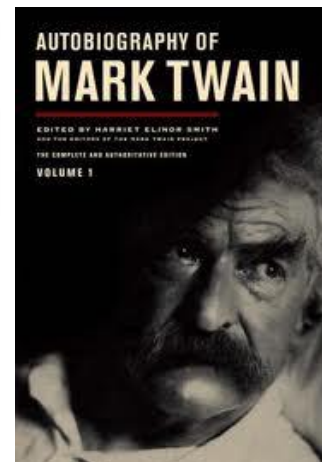
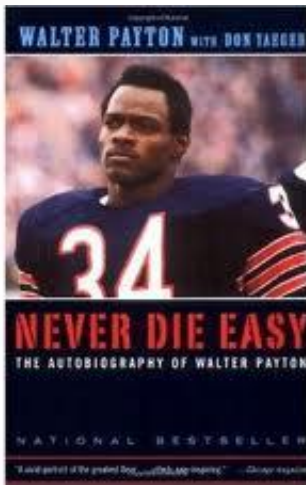
Persuasive - persuasion

- a kind of writing that tries to convince the reader to act or think in a certain way. The writer uses facts, combined with opinion, to take a position on an issue. The writer argues *for* his or her side and/or *against* an opposing side.



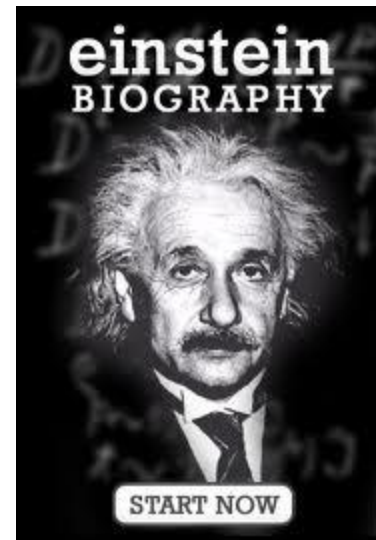
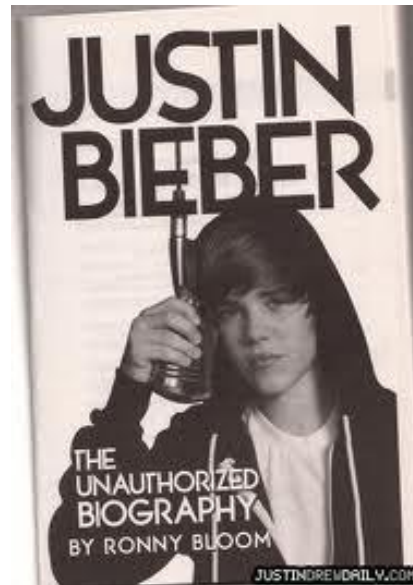
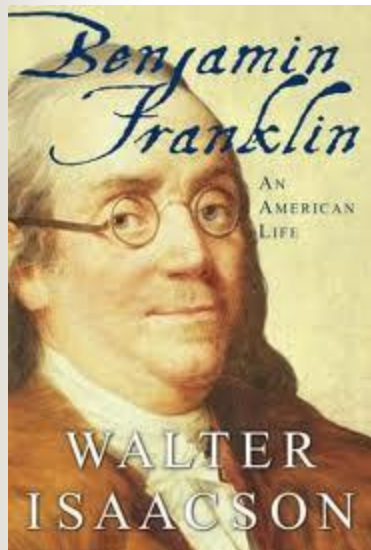
Autobiography

- A writer's account of his/her own life. It is almost always written in first-person (I, me, etc.).
- Short versions include journals, diaries, letters.
- An autobiographical essay focuses on a single person or event in the writer's life.



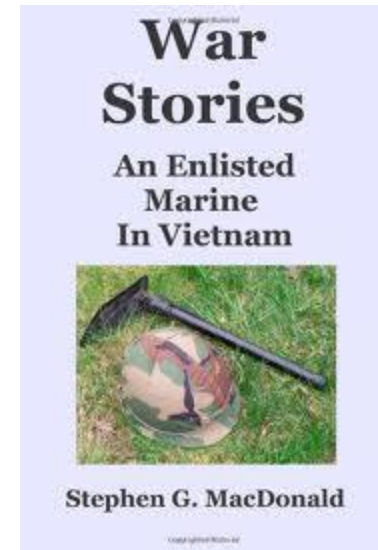
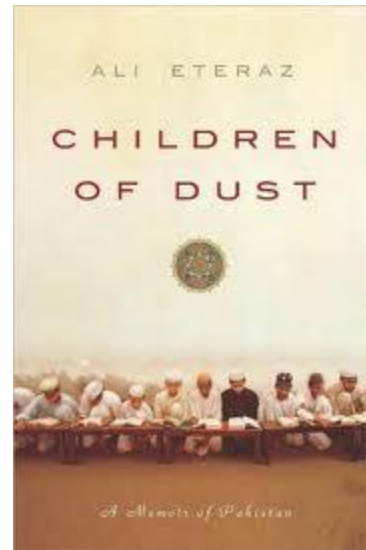
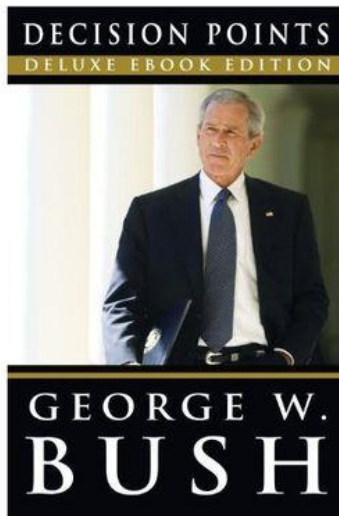
Biography

- account of a person's life written by another person.



Memoir

- form of autobiographical writing in which a writer focuses on his or her involvement with noted people, significant events, or both.





Essay: brief work of non-fiction that deals with a single subject.

- Formal essay: the writer develops and orders ideas in an impersonal manner.
- Informal essay: a writer's expression of ideas is less strict and often employs humor and anecdotes. (An anecdote is a short, entertaining account of a happening; it is usually added to an essay to reinforce an important point the writer is trying to make.)



Essay characteristics

- An essay is a short piece of nonfiction that examines a single subject. It can be based on research or personal experience.
- An essay can be read in one sitting.
- It is written in paragraph form, usually five or more paragraphs.
- The purpose is to inform, to persuade, to entertain.



Strategies for writing nonfiction

- ❑ Nonfiction writers have to stick to factual information. They usually have to research their information before they begin to write. They have to organize their writing as well.
- ❑ Nonfiction writers may use dialogue to record actual conversations. They may also use dialect to reflect actual spoken words.
- ❑ Nonfiction writers also have to avoid using bias and stereotypes in their writing.



Stereotype

A fixed concept or idea of a person that does not allow for any individuality. Examples:

- ❑ All teachers are female, wear glasses, and have their gray hair pulled back in a bun.
- ❑ All old people drive slowly and smell funny.

Nonfiction writers have to make a conscious effort to avoid stereotypes. Writers avoid stereotypes because they (1) make a writer look uneducated and (2) they are *booooooring!*



Bias

A personal and often unreasonable judgment or prejudice. Examples:

- Getting information about the causes of lung cancer from a tobacco company.
- An insurance company tells you that the repair shop they send you to is the best in town.



Objective versus Subjective

- Objective writing: “Just the facts, ma’ am.”
Laying out facts that can be proven to be true (the location of a city, time of day, the identity of the president of the U.S. or France, etc.).
- Subjective writing: Basic facts may be true, but personal opinion sneaks in. Examples: feeling about an event, description of a person, etc.

Question: Can any piece of writing be completely objective, with no opinion whatsoever sneaking into it?