1. **Ballad**- A short definition of the popular ballad (known also as the folk ballad or traditional ballad) is that it is a song, transmitted orally, which tells a story. Ballads are thus the narrative species of folk songs, which originate, and are communicated orally, among illiterate or only partly literate people.

We can distinguish certain basic characteristics common to large numbers of ballads: (a) the beginning is often abrupt; (b) the language is simple; (c) the story is told through dialogue and action; (d) the theme is often tragic (though there are a number of comic ballads); (e) there is often a refrain. To these features we may add: a ballad usually deals with a single episode; the events leading to the crisis are related swiftly; there is minimal detail of surroundings; there is a strong dramatic element; there is considerable intensity and immediacy in the narration; the narrator is impersonal; stock, well-tried epithets are used in the oral tradition; there is frequently incremental repetition; the single line of action and the speed of the story preclude much attempt at delineation of character; imagery is sparse and simple.

We may distinguish further between two basic kinds of ballad: the folk or traditional ballad and the literary ballad. Many historians and critics distinguish a third kind of ballad – the popular ballad.

Egs.- Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", Walter Scott's "Proud Maisie", Keats' "La Belle Dame sans Merci."

1. **Autobiography**- A person’s own account of his or her life. Unlike private records such as journals or diaries, autobiographies are always written for a public audience. Indeed, autobiography is ideally understood by both its authors and its readers to be autobiography exemplary, as a reliable and true portrayal of a life from which others can learn.

The first fully developed autobiography is also the most influential: *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, written in the fourth century. The rise of anthropocentric humanism certainly encouraged people to explore and analyse themselves in greater detail, and helps to explain the proliferation of autobiography in the Enlightenment period. The genre’s overall development might be seen as reflecting shifts in conceptions of the individual. Late medieval and Renaissance work tended to present lives chronologically to portray the emergence of a coherent self which develops into spiritual wholeness. Many autobiographies of the Romantic era, focused more intensely on their writers’ emotional experiences. In the 20th c., modernist sensibilities produced autobiographies, such as Yeats’s *Autobiographies* (1955), which foregrounded the fragmented nature of the self. The last one hundred years or so has undoubtedly been the genre’s period of greatest formal innovation. One key development is the autobiographical novel, such as James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) which presents its subject in the third-person. Some writers, including Yeats, Maya Angelou and Edmund White, have produced different versions of their lives, from a variety of perspectives, or in different modes of writing. In the 20th c., autobiography has provided crucial vehicles for minority voices who have sought to claim significance for certain marginalized lives.

1. **Biography**- Late in the seventeenth century, John Dryden defined biography neatly as "the history of particular men's lives." The name now connotes a relatively full account of a particular person's life, involving the attempt to set forth character, temperament, and milieu, as well as the subject's activities and experiences. Both the ancient Greeks and Romans produced short, formal lives of individuals. Medieval authors wrote generalized chronicles of the deeds of a king, as well as hagiographies: the stylized lives of Christian saints, often based much more on pious legends than on fact. In England, the fairly detailed secular biography appeared in the seventeenth century; the most distinguished instance is Izaak Walton's *Lives*. The eighteenth century in England is the age of the emergence of the full-scale biography, and also of the theory of biography as a special literary genre. It was the century of Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets* (1779-81) and of the best known of all biographies, James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791). Since the 1950s the art of biography has burgeoned, and biography has become a major publishing industry. Biographers and scholars alike have also begun to be much more exercised about some of the theoretical and ethical problems that biography raises. One concern is the question of biography’s accuracy: there is often a tension between the need to appeal to evidence and the drive to generate personality in order to make the work more interesting.
2. **Comedy**- In common literary usage a work, particularly a dramatic work, comedy is a fictional work in which the materials are selected and managed primarily in order to interest and amuse us. The characters and their actiona engage our pleasurable attention rather than our profound concern. We are made to feel confident that no great disaster will occur, and usually the action turns out happily for the chief characters. The term "comedy" is customarily applied only to plays for the stage or to motion pictures; it should be noted, however, that the comic form, so defined, also occurs in prose fiction and narrative poetry. Comedy can be divided into four types- Romantic Comedy, Satiric Comedy, Comedy of manners and Farce. A distinction is often made between high and low comedy. Examples- *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Alchemist* etc.
3. **Dramatic monologue** is a poem in which there is one imaginary speaker addressing an imaginary audience. In most dramatic monologues, some attempt is made to imitate natural speech. In a successful example of the genre, the persona will not be confused with the poet. A dramatic monologue has the following features: (1) A single person, who is not the poet, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem, in a specific situation at a critical moment (2) This person addresses and interacts with one or more other people; but we know of the listeners’ presence, and what they say and do, only from clues in the discourse of the single speaker. (3) The main principle controlling the poet's formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal to the reader, in a way that enhances its interest, the speaker's temperament and character. Examples- Robert Browning’s ‘My Last Duchess’ and ‘Andrea Del Sarto’, Tennyson’s ‘Ulysses’.
4. **Elegy**- Originally, the term elegy initially denoted any poem with the subject matter of change and loss. In the seventeenth century the term elegy began to be limited to its most common present usage: a formal and sustained lament in verse for the death of a particular person, usually ending in a consolation. An important subtype of the elegy is the pastoral elegy, which represents both the poet and the one he mourns—who is usually also a poet—as shepherds. Example- Lord Alfred Tennyson's ‘In Memoriam’ on the death of Arthur Hallam; and W. H. Auden's "In Memory of W. B. Yeats". Occasionally the term is used in its older and broader sense, for somber meditations on mortality such as Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1757), and the ‘Duino Elegies’ (1912-22) of the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke.
5. **Epic**- In its strict sense the term epic or heroic poem is applied to a work that meets at least the following criteria: it is a long verse narrative on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style, and centered on a heroic or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or (in the instance of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*) the human race. The setting of the poem is ample in scale, and may be worldwide, or even larger. The action involves superhuman deeds in battle, such as Achilles' feats in the Trojan War, or a long, arduous, and dangerous journey accomplished. In these great actions the gods and other supernatural beings take an interest or an active part. An epic poem is a ceremonial performance and is narrated in a ceremonial style. It is deliberately distanced from ordinary speech and elevated to the grandeur and formality of the heroic subject and architecture. There is a standard distinction between traditional and literary epics. Examples- Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.
6. **Essay**- A composition, usually in prose which may be of only a few hundred words (like Bacon’s *Essays*) or of book length (like Locke’s ‘Essay Concerning Human Understanding’) and which discusses, formally or informally, a topic or a variety of topics. It is one of the most flexible and adaptable of all literary forms. It is addressed to a general rather than a specialized audience. Thus, the essay discusses its subject in nontechnical fashion, and often with a liberal use of such devices as anecdote, striking illustration, and humor to augment its appeal. Essay can be divided into ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ essays. Essays are generally published in a book or in collections such as The Rambler and The Idler in the eighteenth century. Distinguished essayists have included Coleridge, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, Pater, Emerson, Poe, Thoreau, Santayana, Sainte-Beuve, Montesquieu, Bertrand Russell, Sartre, Camus and Aldous Huxley.
7. **Lyric**-In the original Greek, "lyric" signified a song rendered to the accompaniment of a lyre. In the most common use of the term, a lyric is any fairly short poem, consisting of the utterance by a single speaker, who expresses a state of mind or a process of perception, thought, and feeling. Many lyric speakers are represented as musing in solitude. The range and variety of lyric verse is immense, and lyric poetry, which is to be found in most literatures, comprises the bulk of all poetry. Although the lyric is uttered in the first person, the "I" in the poem need not be the poet who wrote it. In some lyrics, such as John Milton's sonnet "When I consider how my light is spent" and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," the references to the known circumstances of the author's life make it clear that we are to read the poem as a personal expression. The genre also includes extended expressions of a complex evolution of feelingful thought, as in the long elegy and the meditative ode. And within a lyric, the process of observation, thought, memory, and feeling may be organized in a variety of ways. Example- William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey", John Donne's "Canonization".
8. A **mock epic** or mock-heroic poem is distinguished as that type of parody which imitates, in a sustained way, both the elaborate form and the ceremonious style of the epic genre, but applies it to narrate at length a commonplace or trivial subject matter. In a masterpiece of this type, *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), Alexander Pope views through the grandiose epic perspective a quarrel between the belles and elegants of his day over the theft of a lady's curl. The story includes such elements of traditional epic protocol as supernatural machinery, a voyage on board ship, a visit to the underworld, and a heroically scaled battle between the sexes—although with metaphors, hatpins, and snuff for weapons. The term mock-heroic is often applied to other dignified poetic forms which are purposely mismatched to a lowly subject; for example, to Thomas Gray's comic "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat" (1748).
9. **Novel**- The term "novel" is now applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of fiction written in prose. As an extended narrative, the novel is distinguished from the short story and from the work of middle length called the novelette; its magnitude permits a greater variety of characters, greater complication of plot (or plots), ampler development of milieu, and more sustained exploration of character and motives. The subject matter of the novel eludes classification. No other literary form has proved so pliable and adaptable to an endless variety of topics and themes. There are many types of novels- the epistolary novel, the sentimental novel, the novel of sensation, the condition of England novel, the campus novel, the Gothic novel and the historical novel; we have the propaganda, regional, thesis (or sociological), psychological, proletarian, documentary and time novel; we have the novel of the soil and the saga (or chronicle) novel, the picaresque novel, the key novel or livre à clef and the anti-novel; not to mention the detective novel, the thriller, the crime novel, the police procedural, the spy novel, the novel of adventure and the novelette. Example- Jane Austen’s *Emma*, Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*.
10. **Ode**- A lyric poem, usually of some length. The main features are an elaborate stanza-structure, a marked formality and stateliness in tone and style (which make it ceremonious), and lofty sentiments and thoughts. In short, an ode is rather a grand poem; a full-dress poem. However, this said, we can distinguish two basic kinds: the public and the private. The public is used for ceremonial occasions, like funerals, birthdays, state events; the private often celebrates rather intense, personal, and subjective occasions; it is inclined to be meditative, reflective. Tennyson’s ‘Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington’ is an example of the former; Keats’s ‘Ode to a Nightingale’, an example of the latter. Odes are also classified into Regular or Pindaric Odes and irregular odes.
11. Self-evidently a dramatic work consisting of only one act, a **one act play** is the dramatic equivalent of a short story and tends to concentrate on a single episode or situation and as a general rule has only two or three characters. In theme, mood and subject the range is considerable – from farce to tragedy. The one-act play is usually short, with a playing time of fifteen to forty minutes. Towards the end of the 19th c. an increasing number of small experimental theatres greatly encouraged the development of the one-act drama as a form in its own right. For example- Harold Pinter’s *Landscape and Silence* (1970) and John Mortimer’s *Come As You Are* (1971). Many famous dramatists have attempted the form, including Chekhov, Strindberg, Shaw, Hauptmann, Synge, J. M. Barrie, Eugene O’Neill, Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter.
12. **Pastoral**- A minor but important mode which, by convention, is concerned with the lives of shepherds. For the most part pastoral tends to be an idealization of shepherd life, and, by so being, creates an image of a peaceful and uncorrupted existence. The originator of the pastoral was the Greek poet Theocritus, who in the third century B.C. wrote poems representing the life of Sicilian shepherds. The conventions that hundreds of later poets imitated from Virgil's imitations of Theocritus include a shepherd reclining under a spreading beech tree and meditating the rural muse, or piping as though he would never grow old, or engaging in a friendly singing contest, or expressing his good or bad fortune in a love affair, or grieving over the death of a fellow shepherd. From this last type developed the pastoral elegy. Other terms often used synonymously with pastoral are idyll, eclogue and bucolic poetry. Example- *Arcadia* by Sidney, the *Shepherd’s Calender* by Spenser.
13. **Romance**- Romances, which started in verse were works of fiction, or non-historical. In the 13th century, a romance was almost any sort of adventure story, be it of chivalry or of love. Gradually more and more romances were written in prose. Whatever else a romance may be (or have been) it is principally a form of entertainment. It may also be didactic but this is usually incidental. It is usually concerned with characters (and thus with events) who live in a courtly world somewhat remote from the everyday. This suggests elements of fantasy, improbability, extravagance and naivety. It also suggests elements of love, adventure, the marvellous and the ‘mythic’. For the most part the term is used rather loosely to describe a narrative of heroic or spectacular achievements, of chivalry, of gallant love, of deeds of daring. Popular medieval romances in England were Lay of Havelok the Dane and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.
14. **Satire** can be described as the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation. It differs from the comic in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire derides; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against an object that exists outside the work itself. That object may be an individual (in "personal satire"), or a type of person, a class, an institution, a nation, or even the entire human race. Satire has usually been justified by those who practice it as a corrective of human vice and folly. Its frequent claim has been to ridicule the failing rather than the individual, and to limit its ridicule to corrigible faults, excluding those for which a person is not responsible. Critics make a broad division between formal (or "direct") satire and indirect satire. Example- Earl of Rochester's *A Satyr against Mankind*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.
15. **Short story**- A prose narrative of indeterminate length, but too short to be published separately as novels or novellas usually are. According to Edgar Allan Poe, it is a story that concentrates on a unique or single effect and one in which the totality of effect is the objective. A short story may be concerned with a scene, an episode, an experience, an action, the exhibition of a character or characters, the day’s events, a meeting, a conversation, or a fantasy. In the preface to his *Complete Short Stories* Somerset Maugham remarks that the shortest item runs to about 1,600 words (although there have been shorter ones) and the longest to about 20,000 words. The vast majority of short stories would fall somewhere between the two. Most of the terms for analyzing the component elements, the types, and the various narrative techniques of the novel are applicable to the short story as well. Example- *Dubliners* by James Joyce, which is a collection of short stories.
16. **Sonnet**- A lyric poem consisting of a single stanza of fourteen iambic pentameter lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. There are two major patterns of rhyme in sonnets written in the English language:

The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet (named after the fourteenth century Italian poet Petrarch) falls into two main parts: an octave (eight lines) rhyming abbaabba followed by a sestet (six lines) rhyming cdecde or some variant, such as cdccdc.

The Earl of Surrey and other English experimenters in the sixteenth century also developed a stanza form called the English sonnet, or else the Shakespearean sonnet, after its greatest practitioner. This sonnet falls into three quatrains and a concluding couplet: abab cdcd efef gg. There was one notable variant, the Spenserian sonnet, in which Spenser linked each quatrain to the next by a continuing rhyme: abab bebe cdcd ee. Examples of sonnet collections are *Astrophel and Stella* by Sidney and *Amoretti* by Spenser.

1. **Tragedy**- The term is broadly applied to literary, and especially to dramatic, representations of serious actions which eventuate in a disastrous conclusion for the protagonist. According to Aristotle, tragedy has six main elements: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle (scenic effect), and song (music), of which the first two are primary. The plot must be a complete whole — with a definite beginning, middle, and end — and its length should be such that the spectators can comprehend without difficulty both its separate parts and its overall unity. Other features commonly associated with a tragedy are- ‘hamartia’ or the tragic flaw of the character, ‘anagnorisis’ or recognition, ‘peripeteia’ or reversal. Most importantly, however, the aim of tragedy according to Aristotle is to bring about a "catharsis" of the spectators — to arouse in them sensations of pity and fear, and to purge them of these emotions so that they leave the theater feeling cleansed and uplifted, with a heightened understanding of the ways of gods and men. Example- *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* etc.
2. **Tragicomedy**- The term derives from a reference by Plautus (254–184 bc) to the unconventional mixture of kings, gods and servants in his own play Amphitruo as tragico­comoedia. This term essentially refers to plays with a happy ending but containing darker and grimmer thematic patterns than conventional comedies. By the end of sixteenth century, there can be found an increasing mingling of tragic and comic elements, the use of comic relief in tragedy, and what might be called tragic aggravation or heightening in comedy. the Elizabethan and Jacobean conception of life as a tragicomedy was an attempt to balance and reconcile a conflict of vision. This would help to explain the mordant wit and the more macabre elements; also, the sudden and somber events which unexpectedly overshadow the radiance of plays like *Much Ado about Nothing*. Examples- *The Winter’s Tale* (1609–10), *Cymbeline* (c. 1610) and *The Tempest* (c. 1611).

Reference:

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