

Journalistic vs. Literary Writing

This infochart identifies defining and contrasting characteristics of journalistic writing and literary writing. While it is broadly accurate, it heightens the differences between the writing genres, and actual writing sometimes borrows elements of the other genre.

Element	Journalistic Writing	Literary Writing
Authorial Voice	Impersonal, neutral	Personal, individual
Point of View	Third-person; external	Often first-person; internal
Perspective	Objective	Subjective
Mode of Inquiry	Investigative informational	Investigative moral
Relationship to Reality	Factual accuracy over Truth	Truth over factual accuracy
Diction	Simplicity; clarity	Aesthetic; personal
Tone	Dispassionate; flat	Emotion-laden; heightened
Description	Photograph	Imagery
Style	Transparent	Shaping
Scenes/Vignettes	Information-rich	Meaning-rich
Questions Addressed	Standard; who, what, where, when, how?	Unique; personal obsessions and interests of the artist
Figurative Language	Common; adds clarity	Particular; adds depth
Thematic Concerns	News-worthiness; public	Moral or philosophical depth; personal
Reasoning Mode	Logical; linear	Intuitive; emotional; mutli-directional
Use of Quotations	Serving factuality	Serving emotionality