

**Teaching English Literature for Non-Native Students from Madras University
Affiliated College: Challenges and Issues**

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Abstract

Madras University students, who learned in Mother Tongue or English medium, do not have aware of England's ideas, beliefs and knowledge of English culture. Ideas in the world vary according to their own culture. Though some Literary Terms are like English Literary terms and forms, students from Non-Native perceive English literature as difficult subject. The Writer's perspective, emotions, feelings and skill control his work. " Teachers or Lecturers in English literature class should transform into British Culture to teach Literature and students should imbibe British Literature. Lecturers teach not only Literature but also History, Philosophy, Music, Environmental studies and Cinema. The first and foremost problem in teaching English Literature for Non-Native Speakers is Language. Most of the students complete their schooling in their Mother tongue. They do not have sufficient knowledge in language. Without knowing language, it is not possible to understand Literature.

Keywords: Teaching Literature, Methods of teaching literary terms, Madras University students, Teaching Competencies, Mentoring

I) Introduction:

Literature is also like science and Mathematics. We need rational thought and scientific mind to understand Science and Mathematics, but we need Aesthetic mind to understand Literature. Literature is history, life, and Philosophy of Society. Through Poetry, Drama, and Novels, We can know what happened in society and what happens in society. English literature spread not only throughout the world but also in India during European Colonization. Though British people left India, their Culture, Religion, and Literature united with India. William Shakespeare said, "Literature is a comprehensive essence of the intellectual life of a nation."

English Literature spreads like sunlight. Many authors discuss that Literature is mirror of life, reflection of life, contemporary issues. Literature is author's imagination. Today's real event is tomorrow's history and today's imagination is tomorrow's literature. In the beginning, kings were authors who shared issues and challenges in the war field. Many

authors wrote their poetry about religion such as William Langland. The proper Literature begun in the Renaissance period specifically in the Elizabethan age. In the English Literature, each period has prominent literary forms.

Literature is an art, concerned with using Language as a form of expression to tell stories and share message. It uses language creatively and carefully to convey message in its three Genres (Poetry, Drama, Fiction and Prose). It is the beauty of language. It is developed expression of mankind, the logic, emotion, and the forms of expression as drama, poetry and Prose.

Madras University students, who learned in Mother Tongue or English medium, do not have awareness of England's ideas, beliefs and knowledge of English culture. Ideas in the world vary according to their own culture. Though some Literary Terms are like English Literary terms and forms, students from Non -Native perceive English literature as difficult subject. Being teaching English literature to Madras University students, teachers get opportunity to compare and contrast between two cultures. To teach English literature, a teacher or Lecturer should teach culture, History of the country. Students learn English literature by which they have different perspective. The problem among students to learn English literature is medium of instructions from their school days.

Students can understand English History, Culture through Literature. Native Speakers can understand the feelings and emotions of Poetry. Madras University students can also understand the feelings and emotions only after multiple reading owing to Language Barriers. Poetry teaching is easy and interesting because Poetic devices such as Metaphor, Imageries and symbols in the Poem. In India, Multilingual people live together. After the Colonial emancipation, Indians started to promote English language and Literature, Most of the Universities in India prescribed Poetry, Drama, and Fiction for Non-Native Students, that is to say, Madras University Students. Before teaching English literature to Students, Teachers and Lecturers have to imbibe English Culture. To understand literature, students must have both Language proficiency and Aesthetic sense.

India remained under the confusion about whether to be with their Traditional roots or to accept the modern beliefs. Indians felt difficult to follow English Language to Listen, Speak, Read and Write, Then Literature was complicated to Comprehend Culture, History, and Philosophy behind Poetry, Drama, and Fiction. Students, sometimes, should archaic words to understand Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, William Gower. Students can do some activities such as singing Poetry in Easy notes so that they can remember forever. Plays can be enacted in the college or in Rural Streets during their Educational Camps. Different Teaching Methodologies and approaches have emerged to teach Literature. Teaching English literature to Madras University Students is certainly a complicated task. To learn Language, students must know spelling, vocabulary, Grammar, Punctuation but to imbibe Literature, Aesthetic Sense and Critical thinking are enough.

Professor N.Jothi Rama (2008) discusses, “Literature imitates real life and develops self-Expression. Literature involves ideas, emotions, feelings, Psychology and real life incidents. Literature deals with Universal themes such as Love, War, Loss, human relationship, dream, and passion. Literature plays a vital role on imparting knowledge.”

Professors Bilal Zakarneh and Mahmoud discuss, “Literature, largely defined as written material such as essays, Poetry, Novels.”

Nguyen (2016) supports the view that Literature provides a picture of other cultures and raises learners. Biswanth Bhattacharjee (2022) views about Literature that it is the produce of cerebral exercise by great thinkers and Philosophers in any form of writing on life-Philosophy and Psychology of the home sapiens, through different literary devices to spread a cobweb of thinking and paint a picture in the reader’s mind, of probable future events, concerning human behaviour and action and so on.

Ishtiaq Rahii, in his view on Literature, in Face book shares that literature is the ethereal dance between words and emotions. It captures the essence of the human experience, uniting lovers across time and space. Literature whispers secrets, shares dreams, and ignites the spark of romance. An internal love letter is penned by soulful authors, inviting readers into a world of enchantment and fervent emotions.

ii) Literature Review:

Two main Research Articles and Text book were used as references. They explain about how to teach Literature for Non-Native students. Pramod K.Nair discusses in his book ‘Studying Literature’ about the analysis of the form, themes, genres and sub-genres. Literary texts creates a whole world in which character love, hate, live, die, fight. Students look through Literature into the world. Most important Books such as English Literature by William J Long, A history of English Literature by Arthur Compton-Rickett, History of English Literature by Edward Albert were taken as review.

iii) Research Methodology:

This study adopted review to describe how to teach English Literature for Indian students. Research Articles were collected from various Indian Journals. Data was collected from naturalistic conversations offered by 20 Lecturers and 80 Undergraduate students at affiliated College University of Madras.

iv) Short Introduction of English Literature:

In this part, I have discussed a short Introduction of English Literature from Edward Albert who divided the boob into The Old English, Middle English, Age of Chaucer, Age of Shakespeare, Age of Milton, Age of Dryden, Age of Pope, Return to Nature, the Victorian age and Twentieth Century. Before teaching English Literature, a teacher can use this book to understand and teach Literature easily. Because Edward Albert has rendered the Historical background, Literary Features of the Period, the language (especially Dialect) used in the society. Poetry, Prose and Development of Literary forms (Poetry and Prose) and developments of literary styles are major discussion in the book.

In the Old English Period, there were unknown words (Anglo-Saxon) and inner meanings in poetry and prose. Latin language was mixed. Only manuscript was available subsequently, changed into print. Teachers may struggle to teach Old English poetry or prose but no Universities, In India, prescribes Old English Poetry or Prose to Students.

In the Middle English Period, Chaucer was major figure in English Literature who was called "Father of English Poetry and Language". He wrote Poems in English, French and Italian. His Magnum Opus 'Canterbury Tales' is prescribed in almost all the universities in India, specifically, for Postgraduate students. Before teaching 'Canterbury Tales', Teachers can talk about Pilgrimage, detail description of Poetry and its stanza form. In the Elizabethan Age, this Literary age is called "Golden age in Literature". The Greatest figures, in the Elizabethan Age, dominated the literary circle such as Francis Bacon, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Philip Sidney. To teach the Elizabethan Age Literature, Teachers can talk about the historical background of the age.

In the age of Milton can be called Puritan period, people were banned to visit Drama theatre. Milton's Paradise Lost and John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress' were prominent literature in Puritan Period. People, in Puritan period, were not allowed to visit Drama theatre. In Age of Dryden, Prose, Poetry, Drama and Criticism were key forms in English Literature. Teachers may struggle to teach Restoration Dramas and Poetry. Most of John Dryden Poetries were written in Satire, Indirect attack on religion and Politicians. To teach Satire, certainly, a teacher should know Political background of Dryden Period. After Age of Dryden, Pope Period was important in which Mock-Epic was famous. William Blake, Thomas Gray, William Collins were famous figures in Age of Transition. Some poets touched natural theme, it is also called 'Pre-Romantic Period'. They were called Pioneer to Romantic poets. William Wordsworth, P.B.Shelley, John Keats were notable poets during Romantic period. Most of the students are very much interested to learn Nature poems. Most of the teachers are also interested to teach Romantic poetry as language is easy to tech. After Romantic Period, The Victorian Age, Queen Victoria ruled over England, produced greatest Poets and Novelist such as Lord Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Robert Browning, Charles Dickens, and George Eliot. Novel was popular during the period. In the Twentieth century, W.B.Yeats, T.S.Eliot, Bernard Shaw, E.M.Forster was key writers.

v) Teacher's Different Role in Literature Class:

Teachers view on Literature that, "Literature is the expression of the soul through the beautiful words. Any written or spoken work which attracts and have an emotional impact in the reader, listener. Literature is a vehicle of expression through which experience and emotions are passed to others. It is a repository of culture and tradition. It serves as a connection between generations and it is representation of life through words. It is outpouring of imagination from poetic soul. Literature is an art which author conveys to the readers. The Writer's perspective, emotions, feelings and skill control his work. " Teachers or Lecturers in English literature class should transform into British Culture to teach Literature and students should imbibe British Literature. Lecturers teach not only Literature but also History, Philosophy, Music, Environmental studies and Cinema. Teachers in Literature classes become various roles such as Historian, Philosopher, Musician, Actors while teaching Drama.

vi) Teaching Historical background of the Society:

W.H.Hudson discusses in his "An Outline History of English Literature" that "Ordinary English history is our nation's biography; its literature is its autobiography". Authors in their literary works are influenced by social surroundings. Sell (2005) notes that Literature impacts the teaching of language by acting as a historical document containing information about the time the text was written and characteristics of the prevailing society. And sell holds that literatures provides factual as well as precise information about the society and different periods, and contain thoughts of prominent individuals, their pain, happiness and pleasure. 'An Introduction to the Social History of England' by A.G.Xavier and 'A History of England' by John Thorn, Roger Lockyer and David Smith which are prescribed in Madras University. Teachers as well as Students can understand 'An Introduction to the Social History of England' by A.G.Xavier who said, "Pope's Rape of the Lock" is difficult, if not impossible, without reasonable knowledge of the social life of the early eighteenth century England.

At the same time of Charles Dickens throw considerable light on the social life of England after Industrial Revolution". From Tudor Period to George VI, Literature can be taught easily through Historical background which make students understand easily. W.H.Hudson discusses in his "An Outline History of English Literature" that Edmund Spenser infuses England Religion in his poetry "Faery Queene". The queen, in this poetry, is assumed Queen Elizabeth. Spenser identifies true Religion with English Protestantism. Most of the Elizabethan writers wrote Literary works on the basis of Society such as Religion, Life style. William Shakespeare's character Falstaff illustrates low life with history. And his historical drama "Julius Caesar" shows Elizabethan England. Puritanism reflected in John Milton's Poetry. Charles II became King of England after Charles I who spread culture of France.

People started following France culture. England was influenced by French culture and British Writers started to follow French Culture. Industrial Revolution was influenced in Romantic period and Victorian age World War theme was influenced in Twentieth century. Before teaching Literature, Teachers prefer to teach Historical background which easy method to make students understand. A large number of writers in England wrote their Literary works based on their society. As mentioned above, before teaching, John Milton's Paradise Lost, teachers explain the puritan period and its rules, after the discussion on Puritan period, students can understand easily, though it is based on Bible and Hind and Panther about Religion and Absalom and Achitophel about Kings which were written by John Dryden, the greatest Poet in England during Restoration England. After the explicit description of Restoration England such as the Great Fire and the war with Dutch, students can observe and grasp 'Annus Mirabilis' by John Dryden.

William Congreve's "The Way of the World" is faithful reflection of Upper class life. During the period of Queen Anne's period, Joseph Addison wrote a blend of humour and gentle satire. Though William Wordsworth, P.B.Shelley and John Keats presented their poetry on Nature, their poetry intended about Industrial Revolution. Industrial Revolution theme in Novels was dominated in the Victorian Age. Teachers explain about Industrial Revolution and teach poetry and novels.

Shamayal Khan Wardag (2023) shares his view on Literature in Face book, "Literature seems to be a window that gives us an insight into a particular society". Kapilesh Chhatria discusses that Literature shapes the human being as the Society, Culture and tradition and vice versa

vi) Teaching Literary Forms and Terms: Challenges

Professor A.Janani Priya (2008) discusses, "A Learners in a Theatre is an active participant in the learning process". Next challenge in Teaching English Literature on the basis of Literary Forms for Teachers is difficult. A literary form is most important paper in Madras University syllabus. As discussed above, English Literature students can understand on the basis of Historical background and Literary forms for Non-Native students. Literature Genres are divided into five: they are Poetry, Drama, Fiction, Non Fiction and Criticism. Poetry is divided into Objective and subjective. Objective is subdivided Narrative and Dramatic. There are Ballad, Epic, and Metrical Romance in Narrative. Subjective is divided into Lyric and Lyric is dividing into Elegy, Sonnet, Ode, and Dramatic Monologue. An English teacher faces the problem with making students understand the Genres, though some students know some genres.

As epic is longest, for instance John Milton's Paradise Lost, it is not prescribed much to the students, Or University prescribes only one book from epic or extract from the epic. Teaching of Epic poetry is challenge as some words are elevated. Teachers should read the Bible completely to teach Paradise Lost and John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. In Elegy, Teachers should imbibe the theme of the poetry. As far as English sonnet is concerned, Teachers must

understand Poet's intention in Octave and Sestet and the inner meanings. Ode, during Romantic period, is more popular and teaching of Ode is challenge absolutely. Dramatic Monologue is revived by Robert Browning. In this genre, Teacher acts and teaches mono tone. Non –fiction is pivotal role since school days. Students are familiar with Non-Fiction such as Essay, Autobiography, Biography and Travelogue. Though some students feel tedium to listen this genre, Teachers challenge to make it clear by giving activity.

Drama is subdivided into two: They are Comedy and Tragedy. Comedy of Humours, Comedy of Manners, Restoration Comedy, and Romantic Comedy are under Comedy. Heroic Tragedy, Revenge Tragedy, Senecan Tragedy and Tragic – Comedy come under Tragedy. Comedy of Humours and Romantic comedy are usually prescribed specifically; Ben Jonson's every man in his Humour and William Shakespeare's as you like it. Comedy of Manners is prescribed for Post graduate students such as William Congreve's The Way of the World. In Tragedy, Revenge Tragedy is most famous among students, William Shakespeare's Hamlet. Teachers are most passionate to teach Drama, some teachers act like characters, some teacher ask students to enact on stage, some explain summary act wise and scene wise. Students are eager to listen Drama as it is like our life theme.

Literature is incomplete without Fiction. The role of Fiction is longest since the Elizabethan age, John Lyly's contribution of fiction. Fiction is divided Short story: Epistolary Novel, Gothic and Regional Novel, Samuel Richardson's Pamela, Thomas Hardy's Regional Novels. Most of the students, who are Literature students from Rustic, are very much interested Regional Novels.

There is recent trend in Criticism prescription for Undergraduate students. As it is theory, most students feel boredom and teacher's contribution to teach Criticism is smart task especially Post-Colonial theory. Teachers plan to teach Literary Forma and terms effectively. Teaching literary forms and its different genres is one of the best tools to make students understand clearly. Even though Metre in Poetry such as Iambic Pentameter, Blank verse, Heroic Couplet, is difficult, some teachers try to teach these devices.

viii) Challenges and Issues of making understand of Literature:

Modern Days, Literature is related to media such as films and YouTube. "Teaching Literature is a subject, and a difficult one. Doing it well requires scholarly and critical sophistication but it also requires a clear idea of what Literature is, of what is entailed in reading and criticizing it..."(Levive, 2001:14). Students may not be enthusiastic to listen Literature. Teaching Literature of other countries is challenging. Students, In India, study others subject till their school studies. As soon as they join in Literature class. The form and structure of the subject is different. Anyone can teach English or any other language, but cannot teach Literature. Only things the teachers can make the students to evince interest in Literature by going through literary works like Poetry, Drama, and Prose. First one should

learn simple poetry containing stories that are called 'Ballads'. Then switch over to descriptive poems such as Wordsworth's Poetry, and then moral poetry.

Making students explore a variety of Genres and texts showing Films that adapted from books. Literature should not be taught. It should be enjoyed before students so that they too pick up the spirit of literature. Students should ecstasy in the literature class. Teachers should not teach meaning, but rather should teach the beauty of expression. In Literature, what is said is not important but how it is said is important. Metre , in poetry, is important than meaning. If a teachers can make their students enjoy every word of literature. Literature is beauty. Teachers should read the text before teaching literature and should feel in Author's point of view. Teaching literature depends on Students' understanding level. Teachers, sometimes, should play a translator role. Teaching English literature to Indian students requires knowledge of their mother tongue.

The first and foremost problem in teaching English Literature for Non-Native Speakers is Language. Most of the students complete their schooling in their Mother tongue. They do not have sufficient knowledge in language. Without knowing language, it is not possible to understand Literature. When students recite poems, they come across archaic words in Poetry. Immaterially they stop reading poetry.

Most of the Madras University students, who apply for English Literature, tried for some other courses but since they did not get admitted other course, they get admission undergraduate in English Literature. Those who studied schooling English Medium from their childhood are not interested in English Literature course. They prefer some other course and they hardly ever show interested in Literature. Because many of them studied from Tamil Medium, they are unable to understand the language teachers are using in the class rooms. Language is indispensable tool to understand Literature. Teachers challenges to teach English Literature for Tamil Medium students.

ix) Findings and Discussion

English Literature is art like music, Painting and also like science. Even though there are many challenges and issues in Teaching English Literature to Indian students, Teachers and Lecturers are very much interested to teach English Literature. Indian universities prescribe Literature syllabus according to Post colonial perspective. As William Wordsworth wrote poems on the basis of Rustic base and Easy language, anyone can understand his poems. Some teachers teach summary first for students' convenience.

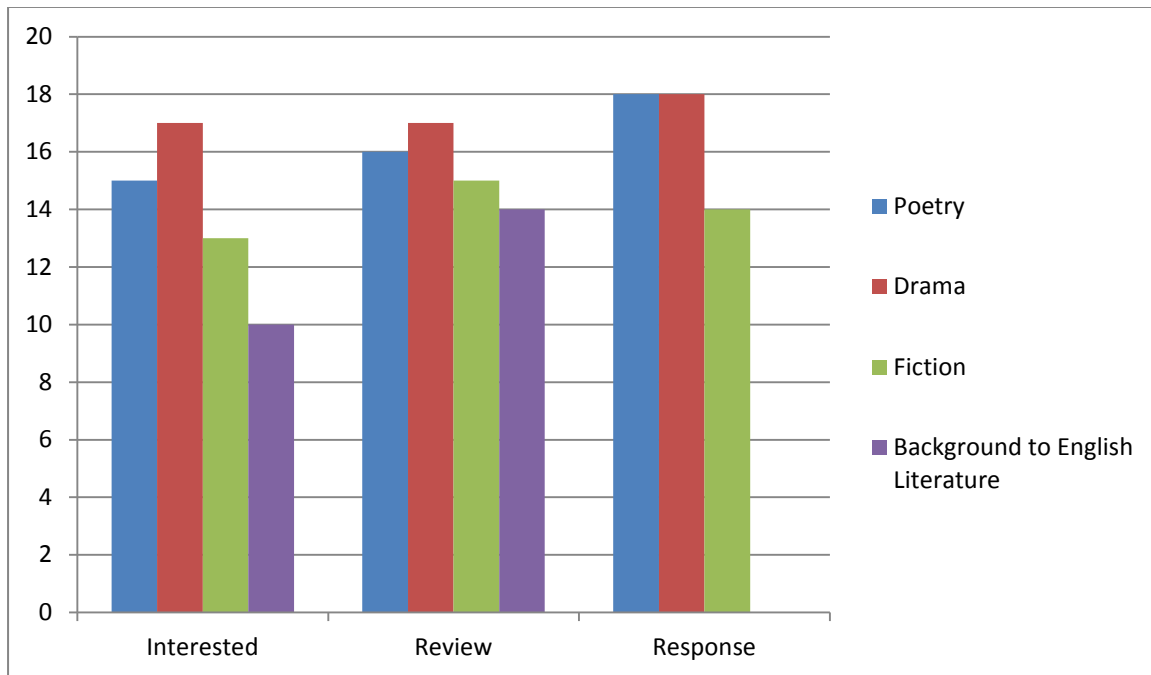


Fig 1.1. Lecturers' View over Literature

In the first figure (fig 1.1), it is observed that most of the Lecturers, In University and College, are very much interested to teach poetry, as poetry is easy to teach. They are interested to teach Drama (though drama should not be taught rather to be enacted on the stage) specifically , William Shakespeare’s dramas such as ‘As You Like it, Merchant of Venice, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Much ado about nothing, Midsummer’s Night dream’ .

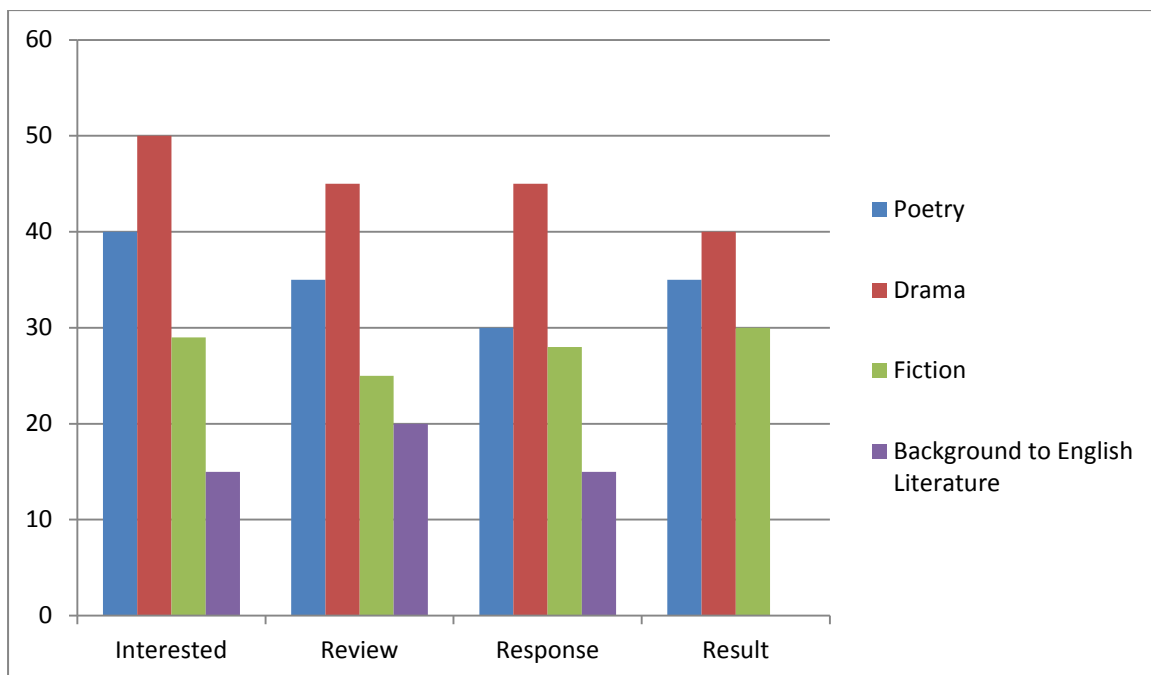


Fig. 1.2 Students' Interested towards Literature

As mentioned in the above chart, Undergraduate Students from Arts and science college affiliated to University of Madras were asked questions individually regarding their interested in English literature. Around 40 students are interested in Poetry. Students review on Poetry that Poetry is portraying objects and Poets' memories recollect past events which make students presume as an author. Poetry can be understood easier than Drama. There are rhyme words, Natural reality and imagination. Students can understand Poet's feelings in verse. Some students are very much interested in Rhymes, Poetic devices such as Alliteration, Simile and Personification. Poetry existed from Anglo-Saxon Period. Even now it is popular. Around 50 students show interested in English Drama, especially Romantic Drama. Some students discussed about drama that how Protagonist solves and challenge the problem and Clowns. Few students view about drama that the plot in drama is useful in life. Some students talked about drama and said that Drama is easy to understand as it is story. Number of students said that drama is interested if the plot contains twists and turns. Love story, Characters, acting on the stage are general review over Drama.

Very few students are only interested in Fiction. Most of the students do not evince interested in Novel since it is longest one. And some teachers also summarize the plot. Students review about Fiction that it is based on historical based. Reading habit can be improved through fiction. Fiction, sometimes, talks about truth

x) Conclusion

Teaching English Literature is interesting and Teachers plan to teach Literary forms, Historical background and Author's biography before teaching Literature for students. It is difficult to imbibe Author's intention. Teachers should do that and they have to discuss in the literature classes. Some authors, For example, William Wordsworth's 'World is too much with us' talks about society how people started following Industry instead of Nature, wrote Poetry based on their society, some authors such as George Eliot infuse Autobiographical elements in their works. Some authors wanted to include Religious elements; they are Pilgrim's Progress, Paradise Lost. For Literature Teachers, teaching it, feel so easy and enjoy infusing literary elements according to authors.

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