

TEACHING PROSE AND LESSON PLANNING

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Etymologically the word "prose" is derived from the Old French "prose" which in turn originated in the Latin expression "prosa oratio" which means "literally straight forward or direct speech." Prose is written in words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and chapters. It utilizes punctuation, grammar and vocabulary to develop its message. Prose is made up of fiction and nonfiction. Fiction includes novels, Mystery stories, detective stories, romance, short stories, historical fiction etc. whereas Nonfiction writing includes essays, autobiographies, speeches, journals and articles.

The main aim of teaching prose is to develop the language ability of the learners. It is the intensive study of a language. The language ability helps the learners to use the English language without any problem.

A textbook is a major tool in the hands of a language teacher to teach prose and poetry. In our schools, graded textbooks are followed for teaching English as a second language. Through the textbooks, various language skills have to be taught. Generally, intensive reading skill is cultivated through the detailed textbook while the extensive reading skill is practiced through the supplementary readers.

No doubt language can be taught without the textbook but it may result in unnecessary repetition and waste of time and energy. At the same time, learners do not progress in a proper manner as they don't have any ready reference. If the textbook is carefully and properly planned it will be useful for both the teachers and the learners.

Types of Prose

Prose includes fiction and non-fiction items.

- ❖ **Fiction** includes novels, mystery, detective, romance, short stories, historical fiction, and narratives.
- ❖ **Nonfiction** writing includes essays, autobiographies, speeches, journals and articles. We can divide the prose into the following types according to function.
- ❖ **Narrative:** Narration is generally called as story-telling. It is narrated in chronological order of events. Narrative questions like what happened, how did it happen? Who did it? Where was it done? Personal experiences, accidents, reports etc. belong to this category.
- ❖ **Argumentative:** It persuades to believe something. It examines different facts and opinions and arrives at a conclusion.
- ❖ **Descriptive:** It describes prose, and focuses on significant details. This description could be related to persons, places, processes, and objects.
- ❖ **Informative:** It communicates information; generally it is seen in newspapers, reports, textbooks, etc.

Elements of Prose

Prose is organized in paragraphs and they have important elements of fiction. They are plot, character, theme, setting, the point of view, style, and figures of speech. These components together create a complete literary work, whether a novel or a short story. It is not necessary to have all elements in a piece of prose. The elements of fiction assist the teacher to explain the content in an effective manner with literary insight.

- ❖ **Plot:** It is the sequence of incidents or events through which an author constructs a story
- ❖ **Character:** It is a person or other being in narrative work of art which may be real or fictional.
- ❖ **Theme:** It is a central idea or central insight of the story.
- ❖ **Setting:** It is the setting of a story in its overall context.
- ❖ **Point of View:** It is a way of considering or particular attitude.
- ❖ **Style:** It is the manner in which an author uses words, constructs sentences, incorporates non-literal expressions,
- ❖ **Figures of speech:** A word or phrase that has a meaning other than the literal meaning.

Examples of Figures of Speech are as follows:

Irony: it is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words

Symbol: a symbol is a person, place, or thing to representing an abstract idea or concept.

Simile: a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a

different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid

Metaphor: a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.

Image: Visually descriptive or figurative language, especially in a literary work.

Teaching of Prose. Teaching the prose of a language is basically a tool on which language learning revolves. Therefore, teaching of prose has a lot of responsibilities attached with it. It is the most important tool in the hands of a teacher to achieve the possible outcome. Teaching prose actually means teaching reading with comprehension. All the four skills of language learning are to be developed by teaching prose. The main aims of teaching prose are:

1. Literary aim.
2. Subject matter aim.

Both these aims have to be fulfilled by teaching prose. Teaching prose should be intensive as well as extensive depending upon the need, the class and age of the students. It includes the teaching of structures, the vocabulary, grammar, language in general and the ability to achieve mastery on all the four skills of language learning.

If we try to sum up the general aims of teaching prose, they are:

1. To enable the students to read and understand with comprehension.
2. To develop the habit of loud and silent reading.
3. To enrich the vocabulary.
4. To help the students think imaginatively and develop creative writing.
5. To understand applied grammar and be able to utilize it effectively.
6. To be able to listen and understand and answer correctly with confidence and fluency.
7. To be able to fit ourselves in the real life situations.

Specific aims.

The specific aims of teaching prose may vary according to the content, age group and class. Sometimes the content is descriptive, a story, a biography, a narrative, an essay, a play etc.

The specific aims may vary everyday depending upon what is being taught and to whom. Let us study the specific aims of some form of prose in brief given here under:

- **Descriptive/narratives.**

1. To acquaint pupils with the style of the writer.
2. To develop the power of imagination.
3. To develop a love for the nature and to develop a sense of feeling for things as nature demands.

- **Story.**

1. To take the students into the atmosphere of the story, facts or fiction.
2. To introduce various characters with a motive to have an impact on the learners.
3. To teach some moral lesson through the story.

4. To develop in them the art and style of story writing.
 - **Essay.**
 1. To develop imaginative thinking.
 2. To bring out creative writing.
 3. To enable the students to arrange things in a systematic way.
 - **Play.**
 1. To acquaint the students with the usage of English in real conversational style.
 2. To introduce various characters.
 3. To acquaint them with the different roles played in life.
 - **Biography.**
 1. To acquaint the students with lives and works of great men and women.
 2. To introduce various characters.
 3. To develop a sense of aesthetic beauty and love of aspiration.

Lesson Planning of Prose.

The lesson to be delivered in prose involves various steps. These various steps are called as the components of a lesson plan. The steps are as under:

1. **Motivation.** Each and every subject or language demands motivation to attract the attention of students. So teachers should motivate the students to study the lesson. Motivation in introducing an English lesson includes all the tactics that a teacher applies to take the students to that point where they are ready to learn the lesson. It may include the use of teaching aids like flash cards, models, charts, posters, material aids etc use of previous knowledge of the students and then a brief introduction about the lesson.

The teacher can introduce the lesson by testing the pre requisite knowledge assumed. He can ask a few questions in the beginning. These are called as the introductory questions and are asked to arouse the curiosity among the students for new lesson.

The motivation or introductory session should automatically and spontaneously lead to the point where the teacher can declare the day's topic and move on to the presentation part.
2. **Presentation.** This is the main and the lengthiest part of lesson plan. The teacher has to present the lesson keeping in view the attention, retention and grasp of the students. It should neither be very short nor too lengthy. Presentation part includes following subdivisions.
 - a. **Model reading by the Teacher.** In case of a prose lesson, the teacher should read out the material loudly being sure that his voice is audible. He should be very clear about the pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm, style etc. In short he has to present a model reading.
 - b. **Loud Reading by the Students.** After the teacher finishes the model reading, he can ask some students to read out the passage loudly one by one. Loud reading can ensure the correct tone, pronunciation, fluency etc on spot only. The teacher can correct any error so that the students do not carry on mistakes with them forever.

- c. **Difficult words/structures to be dealt with.** The teacher has to expose clear and explain the new words, difficult words, structures, idioms, phrases and other grammatical items. The exposition of all these items and their clarification is the main purpose of prose teaching.
 - d. **Silent Reading by the Students.** Then the students may be asked to proceed on to silent reading. This clarifies each and every point individually and increases the students' comprehension.
3. **Recapitulation.** The teacher may again sum up what was taught in the day's lesson. The teacher may clarify the student's doubts, if any, and may explain few words or sentences again and which he thinks need more repetitive and elaboration. Then the teacher proceeds on to the last step of the lesson.
4. **Evaluation.** The main objective of evaluation is to test whether the set objective has been achieved or not. At the end of each lesson, the teacher should put some application questions to evaluate the success of the lesson plan in achieving the predetermined objectives. The evaluation can be carried out by means of questions, assignments, blackboard work, dramatization etc.

Some examples of evaluation are:

- a. Explain the passage either orally or in writing.
- b. Fill in the blanks.
- c. Some simple and important questions from the prose lesson.
- d. Writing some difficult words on the blackboard and asking individual students to read, explain, give meaning, or frame sentences.
- e. Framing structures using substitution table.
- f. Dramatizing the prose lesson.
- g. Some assignment given to student.