

Dickens, Melville, Wilde and countless others would expand the boundaries of prose's definition as they each took the format and applied their own understanding, viewpoints, dialects and vocabulary. Prose was becoming increasingly difficult to define.

The 20c would see prose reach its arguable peak. From *The Oxford Companion to The English Language* (5); *'More prose writing in English has probably been published in this century than in all past centuries combined.'* With a bounty of previous works within the genre to build off of, the limits and boundaries of prose expanded to depths and widths beyond its own definition. Sub-cultures began appearing within prose, 'Prose-poetry' and 'spontaneous prose' began rising as keywords in literate magazines and publications. Modernists such as James Joyce and Ernest Hemingway were reimagining prose for themselves, and pushing prose's regard higher and higher among the educated, as-well as among the common-man.

In the mid-20c, a group of bohemian writers from the East and the West coast of USA hell bent on creative expression and beauty, brimming with inspiration fired up from the modernists a generation before them, would create a body of work and social phenomenon known as the 'beats.' Blending the rules of poetry and prose, writers like Gary Snyder and Lew Welch would draw inspiration from the likes of W.C. Williams and Ezra Pound and create prose-poetry, a new type of poetry that freed itself of metre and structure and focused on imagery and expression. Perhaps most famous among the beats was Jack Kerouac, whose spontaneous ramblings about his adventures across the United States would go on to become classics of the 20c. Below is Kerouac's rules for 'spontaneous prose.' (1).

With the genre becoming so large and offering so many differing examples and schools, prose had become an extremely hard thing to point at. Just as it is impossible to declare any specific man's speech the speech of man, it is impossible to point at a single writer's work and say it is prose. Yet it is, if written as direct as if it were spoken, prose.