

prose . The word derives from the Latin *prosa* or *provers oratio*, 'straightforward discourse'. Thus, direct, unadorned form of language, written or spoken, in ordinary usage. It differs from poetry or verse (*qq.v.*) in that it is not restricted in rhythm, measure or rhyme (*qq.v.*) However, there are such things as poetic prose and the prose poem.

In theory there are as many different kinds of prose as there are to write it, as becomes plain from a cursory study of such different practitioners as: Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Bacon, Sir Thomas Browne, Hobbes, George Savile Marquess of Halifax, Swift, Locke, Addison, Johnson, Fielding, Goldsmith, Hume, Berkeley, Macaulay, Jane Austen, Gibbon, Coleridge, Scott, Dickens, Carlyle, George Eliot, Hardy, Lytton Strachey, Jack London, Henry James, Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Graham Greene, Nabokov and Samuel Beckett.

4. THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE AN INQUIRY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH IN THE UNITED STATES BY H. L. Mencken NEW YORK — ALFRED-A-KNOFF Pg. 480

'It was not until Samuel Johnson's Dictionary (1755) that Englishmen had a universally accepted guide to orthography. In the presence of conflicting usage, Johnson always took the conservative side. He thus ordained that *critic*, *music* and even *prosaic*, which he considered Old English words, should have a final *k*, though all were borrowed from Latin through French.'

5. THE OXFORD COMPANION TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE Pg. 814

PROSE . 14c: through French from Latin *prosa* (*oratio*) direct or straightforward (speech), from *prosus* or *prorsus* direct, straight, contracted forms of *provorsus* or *proverbs* (literally 'turned forward': compare VERSE). *Prosa oratio* was the Latin equivalent of Greek *pezós lógos* speech that goes on foot, as opposed to *emmetros lógos* ('measured speech') or verse, whose high prestige was reflected in the image of riding on horseback. A form of written discourse based on the sentence and without the stylised patterning of *verse* (with which it often contrasts). A negative perception of prose, which has persisted from classical times virtually to the present day, sees it as a medium that lacks strong features and creative vigour: whence the use of *prosaic* to mean 'dull, commonplace, unimaginative'. This ancient perception has, however, diminished greatly in the 20c, in the courses of which prose has become the dominant form of printed discourse and verse has become largely peripheral. The term covers two kinds of procedure: employing physical features such as the non-metrical line, the paragraph, and sentence-based punctuation, and styles of discourse that serve narrative, expository, descriptive, persuasive, dramatic, and other ends. Prose writing is so similar in many ways to carefully organised speech, and the two have been linked for so long in the world of education, that prose is often thought of as simply speech transferred to paper: see SPOKEN PROSE. Everyday speech, however, is much less tightly structured than most types of prose, and its dynamics are quite distinct from those of formal writing. Colloquial English, for example, is not arranged according to the classical theory of the well-formed sentence ('a sentence is a complete thought'), long a key criterion for producing and evaluating prose. Such a criterion for producing and evaluating prose. Such a criterion has been used by elocutionists and others in an attempts to 'improve' speech, but without great success: spoken usage that is too 'prosy' sounds artificial and perhaps pretentious. IN the classical world, the study and use of prose were linked with rhetoric, grammar, and logic but whereas the rhetorical tradition was oral in origin, the beginnings of grammar and logic lay in the use and study of writing. Lacking the mnemonic quality and often the histrionic roles of verse, prose has depended largely on writing (not oral delivery) for its transmission, and has come only within the last 300 years to serve as a regular vehicle for 'high' literary genres such as drama and the epic (the latter essentially in the form of the novel).