**What is creative non-fiction??**

1. **Synonyms:** Literary non-fiction, new journalism, literary journalism

2. **Definition:**

   A. It is a hybrid of literature and non-fiction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-fiction elements</th>
<th>Literary elements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>essay form</td>
<td>story/narration (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explanation/exposition (e)</td>
<td>place/scene/setting (p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standard rhetorical patterns</td>
<td>characterization (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focuses on ideas, facts (not language)</td>
<td>author personally engaged (s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researched facts (R)</td>
<td>literary voice/feel (lx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>artistic, instinctual</td>
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<td></td>
<td>polished language</td>
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</table>

   B. It presents a whole picture of the subject (holistic)—recognizes the complexity of the world/the limits of what we can know.

   It presents a way of looking at the world:

   --concrete examples, narration

   --grounded in self

   --interesting to the reader (and writer)

   --unique voice

   C. It presents documentable subject matter—grounded in real-world facts and issues.

   D. It presents useful, interesting facts based on exhaustive research.

   E. The facts come alive through narration and setting—or well developed scenes (place).

   F. It presents details that help the reader understand the main point.

   G. It shows rather than tells.
Goals of creative non-fiction

1. **Deal with an issue/problem people are concerned about or find a way to make them concerned or interested.**
   Consider your audience
   Use non-fiction techniques to draw the reader in:
   - narration
   - characterization
   - setting/place
   - personal involvement
   Give background to educate your readers
   Give your readers new information to help them understand themselves, the world better

2. **Provide accurate data.**
   Be truthful. Be honest.
   Research thoroughly and carefully (the more you look, the more you’ll find)
   Use a variety of sources:
   - primary (interviews, trips to the place, personal experience, surveys)
   - secondary (library research . . . .)
   Cite your sources so readers know how you gathered the information

3. **Report fairly.**
   Be objective.
   Be logical.
   Select information carefully.
   Provide details.
   Use facts, real people, real situations. Be frank. Don’t be too personal.

4. **Interpret your information.**
   *Introduce
   *Give facts, examples, quotations, . . .
   *Analyze, interpret, explain, synthesize.

5. **Draw conclusions.**

6. **Organize your information.**
   Put your information in a logical order (chronological, spatial, dramatic, general to specific).
   Put your information in an interesting order.
   Use clear paragraphs (topic/purpose).
   Deal with information in blocks.
   Consider using headings.

7. **Use interesting language.**
   vivid, useful details
   quotations / vernacular
   metaphor
   imagery
   humor
   rhythm, pacing

*“What is Creative Nonfiction” and “Goals of Creative Nonfiction” devised by Phil Druker/ University of Idaho*