

# Children's Literature

## 1. What are the characteristics of a 'literary text'? What is the definition of 'Children's Literature'?

### Features of a literary text (لطفاً خودتون این ویژگی‌ها رو بسط بدین):

- Along with content, there is **form**, which highlights the **expressive features** of a text.
- There are **aesthetic** features (beauty of the text).
- We can see more **figures of speech** or **idiomatic language**.

• اگر ویژگی دیگری میشناسید، حتماً ذکر کنید. فراموش نکنید که این موارد رو بسط بدین. همچنین در نظر داشته باشید ممکنه این قسمت که سبز کردیم در ابتدای سوال ۳ هم پرسیده بشه.

### Definition of children's literature:

- Children's literature is generally defined as the body of written works (and oftentimes accompanying illustrations) produced primarily for children or young readers (typically from early childhood through adolescence), and which addresses their interests, experiences, developmental level, and imaginative capacities.
- More precisely, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica:  
The body of written works and accompanying illustrations produced in order to entertain or instruct young people.
- Children's literature constitutes a distinct literary category:
  - Children's literature is literature written primarily for a juvenile audience, defined as ages 0 to 18... includes fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry.
  - Scholars also emphasize that any definition must recognize the variable nature of childhood (developmental, cultural, historical) and that children's literature is not simply adult literature with simpler vocabulary, but has its own unique concerns and aesthetic criteria.

## **2. What are the main types of books in children's literature?**

- Picture books (for very young children) combining simple narrative + illustrations + imaginative idioms.
- Middle-grade fiction that deals with friendship, identity, adventure, calibrated language and themes.

## **3. What are the key characteristics of children's literature? Briefly explain each.**

### **1. Audience-focus and developmental appropriateness:**

- The target audience is children (and young adolescents). Their cognitive, emotional and moral development influences vocabulary, structure, theme, character.
- Language, narrative complexity, and themes are often calibrated to match children's comprehension and interests. For example: the structure is simple and clear; the language is simple, lively, and colloquial.
- There is an age-graded dimension: picture books for young children, chapter books for intermediate, middle-grade for older children, young-adult for adolescents.

### **2. Children as protagonists or focal viewpoint**

- Many children's books feature children or childlike figures as the central characters, and often the perspective is from a child's point of view.
- The world is presented in a way accessible to children, often reflecting their social, domestic, school, friendship, exploration experiences.

### 3. Language and style-accessibility, clarity, imaginative elements

- The language tends to be simpler and more direct than adult literature, though not simplistic or patronizing.
- Narratives often include fantasy, imagination, play, whimsy, and ideas without major concern of reality.
- Frequent use of repetition, rhyme, rhythm, pictures/illustration aids memory and engagement.

### 4. themes and moral/educational dimension

- Children's literature often addresses themes relevant to children's lives:

friendship, family, courage, identity, change, social values.

- it often carries an element of instruction or moral purpose (though not necessarily didactic in a heavy-handed way) for example, virtues, problem-solving, resilience.
- But it also entertains: balancing educational purpose with enjoyment is considered ideal.

### 5. Structure, plot, and resolution

- Many children's texts have a clear narrative arc, simpler plotlines, but with enough conflict or challenge to engage the young reader.
- Ending often tends toward hope, resolution, positive outcome (particularly in younger-child literature) though more complex works may challenge this.

## 6. Illustrations, multimodal features, and format consideration

- Especially in younger-age categories (picture books, early readers), the visual component (Illustrations, picture-texts interplay) is integral.
- Format and layout (large type, short chapters, illustrations, engaging design) matter to children's literature more than many adult texts.

## 7. Cultural, social, and historical responsiveness

- Children's literature reflects and responds to the culture, age-expectations, social values of its time and place.
- it also is increasingly conscious of diversity, representation, inclusivity (though this is a more recent emphasis).

#### 4. Define the following terms:

- **plot:** The sequence of incidents or events in which the author constructs the story; the author purposefully sets the order of incidents, not randomly. In other words, how the author arranges the incidents, or the significant sequence of events.

=> **summary of the major events**

- **Theme:** universal messages about the subject matter
- **Setting:** the time and place of the story
- **Protagonist:** the most important character in the story (the main character) but not necessarily a hero
- **Antagonist:** the rival of the protagonist who is mostly a negative one
- **Characterization:** the way the author introduces characters throughout the story. It is usually presented through the dialogues of characters and the audience recognize their type of personality by the characters' words or actions
- **Flash Fiction:** a very short story that has 50 words but still contains plot and theme
- **Euphemism:** an indirect word or phrase that is used to refer to something embarrassing or unpleasant, sometimes to make it seem more acceptable than it really is

## 5. Why is children's literature especially suitable to explore text-context dynamics?

Van Coillie & McMartin argue that children's literature is a particularly revealing domain to study translation because of its distinctive features:

1. **Asymmetric Relationship:** There is an inherent Asymmetry between authors/translators (usually adult) and the readers (children). This affects how translators make decisions.
2. **High stake cultural, economic & political dimensions:** when children's books travel across cultures, there are often strong cultural, political, or economic motivations and pressures.
3. **Multimodality:** many children's books are not just linguistic texts; they include illustrations, layout design, and other semiotic elements. Translation, then, often involves not just translating words, but also dealing with visual and multimodal features.

Because of these characteristics, translation of children's literature is not just a linguistic act, but a cultural mediation.

## 6. What happens as a result of situating translators' decisions in the field of children's literature?

- By situating translators' decisions in their in their broader socio-cultural contexts, the introduction argues, we gain better insight into power, ideology, and agency in translation.
- Understanding how translated children's books are received (by child readers, parents, education systems, publishers) helps us see how translation contributes to cultural transmission and identity formation in young readers.

## 7. What steps have you taken in the process of translating your short story?

دوستان، این سوال مربوط به پروسه ترجمه داستانتون هست. هر کاری که خودتون انجام دادید رو می‌بایست بنویسید. اما برای راحتی این موضوع، به این موارد اشاره کنید:

ابتدا می‌تونید اشاره کنید که داستانی انتخاب کرده بودید اما مشکلاتی در چاپ اثر وجود داشته (یک یا دو مشکل رو اشاره کنید). و بعد اشاره کنید که یک کتابی رو به صورت گروهی ترجمه کردید و این که به چه صورت داستان‌ها تقسیم شدن و به چه صورت فرستادید و کلیت داستانی که ترجمه کردید از چه قرار بود. سعی کنید حداقل دو پاراگراف راجع به این سوال بنویسید.

## 8. In case of children's literature, what do we mean by 'the unknown'? Briefly explain.

One of the most central challenges in translating children's literature is how to deal with elements from the source culture that may be unfamiliar or "unknown" to young readers in the target culture.

Lathey argues that translators inevitably encounter names, cultural makers (foods, customs, places, social practices) and Intertextual references (allusions to other stories, songs, fairy tales, legends, etc.). These elements pose special challenges in children's books because:

- young readers often have less background than adult readers,
- cultural unfamiliarity can confuse rather than enrich the reading experience,
- but oversimplifying or eliminating foreign elements can strip a text of richness, identity and authenticity.

## 9. Define the following terms:

- **Cultural Markers:**

These include foods, games, social roles, holidays, daily routines, or idiomatic behavior. Decisions include:

keeping the original term (with or without explanation), substituting a culturally appropriate equivalent or using glossaries or footnotes only if appropriate to the age and format.

- **Intertextual References:**

Children's texts often contain references to other stories, nursery rhymes, popular characters, legends, etc. these pose a unique problem: if the target culture does not recognize a referenced story, then the allusion loses meaning. Strategies include translating references literally, substituting familiar local equivalents (if appropriate), or explaining them in supplemental material.

- **Mediation vs. Transparency**

Lathey discusses cultural mediation-where the translator intentionally assists the reader in understanding unfamiliar elements \_ as an important skill. However, it must be balanced so the translation remains lively and engaging rather than overly explanatory or patronizing.

- **Mediation:**

The translator's intervention to help the target reader understand aspects of the source culture, either through glossaries, notes, brief explanations, or adaptation.

- **Domestication vs. Foreignization:**

These are translation strategies:

- ***Domestication:*** adapting source elements to relatable equivalents in the target culture.
- ***Foreignization:*** retaining source elements to preserve their original flavor.