



What's Creative Nonfiction?

The term "creative nonfiction" was first used by Lee Gutkind in the 1980s as a synonym for "narrative nonfiction." Gutkind wished to convey the idea that nonfiction wasn't always dry and utilitarian. By employing such elements as character, dialog, scene building, strong voice, innovative structure, point of view, and literary devices, writers could craft nonfiction that sings.



Over the years, the term has come to be used more broadly, describing both expository and narrative nonfiction that makes use of such elements as strong voice, rich language, which were originally considered as exclusive to fictional texts. It is also used to describe nonfiction that employs innovative text structures and formats. As result, most of the trade nonfiction titles currently published for children include a mix of these creative elements.

Never, never, never does creative nonfiction refer to writing that takes creative liberties with the truth. Everything in a nonfiction book must be accurate and verified through fastidious research. Any kind of undocumented embellishment kicks a piece of writing out of the nonfiction realm.

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