



FICTION VS. NONFICTION

Nonfiction is stories and writings that are true. Fiction can be based on nonfiction, but the events in fiction stories did not actually happen. Characters and places in fiction stories can be made-up, too. In nonfiction, everything is real.

The difference between fiction and nonfiction is not always easy to tell. Some nonfiction stories can be very dramatic, while some fiction can sound very real. Nonfiction can be used to tell a person's life story or provide historical information. Fiction is usually used simply to tell a story and share an experience with the reader.

This is a chart of the different genres of fiction and nonfiction. Can you think of any others?

| FICTION | NONFICTION |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Novels | Memoirs |
| Plays | Autobiographies |
| Poetry | Textbooks |
| Screenplays | Research Papers |

TRY THIS

Read the following two passages. Which do you think is fiction and which is nonfiction?

Jack London (1903)

At the first step upon the cold surface, Buck's feet sank into a white mushy something very like mud. He sprang back with a snort. More of this white stuff was falling through the air. He shook himself, but more of it fell upon him. He sniffed it curiously, then licked some up on his tongue. It bit like fire, and the next instant was gone. This puzzled him. He tried it again, with the same result. The onlookers laughed uproariously, and he felt ashamed, he knew not why, for it was his first snow.

Jack London (1906)

On a Wednesday morning at a quarter past five came the earthquake. A minute later the flames were leaping upward. In a dozen different quarters south of Market Street, fires started. There was no organization, no communication. All the cunning adjustments of a twentieth-century city had been smashed by the earthquake. The streets were humped into ridges and piled with the debris of fallen walls. The steel rails were twisted into horizontal angles. The telephone and telegraph systems were disrupted. And the great water-mains had burst. All the shrewd contrivances and safeguards of man had been thrown out of gear by thirty seconds' twitching of earth-crust.