

# Module 11: Contemporary Voices

## Topic 4 Content: Literary Journalism


### Introduction

#### Literary Journalism

Definition   Context   Elements   Cautions

**Introduction**

Click on each of the folder tabs to examine literary journalism.



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## Topic 4 Content: Literary Journalism

### Definition

The image shows a digital interface with a dark header titled "Literary Journalism". Below the header are four tabs: "Definition", "Context", "Elements", and "Cautions". The "Definition" tab is selected and highlighted. The content area displays the following text:

**Definition**

**Literary journalism** is a form of nonfiction that combines the factual reporting of information with certain narrative techniques and stylistic strategies traditionally associated with fiction. Sometimes referred to as New Journalism, literary journalism has an engaging narrative but is also fact-driven, requiring research and/or interviews in order to incorporate historical data, cultural issues, or political viewpoints.

Below the text is a blurred image of a dictionary page with the following visible text:

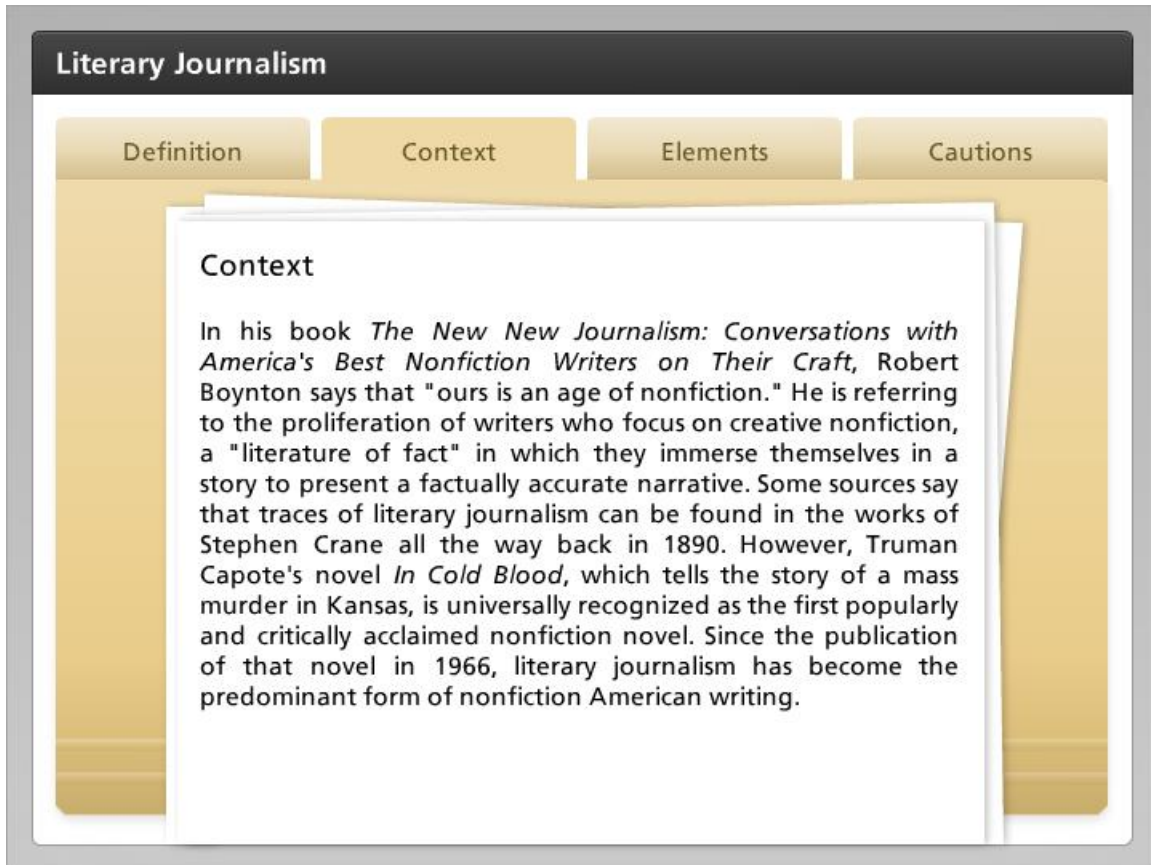
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## Topic 4 Content: Literary Journalism

### Context



**Literary Journalism**

Definition   Context   Elements   Cautions

**Context**

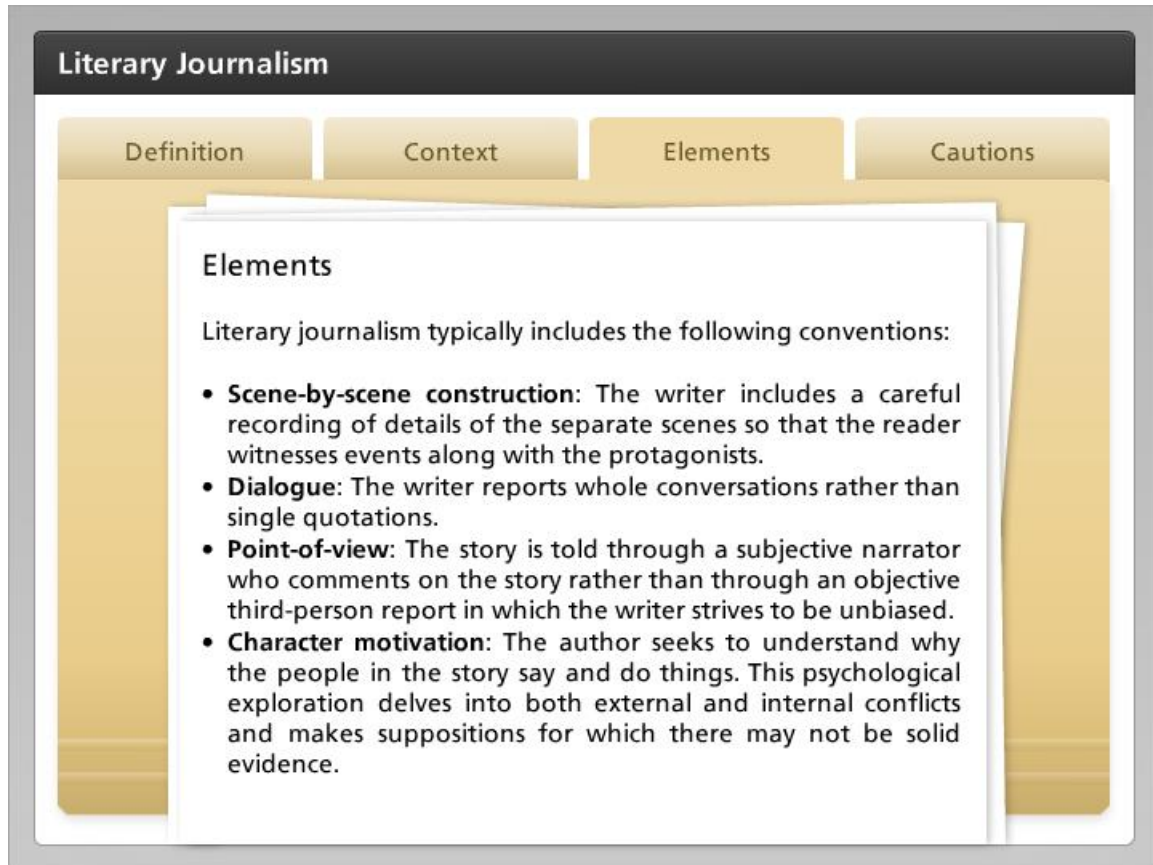
In his book *The New New Journalism: Conversations with America's Best Nonfiction Writers on Their Craft*, Robert Boynton says that "ours is an age of nonfiction." He is referring to the proliferation of writers who focus on creative nonfiction, a "literature of fact" in which they immerse themselves in a story to present a factually accurate narrative. Some sources say that traces of literary journalism can be found in the works of Stephen Crane all the way back in 1890. However, Truman Capote's novel *In Cold Blood*, which tells the story of a mass murder in Kansas, is universally recognized as the first popularly and critically acclaimed nonfiction novel. Since the publication of that novel in 1966, literary journalism has become the predominant form of nonfiction American writing.

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## Topic 4 Content: Literary Journalism

### Elements



**Literary Journalism**

Definition   Context   **Elements**   Cautions

**Elements**

Literary journalism typically includes the following conventions:

- **Scene-by-scene construction:** The writer includes a careful recording of details of the separate scenes so that the reader witnesses events along with the protagonists.
- **Dialogue:** The writer reports whole conversations rather than single quotations.
- **Point-of-view:** The story is told through a subjective narrator who comments on the story rather than through an objective third-person report in which the writer strives to be unbiased.
- **Character motivation:** The author seeks to understand why the people in the story say and do things. This psychological exploration delves into both external and internal conflicts and makes suppositions for which there may not be solid evidence.

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### Cautions

**Literary Journalism**

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#### Cautions

Some critics of literary journalism point out that when a writer takes artistic license—for example, when he or she creates a fictional scene which combines the impressions of several different sources or when the author draws conclusions about the psychology of a character—the reader may rightfully question the truthfulness of the story. The question of whether the narrator is telling the truth, just one version of the truth, or a totally fabricated version is one that must be applied not only to newspaper articles and nonfiction novels but also to Internet blogs and other kinds of reporting sources such as social media.

**CAUTION:  
NARRATOR RELIABILITY**

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