

## A. Genre Definition

1. **A literary form or category.**
  - a. “Genre” is the French term for category
  - b. Genres are generalizations, not mutually exclusive categories.
2. **Broadest categories:**
  - a. Prose: written language in its ordinary form, without metrical structure.
  - b. Poetry: literary work with special intensity is given to the expression of feelings and ideas by the use of distinctive style and rhythm
3. **Marks of Genre**
  - a. Structure or form
  - b. Content
  - c. Function

## B. Prose Genres

1. **Regular Narrative**
  - a. Form: scene layout, development of plot
  - b. Content: characters, author’s critique
  - c. Function: various
2. **Historical Narrative**
  - a. Form: a collection of other genres
  - b. Content: nation of Israel
  - c. Function: document Israel’s relationship with God
3. **Law** (covenant, law, and ritual legislation)
  - a. Form (of covenant): proposal, stipulations, ratification
  - b. Content (of covenant): practical outworkings of the covenant
  - c. Function (of covenant): everyday effect on personal and community life

## C. Poetic Genres

1. **Psalms of Lament**
  - a. Form: invocation, plea to God, a complaint, a request or petition, statement of confidence
  - b. Content: sorry or grief
  - c. Function: call for God’s justice, a cry for help, repentance
2. **Psalms of Praise**
  - a. Form: hymns, enthronement psalms, songs of Zion, royal psalms
  - b. Content: to share an emotion or response to an event, act of deliverance, or truth
  - c. Function: to complement God for who he is and what he has done
3. **Proverbial Wisdom**
  - a. Form: brief, timeless pieces of advice; easy to remember
  - b. Content: morality, finances, work, relationships, leadership, justice
  - c. Function: to develop skill for handling everyday life.
4. **Non-proverbial Wisdom**
  - a. Form: longer than single-statement proverbs; parables, wisdom poems, dialogues, riddles
  - b. Content: often more reflective than proverbs; sometimes called “counter-wisdom”
  - c. Function: reflective help for the perplexing questions of life

## D. Mixed Genres (Prose & Poetry)

1. Prophetic oracles of salvation (addresses nations, not individuals, as if in court)
  - a. Form: a word from the Lord (i.e. oracle), reassurance that God heard, affirmation of God's commitment to his promises
  - b. Content: salvation and blessing
  - c. Function: knowledge of God's ultimate victory and hope for the present
2. Prophetic oracles of judgment (addresses nations, not individuals, as if in court)
  - a. Form: messenger formula, accusation, announcement of judgment
  - b. Content: immediate and pending judgement
  - c. Function: inform of impending wrath or warn to encourage repentance
3. Apocalyptic (subcategory of prophecy)
  - a. Form: graphic visions, mysterious scenes of heaven and the future
  - b. Content: distant judgment and restoration. The final solution for this age is the age to come.
  - c. Function: to encourage saints to preserve and not give up

### Source:

Sandy, D. Brent & Ronald L Giese, Jr., *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament*, Broadman & Holman, 1995.