

## Week Ten: The purpose of storytelling

Reading: Samuel Johnson, Rambler No. 4

1. Is fiction “life in its true state”? (paragraph 1)
2. Why can fiction “neither employ giants to snatch away a lady from the nuptial rites, nor knights to bring her back from captivity” (etc.)? (paragraph 2) **Fiction must be believable.**
3. Why is “the fear of not being approved as just copyers of human manners ... not the most important concern that an author of this sort ought to have before him”? (paragraph 6)
4. According to Johnson, what type of person is reading fiction? Why should “the highest degree of reverence ... be paid to youth, and ... nothing indecent ... be suffered to approach their eyes or ears”? (paragraph 7) **Paragraph 9.**
5. What does Johnson mean when he says that “the power of example is so great, as to take possession of the memory by a kind of violence, and produce effects almost without the intervention of the will”? What power does fiction have? (paragraph 10)
6. What is the job of the writer, according to Johnson? “It is justly considered as the greatest excellency of art, to imitate nature; but it is necessary to distinguish those parts of nature, which are most proper for imitation.” (paragraph 12)
7. What is the purpose of storytelling? (paragraph 13)
8. What is the danger of writing a character in which good and bad are equally present? (paragraph 14)
9. Must a writer only create *good* characters?

### Prescriptive vs. Descriptive Stories

Your stories can edify and tell people how best to live their lives *or* they can warn audiences and try to steer them away from danger.

“The story tells you its meaning; you do not dictate meaning to this story. You do not draw action from idea, rather idea from action. Ultimately the story imbeds its controlling idea within the final climax, and when this event speaks its meaning, you will experience one of the most powerful moments in the writing life—self-recognition.” – Robert McKee

### Homework

Write the next two pages of your story. Keep aiming for the climax—that is what you will write next!