Narrative is all around us, not just in the novel or in historical writing. Narrative is associated above all with the act of narration and is to be found wherever someone tells us about something.

Narrating is therefore a widespread and often unconscious spoken language activity which can be seen to include a number of different text-types (such as journalism or teaching) in addition to what we often think of as the prototypical kind of narrative, namely literary narrative as an art form.

The significance of narrative in human culture can be seen from the fact that written cultures seek their origins in myths, which they then record for posterity.

Narrative provides us with a fundamental epistemological structure that helps us to make sense of the confusing diversity and multiplicity of events and to produce explanatory patterns for them.

Genette draws a distinction between narration (the narrative act of the narrator), discours or récit proper (narrative as text or utterance) and histoire (the story the narrator tells in his/her narrative). The first two levels of narrative can be classed together as the narrative discourse (Fr. discours; Ger. Erzählerbericht) by putting together the narrative act and its product, thus making a binary distinction between them and the third level, the story (Fr. histoire; Ger. Geschichte). The story is then that which the narrative discourse reports, represents or signifies.

Different narratives focus on quite different aspects of the story; or, more precisely, the stories that we reconstruct from different narrative texts often complement each other.

Fictional narratives create fictional worlds, whereas historians collectively seek to represent one and the same real world in explanatory narrative and from a variety of different perspectives.

The Russian Formalists, who were active in the 1920s and 1930s, coined the useful term fabula (E. fable) for this basic level of narrative.

Thus, narrative is the story that the narrator tells. German research here continues the tradition of Goethe’s tripartite distinction between epic, lyric and drama whereby the epic is the prototypical narrative category. The epic has a bard, a narrator who tells the story. […] Narrative is therefore defined as ‘story plus narrator’.

Narrative: The recounting […] of one or more real or fictitious EVENTS communicated by one, two, or several (more or less overt) NARRATORS to one, two or several (more or less overt) NARRATEES. (Prince 2003: 58)

Chatman, on the other hand, defines narratives a conjunction of discourse and story, but extends the definition of discourse to cover several media.

Yet the primary concern in narratives is not actually chains of events but the fictional worlds in which the characters in the story live, act, think and feel.
The emphasis on the ‘human’ character is crucial. One criterion of what makes a narrative a narrative is the requirement of having a human or human-like (anthro-pomorphic) protagonist at the centre. […] But it is agreed among narratologists that ‘real’ narratives are those that have human protagonists or anthropomorphic characters (the talking hare in the fable, the speaking car, and so on).

<table>
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<th>9</th>
<th>Narratives may choose between a number of different perspectives, for example that of portraying the events from the point of view of the narrator or of one of the characters, or of allowing the reader an insight into the thoughts of one character but not of the others.</th>
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<td>Verbal narratives frequently have a narrator who produces the narrative discourse or narrative text. From the text the reader constructs the underlying world and story or action structure (also called the plot), which is a manifestation of the fable or network of motifs of the story.</td>
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