

English for Students of Persian Literature

انتشارات دانشگاه اصفهان

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Dedicated to Mohammadzadeh, Saeed

In Honor of the Resurrection of Words,

and

My wife

For her patience, support, and devotion.

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Preface

As this scholarly journey through the rich and diverse landscape of Persian literature begins, I am pleased to present this volume, meticulously crafted for students of Persian literature, particularly those who are engaging with these texts in English. This work endeavors to illuminate the vibrant tapestry of literary forms that have indelibly shaped the cultural and intellectual heritage of Iran, offering a comprehensive understanding of its most significant genres.

Persian literature, a veritable treasure trove of artistic expression, encompasses many styles and themes that reflect the complexities of human experience. In this volume, several key areas will be explored, including lyric poetry, which captures the profundity of emotion and personal reflection; epic literature, which narrates grand tales of heroism and national identity; and mystic literature, where the quest for spiritual enlightenment intertwines with poetic beauty. Each genre provides unique insights into the Persian soul, revealing the intricate relationship between language, culture, and identity.

Furthermore, an exploration of modern literature, a dynamic field that showcases the evolution of Persian writing in response to contemporary societal changes, will be undertaken. This exploration will encompass the works of influential writers who have challenged conventions and paved the way for new literary expressions. Additionally, dramatic literature, where the stage becomes a powerful medium for exploring human emotions, societal issues, and moral dilemmas, will be examined.

This volume is designed not only to impart knowledge but also to inspire a deeper appreciation for the beauty and complexity of the Persian language. As you engage with the texts and themes presented, reflecting on the cultural contexts that have shaped these works and considering how they resonate with your own experiences and understanding of the world is encouraged.

Throughout this academic endeavor, the hope is that you will not only gain a solid foundation in Persian literature but also

develop the critical thinking skills necessary to analyze and interpret these texts. By embracing the richness of Persian literary traditions, you will uncover new horizons of language and thought, enriching your academic journey and personal growth.

I invite you to immerse yourself in the pages that follow, to explore the depths of Persian literature, and to discover the profound connections between language, culture, and the human experience. Embark on this enlightening voyage through the realms of Persian literary heritage.

Warmest regards,
Masoud Algomoni Jouneghani
2024-08-21
1403-05-31

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Introduction

Persian literature stands as one of the most profound and rich literary traditions globally, reflecting the diverse cultural, historical, and philosophical influences that have shaped Iran over the centuries. This introduction aims to provide a glimpse into the various genres and themes that characterize this vibrant literary landscape.

From the lyrical expressions of love and longing found in Persian poetry to the grand narratives of heroism in epic literature, each genre offers unique insights into the human experience. The mystical writings invite readers to explore the depths of spirituality and the quest for meaning, while modern literature challenges societal norms and reflects contemporary issues.

Delving into the world of Persian literature will reveal the masterpieces of esteemed poets and writers who have significantly shaped this literary tradition. Their timeless voices impart wisdom and inspiration, resonating through generations of readers. This exploration will not only enrich the understanding of the Persian language but also deepen the appreciation for Iran's rich artistic and intellectual heritage.

In this book, students should follow these sections:

New Words

- **Read the sentences and guess the meaning of the new words:** This task aims to enhance vocabulary acquisition through context-based guessing.
- **Match the words in Column A with their meanings in Column B:** This activity focuses on reinforcing word meanings and usage.
- **Fill in the blanks with the provided words:** This exercise encourages active usage and helps to solidify understanding of new vocabulary.
- **Choose the correct answer from the options provided:** This section tests comprehension and application of the new words in various contexts.

- **Word Formation: Use the root word to form the correct word in each sentence:** This segment delves into morphological knowledge, aiding in the understanding of word derivation and usage.

Reading Passage

- **Task-Oriented Plan:** This plan guides students through the reading process, setting clear objectives for comprehension and analysis.
- **Reading Comprehension Questions:** These questions are designed to assess understanding, encourage critical thinking, and promote detailed analysis of the text.
- **Answer the true or false questions based on the reading passage:** This section aims to verify factual understanding and reinforce attention to detail.
- **Multiple Choice Questions:** This section includes a variety of multiple-choice questions designed to test understanding of key concepts and themes from the reading passage.

Grammar: Noun Phrases

- **Explanation:** This subsection provides detailed explanations of noun phrases, enhancing grammatical knowledge and usage.
- **Examples:** Illustrative examples are included to help clarify the concepts. For instance, students will be asked to choose the correct noun phrase that fits within given sentences, reinforcing their understanding.
- **Word Order Exercises:** Practice rearranging words to form correct noun phrases, which aids in syntactical accuracy and fluency.

Further Reading

- **Additional resources and reading materials:** These are provided for those interested in delving deeper into the topic, offering opportunities for extended learning and exploration of Persian literature.

Note: All pictures used in this book are AI-generated.

Lesson 1

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.

Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!

Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,

who violently sweep your house

empty of its furniture,

still, treat each guest honorably.

He may be clearing you out

for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame,

the malice, meet them at the door laughing,

and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,

because each has been sent

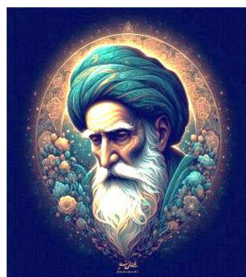
as a guide from beyond.

(Barks et al., 2004, p. 11)

«مثنوی معنوی» - دفتر پنجم -
بخش ۱۵۵ - تمثیل تن ادیبی به
مهمان‌خانه و اندیشه‌های مختلف به
مهمانان

هست مهمان‌خانه این تن ای جوان
هر صبحی ضیف نو آید دوان
هین مگو کین ماند اندر گردنم
که هم اکنون باز پرد در عدم
هرچه آید از جهان غیب‌وش
در دلت ضیف است او را دار خوش

"مولانا"



Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (1207-1273)



New Words



Read the sentences. Guess the meaning of the words underlined.

- 1) The scientist wrote a detailed treatise on climate change, explaining all the factors that contribute to global warming.
- 2) The experience left an indelible impression on her, something she would remember forever.
- 3) The message of the poem resonates with many people, making them feel understood and connected.
- 4) She caught a glimpse of the celebrity as they quickly walked by, just enough to recognize them.
- 5) The festival celebrates the rich heritage of the region, including its traditional music, dance, and food.
- 6) The artist's versatility allows her to create beautiful paintings, sculptures, and even digital art.
- 7) The problem is multifaceted, with several different factors contributing to its complexity.
- 8) The movie is a timeless classic that people of all ages continue to enjoy.
- 9) The interplay between light and shadow in the photograph creates a dramatic effect.
- 10) The teacher explained the relevance of the historical event to current social issues, making the lesson more engaging.



Plan 1: Literary Terms Identification

Objective:

To identify and understand key literary terms in Persian literature.

Activities:

1. Introduction (5 minutes):

Provide a brief overview of key literary terms.

2. Reading Passage (10 minutes):

Distribute a passage from a well-known Persian literary work.

3. Identification Exercise (10 minutes):

Students identify and underline literary terms within the passage.

4. Group Discussion (5 minutes):

Discuss the identified terms and their significance in the passage.

Match the words in Column A with their meanings in Column B.

| **Column A** | **Column B**

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1. Allegory | A. A story where characters represent abstract ideas |
| 2. Fable | B. A long-established custom or belief |
| 3. Genre | C. A category of artistic composition |
| 4. Tradition | D. A short story that conveys a moral lesson |
| 5. Discourse | E. Discussion or debate on a topic |
| 6. Prose | F. Written or spoken language in its ordinary form |

Fill in the Blanks with the words given.

tradition -influence-comprehensive- heritage- versatile- resonate

1. Ferdowsi's Shahnameh is considered a _____ epic that captures the essence of Persian mythology and history.
2. Persian literature has a long _____ of using poetry to convey deep philosophical and mystical ideas.
3. Persian literature has a rich _____ that dates back thousands of years.
4. Saadi is known for being a _____ writer, excelling in both poetry and prose.
5. The _____ of Persian poets like Rumi and Hafez can be seen in literary traditions around the world.
6. The themes and messages in Persian literature often _____ with readers, transcending time and cultural boundaries.

Choose the correct answer.

1. Which of the following is an example of a literary genre?
a) poetry b) prose c) narrative d) all of the above
2. Which of these words is not a type of literary work?
a) allegory b) fable c) treatise d) novel
3. The scientist authored a comprehensive _____ on the impact of pollution.
a) novel b) poem c) treatise d) story
4. The event left a/an _____ mark on his memory, one that he would never forget.
a) temporary b) indelible c) erasable d) forgettable

5. The speech _____ with the audience, making them feel understood and connected.
a) confused b) resonated c) annoyed d) distracted
6. She managed to catch a brief _____ of the sunset before it disappeared.
a) stare b) glance c) glimpse d) look
7. The celebration highlights the region's rich _____, including its customs and traditions.
a) modernity b) heritage c) novelty d) future



Word Formation



Use the root word to form the correct word in the sentences below.

Root Word: Act (active -actively- action)

1. He _____ participated in the project.
2. She was very _____ in the discussion.
3. The _____ of writing requires discipline.
4. The _____ taken by the committee was effective.

Root Word: Create (creation- creative- creatively)

1. The artist's _____ approach was praised by critics.
2. The _____ process of writing is often complex.
3. The _____ of the new policy took several months.
4. The project was completed _____ and on time.

Root Word: Influence (influence-influential-influencing)

1. The author's _____ work has been widely acclaimed.
2. The _____ figures in Persian literature have left an indelible mark.
3. The _____ of Persian literature is undeniable.
4. The _____ of the poet's verses is profound.

Root Word: Resonate (resonate- resonant-resonance)

1. The _____ themes in the novel struck a chord with the audience.
2. The _____ of the treatise's message echoed through the ages.
3. The poet's voice in the mind _____ long after the reading.
4. The story has _____ profound effects that are felt long after reading.

**Reading Passage****The Enduring Legacy of Persian Literature**

Persian literature, with its rich history spanning over a millennium, has left an indelible mark on the literary landscape. The influential works of poets like *Rumi* and *Hafez* have resonated with readers across the globe, transcending the boundaries of time and space. Their timeless verses, often filled with profound wisdom and metaphysical insights, continue to inspire and captivate audiences.

In addition to poetry, Persian prose has also flourished, showcasing the versatility of the literary tradition. The historical narratives of the *Shahnameh*, written by the celebrated poet *Ferdowsi*, provide a glimpse into the heroic tales of ancient Persia. These narratives not only entertain but also educate readers about the cultural heritage of the region, preserving the traditions and beliefs that have shaped the identity of the Persian people.

Moreover, Persian literature boasts a diverse array of genres, including fables, allegories, and philosophical treatises. These works delve into the complexities of human nature, offering a comprehensive understanding of the human experience. The vibrant storytelling tradition in Persian literature has given birth to a rich tapestry of tales, each one woven with threads of wisdom, morality, and cultural significance.

The dynamic interplay between poetry and prose in Persian literature highlights its versatility and relevance in contemporary discourse. As scholars continue to explore these multifaceted works, they uncover the layers of meaning and symbolism that have made Persian literature a global phenomenon.

One of the most striking features of Persian literature is its ability to transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries. The influential works of Persian poets and prose writers have been translated into numerous languages, allowing their messages to reach a wider audience. This timeless appeal is a testament to the universal themes and emotions that are at the heart of Persian literature.

As we delve deeper into the vibrant tradition of Persian literature, we are struck by its enduring relevance and its ability to speak to the human condition across centuries. The influential figures who have shaped this literary heritage, from *Rumi* to *Hafez* and *Ferdowsi*, continue to inspire and challenge us with their words. Their timeless verses and narratives serve as a reminder of the power of literature to transcend the boundaries of time and space, connecting us to the shared experiences of humanity.

The intricate relationship between literature and culture is evident in the way Persian writers have captured the essence of their society through their works. From the heroic epics that celebrate valor and honor to the delicate poetry that explores love and spirituality, Persian literature offers a profound insight into the human experience. It reflects the joys, sorrows, and complexities of life, making it a vital part of the cultural heritage of Iran.

Today, as we study Persian literature, we not only appreciate its artistic beauty but also recognize its role in shaping identities and fostering connections among people. The enduring legacy of Persian literature continues to inspire new generations of writers and readers, ensuring that its rich traditions and profound insights remain alive in the hearts and minds of those who encounter it (*For further information see World History Encyclopedia*)



Task-Oriented Plan 1: The Enduring Legacy of Persian Literature



Objective:

To analyze and appreciate the rich history and influence of Persian literature.

Activities:

Activity 1: Literary Impact Analysis (10 minutes)

Provide students with the passage on the enduring legacy of Persian literature.

Ask them to identify key influential figures and works mentioned in the passage.

Activity 2: Group Discussion (10 minutes)

In groups, students discuss how the works of Rumi, Hafez, and Ferdowsi have impacted global literature. Each group presents their findings, highlighting the universal themes and emotions in these works.

Activity 3: Comparative Genre Exploration (10 minutes)

Assign each student a specific genre mentioned in the passage (e.g., fables, allegories, philosophical treatises).

Activity 4: Symbolism Interpretation (10 minutes)

Students identify examples of symbolism in Persian literature as mentioned in the passage.

Discuss in class how these symbols transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Activity 5: Reflective Essay (10 minutes)

Students write a reflective essay on how Persian literature connects to the shared experiences of humanity.