TEI BY EXAMPLE

MODULE 3: PROSE

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1. Introduction

It's quite difficult to define prose. Prose is not poetry and not drama. Prose is the default way of communication in the Western World. It is the main genre for fictional and non-fictional writing in books, newspapers, flyers, reports, presentations, etc. Novels, business reports, manuals, cookery books, glossy magazines, and transcriptions of conversations are all written in prose.

The OED defines prose as:

> Language in the form in which it is typically written (or spoken), usually characterized as having no deliberate metrical structure (in contrast with verse or poetry)
>
> (*Oxford English Dictionary*, "prose," 1a)

and further sums up a couple of features such as the avoidance of elaboration, metaphorical language, and imaginative contents that distinguishes prose from poetry but do, however, characterize fictional prose.

As with all types of text, prose has structure and meaning. The TEI Guidelines do not devote a dedicated chapter to prose, since prose is the default TEI genre. However, the TEI does offer means to encode structural, semantic, and analytical features in prose. In this module, we bring together most of the encoding suggestions that are scattered throughout the TEI Guidelines and present a didactic approach towards encoding prose texts.