When we are talking about Literature, we think about the Prose and the poetry. Both of them form the literature, called in Greek "Logotehnia", which means the art of the word. The mission of the "Logotehnia" is the continuation from the past to the present.

Prose

We can distinguish the prose between three forms:
1) The short story, 2) The novelette and 3) The novel. The short story differs from the second and third not only in length and size but also in its aim and nature. The difference between the novelette and novel is a matter of quantity rather than quality.

In detail.

The short story

Is a kind of prose, it narrates facts, it is placed in a special area and time, it is related to a main fact of the hero, it comprises secondary persons and episodes, it has a purpose: to describe the behavior of people from the social reality.

The short story is written in a special out-line which has: Unity of hypothesis, Unity of place and time, the narration usually follows a chronological order, it describes the persons and the things, it is a dialogue or monologue, it revives the persons, it discloses their feelings, their actions, their social origin, their dreams etc.
**Novelette**

Novelette in literature is a sustained story which is not historically true, but may very easily be so. The plain and direct purpose is to amuse by a succession of scenes painted from nature, and by a thread of emotional narrative. Novelette is a kind of prose which is between the short story and the novel. It is longer than the short story and shorter than the novel. Besides that it narrates more or less modern facts, real or fictitious. It has usually sentimental content with psychological penetrations and detail folklore.

**Novel (Mythistorima=myth and story)**

The novel narrates historic or imaginary facts for an esthetic enjoyment. It is a fanciful prose inspired usually from the reality in which are described human models. Its supposition stretches out to a greater time and area. Its related to myriad of facts and persons. It narrates more adventures and it has digressions. It has different kind of fictions: Sentimentals, psychological, social and historical.

**Poetry (The art of the Poet)**

In Greek "piitis" means "maker"

The definition of the poetry is the absolute concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language.

That means no literary expression can properly speaking, be called poetry that is not in a certain deep sense emotional,
whatever may be its subject-matter, concrete in its method and its diction, rhythmical in movement, and artistic in form.

Poetry is the oldest kind of the artistic word. Poetry was the primitive expression of the man, and this art is inborn. It applies to imagination, to feelings and to descriptive power. It expresses with images.

According to a professor I had in Athens, poetry is craziness, but "Holy craziness".

Kinds of Poetry

The oldest kind of Poetry is the epic poem, (for example the Homer epics), which they had religious, political and heroic characters.

After the epic poetry is the lyric poetry, which expresses subjective situations of the poet, but such subjective situations which can apply to other people (like the ancient Greek poets Pindar, Sapho and others).

The sonette is an other kind of lyric poetry with its own form (14 verses with some rhymes)

The elegy is the plaintive kind of poetry, something like lamentation for the dead.

In generally there are many kinds of poetry according to what they express. We have religious, martial, war songs, bacchic, patriotic and other.
The Language question

In Greece until 1976 there were two linguistic branches (dialects) which differ from each other in all points that form the structure of a language: Vocabulary, phonetics, syntax etc. One branch was the common modern Greek language, the demotic, spoken by all Greeks and written by most of them; it was also the established language of literature. The other was the "Katharevousa", the purist language, which was spoken by no one, but was the official language of the country; it was the common written language. It was thought perfectly natural that a public speech or University lecture should be in "katharevousa". They thought that by this way they could connect the ancient time with the present. Generations of Greek schoolchildren have been driven to distraction by having to learn one kind of Greek for church, another for formal proclamations and invitations, another for reading newspapers, and fourth for talking and for reading modern literature.
It is a very big and daring act to review the history of the Greek Literature and to mention the most important writers. Dating back as far as twenty seven centuries, the Greeks have established a long tradition for the creation and appreciation of poetry and fiction. Beginning with Homer and continuing through the ages with the demotic songs in the ninth century, with the heroic Byzantine epics, such as Vassilios Digenis Acritas in the eleventh century, with the Cypriot erotic sonnets of the sixteenth century, the great Cretan poems, such as Erotokritos, of the seventeenth century, and the Neo-Hellenic songs of the eighteenth century.

The liberation of Greece in 1828 -after 400 years bondage to Ottoman Empire- finally achieved after a long and bitter war of independence (1821-1828). Greece was one of the poorest countries in Europe with a total population one million, another million of Greeks was killed or died because of the hardships during these eight years. The cities and villages were in ruins. They did not have money. They did not have schools. Nevertheless Greece made a rapid progress in building a strong literary tradition, which within a few decades rose to levels of the achievements of western European nations.

Athens, the capital of the new nation became the center of all Greek political and intellectual life.

The Greek authors did not have to start from the beginning because they had the models in the epic, drama, lyric poetry, and literary criticism that ancient Greek ancestors had bequeathed to them.
In addition to the models of literature of the Byzantine and modern European traditions which were readily available to them, the authors of the Greek diaspora carried the torch of Greek letters, and kept its flame alive while Greece was enslaved. Greeks abroad, before the Greek revolution, had established wealthy communities in France, England, Austria, Romania, Russia, and Egypt.

One of the famous Greeks of diaspora was the great patriot and poet Rhigas Pherraios, who played a significant role by writing on a broad range of topics, ethics, history and literature. Famous remain "The Thourios" with his inspired verses memorized by every Greek schoolboy and girl. Its rousing verses reverberated throughout enslaved Greece and probably accounted more than anything else for the fighting spirit generated before the Revolution of 1821. This War Hymn includes the following verses in free translation:

"How long, my heroes, shall we live in bondage, alone like lions on ridges, on peaks? Living in caves, seeing our children turned from the world to bitter enslavement? Losing our land, brothers, and parents our friends, our children and all our relations? Better an hour of life that is free than forty years of slavery!"
The Romantic School

As soon as the new kingdom was established, and Athens became the capital city, the Romantic School of Athens was flourished. The Greek poets were influenced of the French Romantics and wrote stilted purist (Katharevousa) diction. Achilles Paraschos (1838-1895) was the leading figure in the last period of the School. His models were Alfred de Musset (novelist, poet and dramatist, born in Paris 1810-1857), Victor Hugo (poet, dramatist and novelist, born at Besancon, France 1802-1885) and Lord Byron (poet, born in London 1788 and died in Missolonghi Greece in 1824, fighting against the Turks for Greece's independence).

Romantic poets were George Paraschos, Angelos Vlachos, George Vizyenos, and many others.

The romantic poets used a tendency to exaggerate reality and to see it in contrasts of black and white, or good and evil. A pensive mood and a tendency to melancholy which pervaded the minds of Greek authors, leading some to suicide (like Kostas Karyotakis (1896-1928) whose strange, pessimistic and often sarcastic poems drove him to terminate his life).

The School of the Ionian Islands

Contemporary with the Romantic School of Athens another School of poetry flourished in the Ionian Islands: Corfu, Lefkas, Cephalonia, Zakynthos, which had been under Venetian and later under French and British rule until 1864.
These Islands were enabled to keep step with the literary developments of the West.

The founder and greatest representative of the Ionian School is Dionysios Solomos (1798-1857) a native of Zakynthos, who became the National Poet of Greece.

Dionysios Solomos, like others of the Ionian of his days, received his education in Italy and was influenced by Western ideas, especially those of the poet Dante and the German idealists of the eighteenth century. He wrote his first poems in Italian and soon aspired to become the Dante of Greece and started writing in Greek.

He adopted the spoken Greek language and became the first great user of the demotike. His early works are short lyrics, but the War of Independence stirred him to more ambitious projects. Solomos' Hymn to Liberty has become a best known poem, and, in part, Greece's national anthem.

**HYMN TO LIBERTY**

I can see thee by the lightning
Of the sword-blade flashing high;
I can see thee by the brightning
Of the swiftly glancing eye.

From the hallowed bones arising
Of Hellenic heroes free,
Now as ever valor prizing,
Hail, all hail sweet Liberty!

Solomos, as all Greeks, was fascinated by Lord Byron's personality and his involvement in the Greek struggle for their national independence. When Byron died in Missolonghi in 1824, Solomos immediately composed his tribute, the "Ode on the death of Lord Byron"
"Liberty, cease for a moment
Striking with your sword,
But approach here to lament
By the body of the noble Lord"

Epigram to Psara
On Psara's blackened, charred stone
Glory silently walks all alone
meditating her sons' noble deeds,
and wears a wreath on her hair
made of such few scattered weeds
on the desolate earth left to spare

Of the other poets of the Ionian School, Andreas Kalvos (1792-1869) and Aristotle Valaoritis (1824-1879) are the most distinguished. The poetry of Andreas Kalvos is patriotic and moralizing; it used a classicizing form of the language, and had influence upon subsequent literature.

Aristotle Valaoritis, was deeply romantic and exuberant; and by adopting spoken Greek as the language of poetry he had a considerable influence on later poets. He is the link that connects the Ionian School with the New School of Athens.

The New School of Athens

In 1880 the demotic language was accepted by all writings of the so called New School of Athens in poetry.

Many authors came to Athens from the Islands and from Smyrna. Alexandros Papadiamantis, prose writer, came from the island of Skiathos. Other came from other parts of Greece like Andreas Karkavitsas and Ioannis Kondylakis who wrote short stories about the Greek countryside, the customs of the folk people, or stories of the sea. It was this way that the New Athenian School was formed.

The leader was Kostis Palamas (1859-1943) who though born in Patras, was raised in Missolonghi, and moved to Athens in 1875 to study law.
Palamas rapidly became the most brilliant intellectual figure that Greece had seen yet in modern times. He was a literary historian, a critic, a leading poet, and was working as a general secretary of the University of Athens for thirty years. He was the most important cultural force in Greece for over a half a century. The great figure who marked the transition of Greek letters into modern times, bringing an end to the achievements of the nineteenth century. His many important poetical works portray modern Greek life, the continuity of Greek history and a number of social and spiritual convulsions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Recitation of two poems: Athens and The Grave.

In poetry Palamas' contemporaries George Drosinis (1859-1951), Kostas Krystalis (1868-1894), Lambros Porfyras (1879-1932), and others have all felt and acknowledged their debt to the leader of the school, wide as is the variety of their styles and personalities.

It is the poets of this school who explored the great phrastic and metrical possibilities of the spoken idiom, and who introduced free verse and symbolism into Greek poetry, which has much enriched and enlivened in the course of the twentieth century.