



The Secret Language of Books

A Guide to
Story Elements

2019
expanded
edition

NoveList

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Welcome

When it comes to talking about books, there are endless ways to describe them, but we're often quick to let one concept take the lead — if there are robots or aliens, it must be **science fiction**. If there's a haunted house, then it's **horror**. But there's so much more to books than just one simple descriptor.

And that is the challenge: making a book discoverable when you don't know exactly **WHY** any one reader might be interested in it or what reading experience they're looking for. The reader may be looking for a particular **genre**, like **psychological suspense**, or they might be seeking a particular feeling, like **inspiring** or **gritty** (we call this **appeal**). Some readers want a **specific theme** or plot of a book (like **fish out of water** or **opposites attract**).

That's why NovelList created a vocabulary that tries to tell the complete story (pun intended). We developed this language in response to reading trends, as well as the needs of readers and librarians. None

of these headings individually is the end-all-be-all to finding the right book but, using them together, readers can explore and narrow down their search to find books that fit the reading experience they want.

We've spent a lot of time making sure our headings are sound and can speak to librarians and readers alike. As authors will continue to expand and experiment, we will continue to review and expand our headings — and we always welcome feedback. Please feel free to share your thoughts and questions with us at novelist@ebSCO.com.

Happy reading!

Cathleen Keyser

Metadata Strategy Manager

Starter Questions

Use these to start conversations with readers.

Can you tell me about a book you've read and enjoyed?

What movies and TV shows have you enjoyed?

Which of your favorite authors or series do you wish had a new book?

What are you in the mood for today?

Pace

Pace is the rate at which a story unfolds for the reader. We identify books at either end of the spectrum. We also tag those that start slowly, then accelerate as the story progresses.

Fast-paced

Events in these exciting books unfold rapidly, moving the reader quickly through the story.

Intensifying

These books gradually build in momentum throughout the story, resulting in a gripping conclusion.

Leisurely paced

Due to descriptive language, focus on detail, or careful development of character or setting, these books unfold slowly, allowing the reader to savor the narrative.

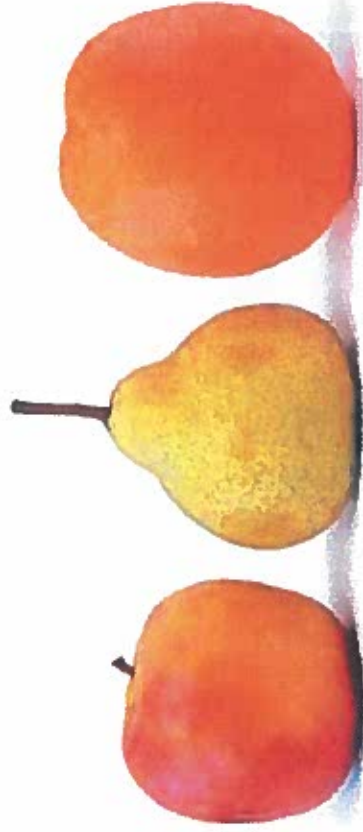
AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:



Why so few pace terms? Nobody is really looking for "medium-paced" books. It's only an active appeal when it stands out on the spectrum.

Making Comparisons

Use comparisons to dig deeper into reading preferences. Do you prefer **plot-driven** or **character-driven** stories? **Fast-paced** or **leisurely paced**? **Amusing and upbeat**, or **creepy and gruesome**?



Storyline

Storyline is a quick way to determine a book's focus and structure.

Action-packed

Pulse-pounding, high-octane excitement is the rule!

Character-driven *Fiction use only*

Interior growth and development of characters is important.

Intricately plotted

These books have intricate, complicated, or elaborate storylines.

Issue-oriented

Issue-oriented books explore controversial themes, which may cover emotional, ethical, or social problems.

Nonlinear

Events in these books shift between time periods.

Open-ended

Instead of providing answers, these books invite readers to ponder events long after the last page.

Own voices

Here the protagonist and the author share a marginalized identity.

Plot-driven *Fiction use only*

Events rather than characters propel these stories forward.

Sweeping

These sprawling stories span decades or generations and frequently include multiple locations and historical events.

Unconventional

Using unique or unexpected elements, these books may twist, adapt, or play with conventional storylines.

World-building

These books immerse the reader in vivid imaginary worlds of invented histories, languages, geography, or cultures.

AUDIENCE(S) THIS
TERMINOLOGY APPLIES TO:

ADULT

TEEN

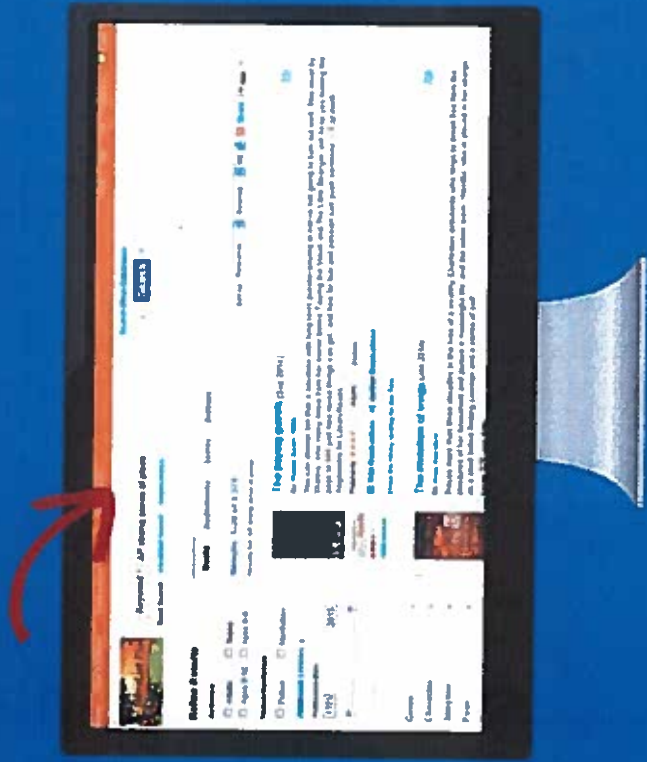
AGES 9-12

AGES 0-8



Tone in Novelist

Do a quick search to find the right tone.
For example, type **AP strong sense of place**.



Tone

Tone is the feeling that a book evokes in the reader. In many cases, this category best answers the question, "What are you in the mood for?"

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:

AGES 0-8
AGES 9-12
TEEN
ADULT

Amusing

They may not make you laugh out loud, but these stories have a light humor that sometimes accentuates more serious themes.

Angst-filled

Characters in these books experience problems associated with adolescence, such as questions about sexuality, popularity, or social standing.

Atmospheric

These books evoke the story's setting, whether it's a gothic mansion or a small Midwestern town.

Bittersweet

A mixed emotional edge — both pleasant and painful — that is sustained throughout the story.

Bleak

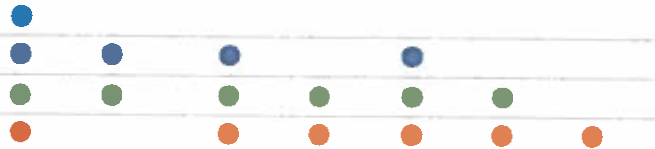
A dark outlook, frequently devoid of faith in human nature and tending away from hope or optimism.

Chaste

These books about romantic relationships focus on the emotions of the characters, and contain no sex or descriptions of sexual activity.

Conservative

Nonfiction use only
Represents a conservative (often Republican) perspective on American politics and social issues such as the environment, poverty, and the economy.



Tone

- Creepy**
Unsettling in a visceral, skin-crawling way, these books make the reader uneasy, and may often have supernatural elements and eerie settings.
- Darkly humorous**
The humor in these books derives from ironic or grimly satiric treatment of death, suffering, and other morbid subjects.
- Disturbing**
Approaching the darker side of human nature, these books are unsettling and often portray socially marginalized or dysfunctional individuals.
- Dramatic**
These cinematic books feature exciting and larger-than-life stories, depicting anything from historical events to space warfare.
- Emotionally intense**
Conveying great depth or complexity of emotion, these books explore the inner lives of characters in detail.
- Explicit**
These books contain lots of vividly described sex, ranging from the plainest (but plentiful) vanilla to the kinkiest of kink.
- Feel-good**
A gentle, comfortable, and hopeful feeling (not just a happy ending).
- Funny**
Laugh-out-loud humor characterizes these books.
- Gossipy**
Actions and people tend to be over-the-top and salacious.
- Gross**
Yuck! Including lots of nasty, oozy, or disgusting facts or details, these books may be educational or purely for entertainment.

ADULT
TEEN
AGES 9-12
AGES 8

- Gruesome**
Not for the squeamish, these books include a significant amount of explicit gore or other grisly elements.
- Haunting**
Often because of hard-hitting storylines, these books have a memorable, unforgettable quality that stays with the reader.
- Heartwarming**
These uplifting stories ultimately leave readers feeling emotionally satisfied.
- Heartwrenching**
These books convey emotions that are keenly distressing, hitting a nerve with readers and deeply affecting them.
- High-drama**
Juicy, sensational, and melodramatic, these books portray back-stabbing social scenes and catty personalities.
- Homespun**
Simplicity is key, often with a rural or small-town setting and characters who are unpretentious and cherish old-fashioned values.
- Hopeful**
While addressing weighty issues, these books incorporate some optimistic elements, expressing the belief that things may improve.
- Impartial** *Nonfiction use only*
Presents a balanced view of a contentious subject.

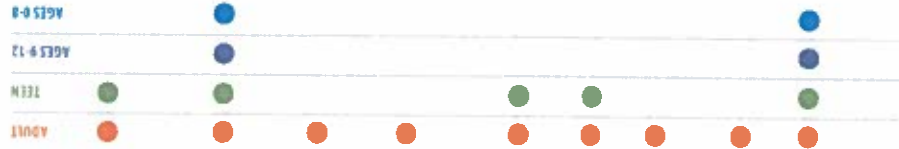
Tone



Humor comes in many varieties, so tone can help you get specific... Are you looking for light-hearted humor? Try **amusing, funny, or silly**. Want something more edgy? Look for **darkly humorous or sardonic**.

Tone

- Impassioned Nonfiction use only**
These books convey strong emotions to readers because the authors are forcefully advocating a particular point of view, making an argument, or telling an emotional story.
- Inspiring**
These books have an enlightening or uplifting quality, which may or may not be religious in nature.
- Irreverent**
No institutions, people, or beliefs are off-limits in these humorous (and sometimes subversive) books.
- Liberal Nonfiction use only**
Represents a liberal (often Democratic) perspective on American politics, politicians, and social issues such as the environment, poverty, and the economy.
- Melancholy**
While not grim or hopeless, these books are sad, somber, or gloomy.
- Menacing**
A sense of threat or menace pervades, evoking feelings of dread.
- Mildly sensuous**
Sex is present, but it's not given pride of place. Relationships are most important, but sometimes characters act on their attractions.
- Moody**
A dark and brooding tone that borders on melodrama.
- Moving**
Emotionally resonant books that make readers feel invested in both the characters and the story.



Tone

- Mystical**
Touching on spiritual themes, these books often explore archetypes and incorporate metaphysical events.
- Noisy**
Because of rousing, energetic, pictures or text, these stories lend themselves to loud readings.
- Nostalgic**
Characters reminisce, or the book looks back toward a particular place or time with longing and wistfulness.
- Offbeat**
Through plot twists, bizarre humor, and unique personalities, these quirky books recount unconventional, idiosyncratic, or unusual stories.
- Patriotic**
These books celebrate and show pride in one's country and its achievements.
- Quiet**
Soothing, low-key stories that have a calming effect on young readers.
- Racy humor**
Including coarse or risqué material; these books refer to sex in a humorous way.
- Reflective**
Contemplative books featuring characters who think seriously about their lives and place in the world.



Some tone words are just for kids — for example, **gross, noisy, quiet, silly, scary, & sweet** are all terms that can help you find the perfect book for storytime, read-alouds, or (best of all!) naptime.

Tone

Romantic

These books feature strong romantic elements — either between characters or in the story itself. Happy endings not guaranteed!

Sad

Issues in these books may be very serious (such as death), or less serious but still challenging (such as a friend moving away).

Sardonic

Dry humor and biting wit set the tone in these stories.

Scary

These spooky books have a frightening or menacing feeling that will make young readers uneasy.

Self-deprecating

Nonfiction use only
Never taking themselves too seriously, the authors humorously expose their own embarrassments, making readers sympathize, laugh, and sometimes cringe!

Serious

Marked by seriousness, gravity, or solemnity, these books confront social issues such as war, poverty, gender, or racial concerns.

Silly

The class clowns of literature, these books are often quite absurd and ridiculous but lots of fun.

Sobering

Addressing weighty social issues, these serious and hard-hitting books present a perspective that may be revelatory to the reader.

Spiritual

Nonfiction use only
These nonfiction books represent a spiritual outlook on religion and spirituality.

ADULT
TEEN
AGES 9-12
AGES 8-8

Tone

Steamy

In adult books, the sex is pretty vivid and goes beyond just innuendo. In teen books, there is still an unmistakably sexy aura, although perhaps not as much graphic detail.

Strong sense of place

Powerfully depicted locales — real or imaginary — come alive and give a good sense of what makes a place unique.

Suspenseful

Ranging in intensity from subtle psychological unease to nail-biting suspense, these books keep readers on edge.

Sweet

With a light tone and appealing innocence, these endearing books are cute, playful, and otherwise delightful.

Thought-provoking

More than just telling a story, these books take on big ideas — anything from philosophical quandaries to time paradoxes.

Upbeat

These fun books are lighthearted, hopeful, and optimistic.

Violent

Not for the faint of heart, these books contain explicit or graphic violence.

Whimsical

These fanciful and playful books will charm and enchant readers, and often include fairy tales or other elements of fantasy.



For readers with a passion for place, direct them to books with a **strong sense of place**, and then pair it with a subject heading for a location — anything from Paris to Middle Earth.

Characters readers love

(and the appeal that tells you why)



Readers fall in love with Nimona, the **quirky, spirited, strong female** villain, even as she's planning attacks on cities with genetically modified dragons.



Following a **large cast of characters**, including **strong female** protagonists, this **LGBTQIA** **diverse** story immerses the reader in a world of magic and intrigue.



Competition between brothers as told by Josh, a **believable** character appealing to middle grade kids into sports and **culturally diverse** characters.

Character

Only applied to fiction, character appeal is especially for those readers who love books because of the characters.

Ability diverse

These characters live with physical, mental, or emotional conditions that can often be challenging.

Anthropomorphic

From cats solving mysteries to crayons quitting their day jobs, the non-human characters in these books offer a unique perspective.

Authentic

These characters behave in ways that accord with their age, nationality, and backgrounds.

Awkward

Often unsure of themselves, these characters lack the social savvy to navigate relationships and other interpersonal situations smoothly.

Believable

These characters ring true for young readers, and behave in ways that are consistent with their age and backgrounds.

Brooding

Haunted by past traumas or mistakes, these morose characters contemplate (and often must confront) what is wrong in the world.

Character duos

From best friends to odd couples, these books feature dynamic duos who take on the world together!

AUDIENCES THIS TERM APPLIES TO:

ADULT

TEEN

AGES 9-12

AGES 0-8



Character

	ADULT	TEEN	AGES 9-12	AGES 0-8
Complex Intriguing and complicated, these multi-dimensional characters have conflicting motivations and desires.	●	●		
Courageous These brave and often self-sacrificing characters have strong convictions and face challenges with determination, despite the odds against them.	●	●	●	●
Culturally diverse These books may feature characters from racial and ethnic minorities living in the United States, Europe, Canada, or Australia, as well as characters from non-white cultural groups living in other parts of the world.	●	●	●	●
Exaggerated These larger-than-life characters often delight readers by adding to the humor or uniqueness of a story.	●	●	●	●
Flawed These characters do not always act in their own best interests, and their sometimes misguided decisions form a central theme in the story.	●	●	●	●
Introspective These characters examine their own feelings, thoughts, and motives, and what they find often has major repercussions for the story.	●	●	●	●
Large cast of characters Whether because of sprawling storylines, epic scopes, or intricate plots, these books contain lots of characters — how well readers get to know them depends on the author.	●	●	●	●

Character

LGBTQIA diverse Identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or just questioning, these characters are not stereotypes and are important to the story (even if in a secondary role).	●	●	●	●
Likeable These appealing characters engage readers and are likeable, despite flaws.	●	●	●	●
Mischievous These child characters frequently get into trouble or cause minor disasters due to their curiosity or intentional disregard for the rules.	●	●	●	●
Quirky Eccentric and idiosyncratic, these characters range from peculiar to bizarre, and generally add to the charm or humor of the stories in which they appear.	●	●	●	●
Relatable Because their emotions and experiences are recognizable, readers are able to identify with these characters and their dilemmas.	●	●	●	●
Religiously diverse These characters follow or have a background in a religion other than Christianity. While their active level of involvement in the religion may vary, the character's religious beliefs are an important element in the story.	●	●	●	●



To help all kinds of readers find all kinds of characters, look for **ability diverse, culturally diverse, LGBTQIA diverse, and religiously diverse** characters. Try adding our **own voices** appeal to find books in which the author and the character share a marginalized identity.

Character

Sarcastic

These young characters sometimes employ sarcasm for humor, and sometimes in response to difficult or challenging situations.

Sassy

These books feature characters (usually women) with outsized personalities and a bottomless well of one-liners and comebacks.

Snarky

These characters employ sarcasm, irony, and biting wit in their approach to life (and often have fun with it).

Spirited

These lively characters are full of energy and vigor.

Spunky

Feisty and scrappy, these characters have pluck and determination.

Strong female

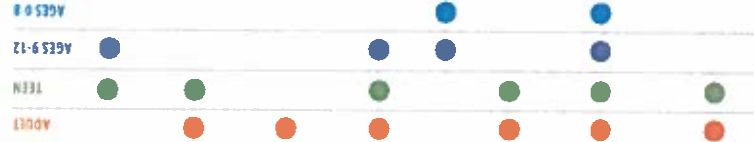
Whether catching criminals or saving the world, these take-charge women and girls are at the top of their game.

Sympathetic

While sometimes dealing with difficult situations or making poor decisions, these characters are presented in such a way that readers empathize with them.

Twisted

Deviant and often unsettling, these characters push the boundaries of literature through behavior that ranges from disturbing to illegal.



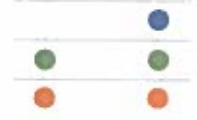
Character

Unlikeable

Deliberately painted in an unflattering light, these characters will not gain the sympathy of readers, so there is less emotional investment if and when bad things happen to them.

Well-developed

Sometimes appearing in more plot-driven stories, these characters rise above others in the strength of their development.



Have a reader who doesn't mind spending time with uncomfortable people? Try books with **unlikeable** or **twisted** characters.

Different Writing Styles

Appeal helps compare very different styles...

DIALECT-FILLED
WELL-CRAFTED DIALOGUE

"There is a loneliness that can be rocked. Arms crossed, knees drawn up, holding, holding on, this motion, unlike a ship's, smooths and contains the rocker. It's an inside kind—wrapped tight like skin. Then there is the loneliness that roams. No rocking can hold it down. It is alive. On its own. A dry and spreading thing that makes the sound of one's own feet going seem to come from a far-off place."
— from *Beloved* by Toni Morrison

"George's voice became deeper. He repeated his words rhythmically as though he had said them many times before. 'Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place. They come to a ranch an' work up a stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got nothing to look ahead to.'"
— from *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

STYLISTICALLY COMPLEX
LYRICAL

Writing Style

Writing style terms tell us how a book is written, from the complexity of the language to the level of detail in the background.

Accessible *Nonfiction use only*
These books explain a complicated or technical issue in an approachable manner.

Attention-grabbing
Irresistible to young readers, these books instantly draw them in.

Banter-filled
These books are characterized by snappy repartee.

Browsable *Nonfiction use only*
Information is arranged in short sections and is often accompanied by illustrations or other graphics to encourage browsing.

Candid
The narrative style of these books is frank and forthcoming, even when discussing potentially sensitive or uncomfortable subjects.

Compelling
These powerful books draw readers irresistibly into the story.

Comprehensive *Nonfiction use only*
These wide-ranging books thoroughly cover the background (and sometimes personalities!) of the subjects they explore.

Concise *Nonfiction use only*
Without wasting a word, these nonfiction books succinctly deliver a wealth of information.

Conversational
Written informally, these read as if a close friend were telling a story.

Descriptive
Full of elaborate descriptions, with illustrative, expressive language.

AUDIENCE(S) THIS
TERMS APPLIES TO

ADULT

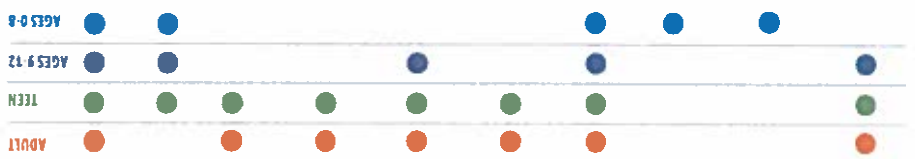
TEEN

AGES 9-12

AGES 0-8



Writing Style



Writing Style

- Dialect-filled**
Regional lingo and colloquialisms bring the setting to life.
- Easy-to-understand** *Nonfiction use only*
These books make hard-to-understand things a little easier.
- Engaging**
These books capture the imagination of readers through narrative style, character, or use of detail.
- Gritty**
Characterized by a narrative style that includes dark and unsettling details, these books often depict violence.
- Jargon-filled**
These books use the specialized, technical language of a particular group, trade, or profession.
- Lush**
Descriptive language evokes the senses, making readers feel as if they are experiencing what is being described.
- Lyrical**
Graceful, beautiful language, often with a rhythmic or poetic quality.
- Minimal text**
Generally used with young children, these have few words per page. The words tend to be simple, and sentences are short.
- Participatory**
These books require the reader to engage with the story by answering questions or through physical interaction.
- Persuasive** *Nonfiction use only*
These books may present both sides of an issue, but are frequently used to bolster a specific opinion.

- Richly detailed**
Details enrich these stories, sometimes focusing on a special body of knowledge (e.g., forensics, music, history, etc.).
- Scholarly** *Nonfiction use only*
Using authoritative sources and addressing complex topics, the language in these books may be academic or technical.
- Slang-heavy**
Characters in these books make frequent use of slang, which often aids in character development.
- Spare**
Minimal and elegant with great attention paid to the use of language.
- Stream of consciousness** *Fiction use only*
These novels and stories portray the uninterrupted and uneven flow of the characters' consciousness.
- Stylistically complex**
Due to sophisticated language and narrative structure, these stories can often be read on a number of levels.
- Thoughtful**
Despite covering a sensitive or controversial topic, these books are considerably written and handle the subject with respect.
- Well-crafted dialogue**
These books contain authentic or notable dialogue.
- Well-researched**
The authors of these books demonstrate a deep and knowledgeable understanding of their subject.
- Witty**
These cleverly written books use language in an inventive, humorous way.
- Wordplay-filled**
These books are full of puns, palindromes, anagrams, and other clever uses of language.



Different kinds of Illustrations

Need a storytime book? **Big and bold** illustrations can be seen from across a crowd. **Detailed** books give young readers a chance to pore over the pictures. **Colorful** books are eye-catching for appealing displays!

Big and Bold



Detailed



Colorful



Illustration

Both picture books and graphic novels have a unique set of qualities important to their readers, from color and drawing style to the mood evoked by the illustrations.

Big and bold

These illustrations convey ideas visually in a simple manner easily understood by young children. The contrast between bright colors and bold lines makes the pictures easily visible from a distance, even within a large group (and thus these books are a great choice for storytime!)

Black-and-white

The artwork is in black and white only, and may range from pen and ink drawings to watercolor-like effects in shades of gray.

Bold

The shapes or lines in these illustrations have a strong and striking appearance. The artwork may consist of simple, basic, or block-like shapes, and the lines may be dark, distinct, or thick.

Cartoony

This style features characters drawn with exaggerated, simplified features. Often humorous, it can be used to lighten difficult or disturbing themes.

Charming

These illustrations are captivating and pleasing to the eye. Often cute and playful, they offer visual support for the light or upbeat tone in a story.

Colorful

The full-color illustrations in these books feature vibrant colors. The artwork may vary widely, but the color palette is vivid.

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:

AGES 0-8

AGES 9-12

TEEN

ADULT



Illustration

ADULT
TEEN
AGES 9-12
AGES 0-8

Dark
Often used for emphasis in stories with a bleak, menacing, or serious tone, these illustrations are full of shadows and dark corners.

Delicate
Deft and fine in texture or structure. Lines are thinly drawn, and the effect of these pictures is subtle.

Detailed
These books convey a lot of information through the quantity and clarity of the detail within the objects and offer readers the chance to pore over the pictures.

Fanciful
These illustrations are imaginative and unexpected and may range from whimsical drawings to surrealistic art with a dreamlike quality.

Folk-art style
Recognized by its flat perspective, simplified or stylized shapes, and dramatic use of color; frequently appears to be created by either an untrained artist or one who does not adhere to academic standards for art.

Impressionistic
These evocative illustrations use soft lines, reflected light, and color to capture a sensory, emotion-filled impression of a scene or an object.

Inventive
These creative books challenge the reader's perceptions with non-standard use of illustrative elements (including line, panels, or color).

Lavish
Whether through use of color, line, or detail, these illustrations are elaborate, sumptuous, and striking.

Illustration

Minimally colored
Featuring a limited color palette, these books can be two-toned or grayscale with one or two brighter colors used as accents.

Muted
The subtle color may have a washed out or subdued quality. This restraint in the use of color often serves to set the tone of the story.

Nightmarish
Deliberately ugly, frightening, or unpleasant. Most likely to accompany storylines that are unpleasant with a creepy, disturbing, or menacing tone.

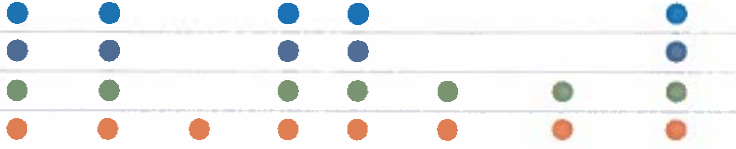
Photographic
These books use photographs as the primary method of illustration.

Realistic
These illustrations use correct proportions and accurate perspective. The content may not represent reality, but the drawing does.

Rough-edged
These illustrations are not sophisticated, polished, or elegant; instead, they have jagged lines and imperfect images, which serve to convey and emphasize the strong emotions being portrayed.

Surreal
These illustrations have a dreamlike or unreal quality, and express the workings of the subconscious. Typically done in a realistic style, they use unexpected juxtapositions of people or objects.

Textured
The visible texture of these illustrations adds realistic depth and detail through the skillful use of artistic medium.



Appeal to Different Listeners



All About the Voices
Find your new favorite narrator!

SEARCH FOR:
Character accents
Energetic
Folksy
Multiple narrators
Read by the author
Youthful



A Story and a Show
Prefer lots of showtime extras?

SEARCH FOR:
Audio drama
Full cast
Live audience
Musically enhanced
Sound effects



Hooked on a Feeling
Looking to evoke a mood or feeling?

SEARCH FOR:
Comedic
Emotionally connected
Engrossing
Intense
Somber

Audio

Audio appeal covers everything from the performance (full cast or read by the author) to voice quality, tone, and artistic delivery.

Audio drama

Dramatic performances, often with a full cast.

Approachable

Through clear performances, difficult concepts become understandable.

Brisk

These narrators move their stories along with quick, agile readings.

Character accents

Vocal versatility brings characters and settings to life.

Comedic

These narrators make good use of comic timing.

Commanding

These narrators deliver strong and authoritative performances.

Crisp

Precise enunciation and clear tones distinguish these narrations.

Deadpan

Humor delivered in a cool, understated manner.

Detached

These performances are emotionally removed from the story.

Distinctly voiced

These narrators provide a multiplicity of voices for their characters.

Emotionally connected

These narrators capture the emotional content of the books they read.

AUDIENCE(S) THIS
TERM APPLIES TO:

ADULT

TEEN

AGES 9-12

AGES 0-8

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Audio

	ADULT	TEEN	AGES 9-11	AGES 0-8
Energetic Performances imbued with spirit, animation, and enthusiasm.	●	●	●	●
Engrossing Listeners are drawn in to these stories.	●	●	●	●
Folksy These narrators highlight regional speech patterns and dialects.	●	●	●	●
Full cast Various narrators perform as individual characters.	●	●	●	●
Gentle Soothing voices easy on the ear.	●	●	●	●
Gravelly Husky, raspy, and throaty voices — think James Earl Jones.	●	●	●	●
Immersive Narration that captures the sensation of a time and place.	●	●	●	●
Intense Dramatic, suspense-filled performances.	●	●	●	●
Live audience Performed in the presence of a live audience.	●	●	●	●
Melodious Lilting, dulcet voices.	●	●	●	●
Multiple narrators Performances including more than one narrator.	●	●	●	●
Musically enhanced Anything from a few musical accents to a full musical score.	●	●	●	●

Audio

	ADULT	TEEN	AGES 9-11	AGES 0-8
Read by the author Authors double as narrators.	●	●	●	●
Resonant Pleasant voices wash over the listener in rich and sonorous tones.	●	●	●	●
Sincere <i>Nonfiction use only</i> Heartfelt performances imbued with genuine conviction.	●	●	●	●
Somber Performances underscoring the serious nature of their stories.	●	●	●	●
Sound effects Productions relying heavily on added audio elements.	●	●	●	●
Understated Restrained performances providing quietly memorable experiences.	●	●	●	●
Unhurried Narrators using slow cadences and measured rhythms.	●	●	●	●
Warm These appealing voices have pleasant, inviting tones.	●	●	●	●
Well-characterized These narrators fully inhabit their characters.	●	●	●	●
Wry Subtle humor, ranging from understated irony to acerbic wit.	●	●	●	●
Youthful Narration imparting an air of innocence and buoyancy.	●	●	●	●



Not sure where to start with audiobooks?
Try well-characterized for a promising listen!

Discover the perfect read in Romance

Themes in Romance

Characters

Best friend's sibling
Off limits...but so tempting.
● ADULT

Childhood sweethearts
Young love blossoms into adult romance.
● ADULT

Enemies to lovers
The line between love and hate can be very thin.
● ADULT

Falling for a friend
Discovering that friendship has more to offer.
● TEEN

Famous flings
Sparks fly when one of you is caught in the limelight.
● ADULT ● TEEN

For richer, for poorer
The 1% don't have the market cornered on true love.
● ADULT

Friends to lovers
Platonic relationships deepen into love.
● ADULT

Hating to dating
They started out as enemies...
● TEEN

Opposites attract
They disagree about everything...except each other.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Second chance at romance
It's better to have loved and lost...and loved again.
● ADULT

Together again
Reunited and it feels so good!
● ADULT

Baby on Board

Getting together for the kids
An unplanned pregnancy leads to marriage.
● ADULT

Secret baby
Revealing a secret love child helps these couples reunite.
● ADULT

Sudden baby
Becoming the guardian of a child leads to romance.
● ADULT

Home again
Coming back to the place you left behind.
● ADULT

Love abroad
A travel adventure leads to everlasting love.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Love in a small town
Fall in love where everyone knows your name.
● ADULT

Setting

The romance genre offers a wide range of reading experiences. From contemporary to historical settings, realistic to supernatural scenarios, and sensuality levels ranging from chaste to explicit, there is something for every reader. All romance subgenres feature a central love story and promises to deliver a happily-ever-after.

Category romances (adult)

Contemporary romances (adult, teen)

Erotic romances (adult)

Fantasy romances (adult, teen)

Futuristic romances (adult)

Georgian romances (adult)

Gothic romances (adult)

Highland romances (adult)

Historical romances (adult, teen)

Holiday romances (adult)

LGBTQIA romances (adult, teen)

Medieval romances (adult)

Multicultural romances (adult, teen)

Paranormal romances (adult, teen)

Regency romances (adult)

Romantic suspense (adult)

Sports romances (adult)

Time travel romances (adult)

Victorian romances (adult)

Western romances (adult)



Themes in Romance

Setting (cont.)

New in town

Moving to a new town leads to new love.

● ADULT

Snowbound & stranded

Things heat up in close quarters.

● ADULT

Workplace romance

Mixing business with pleasure.

● ADULT

Plot

Childhood sweethearts

Young love blossoms into adult romance.

● ADULT

Captive hearts

Kidnapping the heroine (and her heart).

● ADULT

Fake relationship

What begins as a pretense ends in happily-ever-after.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Love in disguise

Can love blossom between those who are not what they seem?

● ADULT ● TEEN

Marriage of convenience

Expedient arrangements deepen into true love.

● ADULT

No strings attached

Not "dating," just... having fun.

● ADULT

Once upon a time

These fairy tales end in happily-ever-after.

● ADULT ● TEEN

One night to forever

A brief fling turns out to have staying power.

● ADULT

Unforgettable love

Memory loss can provide a chance to start over.

● ADULT

Finding the Right Heat Level

How much sex is too much?
Whether romance readers are looking for some good, clean fun or a down and dirty romp, appeal can help find their safe word (or comfort zone).

SWEET ROMANCES

TRY

Chaste
Heartwarming

MILD ROMANCES

TRY

Mildly sensuous
Upbeat

HOT ROMANCES

TRY

Explicit
Moody
Steamy



Find your romance catnip by mixing a favorite theme with appeals like **banter-filled, likeable, upbeat, suspenseful, or sassy**. Combine with our heat level appeals (**chaste, mildly sensuous, steamy, or explicit**) to find your spiciness comfort zone.

Discover the perfect read in Science Fiction



Science fiction asks “What if?” and then answers the question. Encompassing a range of locations and timelines, this “literature of ideas” depicts, with varying degrees of realism, the plausible, the improbable, and the seemingly impossible. Whether exploring the farthest reaches of outer space or the intricate workings of the human mind, this genre challenges readers to envision the best — or worst — of all possible worlds.

Science fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Afrofuturism and Afrofantasy (adult, teen, ages 9-12)

Alternative histories (adult, teen)

Apocalyptic fiction (adult, teen)

Cyberpunk (adult)

Dystopian fiction (adult, teen)

Hard science fiction (adult)

Military science fiction (adult)

Science fantasy (adult)

Science fiction classics (adult)

Science fiction mysteries (adult)

Social science fiction (adult)

Space opera (adult, teen)

Star Trek fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Star Wars fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Steampunk (adult, teen, ages 9-12)

Superhero stories (adult, teen, ages 9-12)



Themes in Science Fiction

Aliens and Robots

Alien invasions

Extraterrestrial lifeforms attack Earth.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

First contact

We're not alone in the universe after all.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Rise of the machines

Robots and computers turn on their creators.

● ADULT

Robots with emotions

These robots DEFINITELY pass the Turing test.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Apocalyptic and Dystopian

Band of survivors

Teamwork means survival.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Battle royale

People are pitted against each other in high-stakes competitions.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Climate change apocalypse

Weathering devastating environmental change.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Evil corporations

Soylent Green, Skynet, SPECTRE — well, we all gotta do something that pays the rent.

● ADULT ● TEEN

For the resistance

Power corrupts, but there is hope!

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Pandemic apocalypse

Both infected and uninfected must struggle to survive.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Concepts and Characters

Altered memories

These characters can't trust their own minds.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Human 2.0

A distinct upgrade from your run-of-the-mill human.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Playing God

Scientific overreach leads to disaster.

● ADULT

Press play to start

It's not just a game when you're in it.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Science fiction boot camp

Ten-hut Boot camp meets space camp.

● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Send in the clones

Cloning humans has deep ethical implications.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Vengeance is mine

Hell hath no fury like a character scorned.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Themes in Science Fiction

Concepts and Characters (cont.)

Weird science

Brilliant kids + science. What could go wrong?
● AGES 9-12

Women of steel

These fully armored women are ready for quest OR battle.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Zero to hero

You've got to start somewhere.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Space and Time

Boldly go

Humans explore the cosmos.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Fixing history

Time travel to alter the past or save the future.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Generation ships

Sometimes you're on that spaceship for a REALLY long time.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Lost in space

First priority: survival. Next on the agenda: getting home.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Space colonization

Putting down roots on other planets.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Time loop

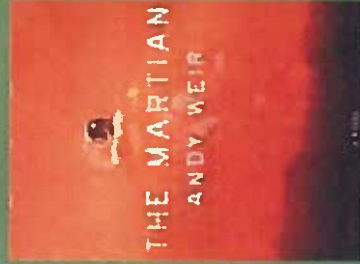
So that happened...again. And again.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Time slip

Characters emerge somewhere else — past or future.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

What Readers Love about Science Fiction

Readers prize science fiction for its ability to raise thought-provoking issues and ask challenging moral and social questions. Some titles that are sure to please:



The Martian

- Complex science made accessible
- Everyman protagonist
- Problem-solving
- Humor
- Suspense
- Survival story



Binti

- Coming-of-age story
- Underdog story
- Relatable heroine, relatable situation
- Saves the day because of different background, experiences, perspective
- World-building, explores different cultures



All Systems Red

- Snarky narrator
- Antihero
- Dark humor
- A mystery to solve
- Brisk pacing
- Skillful execution of interesting concept



Intricately plotted and world-building are always good appeal terms for finding great **science fiction**, but consider including a search with **thought-provoking** for those patrons who want to contemplate what society might look like in the future.

Discover the perfect read in Fantasy



Evoking awe and wonder through dizzying feats of imagination, fantasy fiction casts a spell on readers, immersing them in a world of magic. Set in alternate realms or realities — some similar to, some very different than our own — this genre emphasizes tales of heroism against seemingly insurmountable odds, often climaxing with epic battles between the forces of good and evil.

Fantasy fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
Afrofuturism and Afrofantasy (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
Animal fantasy (ages 9-12)
Arthurian fantasy (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
Asian-influenced fantasy (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
Celtic fantasy (adult)

Contemporary fantasy (adult)
Epic fantasy (adult)
Fantasy mysteries (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
Gateway fantasy (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
High fantasy (teen, ages 9-12)
Historical fantasy (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
Low fantasy (ages 9-12)

Middle Eastern-influenced fantasy (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
Military fantasy (adult)
Mythological fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
Paranormal fiction (teen, ages 9-12)
Sword and sorcery (adult)
Urban fantasy (adult, teen)
Weird Westerns (adult)



Themes in Fantasy

Character

Chosen one
 Prophets foretold of these heroes.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Dark lord
 These lords and ladies are assembling armies of darkness.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Hidden heritage
 There's more to these characters than meets the eye.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Last of their kind
 They are all that remain of their people, or so they think.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Princess power
 These young damsels are in no way distressed.
 ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Rightful heir
 Usurpers and traitors stand in the way of the throne.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Scum and villainy
 Sometimes you have to root for the bad guy.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN

Women of steel
 These fully armored women are ready for quest OR battle.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN

Zero to hero
 These characters achieve greatness from humble beginnings.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN

Plot

Bad religion
 These fantasy worlds have a god problem.
 ● ADULT

Be careful what you wish for
 Genies have to amuse themselves somehow.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Court intrigue
 What's better than power? More power.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Defend the realm!
 Call the banners and rally to the cause!
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

For the resistance
 Power corrupts, but there is hope!
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Magic goes away
 If it's lost, can it be found again?
 ● ADULT

Metaphorical racism
 Think elves who hate dwarves, or magic users who must hide their powers.
 ● ADULT

Quest for magical items
 The objects of power are scattered — let the hunt begin!
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Reluctant allies
 To survive, enemies must make common cause.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN

Themes in Fantasy

Plot (cont.)

Return of magic

Legend becomes reality as magic reenters the world.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Seeking lost parents

Young heroes must find their missing guardians.
 ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Slaying the dragon

What's more epic than this?
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

To the rescue!

Someone always needs saving.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Too powerful to contain

Magic in these stories has explosive consequences.
 ● ADULT

Vengeance is mine

Hell hath no fury like a character scorned.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Setting

Academies of magic

These are VERY special schools for the gifted.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Faerie realm

Welcome to the land of the immortal fae.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Hidden among us

There's a whole world within the world as we know it.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Laws of magic

A wizard did it!... In accordance with a magical system.
 ● ADULT

Realm of the dead

The afterlife has an address.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

How to Tell the Difference Between Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Horror



Science Fiction

What if...
our scientific
theories are right?



Fantasy

What if...
magic exists?



Horror

What if...
our nightmares
are real?



Given up on waiting for George R. R. Martin to finish *The Winds of Winter* in your lifetime? Search for books with the appeal terms **world-building, dramatic, or large cast of characters**. Want something less grim? Combine **world-building with offbeat or wordplay-filled** instead.

Discover the perfect read in Horror



Horror draws on the unseen, the unknown, and the uncanny in order to explore—and expose—humanity's darkest fears. It provokes a range of visceral reactions in the reader, from the subtle chills of dread evinced by Victorian ghost stories to the adrenaline-fueled fear and disgust evoked by contemporary zombie novels. Themes of abjection, monstrosity, and taboo are common.

Horror (adult, teen, ages 9-12)

Historical horror (adult)

Ghost stories (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Horror classics (adult)



Themes in Horror

Characters

Band of survivors

Teamwork means survival.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Childhood trauma

Innocence is lost through a confrontation with evil.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Final girls

The lone female survivors of a horrific event.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Unreliable narrator

Don't believe everything you read.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Plot

Cursed!

Some objects should just be left in the weird little store where you find them.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Possessed

What an excellent day for an exorcism!

● ADULT ● TEEN

Trapped!

Think isolated cabins, Arctic research bases, submarines, graves, or elevators...

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Vengeance is mine

Hell hath no fury like a character scorned.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Monsters

Creature feature

Scary monsters that aren't vampires, witches, zombies, or werewolves.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Creepy clowns and bad seeds

Menace lurks behind things that seem innocent.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Evil animals

Normal animals become human-eating machines.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Evil transformations

A normal, mild-mannered citizen transforms into something terrible.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Monster mayhem

Smart kids find monsters in disguise in these paranormal stories.

● AGES 9-12

Real life monsters

Sometimes the scariest monsters are the ones beside you.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Vampire menace

Gaile-challenged bloodsuckers.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Werewolves among us

Beware the full moon!

● ADULT ● TEEN

Themes in Horror

Monsters (cont.)

Witchcraft and the occult

Sinister spell-casting begets supernatural horror.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN

Zombie apocalypse

Live free or ...walk dead?
 ● ADULT ● TEEN

Setting

Don't go in there!

It takes more guts than brains to visit these creepy spots.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Small town horror

Small towns have problems too.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Moving to a haunted house

Spoiler alert — moving was a BAD idea!
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Style

Body horror

Reader beware — horrible things can happen to the human body.
 ● ADULT

Found footage

Framing devices (such as letters or diaries) highlight the horror in real time.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Lovecraftian horror

Look here for horror beyond human understanding.
 ● ADULT ● TEEN

Monster mashups

Classic literature or history with an injection of horror.
 ● ADULT

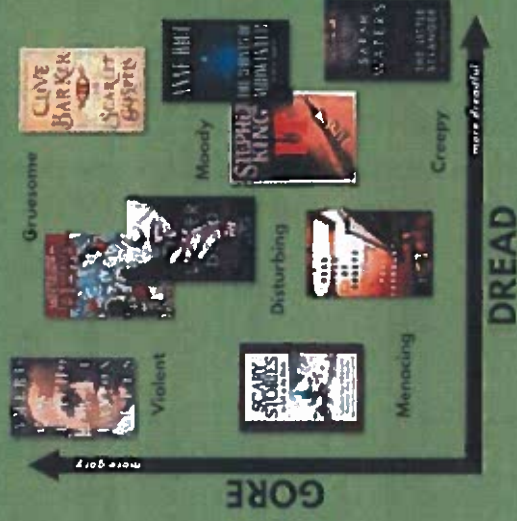


Some horror themes will *always* have a supernatural element, like **vampire menace** or **moving to a haunted house**; others may build on horrifying possibilities in the real world, like **real life monsters**.

Tips for Horror Fans

One way to approach horror is to consider a spectrum of dread (think *The Haunting of Hill House*) to gore (think *Clive Barker*). What are you looking for?

You can use appeal terms to pinpoint your preference. Tone appeals like **moody**, **creepy**, and **menacing** will lead you to the dread end of the scale. Looking for a real gut-churner? Try a search for **violent**, **gruesome**, or **disturbing**!



Discover the perfect read in Mystery



Whodunnit? Mysteries are catnip to readers looking for puzzles to solve, no matter the subgenre (like cozy mysteries or police procedurals). They can be character-driven or action-packed, fast-paced or leisurely paced; in some cases, the location (or time period) is as much a part of the story as the characters are. Mysteries can range from funny and wordplay-filled to downright disturbing.

Mysteries (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Cozy mysteries (adult)

Culinary mysteries (adult)

Hardboiled fiction (adult)

Historical mysteries (adult, teen, ages 9-12)

Hobby mysteries (adult)

Holiday mysteries (adult)

Medieval mysteries (adult)

Mystery classics (adult)

Police procedurals (adult)

Solve-it-yourself mysteries (ages 9-12)

Supernatural mysteries (adult, teen, ages 9-12)

Victorian mysteries (adult)



Themes in Mystery

Characters

Missing memories

A gap in memory conceals vital information.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Rookie on the beat

Newbies must tackle crime as well as skeptical coworkers.

● ADULT

Sherlock Paws

Animal detectives keeping their noses to the ground.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Starring famous figures

What would Jane Austen do? Real people solve mysteries.

● ADULT

Plot

Beyond the grave

Crime victims investigate their own murders.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Eerie mysteries

Is there REALLY something supernatural going on?

● AGES 9-12

Locked room mysteries

The crime scene is isolated; the suspect list is small.

● ADULT

Proving one's innocence

Sometimes the detective is also the primary suspect.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Solve the puzzle

Readers solve these crimes along with the characters.

● AGES 9-12

Setting

The butler did it!

Country estates can hide secrets — and bodies!

● ADULT

Criminal masterpieces

Art heists, forgeries, and other crimes against culture.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Inspired by real events

Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Rural police

Crime is not absent in the country — just more spread out.

● ADULT

Sleuths in schools

Kid-size crimes get sent to the principal's office.

● AGES 9-12

Small town police

Small towns can have big crimes.

● ADULT

Urban police

Crime never sleeps in the city.

● ADULT

Vacation interrupted

Tan lines aren't the only crime! A day at the beach turns deadly for these off-duty sleuths.

● ADULT

Discover the perfect read in Thrillers and Suspense



Increasing tension and menace keep thrillers and suspense readers on the edge of their seats. In some, protagonists have only a short time to neutralize fatal threats (to themselves or the world), while in others, a more subtle danger is in play. Sometimes, readers may know more about what's going on than the protagonists do, which amps up the suspense. Anticipation keeps readers hooked and pages flying by.

Thrillers and suspense (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)

Bio-thrillers (*adult*)

Cyber-thrillers (*adult, teen*)

Financial thrillers (*adult*)

Legal thrillers (*adult*)

Medical thrillers (*adult*)

Political thrillers (*adult*)

Psychological suspense (*adult, teen*)

Spy fiction (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)

Techno-thrillers (*adult*)



As you might guess, **suspenseful** is a common appeal in this genre, and it can be easily modified to suit different tastes: those who love high-octane thrillers might search for **fast-paced** or **action-packed**, while fans of **psychological suspense** can look for **intricately plotted** or **disturbing** to find multilayered tales with shocking twists.

Themes in Thrillers & Suspense

Characters

Framed!

Proof of innocence comes before proof of guilt.

● ADULT

Missing memories

A gap in memory conceals vital information.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Proving one's innocence

Sometimes the detective is also the primary suspect.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Real life monsters

Sometimes the scariest monsters are the ones beside you.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Too good to be true

Something's not quite right.

● ADULT

Unreliable narrator

Don't believe everything you read.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Plot

Ancient enigmas

Codes and mystic symbols unlock ancient mysteries.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

On the run

Sometimes flight beats fight!

● ADULT ● TEEN

Race against time

The clock is ticking!

● ADULT ● TEEN

Shadow organizations

Who's in control? Good question.

● ADULT

Setting

Behind the Iron Curtain

The Cold War heats up in these spy stories.

● ADULT

Inspired by real events

Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Discover the perfect read in Crime Fiction



Crime fiction thrives on what transpires in the shadows: the seedy underbelly of the big city, the forgotten desperation of small country towns, or even quiet domestic angst that begins to boil over. The protagonists in these genres are rarely role models; they pursue their objectives by any means at their disposal, often subverting law and civil society. Readers interested in crime fiction may be drawn to the exploration of moral ambiguity, complex characterizations, or vivid descriptions of life outside mainstream society.

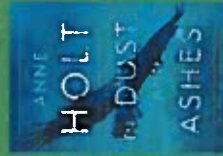
Crime fiction (adult)

Caper novels (adult)

Noir fiction (adult)

Rural noir (adult)

Scandinavian crime fiction (adult)



Discover the perfect read in Humor



When you're alone and life is making you lonely, you can always go...to the humor genre! Guffaws, cackles, smirks, and mwahahaha abound in these novels. While other genres make use of humor, the sole purpose of these stories is to make the reader laugh. Humor ranges in tone, in audience level, and in situations — from witty dialogue and absurd scenarios to dark humor and sarcastic critiques on society's flaws.

Black humor (adult)

Farcical fiction (adult)

Humorous stories
(adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Parodies (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Satirical fiction (adult)



Discover the perfect read in Christian Fiction



Christian fiction incorporates a Christian worldview, though the prevalence of that view may vary. In some novels, the characters' belief system may simply shape their decisions, while in others a conversion or a crisis of faith may drive the plot.

Christian fiction (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)

Christian adventure stories
(*adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)

Bible novels (*adult, teen*)

Christian adventure stories
(*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)

Christian apocalyptic fiction (*adult, teen*)

Christian fantasy (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)

Christian historical fiction
(*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)

Christian historical romances (*adult*)

Christian mysteries (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)

Christian romances (*adult*)

Christian romantic suspense (*adult*)

Christian science fiction
(*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)

Christian suspense (*adult, teen*)

Christian urban fiction (*adult, teen*)

Christian Westerns (*adult*)



Themes in Christian Fiction

Plot

Choosing Christ

These young characters make a decision to follow Christ.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Christianity under fire

When it's tough to be faithful, the faithful get tough.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Count your blessings

These kids see heaven-sent blessings all around them.
● AGES 0-8

Forgive and forget

Characters forgive and move on with their lives.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Life outside the flock

Deciding whether to stay or leave a faith community.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Prodigal returns

Characters who lost their faith return to the fold.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Sinner redeemed

All can be forgiven.
● ADULT

Tell me about God

From parent to child, faith is shared.
● AGES 0-8

Test of faith

After questioning, faith in God is renewed.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

What would Jesus do?

Characters struggle to model their lives after Christ.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Setting

Communities set apart

Enclosed Christian communities live away from the world.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Home again

Coming back to the place you left behind.
● ADULT

Life in small towns

Community begins here.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Fantasy

Caught up in the Rapture

Characters of faith survive the end times.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Christian soldiers

Wearing the armor of God allows you to stand against evil.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Discover the perfect read in Comics & Graphic Novels



Bam! Pow! Splat! Comics and graphic novels refer to a specific format. The terms are often used interchangeably for book-length narratives and collections of shorter stories told through sequential art. Here you'll find everything from superhero comics to manga to collected webcomics, as well as graphic novel hybrids, which combine comic book-style art with more traditional, novel-like text.

- Comics and graphic novels (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Action and adventure comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Alternative comics (adult, teen)
- Apocalyptic comics (adult, teen)
- Crime comics (adult, teen)
- Dystopian comics (adult, teen)
- Erotic comics (adult)
- Fantasy comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Graphic novel hybrids (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Hardboiled comics (adult)
- Historical comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Horror comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Humorous comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- LGBTQIA comics (adult, teen)
- Light novels (adult, teen)
- Manga (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Manhwa (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Manhwa (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Mystery comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Newspaper comic strips (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Noir comics (adult, teen)
- Paranormal comics (adult, teen)
- Romance comics (adult, teen)
- Satirical comics (adult, teen)
- Science fiction comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Spy comics (adult, teen)
- Steampunk comics (adult, teen)
- Superhero comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Surrealist comics (adult)
- Underground comics (adult)
- War comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Webcomics (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Western comics (adult, teen, ages 9-12)



Themes in Comics & Graphic Novels

Characters

Born this way

Congratulations! It's a superhero!

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Cosmic and mystical beginnings

Part superhero, part wizard or god.

- ADULT ● TEEN

Good gone bad

Life on the streets can be irresistible.

- ADULT

Human 2.0

A distinct upgrade from your run-of-the-mill human.

- ADULT ● TEEN

No power, still super

It takes hard work to get to be this good.

- ADULT ● TEEN

Princess power

These young damsels are in no way distressed.

- AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Scum and villainy

Sometimes you have to root for the bad guy.

- ADULT ● TEEN

Sidekick spotlight

Sidekicks get a promotion.

- ADULT ● TEEN

Super-families

Families that fight together, stay together.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Super subversive

Watch these superheroes undergo a major change.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Women of steel

These fully armored women are ready for quest OR battle.

- ADULT ● TEEN

Plot

Assemble!

TEAM—Together Everyone Achieves More.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Fixing history

Time travel to alter the past or save the future.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Multiverse encounters

Wait—you mean there are two of us?

- ADULT ● TEEN

Origin story

Gather round and learn how it all began.

- ADULT ● TEEN

Playing God

Scientific overreach leads to disaster.

- ADULT

Reboots and retcons

New storyline, new setting, new clothes, new attitude!

- ADULT ● TEEN

Vengeance is mine

Hell hath no fury like a character scorned.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Discover the perfect read in Urban Fiction



Page-turning storylines, contemporary urban settings, realistic characters, and straightforward prose drive the popularity of urban fiction, which also features varying levels of violence and drug use. But relationships aren't ignored (especially in the subgenre of drama lit), and vivid descriptions of sex abound.

Urban fiction (*adult, teen*)

Christian urban fiction (*adult, teen*)

Drama lit (*adult*)

Urban erotica (*adult*)



Themes in Urban Fiction

Characters

Backstabbers

You just can't trust some people...

● ADULT

Cheaters

Outrageous acts of infidelity keep the pages turning.

● ADULT

Family business

When you're born into the criminal life, blood is thicker than water.

● ADULT

I'm a survivor

Characters emerge from tough situations and seek power and healing.

● ADULT

Ladies first

These women do what it takes to get paid, get revenge, or get theirs.

● ADULT

My squad

Sisters from another mister swear to remain true.

● ADULT

Crazy in love

Just like Bonnie and Clyde, these couples remain devoted.

● ADULT

Rivals

Sometimes it's strictly business; sometimes it's personal.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Plot

Baby drama

Conflicts revolve around matters of paternity and unplanned pregnancies.

● ADULT

Cautionary tales

Consequences can be harsh.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Get money

These characters try to make it to the high life, by whatever means necessary.

● ADULT

Going straight

Leaving street life for straight life isn't easy.

● ADULT

Good gone bad

Life on the streets can be irresistible.

● ADULT

Just got out

Back on the streets after doing time.

● ADULT

On the down low

Characters secretly pursue same-sex relationships.

● ADULT

Payback

All about revenge.

● ADULT

Themes in Urban Fiction

Plot (cont.)

Sex work

Sometimes work in the sex industry is by choice, sometimes by necessity.

● ADULT

Sinner redeemed

All can be forgiven.

● ADULT

Test of faith

After questioning, faith in God is renewed.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Setting

Church drama

There's nothing holy about the scandals happening here.

● ADULT

Life on the inside

Raw views of prison life.

● ADULT

Raised by the streets

Growing up amidst gangs, drugs, and desperation.

● ADULT ● TEEN

Styles of Urban Fiction

Urban fiction has a lot to offer its fans. Classic urban fiction can be **gritty** or **violent**, featuring writing that is **fast-paced** and **dramatic**. Readers come to urban fiction looking for many different approaches; fortunately, **NovelList** has you covered!



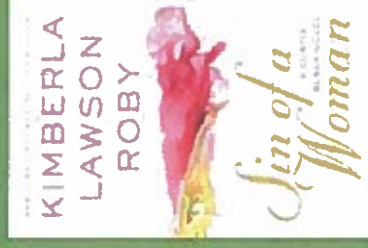
Urban fiction

- Follow-up to an urban fiction classic
- Authentic dialogue
- Flawed characters facing difficult problems head-on



Drama lit

- By day, car business, by night... **family business** (where the real money gets made)
- First in a popular series
- Lots of **family drama** and jockeying for position



Christian urban fiction

- Themes of **payback** and **sinner redeemed**
- Volume #16 in a long-running series
- A little **church drama** plays into the mix



For **urban fiction** that takes a hard look at social issues try: **GX urban fiction AND (AP issue-oriented OR AP thought-provoking)**. If you're looking for **urban fiction** that brings a lot of drama to the table and where women call the shots, try **GX drama lit AND TH ladies first**.

Discover the perfect read in General Fiction (Adults)



This category is wide-ranging and inclusive, a smorgasbord covering everything from heartwarming domestic fiction to stylistically complex literary fiction. Here you'll find classics and contemporary adaptations, biographical novels based on real-life people, smaller genres like chick lit and new adult, not-quite-genres like coming-of-age stories, and a whole lot more!

- Adaptations, retellings, and spin-offs (*adult*)
- Adventure stories (*adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)
- Autobiographical fiction (*adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)
- Biographical fiction (*adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)
- Chick lit (*adult*)
- Christmas stories (*adult, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)
- Classics (*adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)
- Coming-of-age stories (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)
- Domestic fiction (*adult*)
- Epic fiction (*adult*)
- Erotic fiction (*adult*)
- Experimental fiction (*adult*)
- Family sagas (*adult*)
- Gentle reads (*adult*)
- Glitzy and glamour (*adult*)
- Gothic fiction (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)
- Historical fiction (*adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)
- LGBTQIA fiction (*adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)
- Literary fiction (*adult*)
- Love stories (*adult, teen*)
- Magical realism (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)
- Mainstream fiction (*adult*)
- Metafiction (*adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)
- Modern classics (*adult*)
- Modern Westerns (*adult*)
- Mormon fiction (*adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8*)
- New adult (*adult*)
- Picaresque fiction (*adult*)
- Political fiction (*adult*)
- Psychological fiction (*adult, teen*)
- Pulp fiction (*adult*)
- Romantic comedies (*adult, teen*)
- Sea stories (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)
- Southern fiction (*adult*)
- Southern Gothic (*adult*)
- Stories told by animals (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)
- Surrealist fiction (*adult*)
- Survival stories (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)
- Transgressive fiction (*adult*)
- War stories (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)
- Westerns (*adult, teen, ages 9-12*)
- Women's lives and relationships (*adult*)
- Women's romantic fiction (*adult*)

Themes in General Fiction (Adults)

Aficionado

Books about books

Celebrate the reading life we all know and love!
● ADULT

Eat, drink, and be merry

These books are immersed in culinary culture.
● ADULT

Get in the game

In sports, everyone roots for the underdog.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Life in art

These art-focused stories feature both broad strokes and delicate portraits.
● ADULT

Musical reads

Featuring performances from musicians, composers, and music lovers.
● ADULT

Concepts and Characters

Brand new you

Personal changes lead to self-discovery.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Comedy of manners

Poking fun at social standards.
● ADULT

Ensemble casts

Many characters and multiple perspectives.
● ADULT

Fish out of water

Characters leave comfort zones behind.
● ADULT

Green reads

Explore our relationship with the natural world.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Human and animal bonds

These stories explore our relationships with animals.
● ADULT

Life during wartime

War changes life for everybody.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Rags to riches

Wealth and fame await characters from humble beginnings.
● ADULT

Return from war

Civilian life after war can be haunted by trauma.
● ADULT

Rich and famous

Saturated with celebrity culture.
● ADULT

Technical difficulties

For better or worse, technology impacts our lives.
● ADULT

Thrown together

Forging connections in unexpected ways.
● ADULT

Themes in General Fiction (Adults)

Family and Relationships

Chosen family
Sometimes, you're NOT stuck with the family you were born into. ● ADULT

Family gatherings
When families get together, personal histories collide. ● ADULT

Love on the rocks
The course of love does not always run smooth. ● ADULT

Maybe baby
There are many ways to start a family. ● ADULT

No strings attached
Not "dating," just...having fun. ● ADULT

Second act
Life's second half has stories worth telling, too. ● ADULT

Toxic relationships
Intense characters interact in unhealthy ways. ● ADULT

Unhappy families
Family dysfunction is front and center. ● ADULT

Unlikely friendships
Despite differences, unexpected friendships form. ● ADULT ● AGES 0-8

We used to be friends
Not all friendships are forever. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Identity

Engendering gender
These books challenge and explore concepts of gender. ● ADULT ● TEEN

Facing racism
Individual or systemic, racism is a lived experience. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Immigrant experiences
Moving to new countries has always been challenging. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Life's Challenges

Bouncing back
Never let them get you down. ● ADULT

Confronting mortality
All things must pass. ● ADULT

Coping with death
Characters navigate grief following the loss of a loved one. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Dealing with illness
Characters cope with sickness. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Themes in General Fiction (Adults)

Life's Challenges (cont.)

Dealing with mental illness
The mind can be the source of our greatest challenges. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Living with invisible disability
Some disabilities aren't easy to see, but still can make life challenging. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Living with visible disability
Living in an able-bodied world isn't easy when your disability is on display. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Love in wartime
Couples in these novels feel the impact of battle on their relationships. ● ADULT ● TEEN

Go your own way
Sometimes you have to blaze your own trail. ● ADULT

Surviving abuse
Characters seek healing after physical or emotional abuse. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Surviving sexual violence
Characters rebuild their lives after sexual violence. ● ADULT ● TEEN

Narrative Devices

24 hour stories
A lot can happen in a day! ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Child narrator

These stories are told from children's perspectives. ● ADULT

Time and again
If you'd made a different choice, what might have been? ● ADULT

Web of connections
Inanimate objects are given a unique voice. ● ADULT

Setting

Home again
Coming back to the place you left behind. ● ADULT

Life in small towns
Community begins here. ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Novels of place
As much about the setting as the characters. ● ADULT

Office life
Life around the water cooler. ● ADULT

Road tripping
Gas stations, pit stops, getting lost...and self-discovery? ● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Sad small towns
The kind of place most folks leave, if they can. ● ADULT

Suburban malaise
What went wrong in the quest for the American Dream? ● ADULT

Discover the perfect read in General Fiction (Kids and Teens)



This category runs the literary gamut. Here you'll find familiar fare such as realistic fiction and historical fiction, perennial favorites such as horse stories, and an abundance of bookish remixes such as classics-inspired fiction, Shakespeare-inspired fiction, and fairy tale and folklore-inspired fiction.

- Adventure stories (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Autobiographical fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Biographical fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Christmas stories (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Classics (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Classics-inspired fiction (teen, ages 9-12)
- Coming-of-age stories (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Fairy tale and folklore-inspired fiction (teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Historical fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- LGBTQIA fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Love stories (adult, teen)
- Magical realism (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Metafiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Mormon fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Psychological fiction (adult, teen)
- Realistic fiction (teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Romantic comedies (adult, teen)
- Sea stories (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Shakespeare-inspired fiction (teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- STEM fiction (teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)
- Stories told by animals (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Survival stories (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Teen chick lit (teen)
- War stories (adult, teen, ages 9-12)
- Westerns (adult, teen, ages 9-12)



Themes in General Fiction (Kids and Teens)

Experiences

Boarding school life

It can get intense when you live with your classmates.

- TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Coming out experiences

Stories about being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or asexual.

- TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Immigrant experiences

Moving to new countries has always been challenging.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Life after high school

Surviving high school is only half the battle.

- TEEN

Life in small towns

Community begins here.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Road tripping

Gas stations, pit stops, getting lost...and self-discovery?

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Family and Friends

Meet the family

These stories are a family affair, starring a cast of parents, siblings, and other relatives.

- AGES 9-12

Trouble at home

"How are things at home?" can be a loaded question.

- TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Being a friend

It's not always easy to find or keep friends.

- TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Misfits united

The characters in these stories feel like they don't fit in — except with each other.

- TEEN ● AGES 9-12

We used to be friends

Not all friendships are forever.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Life's Challenges

Coping with death

Characters navigate grief following the loss of a loved one.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Dealing with bullies

It's a vicious cycle, affecting both the targets and instigators.

- TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Dealing with eating disorders

Characters live with the physical and psychological stress of eating disorders.

- TEEN

Dealing with illness

Characters cope with sickness.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Dealing with mental illness

The mind can be the source of our greatest challenges.

- ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Themes in General Fiction (Kids and Teens)

Life's Challenges (cont.)

Dealing with suicide

Coping with grief after losing someone to suicide.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Facing racism

Individual or systemic racism is a lived experience.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Living while dying

These characters grow up in the shadow of a serious or terminal illness.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Living with invisible disability

Some disabilities aren't easy to see, but still can make life challenging.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Living with visible disability

Living in an able-bodied world isn't easy when your disability is on display in these stories.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Surviving sexual violence

Characters rebuild their lives after sexual violence.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Teen pregnancy and parenting

Teens confront the choices, changes, and challenges of pregnancy or becoming a parent.
● TEEN

Historical

Girls disguised as boys

Seeking opportunities denied to them, these girls cross-dress out of necessity.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Life during wartime

War changes life for everybody.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Life in slavery

Enslaved characters struggle under the brutality and injustice of slavery.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Love in wartime

Couples in these novels feel the impact of battle on their relationship.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Royal reads

It's good to be king...or is it? Young royals throughout history have wrestled with this question.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Surviving the Holocaust

Read about Jewish characters and other targeted groups as they try to survive during the Nazi regime.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Themes in General Fiction (Kids and Teens)

Personal Development

Artistic endeavors

Stories about creativity and making art.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Brand new you

Personal changes lead to self-discovery.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Exploring faith

Characters strive to balance faith with living their lives.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Let's dance

From class to recital, these books have sparkle motion.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Music makers

Sounds come together to make music, and these stories come to life.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Set the stage

All the world's a stage in these books about actors.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Write it out

Characters find their voice in the written word.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Various

24 hour stories

A lot can happen in a day!
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Boys vs. girls

It's a battle of the sexes as kids divide along gender lines.
● AGES 9-12

Engendering gender

These books challenge and explore concepts of gender.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Get in the game

In sports, everyone roots for the underdog.
● ADULT ● TEEN

Green reads

Explore our relationship with the natural world.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Me and my dog

These stories highlight the powerful bond between kids and dogs. Tissues not included.
● AGES 9-12

New to the neighborhood

It's tough being the new kid on the block.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Running away

Escape, adventure, a personal mission — these stories all feature young runaways.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

Tween romance

First dates, all-consuming crushes, and emerging romantic feelings hold sway.
● AGES 9-12

Underdog athletes

These teams consist of lovable losers.
● AGES 9-12

Discover the perfect read in Fiction for Ages 0-8



Although picture books for children is our biggest genre for very young readers, this category also includes board books (for helping tiny hands turn pages), audio-accompanied read-alongs (for sharing and storytimes), easy readers (for building beginners' confidence), and early chapter books (for newly independent readers). And let's not forget bedtime stories and lullabies, two all-important genres for the caregivers of lively little ones!

Alphabet books (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Bedtime stories (ages 0-8)

Board books (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Counting books (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Cumulative tales (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Early chapter books (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Easy readers (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Fractured fairy tales and folklore (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Lullabies (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Picture books for children (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Read-alongs (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)



Themes in Fiction for Ages 0-8

The Arts

Artistic endeavors

Stories about creativity and making art.

- TEEN
- AGES 9-12
- AGES 0-8

Art comes alive

Adventure and mayhem ensue when art takes on a life of its own.

- AGES 0-8

Let's dance

From class to recital, these books have sparkle motion.

- TEEN
- AGES 9-12
- AGES 0-8

Music makers

Sounds come together to make music, and these stories come to life.

- TEEN
- AGES 9-12
- AGES 0-8

Set the stage

All the world's a stage in these books about actors.

- TEEN
- AGES 9-12
- AGES 0-8

Family and Friends

Adoption and families

The emotions and experiences of adoption.

- AGES 0-8

All kinds of families

What does it mean to be a family? Answers may vary.

- AGES 0-8

Becoming big brothers and sisters

Welcoming a new sibling is a big change for everybody.

- AGES 0-8

Being a friend

It's not always easy to find or keep friends.

- TEEN
- AGES 9-12
- AGES 0-8

Daddy and me

The relationship between father and child is central to these books.

- AGES 0-8

Families in conflict

Divorce and separation can be difficult for children to understand.

- AGES 0-8

Grandparents and me

Time with grandma or grandpa is always special.

- AGES 0-8

Making new friends

Characters meet and discover wonderful things about each other.

- AGES 0-8

Mommy and me

Showing the many ways a mother loves her children.

- AGES 0-8

My siblings and me

Even if they get annoyed sometimes, brothers and sisters still love each other.

- AGES 0-8

Themes in Fiction for Ages 0-8

Family and Friends (cont.)

Unlikely friendships

Despite differences, unexpected friendships form.
● ADULT ● AGES 0-8

Welcome baby!

Newborns bring joy and wonder to those around them.
● AGES 0-8

Experiences and Behavior

Coping with death

Characters navigate grief following the loss of a loved one.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Dealing with illness

Characters cope with sickness.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Emotions and feelings

Help kids put a name to their emotions.
● AGES 0-8

Fighting and forgiving

It's okay to disagree if you learn to make up afterwards.
● AGES 0-8

Handling bad moods

Grouchy days just happen sometimes.
● AGES 0-8

Immigrant experiences

Moving to new countries has always been challenging.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Themes in Fiction for Ages 0-8

Various (cont.)

Learning to share

One for you, one for me...
● AGES 0-8

New to the neighborhood

It's tough being the new kid on the block.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Power of stories

These books celebrate the power of stories and storytelling to encourage, transform, and inspire.
● AGES 0-8

Starting school

Show kids what to expect on the first day of school.
● AGES 0-8

Stay safe

Discuss things like traffic, fire, and stranger danger.
● AGES 0-8



Help kids learn important life skills with a sense of humor. Try combining themes like **handling bad moods** or **dealing with bullies** or **overcoming fear** with appeal terms like **funny** or **amusing**.

Various

Dealing with bullies

It's a vicious cycle, affecting both the target and instigators.
● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Get well soon

School. Minor illnesses, hospital visits, and giving or receiving care.
● AGES 0-8

Green reads

Explore our relationship with the natural world.
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

Discover Library Search Helpers



Although not genres in the traditional sense, these unique access points allow readers to search for books that are otherwise hard to find.

Adult books for young adults (adult)

African American fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Bilingual materials (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Books for reluctant readers (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Books to movies (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Books to TV (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Canadian fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Diary novels (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Epistolary novels (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

First person narratives (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Franchise books (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

High interest-low vocabulary books (teen, ages 9-12)

Illustrated books (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Movie tie-ins (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Multiple perspectives (adult, teen, ages 9-12)

New Zealand fiction (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Novels in verse (adult, teen, ages 9-12)

Parallel narratives (adult, teen, ages 9-12)

Second person narratives (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Short stories (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Short short stories (adult)

Stories without words (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Video game tie-ins (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Translations (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

TV tie-ins (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)



Need a bittersweet, character-driven love story with themes of immigrant experiences and life during wartime? NovelList is here to help! Combine genres, appeals, and themes to pinpoint the right stories. Here are some of our favorite combos — just type them as seen below into the NovelList search box:

Search Tips

AP amusing AND TH being a friend
For a chuckle-worthy story time full of fun and friendship, look for amusing picture books that feature friendship. Add cartoony for cute and accessible illustrations.

GN science fiction AND AP fast-paced AND TH human 2.0
For otherworldly experiences at a breakneck pace, readers who are fans of SF with enhanced beings should search for fast-paced and human 2.0.

AP suspenseful AND TH unreliable narrator
Fans of *Gone Girl* and *The Girl on the Train* should look into suspenseful stories that feature unreliable narrators to find their next perfect page-turner.

AP distinctly voiced AND AP immersive
On a road trip with the family? Some of the best audiobooks have narrators who use distinct voices. Combine with a theme to find a title that works for your family. Some to try: *alien invasions*, *chosen one*, *Sherlock Paws*, *life in small towns*.

GN romance AND AP steamy AND TH marriage of convenience
For your romance readers (who know and love their themes), try a search to combine the level of spice with the type of stories they like. To turn down the heat, change steamy to chaste.

AP feel-good AND TH becoming big brothers and sisters
For parents looking to help their kids feel excited and reassured about the arrival of a new sibling, here's some extra help while expecting. Change to **TH Welcome** to focus on the wonder and joy that newborns bring.

Acknowledgments

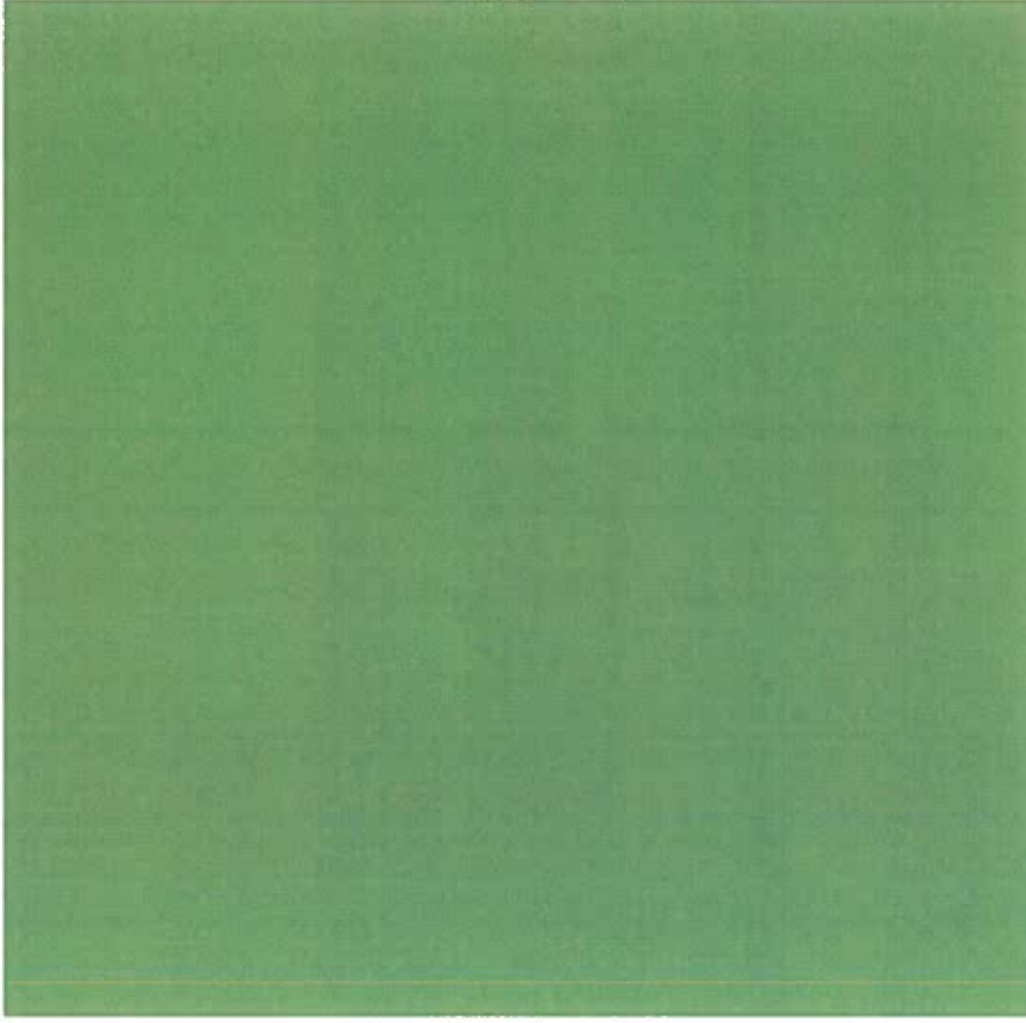
This book is the result of the work of many people. Thank you to everyone below and to all the library staff who work tirelessly on behalf of readers.

Brierley Ash, Krista Biggs, Clay Boyer, Kim Burton, Lisa Chandek-Stark, Elizabeth Coleman, Isabel Crevasse, Lindsey Dunn, Halle Eisenman, Victoria Caplinger Fredrick, Shauna Griffin, Rebecca Honeycutt, Lauren Kage, Cathleen Keyser, Amie Reno, Lisa Schimmer, Gillian Speace, Kendal Spires, Melanie Sturgeon, Suzanne Temple, Dawn Towery, Christine Wells, Autumn Winters, and Renee Young.

Booklet Planning and Design

Danielle Borasky, Elizabeth Coleman, Halle Eisenman, Victoria Caplinger Fredrick, Rebecca Honeycutt, Cathleen Keyser, Jennifer Lohmann, Denise Turner, Christine Wells

In memory of Amy Elizabeth Morgan



A Complete List of NovelList Illustration Appeals

Big and bold

These illustrations convey ideas visually in a simple manner easily understood by young children. The contrast between bright colors and bold lines makes the pictures easily visible from a distance, even within a large group (great choices for storytime!) [Audience: Ages 9-12; Ages 0-8]

Black-and-white

The artwork is in black and white only and may range from pen and ink drawings to watercolor-like effects in shades of gray. [All]

Bold

The shapes or lines have a strong and striking appearance. The artwork may consist of simple, basic, or block-like shapes, and the lines may be dark, distinct, or thick. [Adults, Teens]

Cartoony

This style features characters drawn with exaggerated, simplified features. Often humorous, it can be used to lighten difficult or disturbing themes. [All]

Charming

These illustrations are captivating and pleasing to the eye. Often cute and playful, they offer visual support for the light or upbeat tone in a story. [Adults, Teens]

Colorful

The full-color illustrations in these books feature vibrant colors. The artwork may vary widely, but the color palette is vivid. [All]

Dark

Often used for emphasis in stories with a bleak, menacing, or serious tone, these illustrations are full of shadows and dark corners. [Adults, Teens]

Delicate

Deft and fine in texture or structure. Lines are thinly drawn, and the effect of these pictures is subtle. [All]

Detailed

These books convey a lot of information through the quantity and clarity of the detail within the objects and offer readers the chance to pore over the picture. [All]

Fanciful

These illustrations are imaginative and unexpected and may range from whimsical drawings to surrealist art with a dreamlike quality. [Ages 9-12; Ages 0-8]

Folk-art style

Recognized by its flat perspective, simplified or stylized shapes, and dramatic use of color; frequently appears to be created by either an untrained artist or one who does not adhere to academic standards for art. [Ages 9-12; Ages 0-8]

Impressionistic

These evocative illustrations use soft lines, reflected light, and color to capture a sensory, emotion-filled impression of a scene or an object. [Ages 9-12; Ages 0-8]

Inventive

These creative books challenge the reader's perceptions with non-standard use of illustrative elements (including line, panels, or color). [All]

Lavish

Whether through use of color, line, or detail, these illustrations are elaborate, sumptuous, and striking. [All]

Minimally colored

Featuring a limited color palette, these books can be two-toned or grayscale with one or two brighter accent colors. [All]

Muted

The subtle color may have a washed out or subdued quality. This restraint in color usage often serves to set the tone. [All]

Nightmarish

Deliberately ugly, frightening, or unpleasant. Most likely to accompany storylines that are unpleasant with a creepy, disturbing, or menacing tones. [Adults]

Photographic

These books use photographs as the primary method of illustration. Often found in nonfiction books where photographs are the primary illustrations. [All]

Realistic

These illustrations use correct proportions and accurate perspective. The content may not represent reality, but the drawing does. [All]

Rough-edged

These illustrations are not sophisticated, polished, or elegant; instead, they have jagged lines and imperfect images, which serve to convey and emphasize the strong emotions being portrayed. [Adults, Teens]

Surreal

These illustrations have a dreamlike or unreal quality and express the workings of the subconscious. Typically done in a realistic style, they use unexpected juxtapositions of people or objects. [Adults, Teens]

Textured

The visible texture of these illustrations adds realistic depth and detail through the skillful use of artistic medium. [All]

Want to read about our other appeal terms? Download a copy of [*The Secret Language of Books: A Guide to Story Elements*](#).

