

# The Secret Language of Books

A Guide to  
Story Elements



2021  
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 seeking. 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 NoveList 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 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](mailto:novelist@ebsco.com).

Happy reading!



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.

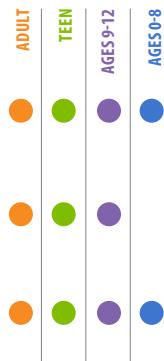
## Intensifying

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? Readers generally aren't 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**

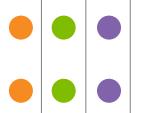
Pulse-pounding, high-octane excitement is the rule!

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:



**Character-driven** *Fiction use only*

Interior growth and development of characters is important.



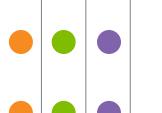
**Intricately plotted**

These books have intricate, complicated, or elaborate storylines.



**Issue-oriented**

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



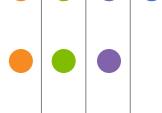
**Nonlinear**

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.



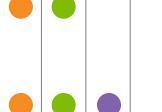
**Plot-driven** *Fiction use only*

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.

# Tone in NoveList

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



The screenshot shows the NoveList search interface. The search bar at the top contains the text "Keyword - AP strong sense of place". Below the search bar, there are three buttons: "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", and "Search History". The main results area displays two book entries:

**1. Dune: the graphic novel. Book 1** (Nov 2020)  
By: Herbert, Brian  
Dune, Frank Herbert's epic science-fiction masterpiece set in the far future amidst a sprawling feudal interstellar society, tells the story of Paul Atreides as he and his family accept control of the desert planet Arrakis. A stunning blend of adventure and mysticism, environmentalism, and politics, Dune is a powerful, fantastical tale that takes an unprecedented look into our universe.  
Series: Dune (Graphic novels), 1  
Accelerated Reader: IL: UG, BL: 8.3, AR Pts: 34  
Popularity: ★★★★  
Adult Fiction  
Title Read-alikes Author Read-alikes Series Read-alikes  
Check Availability

**2. The ballad of songbirds and snakes: a Hunger Games novel** (May 2020)  
By: Collins, Suzanne  
In a prequel to "The Hunger Games," eighteen-year-old Coriolanus Snow prepares to mentor the female tribute from District 12 in the tenth Hunger Games, with the fate of his family hanging on the slim chance that he can help her win the Games.  
Series: Hunger Games Trilogy, prequel  
Lexile: 860 Lexile: 860 Accelerated Reader: IL: MG+, BL: 6.1, AR Pts: 24  
Popularity: ★★★★ Teen Fiction

# 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:

## 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.



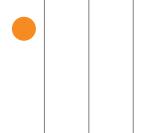
## Chaste

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.



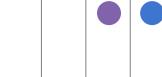
## Gossipy

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.



# Tone

## **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.



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

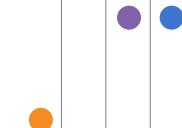
## Romantic

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



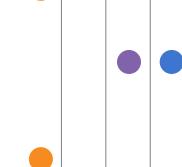
## Sad

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.

# 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.



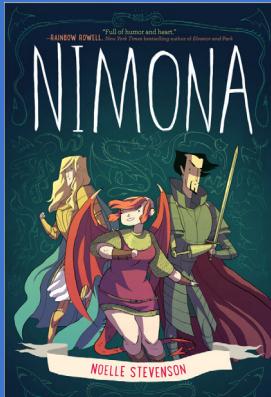
## **Whimsical**

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

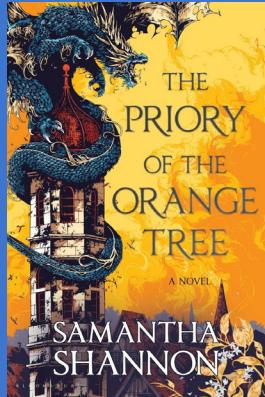


For readers with a passion for place, direct them to books with a **strong sense of place**, and then pair it with a subject heading for a location — anything from Paris to Middle Earth.

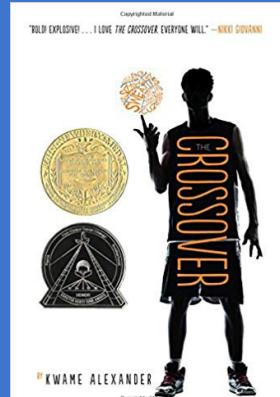
# Characters readers love (and the appeal that tells you why)



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.

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:

ADULT    TEEN    AGES 9-12    AGES 0-8



## **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!



# Character

## Complex

Intriguing and complicated, these multi-dimensional characters have conflicting motivations and desires.



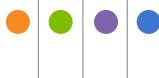
## Courageous

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.



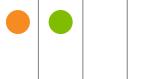
## Exaggerated

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 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.

ADULT  
TEEN  
AGES 9-12  
AGES 0-8



AGES 9-12



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



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



These lively characters are full of energy and vigor.



AGES 0-8

## Spunky

Feisty and scrappy, these characters have pluck and determination.



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



## Strong female

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



AGES 0-8

## Sympathetic

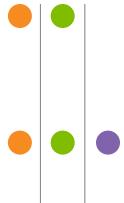
Deviant and often unsettling, these characters push the boundaries of literature through behavior that ranges from disturbing to illegal.



# 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.

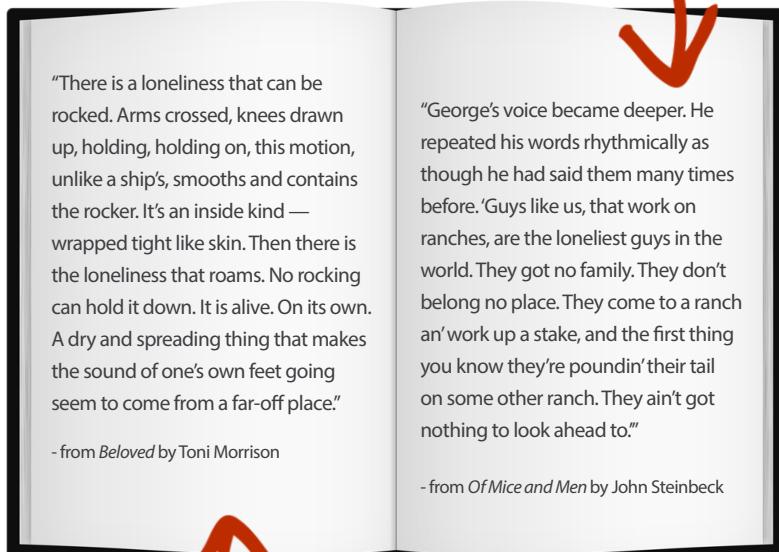


Do you have a reader who doesn't mind spending time with uncomfortable people? Try books with **unlikeable** or **twisted** characters.

# Different Writing Styles

Appeal helps compare very different styles ...

DIALECT-FILLED  
WELL-CRAFTED DIALOGUE



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.

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:

ADULT TEEN AGES 9-12 AGES 0-8



**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.



# Writing Style

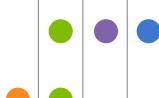
## Dialect-filled

Regional lingo and colloquialisms bring the setting to life.



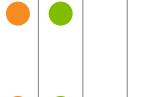
## Easy-to-understand *Nonfiction use only*

These make hard-to-understand things a little easier.



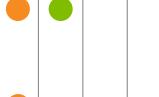
## Engaging

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.



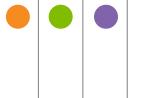
## Incisive

These keenly discerning books cut right to the heart of the matter.



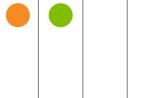
## Jargon-filled

These books use the specialized, technical language of a particular group, trade, or profession.



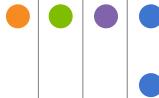
## Lush

Descriptive language evokes the senses, making readers feel as if they are experiencing what is being described.



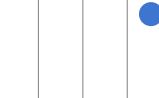
## Lyrical

Graceful, beautiful language, often with a rhythmic or poetic quality.



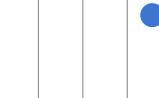
## Minimal text

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*

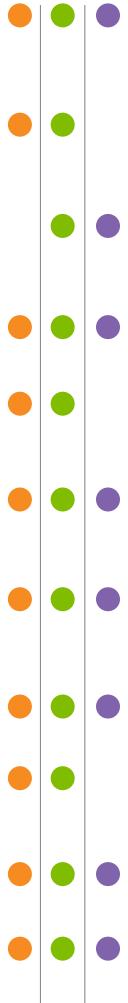
These books may present both sides of an issue, but are frequently used to bolster a specific opinion.



# Writing Style

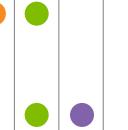
## Richly detailed

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 considerately 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

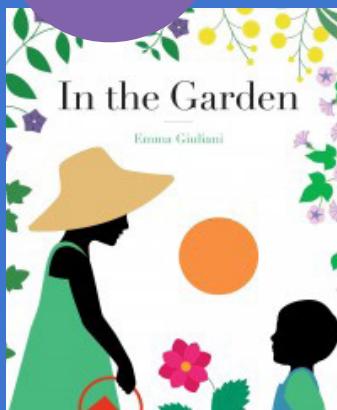
These books are full of puns, palindromes, anagrams, and other clever uses of language.



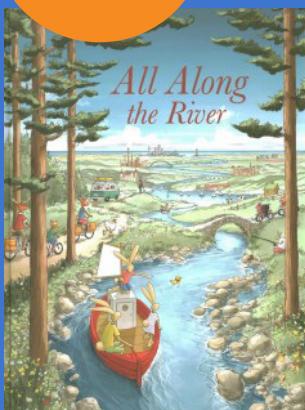
# Different kinds of Illustrations

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!

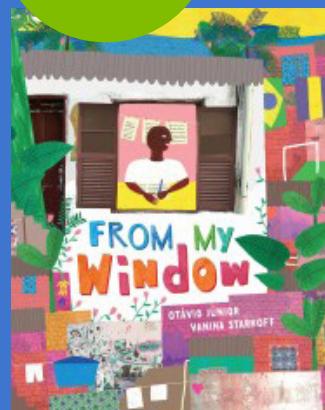
**Big and Bold**



**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!)

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:

ADULT    TEEN    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.



## **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.



# Illustration

## **Dark**

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

ADULT  
TEEN  
AGES 9-12  
AGES 0-8



## **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.



## **Raw**

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.**

## **Aged**

These older-sounding voices impart maturity and experience.

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:



## **Animated**

Performances imbued with spirit, animation, and enthusiasm.



## **Audio drama**

Dramatic performances, often with a full cast.



## **Authoritative**

These narrators deliver strong, commanding performances.



## **Approachable**

Through clear performances, difficult concepts become understandable.



## **Baritone**

Deep, rich tones characterize these narrator voices.



## **Brisk**

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



## **Character accents**

Vocal versatility brings characters and settings to life.



## **Chilling**

Don't be fooled! Eerily calm voices mask the underlying tension of these audiobooks.



## **Clear**

Speaking distinctly, these narrators keep their voices even and inviting, precisely conveying authors' words and meaning.



# Audio

	ADULT	TEEN	AGES 9-12	AGES 0-8
<b>Comedic</b> These narrators make good use of comic timing.	●	●	●	●
<b>Crisp</b> Precise enunciation and clear tones distinguish these narrations.	●	●	●	●
<b>Deadpan</b> Humor delivered in a cool, understated manner.	●	●	●	●
<b>Detached</b> These performances are emotionally removed from the story.	●	●	●	●
<b>Distinctly voiced</b> These narrators provide a multiplicity of voices for their characters.	●	●	●	●
<b>Emotionally connected</b> These narrators capture the emotional content of the books they read.	●	●	●	●
<b>Engrossing</b> Listeners are drawn in to these stories.	●	●	●	●
<b>Folksy</b> These narrators highlight regional speech patterns and dialects.	●	●	●	●
<b>Full cast</b> Various narrators perform as individual characters.	●	●	●	●
<b>Gentle</b> Soothing voices easy on the ear.	●	●	●	●
<b>Gravelly</b> Gritty, raspy, and throaty voices — think James Earl Jones.	●	●	●	●
<b>Husky</b> Whether described as smoky, breathy, or whispery, these voices will have a natural throaty timbre.	●	●	●	●

# Audio

## **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.



## **Read by the author**

Authors double as narrators.



## **Resonant**

Pleasing voices wash over the listener in rich and sonorous tones.



## **Seamless**

Whether single or multiple narrators, the narration is fluid with smooth, effortless transitions between voices and scenes.



## **Sensitive**

These narrators carefully balance challenging or emotionally fraught storylines using considerate and thoughtful tones.



## **Sincere** *Nonfiction use only*

Heartfelt performances imbued with genuine conviction.



## **Somber**

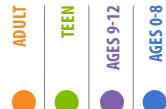
Performances underscoring the serious nature of their stories.





## Sophisticated

Frequently featuring refined accents, these books are narrated with elegance.



## Sound effects

Productions relying heavily on added audio elements.



## Theatrical

Dramatic, entertaining, and sometimes over-the-top, these performances capture the feeling of a stage show without actually being there.



## Understated

Restrained performances providing quietly memorable experiences.



## Unhurried

Narrators using slow cadences and measured rhythms.



## Visceral

Not for the faint of heart, these voices let you experience the gut-wrenching details (almost) first-hand.



## 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!

# Genre in NoveList

Keep up with your favorite genres or get quick reading suggestions for a genre you're unfamiliar with in our genre browse.

The screenshot shows the NoveList homepage with a red arrow pointing from the text above to the 'Genre' link in the sidebar menu. The sidebar also includes links for 'Appeal', 'Themes', 'Recomm', 'Award Winners', 'Fiction', 'Adult', 'Audiobooks', and several genre categories like 'Australian and New Zealand Fiction' and 'Historical Fiction'. The main content area features a search bar, a green banner with a social justice theme, and a section titled 'I'm in the mood for books that are...' with filters for 'Adult', 'Teen', 'Ages 9-12', and 'Ages 0-8'. Below this are sections for 'Leisurely paced and Atmospheric' and 'Action-packed and Fast-paced', each with a grid of book covers. A large red arrow points from the text above to the 'Genre' link in the sidebar menu.

# Discover the perfect read in **Romance**



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 promise 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)

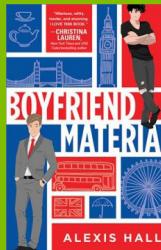
**Romantic suspense** (adult)

**Sports romances** (adult)

**Time travel romances** (adult)

**Victorian romances** (adult)

**Western romances** (adult)



# Themes in Romance

## Characters

### Best friend's sibling

Off limits... but so tempting.

● 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

'Tis 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

## Setting

### 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

### New in town

Moving to a new town leads to new love.

● ADULT

# Themes in Romance

## Setting (cont.)

### Snowbound & stranded

Things heat up in close quarters.

● ADULT

### Workplace romance

Mixing business with pleasure.

● ADULT

## Plot

### 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



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.

# 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

# 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)

**Alternate 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 fiction thrillers** (adult, teen)

**Social science fiction** (adult)

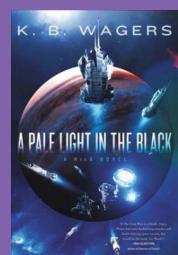
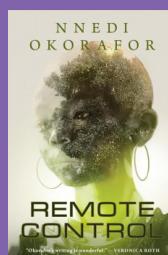
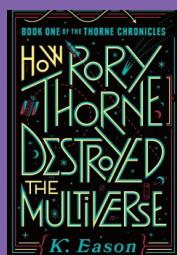
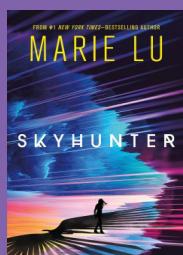
**Space opera** (adult, teen)

**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.

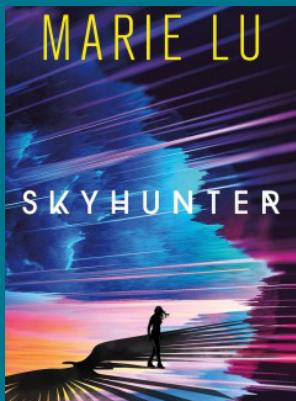
● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12



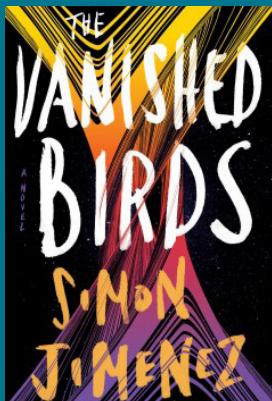
**Intricately plotted** and **world-building** are always good appeal terms for finding great **science fiction**, but consider including a search with **thought-provoking** for those patrons who want to contemplate what society might look like in the future.

# What Readers Love about Science Fiction

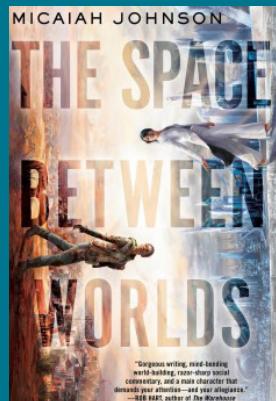
Readers prize science fiction for its ability to raise thought-provoking issues and ask challenging moral and social questions. Some titles that are sure to please:



- Teen freedom fighters
- Found family
- Diverse cast of well-developed characters
- Fast-paced, action-packed
- War story
- Far-future dystopia



- Bittersweet, almost elegiac philosophical space opera
- Lyrical writing
- Parallel narratives
- Character-driven, relationship-focused
- Reminiscent of Ursula K. LeGuin's Hainish novels



- Action-packed, suspenseful multiverse tale
- Full of twists and turns
- Bisexual working-class Black heroine
- Compelling first-person narration

"Gorgeous writing, vivid imagery, and a complex, compelling narrative, and a main character that demands your attention—and your allegiance." —SILVIA HALE, author of *The Boneholder*

# 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)

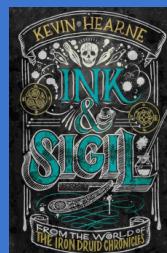
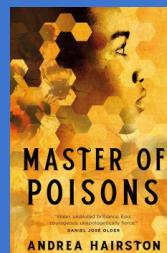
## **Paranormal fiction**

(teen, ages 9-12)

## **Sword and sorcery** (adult)

## **Urban fantasy** (adult, teen)

## **Weird Westerns** (adult)



# Themes in Fantasy

Character	Plot
<b>Chosen one</b> Prophets foretold of these heroes.  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12	<b>Bad religion</b> These fantasy worlds have a god problem.  ADULT
<b>Dark lord</b> These lords and ladies are assembling armies of darkness.  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12	<b>Be careful what you wish for</b> Genies have to amuse themselves somehow.  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12
<b>Hidden heritage</b> There's more to these characters than meets the eye.  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12	<b>Court intrigue</b> What's better than power? More power.  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12
<b>Last of their kind</b> They are all that remain of their people, or so they think.  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12	<b>Defend the realm!</b> Call the banners and rally to the cause!  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12
<b>Princess power</b> These young damsels are in no way distressed.  AGES 9-12  AGES 0-8	<b>For the resistance</b> Power corrupts, but there is hope!  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12
<b>Rightful heir</b> Usurpers and traitors stand in the way of the throne.  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12	<b>Magic goes away</b> If it's lost, can it be found again?  ADULT
<b>Scum and villainy</b> Sometimes you have to root for the bad guy.  ADULT  TEEN	<b>Metaphorical racism</b> Think elves who hate dwarves, or magic users who must hide their powers.  ADULT
<b>Women of steel</b> These fully armored women are ready for quest OR battle.  ADULT  TEEN	<b>Quest for magical items</b> The objects of power are scattered – let the hunt begin!  ADULT  TEEN  AGES 9-12
<b>Zero to hero</b> These characters achieve greatness from humble beginnings.  ADULT  TEEN	<b>Reluctant allies</b> 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



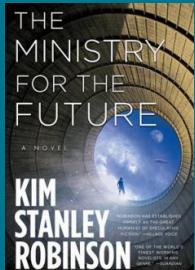
Given up on waiting for George R. R. Martin to finish *The Winds of Winter* in your lifetime? Search for books with the appeal terms **world-building, dramatic, or large cast of characters**. Want something less grim? Combine **world-building** with **offbeat** or **wordplay-filled** instead.

# How to Tell the Difference Between **Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror**



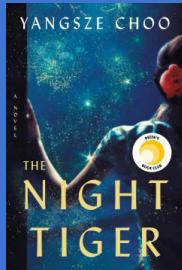
## Science Fiction

*What if ...  
our scientific  
theories are right?*



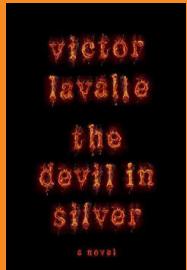
## Fantasy

*What if ...  
magic exists?*



## Horror

*What if ...  
our nightmares  
are real?*



# Discover the perfect read in **Horror**



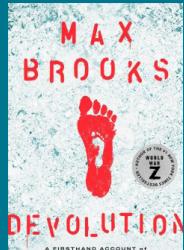
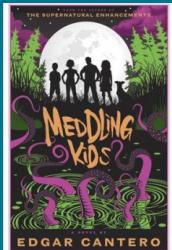
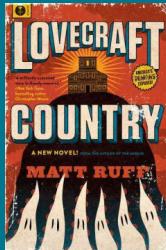
Horror draws on the unseen, the unknown, and the uncanny in order to explore — and expose — humanity's darkest fears. It provokes a range of visceral reactions in the reader, from the subtle chills of dread evinced by Victorian ghost stories to the adrenaline-laced fear and disgust evoked by contemporary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

## 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

Garlic-challenged bloodsuckers.

● ADULT ● TEEN

### Werewolves among us

Beware the full moon!

● 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

# 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

### Cosmic 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 **moodily**, **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)

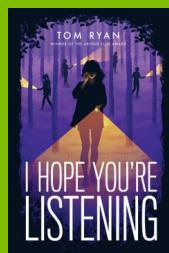
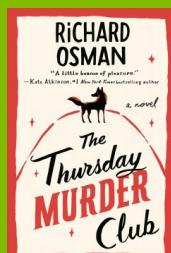
**Mystery classics** (adult)

**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

### Wartime crime

The investigators in these stories must contend with criminals in a wartime setting.

● ADULT

# Discover the perfect read in **Thrillers & 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)

**Historical thrillers** (adult)

**Legal thrillers** (adult)

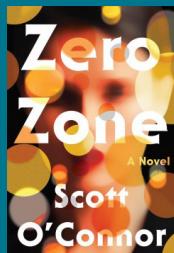
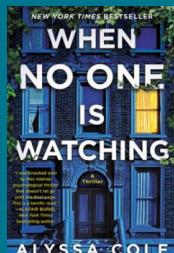
**Medical thrillers** (adult)

**Political thrillers** (adult)

**Psychological suspense** (adult, teen)

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

**Techno-thrillers** (adult)



# 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

### 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

### Proving one's innocence

Sometimes the detective is also the primary suspect.

● 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



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.

# 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.

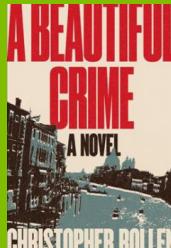
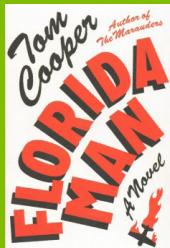
**Crime fiction (adult)**

**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 mwahahahas 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)**

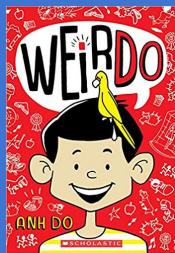
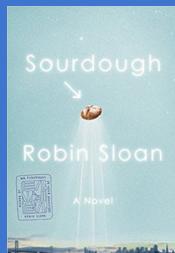
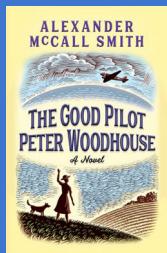
**Farcical fiction (adult)**

**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)

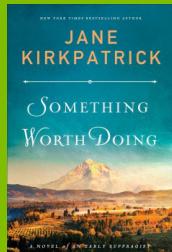
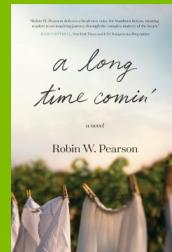
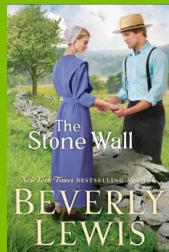
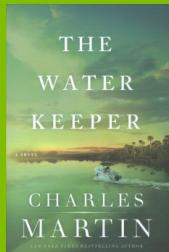
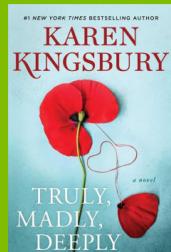
**Christian science fiction**

(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)

## **Manhua** (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)

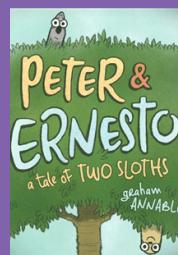
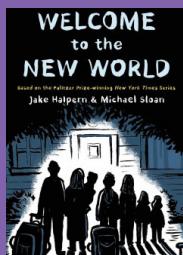
## **Surrealist comics** (adult)

## **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**



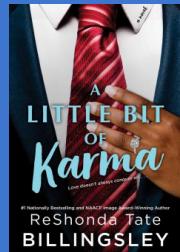
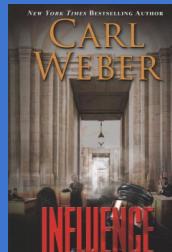
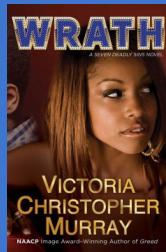
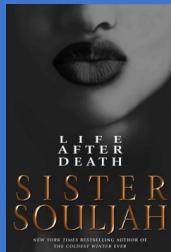
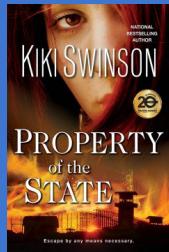
Page-turning story lines, contemporary urban settings, realistic characters, and straightforward prose drive the popularity of **urban fiction**, which also features varying levels of violence and drug use. But relationships aren't ignored (especially in the subgenre of **drama lit**), and vivid descriptions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

**Urban fiction** (adult, teen)

**Christian urban fiction** (adult, teen)

**Drama lit** (adult)

**Urban erotica** (adult)



# Themes in Urban Fiction

Characters	Plot
<b>Backstabbers</b> You just can't trust some people...  <b>ADULT</b>	<b>Baby drama</b> Conflicts revolve around matters of paternity and unplanned pregnancies.  <b>ADULT</b>
<b>Cheaters</b> Outrageous acts of infidelity keep the pages turning.  <b>ADULT</b>	<b>Cautionary tales</b> Consequences can be harsh.  <b>ADULT</b>  <b>TEEN</b>
<b>Crazy in love</b> Just like Bonnie and Clyde, these couples remain devoted.  <b>ADULT</b>	<b>Get money</b> These characters try to make it to the high life, by whatever means necessary.  <b>ADULT</b>
<b>Family business</b> When you're born into the criminal life, blood is thicker than water.  <b>ADULT</b>	<b>Going straight</b> Leaving street life for straight life isn't easy.  <b>ADULT</b>
<b>I'm a survivor</b> Characters emerge from tough situations and seek power and healing.  <b>ADULT</b>	<b>Good gone bad</b> Life on the streets can be irresistible.  <b>ADULT</b>
<b>Ladies first</b> These women do what it takes to get paid, get revenge, or get theirs.  <b>ADULT</b>	<b>Just got out</b> Back on the streets after doing time.  <b>ADULT</b>
<b>My squad</b> Sisters from another mister swear to remain true.  <b>ADULT</b>	<b>On the down low</b> Characters secretly pursue same-sex relationships.  <b>ADULT</b>
<b>Rivals</b> Sometimes it's strictly business; sometimes it's personal.  <b>ADULT</b>  <b>TEEN</b>	<b>Payback</b> All about revenge.  <b>ADULT</b>

# Themes in Urban Fiction

## Plot (cont.)

### Sex work

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



### Sinner redeemed

All can be forgiven.



### Test of faith

After questioning, faith in God is renewed.



## Setting

### Church drama

There's nothing holy about the scandals happening here.



### Life on the inside

Raw views of prison life.



### Raised by the streets

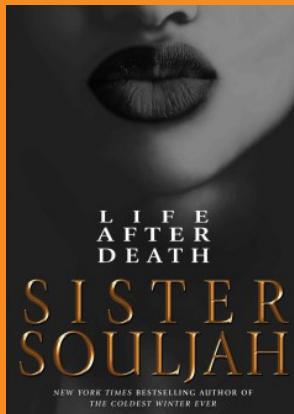
Growing up amidst gangs, drugs, and desperation.



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**.

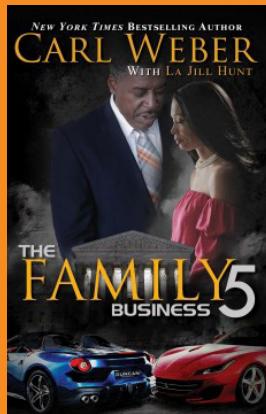
# Styles of Urban Fiction

**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, NoveList has you covered!



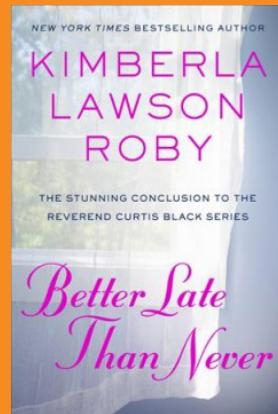
## Urban fiction

- 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)
- Fifth book in a popular series
- Lots of **family drama** and jockeying for position



## Christian urban fiction

- Themes of **payback** and **sinner redeemed**
- Volume #15 in a long-running series
- A little **church drama** plays into the mix

# 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, the emotional tug of **relationship fiction**, 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)  
**Glitz 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)  
**Relationship 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)

# Themes in General Fiction (Adults)

## Aficionado

### Books about books

Celebrate the reading life we all know and love!



### Eat, drink, and be merry

These books are immersed in culinary culture.



### Fandemonium!

In these stories, characters immerse themselves in the pop culture surrounding their geeky interests, either in person or online.



### Get in the game

In sports, everyone roots for the underdog.



### Life in art

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



### Musical reads

Featuring performances from musicians, composers, and music lovers.



## Concepts and Characters

### Brand new you

Personal changes lead to self-discovery.



### Comedy of manners

Poking fun at social standards.



### Ensemble casts

Many characters and multiple perspectives.



### Fish out of water

Characters leave comfort zones behind.



### Green reads

Explore our relationship with the natural world.



### Human and animal bonds

These stories explore our relationships with animals.



### Life during wartime

War changes life for everybody.



### Rags to riches

Wealth and fame await characters from humble beginnings.



### Return from war

Civilian life after war can be haunted by trauma.



### Rich and famous

Saturated with celebrity culture.



### Technical difficulties

For better or worse, technology impacts our lives.



### Thrown together

Forging connections in unexpected ways.



# 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

### Forbidden love

Circumstances conspire to keep lovers apart in these stories. Will the lovers beat the odds, or will fate separate?

● ADULT ● TEEN

### Go your own way

Sometimes you have to blaze your own trail.

● ADULT

### 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

### 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

### Unnamed narrator

Known by false identities, aliases, titles, or simply no name at all, these narrators keep you guessing as to who they are, and whether it matters.

● ADULT

### Unreliable narrator

Don't believe everything you read.

● ADULT ● TEEN

### 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

# Themes in General Fiction (Adults)

## Setting (cont.)

### **Novels of place**

As much about the setting as the characters.



### **Office life**

Life around the water cooler.



### **Road tripping**

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



### **Sad small towns**

The kind of place most folks leave, if they can.



### **Suburban malaise**

What went wrong in the quest for the American Dream?



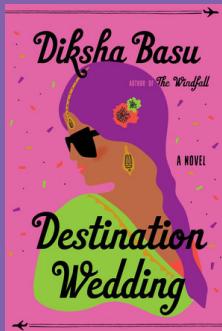
# Tips for Relationship fiction fans

When working with fans of **relationship fiction**, keep in mind that they might not even know there's a genre for the type of book they want. Focus on the type of reading experience they're looking for with different appeal factors like: **upbeat, heartwarming, thought-provoking, or moving.**

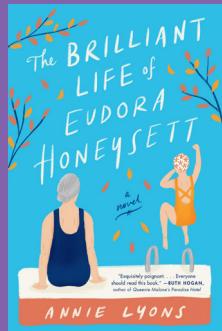
Pairing these appeals with popular relationship fiction themes such as **bouncing back, family gatherings, and unlikely friendships** can help pinpoint the type of story a reader is looking for.



Moving



Family  
gatherings



Unlikely  
friendships



Heartwarming

# 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, 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)

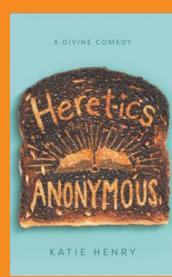
**Stories told by animals** (adult, teen, ages 9-12)

**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

### Dealing with suicide

Coping with grief after losing someone to suicide.

● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

# Themes in General Fiction (Kids and Teens)

## Life's Challenges (cont.)

### 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 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

### 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

## 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

# Themes in General Fiction (Kids and Teens)

## Personal Development (cont.)

### 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

### Celebrating identity

These joyful narratives celebrate all kinds of diversity.

● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

### Engendering gender

These books challenge and explore concepts of gender.

● ADULT ● TEEN

### Fandemonium!

In these stories, characters immerse themselves in the pop culture surrounding their geeky interests, either in person or online.

● ADULT ● TEEN ● AGES 9-12

### 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)

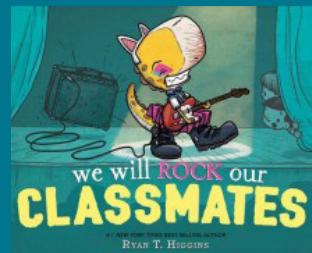
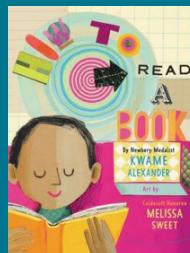
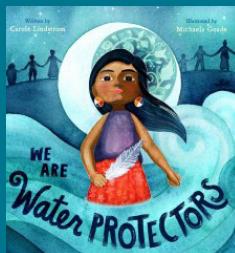
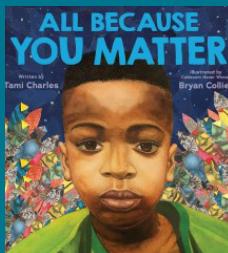
**Lullabies** (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

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

**Pourquoi tales** (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

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

**Storytime standouts** (ages 9-12, ages 0-8)



# Themes in Fiction for Ages 0-8

## The Arts

### Art comes alive

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

● AGES 0-8

### Artistic endeavors

Stories about creativity and making art.

● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● 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

### 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

### Mind your manners

Remember to say "please," "thank you," and sometimes "I'm sorry."

● AGES 0-8

### Overcoming fear

Find ways to move past fears and phobias.

● AGES 0-8

## Various

### Celebrating identity

These joyful narratives celebrate all kinds of diversity.

● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

### Dealing with bullies

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

● TEEN ● AGES 9-12 ● AGES 0-8

### Get well soon

Achoo! Minor illnesses, hospital visits, and giving or receiving care.

● AGES 0-8

# Themes in Fiction for Ages 0-8

## Various (cont.)

### Green reads

Explore our relationship with the natural world.

● ADULT   ● TEEN   ● AGES 9-12   ● AGES 0-8

### 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**.

# 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)

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

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

Books for adult new readers (adult)

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

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)

Manga to Anime (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

Media 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)

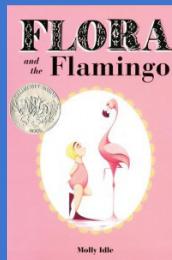
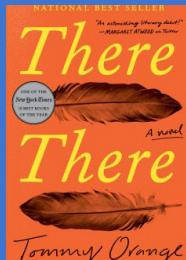
Second person narratives (adult, teen, ages 9-12, ages 0-8)

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)

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



# Search Tips

Need a bittersweet, character-driven love story with themes of immigrant experiences and life during wartime? NoveList 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 NoveList search box:

## **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 own voices AND TH immigrant experiences**

Readers looking for titles reflecting a living experience can try adding **AP own voices** to a search to find books where the author and character share a marginalized identity.

## **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 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**.

## **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 baby!** to focus on the wonder and joy that newborns bring.

# Acknowledgements

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## **In memory of Amy Elizabeth Morgan**



“

“Stories form the heart of libraries. Isn’t it time we acknowledge that Story is our brand?”

- Joyce Saricks



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