



Category Definitions

Please read the category definitions carefully. Entry into a category that does not fit your title may result in disqualification.

SCIENCE FICTION

Deals principally with the impact of actual or imagined science on society or individuals or has a scientific factor as an essential component to the story.

Subgenres: Aliens/Space, Time Travel, Parallel Universe, Alternate History, Steampunk

FANTASY

Fantasy fiction is a genre of writing in which the plot could not happen in real life (as we know it, at least). Often, the plot involves magic or witchcraft and takes place on another planet or in another, undiscovered, dimension of this world.

If the story contains magical elements, it's an Urban Fantasy. If it doesn't, it's Paranormal.

Subgenres: Romantic Fantasy, Alternative History, Contemporary Fantasy, Dark Fantasy, Epic Fantasy/High Fantasy, Fairy Tales and Mythology, Heroic Fantasy, Magical Realism, Sword and Sorcery, Urban Fantasy

GAME LIT & LIT RPG

Lit RPG is a new genre that combines the conventions of RPGs with science-fiction and fantasy novels. Games or game-like challenges form an essential part of the story and visible RPG statistics are a significant part of the reading experience. This is in contrast to Game Lit, which involves game-like worlds but does not typically provide visible statistics.

APOCALYPTICA

Apocalyptica is a subgenre of science fiction in which the Earth's technological civilization is collapsing or has collapsed. The apocalypse event may be any number of scenarios, such as climate change, nuclear holocaust, plague, a zombie apocalypse, or an alien invasion. The story may involve attempts to prevent an apocalypse event, deal with the impact and consequences of the event itself, or may be set after the event (post-apocalyptic).

HORROR

The horror genre focuses on the emotions (fear, dread, terror, and horror) of both characters and readers. A key element is the story's tone, which is often dark, although a story may not begin that way. Readers read horror novels to be frightened.

Subgenres: Psychological, Survival, Supernatural, Science Fiction, Monsters/Demons, Occult

PARANORMAL

Books in the paranormal fiction genre are set in the real world, but they include experiences that defy scientific explanation. For example, stories set on earth that include things like angels, demons, ghosts, psychics, vampires, etc.

If the story contains magical elements, it's an Urban Fantasy. If it doesn't, it's Paranormal.

MYSTERY

Stories focus on a puzzling crime, situation, or circumstance that needs to be solved, typically a crime.

Subgenres: Cozy, Amateur Sleuth, Private Eye, Noir, Crime/Procedural, Forensic/Medical

THRILLER & SUSPENSE

While the focus of mysteries is on solving a crime that's already taken place, thrillers are all about what might happen and what can be done to prevent a catastrophe. Suspense and thrillers share elements, but there are differences between the genres. Danger may not be as apparent or may not be present right away in a suspense novel. As the story builds, so does the danger.

Subgenres: Political, Crime, Psychological, Tech, Action, Conspiracy, Disaster, Spy, Supernatural

ROMANCE

Romantic Fiction has two strict criteria: The first is that the story must focus on the relationship and romantic love between two people. Secondly, the end of the story must be positive, leaving the reader believing that the protagonists' love and relationship will endure for the rest of their lives.

Subgenres: Contemporary, Historical, Erotic, Religious/Spiritual, Time Travel

EROTICA

Erotica is a story where sex plays a central role and there may or may not be a love story. Happily Ever Afters are *not* an intrinsic part of erotica, though they can be included.

GENERAL FICTION

Any fiction book that does not fall into one of the other categories. For example: Historical Fiction, Westerns, Literary Fiction, Women's Literature, etc...

CLASSICS

For this category Classics will be any book that has entered the public domain.

YOUNG ADULT

Written for an audience between the ages of 12-18 (some people say 21). Typically, the protagonist of the story will also fall within this age range. Any literary genre can be a subgenre of YA.

AUDIO DRAMA

Stories specifically written and designed solely with the intention of the final product being only audio.

Subgenres: Radio Drama, Audio Play, Audio Journalism, Audio Mockumentary, Audio Narrative, Audio Theater

LGBTQ+

Books in any genre where the main storyline involves an LGBTQ+ relationship and/or the protagonist is LGBTQ+

BIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

Biography portrays the experiences of all these events occurring in the life of a real person. A memoir is a collection of memories about moments or events, public or private, which took place in the writer's own life.

HUMOR

These are books written for the sole purpose of being funny, not books where humor is secondary to other genre characteristics. Examples would be Farce, Parody, Satire, or Non-fiction books written by humorists.

ANTHOLOGY

A compilation of poems and/or short stories.

NON-FICTION

Any non-fiction book that *does not* fall under biography, memoir, anthology, or humor.