

Lesson 2

Genre - Meaning and Main Types

Let's Define 'Genre'

Genre a particular type of writing, movies, music etc, which has certain features that all examples of this type share.

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MOVIES

action
comedy
thriller
romance
fantasy
biopic

MUSIC

jazz
pop
classical
Carnatic
Hindustani
metal

WRITING

science fiction
biography
graphic novel
mystery
historical fiction
fantasy

Genre is ONE way to classify books.

- Books can be classified in many ways. **Genre** is just one way to do it.
- Other ways can use:
 - alphabetical order of title or author name,
 - size,
 - themes in the book,
 - language,
 - popularity, or
 - even colours!

Genre ≠ Theme

- A horror story can have the theme of love (the lovers may visit a grave for a date and something sinister may happen there)

AND

- A romantic novel can have the theme of love (two people fall in love and eventually get married)

AND

- A comedy can have the theme of love (romantic comedy – few obstacles on their way, lots of jokes and funny situations, followed by a happy ending)

The Three Main Genres in Writing

1. Poetry
2. Drama / Play - contains dialogues and stage directions
3. Prose - has complete sentences and is organized into paragraphs
 - a. Fiction - literature with imaginary events and people
 - b. Nonfiction - writing about something that is factual

An Important Aside

Nonfiction – writing about something that is factual.

This does not mean everything in nonfiction is correct and true.

In the words of Joe Sutliff Sanders,

the author of *Literature of Questions: Nonfiction for the Critical Child*,

“Nonfiction is written by human beings. Imperfections, mistakes, and bias are inevitable, which means that insofar as it is ever a literature of facts, it is a literature of facts laced with error.”

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Each of these have further subtypes.

graphic-narrative autobiography
horror philosophy thriller
series-novel poetry-collection
science poetry-anthology gothic-novel graphic-history
retelling instructional-guide legend family-saga
contemporary-realistic-fiction techno-thriller
mythology historical-fiction mystery
law-novel anti-war humor magic-realism
adventure epistolary-novel biography
journalism sports-novel play history parody
essay-collection fantasy microfiction-collection
spy-novel supernatural classic
science-fiction free-verse-narrative diary

Can a piece of writing belong to multiple genres?

YES!

For example, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* can be classified as

- Children's literature and
- Fantasy

Every library makes its own rules to decide where to place a book like *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

In our library,

How do you identify the genre of a book?

The easy part is to differentiate among the main genres.

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To be more precise about genre

For example, to know whether a book is historical fiction or realistic fiction; or if it is a dystopian novel or a science fiction novel, you need to know **TWO** things:

- The book itself (the blurb is sometimes enough)
 - Characterization
 - Setting
 - Plotline
- The defining characteristics of the genres in question

To be continued . . .