

Genres  
Handout

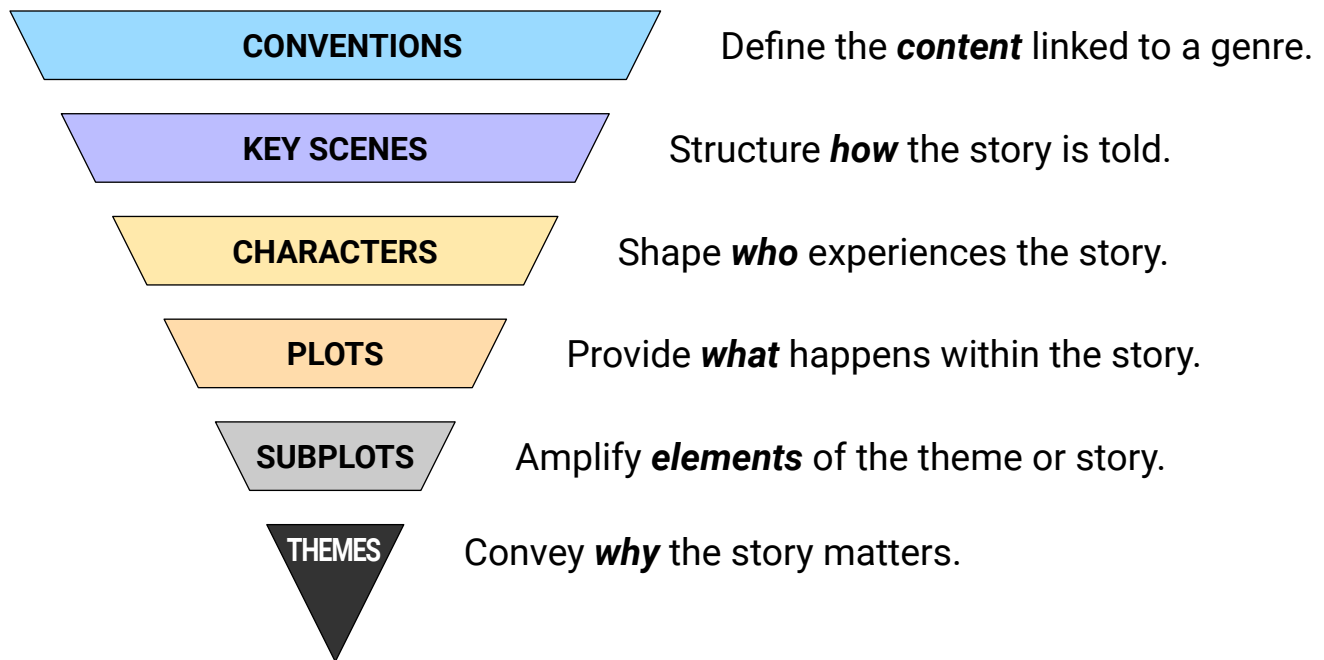


# Story Genres Descriptions



Grant P. Ferguson  
[WritingForEternity.com](http://WritingForEternity.com)

# Genres Drive Audience Expectations



**Conventions:** Readers expect a genre's content to fulfill expectations set by a lifetime of stories they've heard, watched, and read.

**Key Scenes:** A key scene fulfills a specific function in the story expected by readers' based on their experience with TV shows, films, and books.

**Characters:** The people populating novels range from realistic to fantasy characters, and they show an array of traits, behaviors, and emotions.

**Plots:** The main plot weaves a thread of crucial events of what happens within the story, and those events force characters into conflicts.

**Subplots:** A subplot interjects more events and characters, amplifying the main plot and the story's themes.

**Themes:** The story's external, internal, and philosophical themes convey to readers why the story matters.



# Genre: Action

<b>Key Question</b>	How will the characters change and what will they learn?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Action:</b> Focuses on life or death and emphasizes physical events.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Man vs. State, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. Man, Man vs. Time.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Overcome the physical events to achieve safety. <b>Values:</b> Range between life and death. <b>Emotions:</b> Readers feel the excitement of experiencing danger. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist uses strength(s) to save the victim(s).
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The chief protagonist's role is the story's hero.</li><li>- Other character(s) serve as the victim(s).</li><li>- The chief antagonist's role is the story's villain.</li><li>- The villain's strengths are nearly impossible to beat.</li><li>- The fast-paced events include a deadline to save the victim(s).</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A life threatening event by the antagonist or environment.</li><li>- The protagonist voices reluctance to get involved or take action.</li><li>- Events force protagonist to take actions but fail.</li><li>- The discovery of the antagonist's object of desire.</li><li>- The protagonist's ally teaches/voices the change needed to win.</li><li>- Protagonist faces low point and uses strengths to save victim(s).</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A hero focused on saving the victim(s). <b>Antagonist:</b> A villain who disrupts the sense of safety. <b>Others:</b> victim(s), supporting cast (e.g., sidekick).
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> One or more disrupting events with one or more victims.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>B:</b> An ally helps the hero learn the change needed to beat the villain. <b>C:</b> The protagonist's required change forms that character's arc. <b>D:</b> Conflict (community or environment) of interest to readers. <b>E:</b> The setting creates a story world readers want to know about.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Life vs. Death (Hero wins by overpowering Villain). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.



# Subgenre: Cozy Mystery

<b>Key Question</b>	Will the amateur sleuth identify the killer and bring criminal to justice?
<b>Subgenre</b>	<b>Cozy Mystery:</b> Focuses on preserving safety by bringing killer to justice.
<b>Tropes</b>	Animal, Antique Store, Beach/Seaside, Bed-and-Breakfast, Campground, Contemporary, Craft/Hobby, Cruise Ship, Culinary, Village, Farm, Historical, Funny, Paranormal, Pets, Southern, Travel.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> The protagonist restores safety by bringing killer to justice. <b>Values:</b> Shows how values range between injustice and justice. <b>Emotions:</b> Readers feel the intrigue to solve the puzzle. <b>Climax:</b> The protagonist preserves "safety" by exposing the killer.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solves a mystery of a murder occurring near the start of story.</li> <li>- Off-stage crime, plausible MacGuffin, and all clues visible.</li> <li>- Red herrings distract, twists surprise,; sleuth justifies investigation.</li> <li>- No profanity, sex, or violence; many obstacles and rising stakes.</li> <li>- Crime occurs within community and typically killer is a local.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Murder victim discovered</li> <li>- Sidekick states internal theme</li> <li>- Sleuth states external theme</li> <li>- Praise of killer's strengths</li> <li>- Event bonds readers to sleuth</li> <li>- Sleuth discovers MacGuffin</li> <li>- MacGuffin is hinted</li> <li>- Sleuth exposes killer</li> <li>- Sleuth chases true/false clues</li> <li>- Killer is brought to justice*</li> </ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<p><b>Protagonist:</b> Amateur Sleuth (usually a female).</p> <p><b>Antagonist:</b> Killer unidentified but is a member of the community.</p> <p><b>Others:</b> victim(s); suspects; sidekick; quirky characters.</p>
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> Murder(s) in community , multiple suspects (i.e, a puzzle to solve).
<b>Subplots</b>	<p><b>B:</b> A helper or mentor helps protagonist learn internal theme.</p> <p><b>C:</b> The protagonist's change creates a classic character arc.</p> <p><b>D:</b> local community conflict intrigues readers.</p> <p><b>E:</b> The setting creates a story world readers want to visit.</p>
<b>Theme</b>	<p><b>External:</b> Justice vs. Injustice (Protagonist wins by outwitting Killer).</p> <p><b>Internal:</b> Good vs. Evil (Sleuth wins by doing good).</p> <p><b>Philosophical:</b> Unselfish vs. Selfish (Sleuth acts unselfishly despite risks).</p>



# Genre: Crime

<b>Key Question</b>	How do you expose and punish criminals?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Crime:</b> Emphasizes bringing criminals to justice, preserving safety.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Murder Mystery (Master Detective, Cozy, Historical, Noir/ Hardboiled, Paranormal, Police Procedural), Organized Crime, Caper, Courtroom, Newsroom, Espionage, Prison.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Bring the killer to justice and restore personal safety. <b>Values:</b> Range between injustice and justice. <b>Emotions:</b> Readers feel the intrigue to solve the puzzle. <b>Climax:</b> The protagonist restores safety by exposing the criminal.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The antagonist's object of desire (i.e., the MacGuffin) is revealed.</li><li>- Include true (i.e., evidence based) and false (i.e., red herring) clues.</li><li>- Personal interactions between antagonist and protagonist.</li><li>- Time constraint on the protagonist or antagonist to act.</li><li>- Additional conventions based on the subgenre.</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- One or more characters are victims of a crime.</li><li>- The intellect, strengths, or power of the antagonist are revealed.</li><li>- The protagonist discovers the antagonist's MacGuffin.</li><li>- Events reveal the process of discovering the antagonist's identity.</li><li>- The protagonist exposes the antagonist in the story's climax.</li><li>- The antagonist is brought to or escapes justice (subgenre based).</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A person focused on bringing the criminal to justice. <b>Antagonist:</b> A criminal who disrupted the sense of safety. <b>Others:</b> victim(s), suspect(s), support characters (e.g., sidekick).
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> One or more puzzling crimes with one or more suspects.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>B:</b> A character helps protagonist learn internal theme. <b>C:</b> Protagonist's transformation forms character arc. <b>D:</b> Some community conflict of interest to readers. <b>E:</b> The setting creates a story world readers want to visit.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Justice vs. Injustice (Protagonist wins by outwitting Antagonist). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.





# Genre: Fantasy

Key Question	Will the hero navigate the alternate world and reach full potential?
Genre	<b>Fantasy:</b> An alternate world requires order to suspend disbelief.
Subgenres	Human (Anthropomorphic, Fantastical), Magical (Epic, Portal, Dark, Grimdark, Urban)Science, Space Opera)
Expectations	<b>Focus:</b> A well-defined alternate world with believable rules. <b>Values:</b> Ranges from <i>chaos</i> to <i>order</i> to <i>complexity</i> . <b>Emotions:</b> Reader feel a sense of wonder from alternate world. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist uses strengths to navigate the alt-world.
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The alternate world has rules of operation.</li><li>- The descriptions include land, people, and technology.</li><li>- A metaphor helps readers understand the alternate world.</li><li>- The characters and environment help to define the culture.</li><li>- Characters show the rules and systems in operation.</li></ul>
Key Scenes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Opening scenes of the alternate world reveal its details slowly.</li><li>- Hero explores the alternate world while developing a "plan."</li><li>- Scenes introduce a web of fantastic characters.</li><li>- Alternate world scenes "test" the hero, showing a weakness.</li><li>- Several scenes emphasize hero's desire, creating narrative drive.</li><li>- Until final "test," scenes meander or branch based on the premise.</li></ul>
Characters	<b>Protagonist:</b> A hero with a key strength and weakness. <b>Antagonist:</b> Represented by authorities (unique powers/skills). <b>Others:</b> A web of characters based on the alternate world.
Plot	<b>A:</b> A series of events that tests hero's resolve to reach full potential.
Subplots	<b>B:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>C:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>D:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>E:</b> Varies by subgenre.
Theme	<b>External:</b> Success vs. Failure (Hero navigates world to reach full potential) <b>Internal:</b> The epic struggle is to achieve hero's full potential. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies based on subgenres.



# Genre: Horror

<b>Key Question</b>	How do you rise to the challenge, survive the attacks, and defeat the monster?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Horror:</b> Focuses on life or death by pitting a person against a monster.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Uncanny, Supernatural, Possession, Ambiguous.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Overcome the physical events to achieve safety. <b>Values:</b> Range between life and death. <b>Emotions:</b> Readers feel the fear/terror of facing a monster. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist uses strength(s) to save the victim(s).
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Pits the protagonist against the monster and unable to escape.</li><li>- A specific character is the victim of an improbable premise.</li><li>- The antagonist's role is the story's suspenseful monster.</li><li>- The monster is unreasonable and protagonist is the final victim.</li><li>- The action-packed events include a deadline to save victim(s).</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A life threatening attack by the antagonist (i.e., monster).</li><li>- The protagonist acknowledges the monster is unbeatable.</li><li>- A series of supporting minor character deaths.</li><li>- The moment when protagonist is at the mercy of the monster.</li><li>- A false ending to the story.</li><li>- A surprise twist and the story's true ending.</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> An individual focused on saving victim(s) and self. <b>Antagonist:</b> An evil monster who disrupts the sense of safety. <b>Others:</b> victim(s), supporting cast.
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> Many monster attacks on victims and impossible survival odds.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>B:</b> A love interest that drives protagonist to fight the monster. <b>C:</b> The protagonist's required change forms that character's arc. <b>D:</b> Some environmental issue complicates fighting the monster. <b>E:</b> The setting creates a story world that adds to readers' terror.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Life vs. Death (Hero prevails (outwits/overpowers Monster). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.



# Genre: Love

<b>Key Question</b>	How do we handle courtship, attract mates, survive heartbreaks, keep bonds?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Love:</b> Addresses the love or hate within family, fraternal, or romance.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Courtship, Marriage, Obsession.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Satisfy yearning for connection by attaining true love. <b>Values:</b> Range between hate and love. <b>Emotions:</b> Readers feel love through an authentic connection. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist and love interest show their proof of love.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A love triangle of protagonist, love interest, and rival.</li><li>- Other characters help and harm the relationship.</li><li>- Opposite character traits influence the budding relationship.</li><li>- Forces oppose the relationship (e.g., secrets, rituals).</li><li>- The lovers must overcome their flaws or moral failings.</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The lovers meet.</li><li>- The lovers first kiss or intimate connection.</li><li>- The lovers show vulnerability by expressing their love.</li><li>- The lovers break up.</li><li>- The lovers show proof of love by one or both making a sacrifice.</li><li>- The lovers reunite and commit or separate (subgenre based).</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> Two characters where one or both fall for the other. <b>Antagonist:</b> A rival intent on winning one of the lovers for self. <b>Others:</b> helpers, harmers, sidekick(s) to one or both lovers.
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> A series of events that bring together and pull apart the lovers.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>B:</b> An ally helps one lover learn the change needed to win the other lover. <b>C:</b> One lover's required change forms that character's arc. <b>D:</b> Some community conflict that separates the lovers. <b>E:</b> The setting creates a story world readers want to know about.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Hate vs. Love (Love wins when lovers change or sacrifice). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.





# Genre: Morality

<b>Key Question</b>	Will the protagonist act selfishly or unselfishly?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Morality:</b> Shows protagonist going beyond self, promote well-being of others.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Punitive, Redemption, Surrender, Triumph.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Transcend selfishness by contributing to the greater good. <b>Values:</b> Range between selfish and unselfish. <b>Emotions:</b> Readers feel satisfaction or contempt. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist chooses and acts for the greater good of others.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Demonstrates the worst of the morally bankrupt protagonist.</li><li>- A mentor or sidekick helps protagonist see the issue.</li><li>- Events force protagonist's choice: act selfish or unselfish.</li><li>- Past choices and actions torment the protagonist.</li><li>- The protagonist receives aid from an unexpected source.</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- An event makes the protagonist aware of the moral issue.</li><li>- The protagonist refuses to change.</li><li>- The protagonist reaches a low point, forcing a moral reckoning.</li><li>- The protagonist's self-sacrifices for a greater good.</li><li>- The protagonist faces a real or emotional death (subgenre based).</li><li>- The climax and resolutions are subgenre based.</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A morally corrupt protagonist. <b>Antagonist:</b> Protagonist's inner selfishness. <b>Others:</b> sidekick, coworkers, family, friends.
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> A series of events highlights protagonist's selfishness.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>B:</b> Someone or something important to protagonist forces awareness. <b>C:</b> Protagonist's required change forms that character's arc. <b>D:</b> Some community conflict highlights the need for change. <b>E:</b> The setting creates the need for protagonist's unselfish act.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Selfish vs. Unselfish (Morality wins when act on behalf of other). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.



# Genre: Performance

<b>Key Question</b>	Will the protagonist do what's required despite the hardships?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Performance:</b> Emphasizes the hero's strengths and need for approval.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Art, Business, Music, Sports.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Attain recognition by mastery of art, sport, or profession. <b>Values:</b> Range between shame and respect. <b>Emotions:</b> Readers feel triumph when protagonist achieves success. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist chooses self, relationship, or other over success.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Show a strong mentor.</li><li>- Show protagonist striving for mastery.</li><li>- Show protagonist facing an inevitable failure.</li><li>- Show the mentor influencing adversely protagonist's success.</li><li>- Show mentor/protagonist's divide, forcing win/lose or lose/win.</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Show the trigger event with a performance opportunity.</li><li>- Show the protagonist sidestepping performance responsibility.</li><li>- Show the protagonist lashing out when forced to perform.</li><li>- Show the protagonist's discovering mentor's object of desire.</li><li>- Show the protagonist's change need, but failure to counter mentor.</li><li>- Show protagonist's mastery, satisfying self, relationship, or other.</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A performing artist, professional, musician, athlete. <b>Antagonist:</b> Protagonist's mentor with selfish goal or ambition. <b>Others:</b> family, friends, co-performer.
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> A series of ever-increasing important performances.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>B:</b> Mentor's parallel goal or ambition. <b>C:</b> Protagonist's required change forms that character's arc. <b>D:</b> Some performance conflict highlights the need for change. <b>E:</b> The setting adds to the conflict between protagonist and mentor.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Shame vs. Respect (Performance wins when making right choices). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.



# Genre: Science Fiction

<b>Key Question</b>	Will the hero use the futuristic technologies to change society?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Sci Fi:</b> An alternate world requires rules for suspension of disbelief.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Alternate History, Cyberpunk, Hard Science, Military, Post Apocalyptic, Dystopian, Romantic, Soft Science, Space Opera, Steampunk, Alien Invasion
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> A well-defined alternate world with believable rules. <b>Values:</b> The society-culture ranges from <i>slavery</i> to <i>freedom</i> . <b>Emotions:</b> Reader feel a sense of the future's potential (+/-). <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist adopts technologies to flourish.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The alternate world has defined operating rules and penalties.</li><li>- The descriptions include land, people, and technology.</li><li>- A science theory helps readers understand the alternate world.</li><li>- The characters and environment help to define the society-culture.</li><li>- Characters show the rules and systems in operation.</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Opening scenes of the alternate world reveal its scale.</li><li>- Hero sees how "forces" influence the people and "plans" a change.</li><li>- Scenes introduce the technology that influences society-culture.</li><li>- Minor characters show how the world system and society works.</li><li>- Several scenes emphasize hero's goal, creating narrative drive.</li><li>- The scenes branch to show the premise-based story world.</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A hero set apart in some way from society-culture. <b>Antagonist:</b> An authority controls with unique powers/skills. <b>Others:</b> A web of characters based on the alternate world.
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> Hero strives for society change.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>B:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>C:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>D:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>E:</b> Varies by subgenre.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Stasis vs. Change (Hero's choices influence society's change). <b>Internal:</b> Stasis vs. Change (Hero must change to get rid of flaw). <b>Philosophical:</b> Hero's Societal Vision vs. Opponent's View



# Genre: Society

Key Question	Will the characters rise up against their oppressors?
Genre	<b>Society:</b> Shows a subjugated people rebelling against their subjugators.
Subgenres	Domestic, Women's Issues, Biographical, Political, Historical.
Expectations	<b>Focus:</b> Attain power/well-being by taking action (rising up/exposing lies). <b>Values:</b> Range between impotence and power. <b>Emotions:</b> Feel a compulsion to right wrongs. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist gains power/stays impotent based on subgenre.
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A chief protagonist with other protagonists mirroring key traits.</li><li>- A broad setting that exacerbates or amplifies the key issues.</li><li>- The large power divide emphasizes the plight of the subjugated.</li><li>- A point of no return marks the rebellion and doom of the vanquished.</li><li>- A paradoxical or bittersweet ending based on subgenre.</li></ul>
Key Scenes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A trigger event threatens those in power (i.e., the antagonist's view).</li><li>- The protagonists (subjugated people) refuse to rise up.</li><li>- An event forces the protagonists to rebel based on the power hierarchy.</li><li>- Their rebellion strategy and effort fails.</li><li>- The protagonists find and seek the antagonists' object of desire.</li><li>- At a low moment, the protagonists realize the need to change strategy.</li><li>- The protagonists show strengths in climax; ending based on subgenre.</li></ul>
Characters	<b>Protagonist:</b> A group of subjugated people. <b>Antagonist:</b> A group of in-power subjugators. <b>Others:</b> Various characters based on the subgenre.
Plot	<b>A:</b> Events force protagonists to seek power through rebellion.
Subplots	<b>B:</b> A central character represents the want and need of the subjugated. <b>C:</b> The central character's required change forms the character arc. <b>D:</b> One or more subplots highlight the need for change. <b>E:</b> The story world creates the backdrop for the protagonists' plight.
Theme	<b>External:</b> Impotence vs. Power (Gain power by exposing subjugator's lies). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.



# Genre: Status

<b>Key Question</b>	Will the protagonist rise in status despite required price of upward mobility?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Status:</b> Emphasizes an individual's society-rank and self-respect.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Admiration (starts high/ends high), Pathetic (starts low/ends low), Sentimental (starts low/ends high), Tragic (starts high/ends low).
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Attain prestige by performance, relationships, dominance. <b>Values:</b> Range between failure and success. <b>Emotions:</b> Subgenre based: respect, pity, nostalgic, dread. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist's choice dictates subgenre based ending.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A mentor teaching how to succeed or avoid failure.</li><li>- Social problems complicate achieving success.</li><li>- A character who represents what not to do (e.g., sells out).</li><li>- The protagonist recognizes the truth (i.e., no going back to old way).</li><li>- Often a bittersweet ending (e.g., loses status but has self-respect).</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Show a trigger event that challenges protagonist's status quo.</li><li>- Show the protagonist leaving stable world to seek status.</li><li>- Show the protagonist's old ways embarrass self in the unstable world.</li><li>- Show the protagonist's finding/seeking antagonist's object of desire.</li><li>- Show the protagonist trying to beat antagonist and failing.</li><li>- Show the protagonist's lowest moment and choice (subgenre based).</li><li>- Show the climax and resolution based on the subgenre.</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A upwardly mobile but flawed protagonist. <b>Antagonist:</b> The character depends on the chosen subgenre. <b>Others:</b> sidekick, what-not-to-do representative, family, friends.
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> Events force protagonist to choose: self-respect or sell out.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>B:</b> A representative of "what not to do" raises hero's awareness. <b>C:</b> Protagonist's required change forms the character arc. <b>D:</b> Some status conflict highlights the need for change. <b>E:</b> The environment creates the need for protagonist's choice.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Failure vs. Success (Protagonist wins if self-respect prevails). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.



# Genre: Thriller

<b>Key Question</b>	How will the protagonist deal with evil forces in everyday life?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Thriller:</b> Focuses on the hero defeating the evil antagonist to restore safety.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Child in Jeopardy, Espionage, Financial, Hitchcock, Journalism, Legal, Medical, Military, Political, Psychological, Serial Killer, Woman in Jeopardy.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Attain safety by defeating the evil antagonist. <b>Values:</b> Range between damnation (worse than death) and life. <b>Emotions:</b> Readers feel excitement. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist experiences damnation or life based on subgenre.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The antagonist's (i.e., villain's) object of desire (i.e., MacGuffin).</li><li>- A series of false clues (i.e., red herrings) that mislead story's hero.</li><li>- The villain makes the hero's plight personal and painful.</li><li>- The hero must act by a deadline but fails, wasting scarce time.</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A trigger event that highlights hero faces a master villain.</li><li>- Someone voices praise for the villain's intellect, power, or results.</li><li>- The table turns, and hero becomes the victim.</li><li>- At the climax, the hero is at the mercy of the villain.</li><li>- A false ending.</li><li>- A true ending followed by the outcome is based on the subgenre.</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A character with traits from the Action genre. <b>Antagonist:</b> An evil villain with traits from Horror committed a crime. <b>Others:</b> Various characters based on the subgenre.
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> A crime forces hero to seek safety by defeating evil villain.
<b>Subplots</b>	Note: Subplots vary based on the chosen subgenre.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Damnation vs. Life (Life prevails when hero outwits evil villain). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.





# Genre: War

<b>Key Question</b>	How do we survive war and maintain our humanity?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>War:</b> Shows a soldier's internal change; the war's external savagery.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Pro-war, Anti-war, Brotherhood of war.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Restore safety by winning battle (life worthy/death honorable). <b>Values:</b> Range between dishonor and honor. <b>Emotions:</b> Readers feel Intrigue. <b>Climax:</b> Protagonist experiences dishonor or honor based on big battle.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A soldier conveys the story (or group represents that soldier's traits).</li><li>- Large-scale setting or internal soldier's internal thoughts/feelings.</li><li>- Impossible situation where soldier/group are the underdog.</li><li>- A point where soldier/group accept the probability of death.</li><li>- One sacrifices for the good of the brotherhood of soldiers.</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A trigger attack and protagonist refuses the duty to respond.</li><li>- Forced to respond, protagonist complains to those in power.</li><li>- Each soldier learns of their inner antagonist's object of desire.</li><li>- Soldier/group try but fail to outflank antagonist.</li><li>- Soldier/group realize change needed to win, and feel all is lost.</li><li>- Soldier/group fight big battle, using strengths based on subgenre.</li><li>- Soldier/group rewarded for sacrifice based on subgenre.</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A soldier (or a group who represent soldier's traits). <b>Antagonist:</b> An opposing force more powerful than soldier/group. <b>Others:</b> various characters (e.g., the hierarchal power structure).
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> A war forces protagonist(s) to battle inner/external villain(s).
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>Note:</b> Subplots vary based on chosen subgenre.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Dishonor vs. Honor (Honor prevails when hero sacrifices for others). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.



# Genre: Western

Key Question	Will the characters learn and change?
Genre	<b>Western:</b> Focuses on the self-reliant person's independence and link to society.
Subgenres	Professional, Traditional, Transitional, Vengeance.
Expectations	<b>Focus:</b> Provide safety by negotiating independence versus vs. connection. <b>Values:</b> Range between subjugation (injustice) and freedom (justice). <b>Emotions:</b> Feel the inner strengths (freedom, righteousness, bravery). <b>Climax:</b> Hero at villain's mercy shows inner strengths, no compromise.
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Life or death stakes; setting serves as a character.</li><li>- Defined hero, victim, villain, and hero wants to save victim/stop villain.</li><li>- Hero operates independently, and outside law as per subgenre.</li><li>- Villain is more powerful than hero, hero is more powerful than victim.</li><li>- Someone praises villain, hero faces deadline, villain makes it personal.</li></ul>
Key Scenes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A trigger event caused by the villain's attack.</li><li>- Hero discovers and understands the villain's object of desire.</li><li>- Hero reluctant to accept the responsibility to take action.</li><li>- An event or situation that forces hero to lash out.</li><li>- Hero tries but fails to outflank the villain.</li><li>- At a low point, hero acknowledges the need for a change in strategy.</li><li>- At the villain's mercy, hero uses strengths to restore safety.</li></ul>
Characters	<b>Protagonist:</b> A self-reliant individual. <b>Antagonist:</b> A powerful villain based on the subgenre. <b>Others:</b> Many characters (e.g., victims; hero's allies; villain's minions).
Plot	<b>A:</b> Characters' lives threatened by villain create the need for a tough hero.
Subplots	<b>Note:</b> Subplots vary based on chosen subgenre.
Theme	<b>External:</b> Injustice vs. Justice (Justice wins when hero fights for the good of all). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.



# Genre: Worldview

<b>Key Question</b>	Will the character solve the problem given the person's existing belief?
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Worldview:</b> Focuses on the person's yearning to understand self /strengths.
<b>Subgenres</b>	Disillusionment, Education, Coming of Age, Revelation.
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Realize self-actualization by replacing an old belief with a new one. <b>Values:</b> Range between ignorance and wisdom. <b>Emotions:</b> Feel the emotional range between pity to satisfaction. <b>Climax:</b> Hero uses or ignores newfound wisdom to grow/regress.
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A mentor figure.</li><li>- Social problem (e.g., racism) of magnitude serves as backdrop.</li><li>- A support character says one thing but does another.</li><li>- A point where protagonist realizes there is no going back to old way.</li><li>- The bittersweet ending is either win-but lose or lose-but-win.</li></ul>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A trigger event serves as either an opportunity or challenge.</li><li>- The protagonist is reluctant to accept the opportunity or challenge.</li><li>- The protagonist lashes out when forced to change.</li><li>- The antagonist's object of desire is discovered by protagonist.</li><li>- The protagonist's approach fails to outmaneuver the antagonist.</li><li>- At a low moment, protagonist acknowledges need to change.</li><li>- The climax/resolution depends on subgenre (win/lose; lose/win).</li></ul>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A hero ignorant of an alternative to existing belief. <b>Antagonist:</b> Self in the form of the protagonist's ignorance. <b>Others:</b> mentor (i.e., a person who helps protagonist learn new belief).
<b>Plot</b>	<b>A:</b> The protagonist must replace an old belief with a new one.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>Notes:</b> Worldview frequently serves as an internal subplot to other genres.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Ignorance vs. Wisdom (Gain wisdom by sharing strengths). <b>Internal:</b> Varies by subgenre. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies by subgenre.



# Subgenre: Young Adult\*

<b>Key Question</b>	Will the young protagonist find a solution to the (age-related) issue?
<b>Genre</b>	YA: Focuses on issues of young adults between the ages of 14 and 18.
<b>Tropes   Genres</b>	Chosen One; Love Triangle; I'm Different...;   Fantasy, Urban, Fairytale Retelling, Paranormal, Dystopian, Science Fiction, Love, World's End, Coming of Age, Magic, Historical, Mystery, Steampunk, Contemporary
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Problems relevant to the young adult audience. <b>Values:</b> Ranges widely and based on chosen YA Tropes   Genres. <b>Emotions:</b> The array of emotions stirring within ages 14 to 18 years <b>Climax:</b> Gives hope that YA issues can and will be resolved.
<b>Conventions</b>	<i>Note: The Conventions conform to the chosen YA Tropes   Genres.</i>
<b>Key Scenes</b>	<i>Note: The Key Scenes conform to the chosen YA Tropes   Genres.</i>
<b>Characters</b>	<b>Protagonist:</b> A young protagonist, typically between ages 14-18. <b>Antagonist:</b> Varies widely based on chosen YA Tropes   Genres. <b>Others:</b> Varies widely based on chosen YA Tropes   Genres.
<b>Plot</b>	<b>Note:</b> Generally, YA novels are more plot driven than characters.
<b>Subplots</b>	<b>Note:</b> Subplots vary widely, from none to complex.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>External:</b> Generally, adjusts the typical adult themes for age. <b>Internal:</b> Varies based on chosen YA Tropes   Genres. <b>Philosophical:</b> Varies based on chosen YA Tropes   Genres.

*\*Note: People often debate whether Young Adult fiction is a stand-alone genre or subgenre.*

*The consensus suggests most books categorized as YA are written for ages 14-18. However, that omits the significant number of adults who read YA fiction (e.g., Harry Potter, The Hunger Games). Adults read YA books because the tropes, genres, and subgenres offer interesting insights into how young people view and navigate the world.*

*Key considerations include: marketing to the young readers; creating a chief protagonist who falls within or near the age of 14-18; defining an age-appropriate story problem and goal (but that does not prevent writers from dealing with larger, even global issues).*

*With adjustments for age, writers can use any of the popular genres to write YA fiction.*

