



Different Strokes, Different Folks: Fiction Genres

There are different types of music, movies, and books. We can organize them into **genres**, identifying the characteristics they share and ways they differ. When we look at books, we need to ask:

1. Is a book about information and is it all true? If so, it is a nonfiction book.
2. Has an author used her imagination to create a story? If the story is not literally true, it is fiction.

Nonfiction books are kept together on library shelves, organized by the information they contain. Information books, nonfiction books, get classified by **Dewey Decimal** numbers.

Fiction books are organized by author, arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. If you enjoy books by one author, you will probably enjoy more.

We can also think about the types of fiction stories authors create – genres. If we enjoy one type of story, one genre, we will probably enjoy more – even if they are by different authors.

Let's look at a simple way to think about genres – 6 types of fiction books. Almost any fiction book can be classified as one of the following:

Realistic Fiction, Problem

Novels. Realistic fiction is about situations and problems that people live with and experience today. Some are about growing up, being a teenager, or challenges adults face. These books let us learn about how others manage their lives.

Humor. Don't we all like to laugh? Even the most serious story can contain humor. We can

Nonfiction Books: Dewey Decimal System

Information books are organized by ideas – Dewey Numbers. Here are the ten general classifications for nonfiction books:

100-199 – Who Am I? Books about how we think and act. These are the things that make us human.

200-299 – Who Made Me? Book about God, religion and myths.

300-399 – Who Is My Neighbor? Folktales, fairytales, how people live.

400-499 How Do I Communicate With My Neighbors? Books about languages, writing, and grammar.

500-599 – What Will I Talk About? Natural sciences.

600-699 – What Will I Do With Science? Applied sciences.

700-799 – Time For a Break! Books about what we do for fun.

800-899 – Back to Work: Literature. Humor, plays, poems, short stories.

900-999 – Who, What, Where, When, Why? How did everything happen? History, geography, biographies.

000-099 – Everything Else - Room to Grow! Computer software, general works, almanacs, and uncertain knowledge like aliens and monsters.

laugh in almost any situation. This can be an effective tool to deal with problems. Any book/genre can contain humor, but books/authors in this genre specialize in it.

Adventure, Sports, Mysteries,

Supernatural, Horror. Looking to "get away?" This genre is all about the pleasure of reading and how we can "escape" through literature. For example, sports can be a metaphor for "the game of life." These forms of literature take readers out of his/her normal day-to-day existence and put them in extraordinary circumstances.

Fantasy and Science Fiction. Do you like to see an author create an exciting world unlike anything anyone has seen? Fantasy writers get to make up all the rules. But perhaps you prefer to stretch your imagination within the world as it almost could be. Science fiction stays within reasonable boundaries. A precise definition of

these two types of books is difficult, because these genres are related. To enjoy either one, we need to accept the author's story, suspending any disbelief. Then, these books are fun.

Historical Fiction. Historical fiction presents the past in a manner that connects with today's readers on a personal and emotional level. By nature, it gets readers involved with history in exciting and interesting ways. The characters, although not all real historical figures, behave appropriately for the historical setting.

Poetry, Drama, Short Stories.

Perhaps due to the popularity of "spoken word" and rap music, poetry books are very popular. Short stories are also "hot". These works can be highly entertaining, perhaps representing a more manageable read than a novel. For busy readers, short stories have a lot to offer.