

NoveList Story Elements

NoveList's story elements include **genres**, **appeals**, and **themes**. They make it easy for you and your readers to find the kinds of books they are interested in, using language they can understand.

NoveList Genres

Definition: Genres are one of the most recognizable entry points into reading. NoveList librarians develop and use a wide range of genres to help connect related books and help readers find their next great read. Broad genres (mysteries, romances, science fiction) can often be narrowed to more specific genres (hardboiled fiction, paranormal romances, space opera).

Genre Guides provide in-depth descriptions of what's what and who's who in your favorite (or new-to-you) genre. To retrieve genre guides, search for **Keyword: DE Genre guide**

Genre Index: A list of genre terms used in NoveList. Not all genres are used at all audience levels. To retrieve the genre index, search for **Keyword: UI 453772**

Genre Terms: To search for books by genre, perform a keyword search using NoveList field code **GN** followed by a genre term: **Keyword: GN Scandinavian crime fiction**

REALISTIC GENRES

Crime Fiction

Crime fiction | Noir fiction | Scandinavian crime fiction

General Fiction

Adaptations, retellings, and spin-offs | Adventure stories | Autobiographical fiction | Biographical fiction | Christian fiction | Family sagas | Historical fiction | Humorous stories | Love stories | Mainstream fiction | Realistic fiction | Relationship fiction | Sea stories | Sports fiction | Urban fiction | War stories | Westerns

Literary Fiction

Classics | Experimental fiction | Gothic fiction | Literary fiction | Magical realism | Psychological fiction

Mysteries

Cozy mysteries | Hardboiled fiction | Historical mysteries | Mysteries | Police procedurals | Supernatural mysteries

Romances

Category romances | Contemporary romances | Fantasy romances | Futuristic romances | Georgian romances | Gothic romances | Highland romances | Historical romances | Love stories | Medieval romances | Paranormal romances | Regency romances | Romantic comedies | Romantic suspense | Victorian romances | Western romances

Thrillers and Suspense

Historical thrillers | Legal thrillers | Medical thrillers | Political thrillers | Psychological suspense | Spy fiction | Techno-thrillers | Thrillers and suspense

SPECULATIVE GENRES

Fantasy

Afrofantasy | Animal fantasy | Contemporary fantasy | Dark fantasy | Epic fantasy | Fairy tale and folklore-inspired fiction | Fantasy fiction | Fantasy mysteries | Gateway fantasy | Historical fantasy | Military fantasy | Mythological fiction | Paranormal fiction | Urban fantasy

Horror

Ghost stories | Gothic fiction | Historical horror | Horror

Science Fiction

Afrofuturism | Alternate histories | Apocalyptic fiction | Cyberpunk | Dystopian fiction | Hard science fiction | Military science fiction | Science fantasy | Science fiction | Science fiction mysteries | Science fiction thrillers | Social science fiction | Space opera | Steampunk | Superhero stories

GRAPHIC NOVELS

Action and adventure comics | Alternative comics | Autobiographical comics | Biographical comics | Comics and graphic novels | Crime comics | Fantasy comics | Graphic novel hybrids | Historical comics | Horror comics | Humorous comics | Newspaper comic strips | Paranormal comics | Romance comics | Satirical comics | Science fiction comics | Sports comics | Superhero comics | Webcomics

Manga

Boys Love manga | Josei manga | Kodomo manga | Light novels | Manga | Manhwa | Manhwa | Seinen manga | Shojo manga | Shonen manga | Yuri manga

LIBRARY HELPERS

Author-Based

Australian fiction | Canadian fiction | New Zealand fiction

General

Bilingual materials | Book club best bets | Books for new adult readers | Debut title | Diary novels | Epistolary novels | First person narratives | Franchise books | Gentle reads | Illustrated books | Multiple perspectives | Novellas | Novels in verse | Parallel narratives | Plot-your-own stories | Second person narratives | Short stories | Stories in rhyme | Stories without words | Translations

Juvenile-Focused

Adult books for young adults | Bedtime stories | Books for reluctant readers | Classics-inspired fiction | Cumulative tales | Early chapter books | Easy readers | High interest-low vocabulary books | Picture books | Pourquoi tales | Realistic fiction | Shakespeare-inspired fiction | STEM fiction | Storytime standouts

Media Related

Manga to anime | Media tie-ins | Page to screen

NoveList Appeals

Definition: Appeals helps readers determine *why* they enjoyed a book and whether a particular book will fit their style. You can use appeal to find books based on the type of character you like, the pacing or tone, or even the style of illustration. Appeals help you and your patrons articulate the “why” behind the perfect book.

Appeal Index: A list of appeal terms used in NoveList. Not all appeal terms are used on all audience levels. To retrieve the appeal index, search for **Keyword: UI 453774**

Appeal Terms: To search for books by appeal, perform a keyword search using NoveList field code **AP** followed by an appeal term: **Keyword: AP Intricately plotted**

STORYLINE

Action-packed | Character-driven | Intricately plotted | Issue-oriented | Nonlinear | Open-ended | Own voices | Plot-driven | Sweeping | Unconventional | World-building

PACE

Fast-paced | Intensifying | Leisurely paced

TONE

Emotional

Angst-filled | Bittersweet | Emotionally intense | Feel-good | Heartwarming | Heartwrenching | High-drama | Hopeful | Inspiring | Melancholy | Moody | Moving | Romantic | Sad | Sweet | Upbeat

General

Atmospheric | Dramatic | Gossipy | Homespun | Mystical | Noisy | Nostalgic | Quiet | Reflective | Serious | Sobering | Strong sense of place | Suspenseful | Thought-provoking | Whimsical

Heat Index

Chaste | Mildly sensuous | Steamy | Explicit

Humor

Amusing | Darkly humorous | Funny | Irreverent | Offbeat | Racy humor | Sardonic | Silly

Nonfiction

Conservative | Impartial | Impassioned | Liberal | Self-deprecating | Spiritual

Sinister

Bleak | Creepy | Disturbing | Gross | Gruesome | Haunting | Menacing | Scary | Violent

WRITING STYLE

Dialogue

Banter-filled | Conversational | Dialect-filled | Slang-heavy | Well-crafted dialogue

General

Attention-grabbing | Candid | Compelling | Descriptive | Engaging | Gritty | Incisive | Jargon-filled | Lush | Lyrical | Minimal text | Participatory | Richly detailed | Spare | Stream of consciousness | Stylistically complex | Thoughtful | Well-researched | Witty | Wordplay-filled

Nonfiction

Accessible | Browsable | Comprehensive | Concise | Easy-to-understand | Persuasive | Scholarly

CHARACTER

General

Anthropomorphic | Authentic | Awkward | Believable | Brooding | Character duos | Complex | Courageous | Exaggerated | Flawed | Introspective | Large cast of characters | Likeable | Mischievous | Quirky | Relatable | Sarcastic | Snarky | Spirited | Spunky | Strong female | Sympathetic | Twisted | Unlikeable | Well-developed

Disability

Autistic | Blind or have low vision | Deaf or hard of hearing | Dyslexic | Intellectually disabled | Neurodivergent | People with mental illness | People with synesthesia | Physically disabled | Using mobility or assistive device

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

LGBTQIA | Asexual | Bisexual | Gay | Intersex | Lesbian | Nonbinary | Queer | Transgender

Race and Ethnicity

Asian | Black | Indigenous | Latino/Latina/Latine | Multiracial | Pacific Islander | Southwest Asian and North African (Middle Eastern) | Unspecified people of color

Religion

Atheist | Agnostic | Buddhist | Christian | Hindu | Indigenous religions | Jewish | Muslim | Pagan | Sikh | Spiritual

AUDIO

Audio Characteristics

Audio drama | Character accents | Full cast | Multiple narrators | Musically enhanced | Read by the author | Sound effects

Voice Characterization

Distinctly voiced | Emotionally connected | Well-characterized

Voice Characteristics

Animated | Approachable | Authoritative | Baritone | Brisk | Clear | Comedic | Crisp | Deadpan | Detached | Engrossing | Folksy | Gentle | Gravelly | Husky | Immersive | Intense | Melodious | Resonant | Seamless | Sensitive | Sincere | Somber | Sophisticated | Understated | Unhurried | Wry | Youthful

ILLUSTRATION

Big and bold | Black-and-white | Bold | Cartoonish | Charming | Colorful | Dark | Delicate | Detailed | Fanciful | Folk-art style | Impressionistic | Inventive | Lavish | Minimally colored | Muted | Photographic | Raw | Realistic | Surreal | Textured

NoveList Themes

Definition: Themes are the (sometimes) hard-to-define elements of a book that hook a reader. They broadly summarize key plot points – think “chosen one” in fantasy or “fake relationship” in romance.

Theme Index: A list of themes used in NoveList. Not all themes are used at all audience levels. To retrieve the theme index, search for **Keyword: UI 453923**

Theme Terms: To search for books by theme, search using NoveList field code **TH** followed by a theme term: **Keyword: TH Chosen one**

FANTASY

Characters

Chosen one | Dark lord | Hidden heritage | Last of their kind | Princess power | Rightful heir | Scum and villainy | Women of steel | Zero to hero

Plot

Bad religion | Be careful what you wish for | Court intrigue | Defend the realm! | For the resistance | Magic goes away | Metaphorical racism | Quest for magical items | Reluctant allies | Return of magic | Seeking lost parents | Slaying the dragon | Sword and sorcery | To the rescue! | Too powerful to contain | Vengeance is mine

Setting

Academies of magic | Arthurian-influenced fantasy | Asian-influenced fantasy | Celtic-influenced fantasy | Faerie realm | Hidden among us | Isekai | Laws of magic | Southwest Asian and North African (Middle Eastern)-influenced fantasy | Realm of the dead | Weird westerns

HORROR

Characters

Band of survivors | Childhood trauma | Final girls | Unreliable narrator

Monsters

Creature feature | Creepy clowns and bad seeds | Evil animals | Evil transformations | Monster mayhem | Real life monsters | Vampire menace | Werewolves among us | Witchcraft and the occult | Zombie apocalypse

Plot

Cursed! | Possessed! | Trapped! | Vengeance is mine

Setting

Don't go in there! | Small town horror | Moving to a haunted house

Style

Body horror | Cosmic horror | Found footage | Monster mashups

SCIENCE FICTION

Aliens and robots

Alien invasions | First contact | Rise of the machines | Robots with emotions

Apocalyptic and dystopian

Band of survivors | Battle royale | Climate change apocalypse | Evil corporations | For the resistance | Pandemic apocalypse

Space and time

Boldly go | Fixing history | Generation ships | Lost in space | Space colonization | Time loop | Time slip

Miscellaneous

Altered memories | Human 2.0 | Playing God | Press play to start | Science fiction boot camp | Send in the clones | Vengeance is mine | Weird science | Women of steel | Zero to hero

SUPERHERO GRAPHIC NOVELS AND STORIES

Characters

Born this way | Cosmic and mystical beginnings | Good gone bad | Human 2.0 | Magical girls | No power, still super | Princess power | Scum and villainy | Sidekick spotlight | Super-families | Super subversive | Women of steel

Plot

Assemble! | Fixing history | Isekai | Multiverse encounters | Origin story | Playing God | Reboots and retcons

CHRISTIAN FICTION

Plot

Choosing Christ | Christianity under fire | Count your blessings | Life outside the flock | Sinner redeemed | Tell me about God | What would Jesus do

Internal struggles

Forgive and forget | Prodigal returns | Test of faith

Setting

Communities set apart | Home again | Life in small towns

Fantasy

Christian soldiers | Caught up in the Rapture

GENERAL FICTION

Aficionado

Books about books | Eat, drink, and be merry | Fandemonium! | Get in the game | Life in art | Musical reads

Family and relationships

Chosen family | Family gatherings | Forbidden love | Grumpy-sunshine | Love on the rocks | Maybe baby | No strings attached | Second act | Toxic relationships | Unhappy families | Unlikely friendships | We used to be friends

Genre-esque

Comedy of manners | Green reads | Rags to riches | Road tripping

Identity

Engendering gender | Facing racism | Immigrant experiences

Life's challenges

Bouncing back | Confronting mortality | Coping with death | Dealing with illness | Dealing with mental illness | Forbidden love | Go your own way | Surviving abuse | Surviving sexual violence | Living with invisible disability | Living with visible disability

Narrative devices

24 hour stories | Child narrator | Metafiction | Stories told by animals | Time and again | Unnamed narrator | Unreliable narrator | Web of connections

Setting

Dark academia | Home again | Life in small towns | Love in wartime | Novels of place | Office life | Sad small towns | Suburban malaise

Miscellaneous

Brand new you | Christmas stories | Coming of age | Ensemble casts | Fish out of water | Human and animal bonds | Life during wartime | Return from war | Rich and famous | Slice of life | Survival stories | Technical difficulties | Thrown together

MYSTERIES, SUSPENSE, AND THRILLERS

Characters

Behind the Iron Curtain | Framed! | Missing memories | Real life monsters | Rookie on the beat | Sherlock Paws | Starring famous figures | Unreliable narrator | Too good to be true

Setting

Criminal masterpieces | Inspired by real events | Rural noir | Rural police | Sleuths in schools | Small town police | The butler did it! | Urban police | Vacation interrupted | Wartime crime

Plot

Ancient enigmas | Beyond the grave | Caper novels | Culinary mysteries | Eerie mysteries | Hobby mysteries | Holiday mysteries | Locked room mysteries | On the run | Proving one's innocence | Race against time | Shadow organizations | Solve the puzzle

ROMANCE

Characters

Best friend's sibling | Childhood sweethearts | Enemies to lovers (Hating to dating on the teen level) | Famous flings | Forbidden love | For richer, for poorer | Friends to lovers (Falling for a friend on the teen level) | Grumpy-sunshine | Opposites attract | Second chance at romance | Together again

Baby on board

Getting together for the kids | Secret baby | Sudden baby

Setting

Home again | Love abroad | Love in a small town | New in town | Snowbound & stranded | Time travel romances | Workplace romance

Plot

Captive hearts | Fake relationship | Holiday romances | Love in disguise | Marriage of convenience | No strings attached | Once upon a time | One night to forever | Sports romances | Unforgettable love

URBAN FICTION

Characters

Backstabbers | Cheaters | Family business | I'm a survivor | Ladies first | My squad | Crazy in love | Rivals

Plot

Baby drama | Church drama | Going straight | Good gone bad | Just got out | Life on the inside | On the down low | Payback | Sex work | Sinner redeemed | Test of faith

Trajectory

Cautionary tales | Get money | Raised by the streets

REALISTIC FICTION FOR TEENS AND KIDS

Experiences

Boarding school life | Coming of age | Coming out experiences | Immigrant experiences | Life after high school | Life in small towns | Road tripping

Family and friends

Meet the family | Trouble at home | Forbidden love | Being a friend | Misfits united | We used to be friends

Historical

Girls disguised as boys | Life during wartime | Life in slavery | Love in wartime | Royal reads | Surviving the Holocaust

Life's challenges

Coping with death | Dealing with bullies | Dealing with eating disorders | Dealing with illness | Dealing with mental illness | Dealing with suicide | Facing racism | Living while dying | Living with invisible disability | Living with visible disability | Surviving abuse | Surviving sexual violence | Teen pregnancy and parenting

Personal development

Artistic endeavors | Brand new you | Celebrating identity | Exploring faith | Let's dance | Music makers | Set the stage

Miscellaneous

24 hour stories | Boys vs. girls | Christmas stories | Dark academia | Engendering gender | Fandemonium! | Green reads | Get in the game | Horse stories | Me and my dog | Metafiction | New to the neighborhood | Running away | Slice of life | Stories told by animals | Survival stories | Tween romance | Underdog athletes

YOUNG READERS

The arts

Artistic endeavors | Art comes alive | Let's dance | Music makers | Set the stage

Emotions and behavior

Coping with death | Dealing with illness | Emotions and feelings | Fighting and forgiving | Handling bad moods | Immigrant experiences | Living with invisible disability | Living with visible disability | Mind your manners | Overcoming fear

Families

Adoption and families | All kinds of families | Becoming older siblings | Daddy and me | Families in conflict | Grandparents and me | Mommy and me | My siblings and me | Welcome baby!

Friendship

Being a friend | Making new friends | Unlikely friendships

Miscellaneous

Celebrating identity | Christmas stories | Dealing with bullies | Get well soon | Green reads | Horse stories | Learning to share | Metafiction | New to the neighborhood | Power of stories | Starting school | Stay safe

EXTRAS

Books By Time Period. **Keyword: “books by time period”**

Book Discussion Guides. **Keyword: “book discussion guides”**

Manga Glossary: Common Terms. **Keyword: “manga glossary”**

PBS Books Author Videos. **Keyword: “pbs books”**

Novelist Search Strategies (printable one-page PDF handouts)
www.etsd.com/novelist/idea-center/improve/search-strategies

- Discover books by culture or place
- Find audiobooks for every listener
- Find books by reading level
- Find books for storytime
- Find books with diverse characters
- Find graphic novels
- Find read-alikes
- Find recent media mentions
- Find the right romance
- Search for books for tweens
- Search for gentle reads
- Speed search Novelist using field codes
- Use Novelist to support summer reading

