

What Is a Genre?

Definition from Dictionary.com:

Genre (noun)

- 1: a kind of literary or artistic work
- 2: a style of expressing yourself in writing [syn: writing style, literary genre]
- 3: a class of artistic endeavor having a characteristic form or technique."

Additional Explanation:

The two major categories, or genres, are **fiction** (about things, events, and characters that are not true) and **nonfiction** (about things, events, and people that are based on fact). From these two major categories, we can classify even further. For example, fiction can be divided into poetry, drama (plays), or prose. Those categories tell us something about the form of the work.

Further, we also classify fiction according to **layout and style**. There are picture books, which contain words and pictures, novellas or short novels, and short stories, which are much shorter than novellas.

Finally, fiction can be classified by **content and theme**. Here is where we find our common genres: adventure stories, science fiction/fantasy, mystery, horror, romance, realistic fiction, and historical fiction.

One thing to keep in mind while reading different texts: genre categories aren't always clear-cut. You can have a crime/mystery story set in the future (science fiction) or in the past (historical fiction).