

# Biography

## Contemporary/Popular Biography

Works written by an author about a living or recently deceased subject. Takes readers step-by-step through the subject's life story from childhood through to whatever stage of life the subject has reached and offers insight into how the subject grew and evolved because of their experiences. Can be classified as either authorized or unauthorized. Authorized biographies are published with the approval of the subject or their family.

Unauthorized biographies are published without permission—or perhaps even without any participation—from the subject or their family.

## Historical Biography

Specifically focus on historically significant subjects who are usually long dead. They typically place particular emphasis on exploring the relationship between the subject's life and contribution and the time during which they lived. Most historical biographies are written about well-known subjects and go into exhaustive detail about their lives and accomplishments.

## Group Biography

If a group of people share certain characteristics or are connected through common circumstances, they may be profiled collectively in a group biography.

## Academic Biography

Typically the most formal and detailed kind of biography. Strongly fact-based and accomplishment-oriented. The life lessons meant to be imparted by other types of biographies are largely absent. Academic biographies are usually aimed at examining the subject's impact on the field with which they are most closely associated. Most academic biographies also include numerous footnotes and other notations that indicate important references.

## Autobiography

Written by the subject, sometimes with the assistance of a ghostwriter. In an autobiography, a person details their own life story and highlights their own experiences and accomplishments. Because they are penned by the subject themselves, autobiographies are usually written from a first-person perspective. For the same reason, autobiographies tend to be less objective than traditional biographies.

## Fictionalized Biographies/Biographical Fiction

Fictionalized biographies are mostly true works based on the real facts and events of a subject's life that incorporate some amount of fictionalization to create a more entertaining narrative. In most cases, a fictionalized biography is, like other biographies, predominantly a retelling of a person's life story. The difference is that the author exercises some creative freedom in how they relate that story.

Biographical fiction is fiction that is written in the form of a traditional biography. Most works of this type essentially involve an author providing a wealth of background information on a fictional character or characters. While technically a novel, a work of biographical fiction tends to read like a traditional biography.

## Fantasy

1. **Dystopian fantasy:** Sometimes grouped in with science fiction, speculative fiction, and literary fiction, dystopian fantasies imagine worlds gone wrong. The settings are at once familiar to contemporary audiences and also alarmingly worse than the present world. Jack Vance's *Dying Earth* series is a pulpy example of this subgenre of fantasy fiction.
2. **High fantasy:** Sometimes called "epic fantasy," high fantasy is set in a magical environment that has its own rules and physical laws. This subgenre's plots and themes have a grand scale and typically center on a single, well-developed hero or a band of heroes, such as Frodo Baggins and his cohorts in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* or Bilbo Baggins and the dwarves in *The Hobbit*. George R.R. Martin combines high fantasy with elements of medieval fantasy and romance in his *Song of Ice and Fire* series (and the *Game of Thrones* television series based upon those books).
3. **Low fantasy:** Set in the real world, low fantasy includes unexpected magical elements that surprise ordinary characters, like the plastic figurines come to life in Lynne Reid Banks's *The Indian in the Cupboard*.
4. **Magical realism:** While similar to low fantasy, magical realism characters accept fantastical elements like levitation and telekinesis as a normal part of their otherwise realistic world, as in Gabriel García Márquez's magical realism classic *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.
5. **Sword and sorcery:** A subset of high fantasy, this subgenre focuses on sword-wielding heroes—such as the titular barbarian in Robert E. Howard's Conan pulp fiction stories—as well as magic or witchcraft. J.K. Rowling popularized the sword and sorcery subgenre for young adults with her Harry Potter series.
6. **Urban fantasy:** Urban fantasy is a genre of literature encompassing novels, novellas, and short stories in which fantastical characters and concepts are placed in a real world urban setting, often in the present day. Urban fantasy novels have devoted followings and they have spawned film and TV adaptations. Urban fantasy stories often draw from noir and gritty police procedurals. They also may incorporate fantastical elements and supernatural creatures. These could involve undead zombies, vampires, druids, demons, wizardry, witchcraft, and other such fantasy tropes. *The Dresden Files* by Jim Butcher is an example of urban fantasy.
7. **Paranormal romance:** This fantasy subgenre combines romantic themes with fantasy elements like vampires, werewolves, shifters, faeries, and zombie armies. Many contemporary fantasy series blur the line between urban fantasy stories, coming-of-age tales, and paranormal romances. Patricia Briggs and Jeaniene Frost are popular authors in this subgenre.
8. **Dark fantasy:** Combining elements of fantasy with the horror genre, dark fantasy's aim is to unnerve and frighten readers. For example, consider the gargantuan, otherworldly monsters in H. P. Lovecraft's universe. Gothic and Victorian dark fantasy tends to embrace a paranormal setting and supernatural elements, which can range from vampires to werewolves and beyond. Note that by no means is every paranormal fantasy a dark fantasy.
9. **Grimdark fantasy:** One step beyond dark fantasy, grimdark novels pry into the blackest depths of the human condition, often in the proverbial underbelly of an alternate world. *The Court of Broken Knives* by Anna Smith Spark is a popular book within this subgenre.

10. **Fables:** Using personified animals and the supernatural, fables impart moral lessons, like the stories in Aesop's Fables and Arabian Nights.

11. **Fairy Tales:** Intended for children, fairy tales and folk tales are typically set in distant magical worlds (with beginnings like "Once upon a time, in a land far, far away...") where trolls, dragons, witches, and other supernatural characters are an accepted truth, as in the Brothers Grimm's Grimms' Fairy Tales.

12. **Superhero fantasy:** Unlike stories in which a hero acquires special abilities through scientific means, such as exposure to radiation, the protagonists' powers in more fantastical superhero stories are supernatural. Many superhero stories are set in a low fantasy world—one that's quite similar to our own world. Superheroes ranging from Wonder Woman to Thor bring fantasy elements to worlds that otherwise obey the known laws of science. Many superhero fantasy authors have worked in the comic book medium, from Stan Lee to Bob Kane. As such, superhero fiction in the fantasy genre is also known as comic fantasy or comic book fantasy.

13. **Fantasy of manners:** This subgenre, exemplified by fantasy books like *Gormenghast* by Mervyn Peake, combines supernatural world-building with the type of society-centric concerns one might encounter in a work by Edith Wharton or Noel Coward. Human drama and pettiness may outweigh magical powers in this subgenre of fantasy literature.

14. **Crossworlds fantasy:** Sometimes called portal fantasy, this subgenre involves characters transporting from a normal world to a magical one. This requires authors to engage in both magical world-building and grounded realistic world-building. Crossworlds fantasy stories often appeal to children, as seen in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series by C.S. Lewis and *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. These works also fit a category known as juvenile fantasy.

15. **Steampunk fantasy:** This highly specific subgenre combines the Victorian science and technology of the Industrial Revolution with contemporary takes on robots and machines. As such, steampunk fantasy is at once alternate history, science fantasy, and a modern fantasy—although the specifics vary with specific novels. *Soulless* by Gail Carriger is a particularly well-regarded steampunk fantasy novel.

16. **Arthurian fantasy:** These historical fantasy stories exist in a magical world of King Arthur, although Arthur himself is not always the main character. Due to their magical setting, Arthurian fantasy novels and short stories tend to feature mythic creatures like dragons, and many of their heroes are knights—which also makes them part of the heroic fantasy subgenre.

17. **Sci-fi fantasy:** These stories can be set in any variety of time periods—which means they can be a contemporary fantasy, a modern fantasy, a futuristic fantasy, or even historical fantasy—but they establish a new world where scientific advancements have changed the rules of engagement, while still incorporating magical elements. The *Star Wars* series and the various works of Isaac Asimov have helped set the bar for sci-fi fantasy.

18. **Wuxia fantasy:** This subgenre is rooted in classic Chinese literature. It involves elements of fantasy interspersed with martial arts. *Jade City* by Fonda Lee is an example of wuxia fantasy.

# Horror

**Psychological Horror:** Psychological horror focuses on the mental, emotional, and psychological states to frighten, disturb, or unsettle readers.

**Slasher Horror:** Slasher horror is characterized by a violent psychopath hunting and killing a sequence of victims in a terrifying manner.

**Gothic Horror:** Gothic horror stories are designed to inspire fear through a romanticized view of the past, combining elements of both horror and romance.

**Paranormal Horror:** This subgenre involves supernatural elements, such as ghosts, vampires, witches, or demons.

**Lovecraftian Horror:** Inspired by the work of H.P. Lovecraft, this subgenre often involves cosmic horror of the unknown and the unknowable more than gore or other elements of shock.

**Zombie Horror:** These tales involve zombies, undead creatures, usually in an apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic world.

**Body Horror:** This subgenre focuses on the graphic destruction or degeneration of the body.

**Splatterpunk:** A movement within horror literature that aims to emphasize the gory, visceral, and often extreme nature of horror.

**Supernatural Horror:** This subgenre includes stories that have elements beyond scientific understanding, often involving gods, demons, or ghosts.

**Sci-Fi Horror:** This subgenre combines elements of horror with the settings and technology typically found in science fiction.

**Occult Horror:** This subgenre deals with the occult, involving witches, satanism, and demonic possession.

**Vampire Horror:** This subgenre centers around the myth and lore of vampires.

**Ghost Horror:** These stories involve spirits or ghosts causing terrifying events.

**Werewolf Horror:** This subgenre focuses on stories revolving around the lore of werewolves.

**Survival Horror:** These stories often involve protagonists trying to survive in hostile environments.

**Haunted House:** This subgenre involves stories of haunted houses or other locations where the setting itself is tied to the horror.

**Monster Horror:** These stories often revolve around monsters, creating fear through their appearance or actions.

**Eco-Horror:** This subgenre involves stories where the horror is derived from nature or the environment.

**Erotic Horror:** This subgenre blends elements of horror and erotica, using sexual themes to elicit fear and dread.

**Techno Horror:** This subgenre uses elements of technology to create fear, often involving computers, robots, or other forms of advanced technology.

**Comedy Horror:** This subgenre often combines horror themes with comedic elements, using humor to lighten the horror.

**Cthulhu Mythos:** A shared fictional universe, based on the work of American writer H. P. Lovecraft.

**Witch Horror:** This subgenre includes stories that involve witches or witchcraft.

**Quiet Horror:** This subgenre focuses on creating a sense of dread and the uncanny through subtle and often psychological means, rather than relying on graphic violence.

**Weird Fiction:** A subgenre that focuses on the weird, blending elements of horror, fantasy, and speculative fiction.

**Crime Horror:** This subgenre combines elements of horror and crime fiction, often involving serial killers or violent criminals.

**Extreme Horror:** This subgenre is characterized by the depiction of extreme acts, such as gratuitous violence, gore, and taboo subjects.

**Dark Fantasy:** This subgenre combines elements of fantasy with horror, creating a dark and often gloomy supernatural world.

**Post-Apocalyptic Horror:** This subgenre deals with stories set in a world devastated by an apocalyptic event.

**Historical Horror:** This subgenre uses historical settings or elements to heighten the horror.

**Pulp Horror:** This subgenre emulates the style of classic pulp fiction, often involving fast-paced plots and lurid themes.

**Teen Horror:** This subgenre focuses on horror stories aimed at a teenage audience.

**Southern Gothic:** This subgenre employs the use of macabre, ironic events to examine the values of the American South.

\* From: Horror Subgenres: 33 Scary Subgenres for Fiction Writers <https://self-publishingschool.com/horror-subgenres/>

# **Memoir**

## **1. The traditional memoir**

The traditional memoir may be about a famous or an ordinary person, and covers a portion of their life the writer feels is interesting to an audience or was deserving of exploration. The list of traditional memoir sub-genres classified by subject could be quite long:

- the artist's memoir
- the spiritual memoir
- the political memoir
- the coming of age memoir
- the business development memoir
- the parenting memoir

A look at Amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com will bring up hundreds of titles. As soon as you change the subject of a memoir search you change the sub-genre.

## **2. The self-help memoir**

The story of an individual who has overcome some difficulty. It tells us about that challenge and provides us with a step by step plan for how we too can overcome that difficulty. It's likely to have lists and recommended actions. While it may also have a bibliography, its strength is in the author's personal testimony. The problem written about in a self-help memoir is usually personal—a physical or social problem: disease, poverty, abuse, etc.

## **3. The healing memoir**

Specifically about how one can cure oneself of an illness, either physical or emotional. It contains strategies the reader can implement (including remedies, exercise and food choices). The healing memoir may have a bibliography of medical studies.

## **4. The how-to memoir**

The how-to memoir differs from a traditional memoir in its details, action lists, and "recipes" in general.

## **5. The investigative memoir**

The investigative memoir is likely to be about a challenge in the political or social arena. The writer talks about his or her life challenges and the resultant significant research to dig up facts and use them to combat the challenges. These memoirs include documentation to prove the writer's point. It will include footnotes, endnotes and a bibliography.

## **6. The food memoir**

There is also the food memoir—also known as the foodoir. A foodoir delves into the story of the role of food in the writer's life. Can be a how-to book, a self-help book or even a healing book. It generally contains recipes, and may include such information as how to stock your kitchen, and what implements to buy.

## Mystery

**Classic Detective:** Originating in the mid-19th century, it primarily features a skilled investigator who solves a crime that others cannot.

**Hard-Boiled:** This subgenre is characterized by a tough, cynical detective, graphic violence, and moral ambiguity.

**Noir:** Noir mysteries often deal with crime, corruption, and the seedy underworld, with a morally ambiguous protagonist.

**Cozy Mystery:** A subgenre where sex and violence are downplayed or treated humorously, often set in small, socially intimate communities.

**Amateur Sleuth:** This subgenre involves a protagonist with no formal connection to law enforcement who solves mysteries.

**Police Procedural:** These stories focus on a team of professionals solving crimes using procedures and techniques utilized by police.

**Forensic:** This subgenre centers around the scientific methods used to solve crimes, often with a protagonist who is a medical examiner or forensic pathologist.

**Culinary Mystery:** A subgenre where crimes, often murder, are set in culinary businesses or environments, often featuring recipes.

**Paranormal Mystery:** This subgenre involves mysteries where supernatural or fantasy elements play a major role.

**Historical Mystery:** Set in a significant, recognizable period of history, with the main character solving crimes using the means available at the time.

**Locked Room:** This subgenre involves a crime, usually murder, that is seemingly impossible to commit.

**Capery:** A subgenre where the main characters are criminals planning or executing a major theft or elaborate scam.

**Inverted Detective:** Unlike traditional mysteries, the criminal's identity is revealed at the beginning, and the story follows the detective's efforts to prove their guilt.

**Procedural:** Focuses on the detailed, step-by-step procedures that investigators use to solve crimes.

**Woman Sleuths:** This subgenre features a woman as the main sleuth, providing a female perspective to the mystery.

**Supernatural Mystery:** Involves cases that are solved through supernatural means, such as magic, witches, ghosts, or werewolves.

**Gothic Mystery:** Combines elements of horror, romance, and mystery, often set in a haunted or eerie castle or mansion.

**Animal Mystery:** This subgenre involves animals as key characters, often as sleuths themselves or companions to the detective.

**Medical Mystery:** Centers around disease, medical science, or biotechnology, with doctors or medical researchers as the main characters.

**Nautical Mystery:** These mysteries take place at sea, often on ships, and involve seafaring dangers or maritime crime.

**Comic Mystery:** This subgenre features humor and fun, often featuring quirky characters and hilarious situations.

**Academic Mystery:** Set in an academic setting such as a university or school, with academics or students as detectives.

**International Mystery & Crime:** Set in international locations, dealing with crimes that cross international borders.

**Private Investigators:** The main character is a professional private investigator who solves crimes for clients.

**True Crime:** This subgenre involves real-life [crime stories](#), including criminal cases and forensic procedures.

**Ethnic Detectives:** Featuring detectives of diverse ethnicity, bringing cultural aspects into the plot.

**LGBT Mystery:** Featuring gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender characters as the protagonist.

**Religious Mystery:** Involves religious institutions, clergy, or religious symbols in the mystery.

**Sociological Mystery:** Deals with a society's structures and issues within the plot of a mystery.

**Western Mystery:** Combines the traditional Western setting with a mystery that the protagonist must solve.

**Juvenile Mystery:** Tailored towards younger audiences, often featuring young detectives solving age-appropriate mysteries.

**Seniors Sleuths:** Features elderly characters solving mysteries, often set in retirement communities.

**Steampunk Mystery:** Combines elements of the steampunk genre with a mystery plot, often set in Victorian era with advanced steam-powered technology.

**Holiday Mystery:** Mysteries centered around holidays, with the plot often tying in to the holiday theme.

**Disability Sleuths:** Features detectives with disabilities, who use their unique perspectives to solve crimes.

**Native American Mystery:** Involves Native American characters, settings, or themes.

**Futuristic Mystery:** Set in the future, featuring advanced technology, alternative societies, or futuristic concepts.

**Craft Mystery:** Centers around crafting hobbies or professions, often with instructions or patterns included.

**Asian Detective:** The protagonist is of Asian descent or the setting is in Asia.

**Nordic Noir:** A mystery subgenre featuring crime fiction written from a Scandinavian point of view.

**Sports Mystery:** Involves sports or athletes, with the plot revolving around a crime related to sports.

**Paranormal Romance Mystery:** Combines elements of paranormal romance with a mysterious plot.

**Archaeological Mystery:** The main character is an archaeologist, and the mystery often involves ancient artifacts or sites.

**Business Mystery:** Set in a corporate or business setting, where the protagonist often must solve a crime related to business.

**Cyber Crime:** Focuses on crimes committed via the Internet or computers.

**Literary Mystery:** These mysteries place a high value on quality writing and complex, thoughtful themes.

**Screwball Mystery:** A lighter mystery subgenre that features a farcical, comedic plot.

**Farm Mystery:** The setting is a farm, and the crimes are often related to farming or rural life.

**Gangster Mystery:** Involves organized crime, mafia, or gangster characters.

**Zoo Mystery:** Set in a zoo or involving animals, with the protagonist often working at a zoo.

**Climate Fiction Mystery:** This subgenre combines elements of climate fiction (cli-fi) with a mystery plot.

\*Adapted from "Mystery Subgenres: 60+ Immersive Fiction Subgenres" <https://self-publishingschool.com/mystery-subgenres/>

# Nonfiction

## History

History books are not to be mistaken with textbooks. Rather than cherry-picking details to be memorized about a person, an event, or an era, these nonfiction titles are more like cross-sections in time. They provide readers with as much of the social and political contexts of events as possible with the use of rich primary and secondary sources, so as to better understand their causes and their legacies.

Examples:

- Guns, Germs, and Steel by Jared Diamond
- Leningrad: The Epic Siege of World War II, 1941-1944 by Anna Reid

## Philosophy

This is where the big questions get asked. While 'philosophy' conjures up the image of impenetrable books written by Nietzsche and Confucius for the enjoyment of beard-stroking academics, that isn't the be-all-and-end-all of this genre! Contemporary authors have taken care to make their writings more accessible without sacrificing depth of analysis.

Examples:

- Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy by Simon Blackburn
- How to Think Like a Roman Emperor by Donald Robertson
- A Grammar of the Multitude by Paolo Virno

## Religion and Spirituality

Books about religion and spirituality can take many forms. Some are theory-based, some are written from personal experience, and some are structured like a self-help book, with the end goal of helping readers find their spiritual home.

Examples:

- Waking the Buddha by Clark Strand
- The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle

## Science

Science books, or "Science & Maths" books — as Amazon would categorize them — can get quite technical. Most of the time, they're reporting on scientists' academic research. And so, science books tend to be well-organized and follow academic conventions like referencing and indexing. But while they sound dry, the intriguing questions that they address can always be presented in ways that keep readers coming. In any case, readers can always choose to scan over the complex mathematical proofs, or authors can put all that into the appendix.

Examples:

- A Brief History of Time by Stephen Hawking
- Origins: Fourteen Billion Years of Cosmic Evolution by Neil deGrasse Tyson and Donald Goldsmith

## **Popular Science**

Popular science books take complex research and processes and get rid of most of the jargon, so that your average Joe can pick them up and learn something new about our universe.

Examples:

- A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson
- Astrophysics for People in a Hurry by Neil deGrasse Tyson

## **Politics and Social Sciences**

With the ongoing social and political tumult across the world, there has been a rise in both the reading and writing of this kind of book. Some political and social science books are based more on anecdotal evidence, others are on par with academic papers in terms of depth of research. Either way, they usually pick out a specific feature or structure in society to analyze with a critical eye.

Examples:

Why Nations Fail by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson  
Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge

## **Essay**

A book of essays is a collection of themed pieces of writing written by an author, or multiple authors, who often has some sort of authority on or personal experience with the subject matter. While they sound incredibly serious, they don't require as much research as the types of nonfiction we've mentioned above. They're often quite introspective and personal, like op-ed pieces or magazine articles. In fact, many essay books are made up of articles that were previously published in newspapers or magazines.

Examples:

Notes of a Native Son by James Baldwin  
The Good Immigrant, edited by Nikesh Shukla

## **Self-Help**

Out of all the non-fiction genres out there, this is probably the most popular one. The name itself is explanatory: a self-help book provides you with some guidance and actions through which you can solve personal problems. Self-help books can be research-based, or they can be reflective — like an extended blog post. Note, though, that while the latter kind may read somewhat like a memoir in style, if you choose to write a self-help book, you must explicitly advise the reader.

Examples:

- Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell
- The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck by Mark Manson

## **Business and Economics**

While this a broad category that may include volumes with a journalistic flavor, business books tend to be guides to entrepreneurship and management. It's a medium for those who've had experience in the workplace or the market to share their tips and tricks (and also a good tool for authors to bag guest-speaking events). In this sense, this kind of book is like self-help, but specifically for entrepreneurs and business managers.

Examples:

- Profit First by Mike Michalowicz
- The Big Short by Michael Lewis

## **Health and Wellness**

These books cover many different topics, from diets to sleeping habits, from stress management to dealing with anxiety. Most are written by researchers and doctors, who have the technical knowhow to offer sound insight and advice.

Examples

- Lifespan by David Sinclair
- This Is Your Brain on Food by Uma Naidoo

## **Crafts and Hobbies**

Origami, crochet, calligraphy, gardening — you name it, there's a book about it. Nowadays, books like these appeal to the audience not solely because of the skills but also the author. Authors are usually someone with an online presence and authority when it comes to the craft, and their book's tone and interior design usually reflect a bit of their personality.

Examples:

- By Hand by Nicole Miyuki Santo
- Alterknit Stitch by Andrea Rangel

## **Travel Guides**

Again, the internet seems to have taken over from books when it comes to helping travelers and tourists discover new places. Still, travel guides are a lot more comprehensive, keeping everything you might need to know about budgeting, languages, places to visit (or avoid), and much more, in one place. Ebooks are the perfect format for these guides — they're easy for travelers to refer to on the go, and they're not as costly to update to include the latest information.

Examples:

- The Lonely Planet series
- The Time Out series

## **Cookbooks**

Cookbooks make up another type of nonfiction that's evermore popular, and not just because we're cooking more and more at home nowadays. They're increasingly beautiful, and to write a cookbook is to have a vision in mind about what kind of mouth-watering photos (or illustrations!) it would offer alongside easy-to-follow instructions. They also tend to have cohesive themes, i.e. desserts for vegans, at-home experimental fine-dining, or worldly culinary adventures from your kitchen.

Examples:

- In Bibi's Kitchen by Hawa Hassan and Julia Turshen
- Ottolenghi Simple by Yotam Ottolenghi
- Midnight Chicken: & Other Recipes Worth Living For by Ella Risbridger

## **Parenting and Family**

From understanding with the psychology of young minds to finding the best environments and ways to nurture them, parenting books with sound academic backing provide useful insights and advice to help readers become better guardians and caregivers.

Examples:

- Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids by Laura Markham
- Unequal Childhoods by Annette Lareau

## **Children's Nonfiction**

Explaining the world to children, even on a limited scale, can be incredibly difficult, as it's hard to keep their attention. Luckily, a bit of assistance from an illustrator can do wonders. As a result, many children's nonfiction books are in the style of picture books and chapter books. Topics covered include short historical accounts and biographies, or stories that explain scientific phenomena and how they are studied.

Examples:

- The Little Leaders series by Vashti Harrison
- There Are Bugs Everywhere by Britta Teckentrup

## **Educational Guides**

Targeted at final-year high-schoolers and young college students, with the aim of providing them some guidance as they reach that strange age where independence is desperately craved but also a bit scary. Unlike popular YA fiction, this is still definitely a niche, yet, as rising study-with-me YouTubers would show you, there is potential for growth. There are also learning guides for older audiences as well.

Examples:

- The Uni-Verse by Jack Edwards
- Beginners by Tom Vanderbilt

## **Textbooks**

Each comprehensively puts together information about a specific subject (and sometimes even the subject of teaching itself). Textbooks also include questions that stimulate learners, encouraging them to reflect on certain matters. As they are meant to accompany a curriculum, textbooks have to be written with a good overarching grasp of the subject and solid understanding of pedagogy.

Examples:

- Oxford's Very Short Introduction series by Oxford University Press
- Letting Go of Literary Whiteness

## **Language Books**

Language books can be general guides as to how to learn any language, or they can go into the nitty-gritty of a particular language. Some of them aren't even about learning to use and communicate in a language; instead, they take a dive into the origins and inner workings of these complex systems. Regardless, because of the complexity of the subject, these nonfiction titles require expert knowledge from the part of the author.

Examples

- Through the Language Glass by Guy Deutscher
- How to Speak Any Language Fluently by Alex Rawlings

## **Humor**

Many of them are memoirs of comedians and talk show hosts, others are written by celebrated essayists and journalists. The celebrity profiles of authors in the genre explains humorous nonfiction's popularity. While form may vary, most of these titles are penned as social commentaries that candidly talk about issues that are often overlooked.

Examples:

- Assassination Vacation by Sarah Vowell
- Hyperbole and a Half by Allie Brosh

## **Arts Books**

The arts section is a fun mix — to name a few, there are photography collections, art catalogues, books on theory and critique, and volumes that teach artistic endeavors. With nuggets of wisdom from industry experts and often great attention paid to design details, these books are like pieces of artwork themselves.

Examples

- The World of Art series by Thames & Hudson
- Women Artists by Flavia Frigeri

## **Travel Literature**

Some call them travelogues, others call them travel memoirs — either way, travel literature books straddle the line between informing on the many cultures of the world and self-reflection. Books that fall into this genre are usually quite poetic and insightful (unlike practical travel guides). They're all about personal journeys that are meditative and eye-opening, and can be about a specific place or a series of places.

Examples:

- Full Tilt: Ireland to India with a Bike by Dervla Murphy
- Notes from a Small Island by Bill Bryson

## **Journalism**

Follow investigative journalists as they uncover ugly truths. Other than doing justice by in-depth and sometimes even dangerous investigations, this type of nonfiction also enthralls readers with the twists and turns of real events and details of actual underground operations, conspiracies, and court dramas, to name a few.

Examples

All the President's Men by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein

Catch and Kill by Ronan Farrow

\*Adapted from: "Nonfiction: 24 Genres and Types of Fact-Based Books" <https://reedsy.com/blog/guide/nonfiction/>

## Romance

**Contemporary Romance:** Set in the present time, these stories focus on romantic relationships unfolding in modern settings.

**Historical Romance:** These stories are set in the past, typically featuring romantic relationships in historical time periods. Examples include Regency romance, Victorian romance, Viking romance, and Medieval romance.

**Regency Romances:** Set in the early 19th century, regency romances typically revolve around the social customs, etiquette, and romantic relationships of the British Regency era, made famous by authors like Jane Austen.

**Western Romances:** Set in the American West during the 19th century, western romances feature romantic relationships against the backdrop of frontier life, cowboys, and the challenges of the Wild West.

**Paranormal Romance:** Often involving supernatural creatures like vampires, werewolves, demons, angels, or witches, paranormal romance focuses on romantic relationships in worlds where paranormal elements and fantasy are integral to the plot.

**Vampire Romances:** Vampire romances feature romantic relationships involving vampires as central characters, exploring the complexities and forbidden nature of love between humans and vampires.

**Werewolf & Shifter Romance:** These stories involve romantic relationships with characters who can transform into werewolves, shapeshifters, or other animal forms, exploring themes of fated mates and primal desires.

**Monster Romance:** A type of paranormal romance that features a monster-influenced hero or heroine, especially those who don't fall into other paranormal or sci-fi categories (for example, aliens or shifters).

**Romantic Comedy:** Light-hearted and humorous, romantic comedies emphasize the comedic elements while developing romantic relationships as the central theme.

**Erotic Romance:** These stories involve explicit and steamy romantic relationships, often exploring themes of sexuality and desire in detail.

**Young Adult Romance:** Tailored for a teenage audience, young adult romance follows teenage protagonists as they navigate love, relationships, and coming-of-age experiences.

**New Adult & College Romance:** Targeted toward younger adult readers, new adult and college romance follows characters in the transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood, featuring romantic relationships set in college or early adult life.

**Paranormal Women's Fiction Romance:** Paranormal women's fiction combines elements of paranormal or supernatural elements with women's fiction, focusing on the personal growth and empowerment of the female protagonist. These stories often feature women going through a life transition or rediscovery, with the paranormal elements adding an additional layer of excitement and self-discovery to the narrative. Depending on the source, it can be defined as having 35+ or 40+ heroines.

**Inspirational Romance:** Rooted in faith and spirituality, these stories often involve characters who find love and connection while embracing their religious or inspirational values.

**Fantasy Romance:** Blending elements of fantasy and romance, these stories take place in fantastical worlds, featuring magic, mythical creatures, and epic adventures alongside romantic relationships.

**Romantasy:** Romantasy blends high fantasy world-building with deeply romantic storylines and guaranteed happily-ever-after endings. These stories feature sweeping epic settings, magic systems, and mythical creatures alongside central romantic arcs that carry equal weight to the larger plot. Characters often include morally complex heroes, fated bonds, and high-stakes adventure woven throughout the love story. Romantasy has seen explosive growth in recent years and has become one of the most searched and discussed crossover genres in fiction.

**Urban Fantasy Romance:** Urban fantasy romances blend the excitement of urban settings with the enchantment of fantasy elements, creating a unique backdrop for passionate love stories.

**High Fantasy Romance:** High fantasy romance is set in a fully fictional world with its own unique rules, cultures, and magic systems. In high fantasy romances, readers are transported to enchanting realms filled with mythical creatures, epic quests, and larger-than-life heroes and heroines. These stories often revolve around the struggle of overcoming great challenges, discovering destinies, and finding love in the midst of fantastical adventures. High fantasy romances offer an immersive escape into a world of magic, where love blossoms amidst epic battles and ancient prophecies.

**Science Fiction / Sci-Fi Romance:** Combining elements of science fiction and romance, these stories take place in futuristic or otherworldly settings, often featuring advanced technology and space exploration alongside romantic relationships.

**Alien Romance:** Sci-Fi Romances featuring aliens, whether visiting Earth or taking place in spaceships or on other planets.

**Alternate Reality Romances:** A type of sci-fi romance that refers to stories that take place in a fictional or parallel universe, separate from our own reality.

**Dark Romance:** Dark romance is a subgenre characterized by intense and often taboo themes, featuring complex relationships that explore dark and psychological elements. It typically involves morally ambiguous, morally gray, or morally flawed characters and may explore themes of power dynamics, obsession, or unconventional love.

**Suspense/Thriller Romance:** Combining suspense and romance, these stories involve romantic relationships set against a backdrop of danger, mystery, and suspenseful plotlines.

**Disabled-Identifying Romances:** Romance Books Featuring Disabled-Identifying Protagonists Or Love Interests. One or both main characters will identify as having a disability.

**LGBTQ+ Romance:** These stories focus on romantic relationships involving characters from the LGBTQ+ community, highlighting diverse experiences and love stories.

**Later in Life Romance:** Also known as “silver fox” romance, these stories focus on romantic relationships between mature characters who are typically older and have experienced life’s ups and downs.

**Action & Adventure Romance:** These stories blend romance with thrilling action and adventure, featuring high-stakes situations, danger, and excitement alongside the development of romantic relationships.

**BIPOC Romance:** BIPOC Romance refers to romance stories that prioritize and center the experiences, perspectives, and romantic relationships of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) protagonists. These stories explore love, connection, and intimacy within diverse communities, highlighting the richness and diversity of BIPOC experiences, cultures, and identities.

**Multicultural Romances:** These stories highlight romantic relationships between characters from diverse cultural backgrounds, focusing on the challenges and joys of love across cultures or interracial relationships.

**Billionaire Romance:** Often falling under the category of contemporary romance, billionaire romance stories feature wealthy protagonists and emphasize the dynamics of love and romance in a lavish and affluent lifestyle.

**Clean & Wholesome Romance:** Clean and wholesome romance focuses on the development of romantic relationships without explicit content or graphic scenes, providing uplifting and heartwarming stories suitable for a wide range of readers.

**Cozy Romance:** Cozy romance, also known as sweet romance, focuses on heartwarming and light-hearted stories that prioritize the development of loving and wholesome relationships. These stories typically have a low level of conflict and explicit content, providing readers with a comforting and feel-good reading experience.

**Gothic Romances:** Inspired by the classic gothic literature tradition, these romances often take place in dark and mysterious settings, featuring brooding heroes, damsels in distress, and elements of suspense and the supernatural.

**Holiday Romance:** Holiday romances are set during specific holidays or festive seasons and revolve around romantic relationships that blossom amid the backdrop of holiday celebrations and traditions.

**Medical Romance:** These stories focus on romance within the medical field, involving doctors, nurses, or other medical professionals and highlighting the challenges and joys of love amidst the demands of their careers.

**Military Romance:** Military romance features characters involved in the military, such as soldiers, veterans, or military spouses, and explores the complexities of romantic relationships in the context of service to their country.

**Sports Romance:** Sports romance revolves around romantic relationships involving characters who are athletes or involved in the sports industry, highlighting the passion and dynamics of love in the context of sports.

**Time Travel Romances:** These stories involve characters who travel through time, often (not always) finding love and navigating romantic relationships across different time periods.

**Rockstar Romance:** Rockstar romance revolves around romantic relationships involving characters who are musicians or involved in the music industry, portraying the allure and challenges of love in the world of rock and roll.

**Mafia Romance:** Mafia romance is a subgenre of romance that revolves around romantic relationships involving characters affiliated with organized crime or mafia families. These stories often explore the dangerous and forbidden nature of love between individuals who are immersed in a world of violence, secrecy, and power struggles. Mafia romances typically involve themes of redemption, loyalty, and the complexities of navigating relationships within a criminal underworld.

\*Adapted from: "Comprehensive List of Romance Genres" <https://michellepillow.com/comprehensive-list-of-romance-genres/>

# Thriller

## Psychological thriller

Delves into the intricate psychological effects of unfolding events.

Key characteristics of a psychological thriller:

1. Mind games or manipulation
2. Moral ambiguity
3. Twisted family or social dynamics
4. Unreliable narrators
5. Deep dive into the human psyche

Famous psychological thriller examples:

1. *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn – A wife goes missing, and her husband becomes the prime suspect.
2. *Shutter Island* by Dennis Lehane – A U.S. Marshal investigates a mental institution and questions his sanity.
3. Movie: “*Black Swan*” – A ballet dancer’s mind unravels as she prepares for a role.

Who should write a psychological thriller?

If you enjoy unraveling human behavior and exploring what drives people, this genre is for you. Those who excel in portraying [complex characters](#) and moral ambiguity should consider writing psychological thrillers.

## Crime thriller

Revolves around the commission, investigation, or prevention of a crime.

Key characteristics of a crime thriller:

1. Detective or investigator as [the protagonist](#)
2. High stakes
3. Clues and red herrings
4. Criminal psychology
5. Action-packed sequences

Famous crime thriller examples:

1. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson – A journalist and hacker investigate a woman’s disappearance.
2. *In the Woods* by Tana French – A detective confronts his past while solving a young girl’s murder.
3. Movie: “*Se7en*” – Detectives hunt a serial killer who uses the seven deadly sins.

Who should write a crime thriller?

If you’re intrigued by the mechanics of law and fascinated by the criminal mind, this subgenre plays to your strengths. Strong plotting and pacing skills are a must for those considering writing crime thrillers.

## **Suspense thriller**

Aims to keep readers on the edge of their seats with high tension and drama.

Key characteristics of a suspense thriller:

1. Cliffhangers
2. Time constraints
3. Limited information
4. High emotional stakes
5. Multiple viewpoints

Famous suspense thriller examples:

1. The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown – A symbologist races against time to solve a murder and conspiracy.
2. Before I Go To Sleep by S.J. Watson – A woman wakes up every day with no memory of her past.
3. Movie: “Rear Window” – A man suspects his neighbor of murder but can’t leave his apartment to prove it.

Who should write a suspense thriller?

If you excel at building tension and enjoy a gradual build-up that climaxes intensely, consider writing suspense thrillers. A keen understanding of pacing is crucial for those interested in this genre.

## **Action thriller**

Delivers excitement through physical action and stunts.

Key characteristics of an action thriller:

1. Fast pace
2. High-stakes scenarios
3. Explosive confrontations
4. Resourceful heroes
5. Villains with significant firepower

Famous action thriller examples:

1. Jack Reacher series by Lee Child – A former military police officer takes justice into his own hands.
2. The Bourne Identity by Robert Ludlum – A man with amnesia discovers he’s an assassin. This is similar to the spy thriller in the next subgenre.
3. Movie: “Die Hard” – A cop fights terrorists in a high-rise building.

Who should write an action thriller?

If you’re adept at crafting intense action sequences and enjoy rapid storytelling, this subgenre suits your writing style.

## **Spy thriller**

Revolves around espionage and covert activities.

Key characteristics of a spy thriller:

1. Political intrigue
2. Undercover operations
3. Surveillance
4. Moral quandaries
5. Global stakes

Famous spy thriller examples:

1. Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy by John le Carré – A retired spy uncovers a mole in the intelligence agency.
2. The Day of the Jackal by Frederick Forsyth – An assassin is hired to eliminate Charles de Gaulle.
3. Movie: “Skyfall” – James Bond faces a threat from within MI6.

Who should write a spy thriller?

If you're intrigued by geopolitics, covert operations, and high-stakes global scenarios, this subgenre offers an exciting avenue for your writing. A penchant for research will greatly enhance your storytelling.

## **Legal thriller**

Focuses on lawyers or courtrooms and often involves a major criminal case.

Key characteristics of a legal thriller:

1. Legal procedures
2. Moral dilemmas
3. High-stakes trials
4. Lawyer as the protagonist
5. Legal jargon

Famous legal thriller examples:

1. A Time to Kill by John Grisham – A young lawyer defends a black man accused of killing two white men.
2. Presumed Innocent by Scott Turow – A prosecutor is accused of murdering his colleague.
3. Movie: “A Few Good Men” – Navy lawyers defend Marines accused of murder.

Who should write a legal thriller?

If you have a background in law or a strong interest in legal issues and ethics, this is a great fit. Detail-oriented writers will excel here.

## **Political thriller**

Involves the complex world of political maneuvering, and can feature politicians, or those trying to expose them.

Key characteristics of a political thriller:

1. Political corruption
2. Power plays

3. Government secrets
4. Revolutions or coups
5. Public vs. private personas

Famous political thriller examples:

1. All the King's Men by Robert Penn Warren – A journalist becomes entangled in a corrupt political landscape.
2. House of Cards by Michael Dobbs – A politician maneuvers his way to the top, at any cost.
3. Movie: "The Manchurian Candidate" – A soldier is brainwashed to assassinate a political candidate.

Who should write a political thriller?

If you have a grasp on political systems and enjoy dissecting power dynamics, this is your turf. Writers with strong opinions on governance will find a home here.

### **Medical thriller**

Focuses on medical professionals, diseases, or medical ethics.

Key characteristics of a medical thriller:

1. Medical jargon
2. Ethical dilemmas
3. Scientific research
4. Epidemics or pandemics
5. Hospital settings

Famous medical thriller examples:

1. Coma by Robin Cook – Patients mysteriously go into comas during routine surgeries.
2. The Andromeda Strain by Michael Crichton – Scientists rush to contain a deadly extraterrestrial microbe.
3. Movie: "Contagion" – The global spread of a virus and the race to find a cure. If this reminded you a bit of the recent pandemic, you're not alone.

Who should write a medical thriller?

If you have a medical background or are passionate about medical ethics or diseases, you'll excel in this subgenre. Doing research for this type of book is crucial.

### **Techno-thriller**

Combines the action of thrillers with complex technological elements.

Key characteristics of a techno-thriller:

1. Advanced technology
2. Cybersecurity
3. Hacking
4. Futuristic settings
5. Ethical implications of technology

Famous techno-thriller examples:

1. Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson – A computer virus threatens to infect human minds.
2. Neuromancer by William Gibson – A washed-up computer hacker is hired for a heist against a powerful AI.
3. Movie: “The Matrix” – A computer hacker discovers his world is a simulated reality.

Who should write a techno-thriller?

If you're tech-savvy and intrigued by the implications of emerging technologies, this is your subgenre. A strong grasp of technological concepts is beneficial.

\*Adapted from “Thriller Genre Subgenres: 10 Types of Thriller Novel” <https://self-publishingschool.com/thriller-genre-subgenres/>

## Sci-Fi

**Science fiction** - Fiction that explores worlds with imagined innovations in science and/or technology. Often dives into the consequences of these innovations.

**Speculative fiction** - An umbrella term that covers works and genres with elements that separate them from reality such as magic or the supernatural. Science fiction, fantasy, horror, alternative histories, and more can be considered speculative fiction.

**Space opera** - Think Star Trek or Star Wars: a subgenre of science fiction that features grand adventure in space. Often includes depictions of aliens and advanced technology like faster-than-light travel.

**Climate fiction (Cli-Fi)** - Science fiction that deals with the impact of climate change, usually on Earth but can include fictional planets. Cli-fi works can be either utopic or dystopic/apocalyptic and often take place in a near future.

**Cyberpunk** - A subgenre of science fiction that blends advanced technology with societal collapse or decay. Many cyberpunk works use elements from hard boiled detective fiction and film noir.

**Steampunk** - A genre that features the technology and aesthetics of the 19th century's steam-powered machinery. These works tend to take place in alternative history settings, such as reimagining the Victorian era with advanced, steam-powered technology. Steampunk can also include elements of fantasy, horror, and more.

**Solarpunk** - The utopian counterpart to cyberpunk, solarpunk is a subgenre of science fiction that explores a future where advanced technology is used to create a sustainable society.

**Dystopian fiction** - A speculative fiction genre that explores an oppressive or otherwise undesirable society. Authors often draw upon contemporary political issues when crafting their dystopias.

**Utopian fiction** - A speculative fiction genre that envisions a perfect and ideal society. Utopias can be read as critiques on contemporary society or they can be seen as goals to aspire to.

**Human-Alien Encounter** - A subgenre of science fiction that involves stories of humans meeting/interacting with extraterrestrial beings. This genre can overlap with space opera.

\*From: "Science Fiction: Glossary of Genres" <https://guides.lib.utexas.edu/c.php?g=849284&p=9855392>