



Writing Genre Fiction

Overview, Tips & Tricks, and Resources

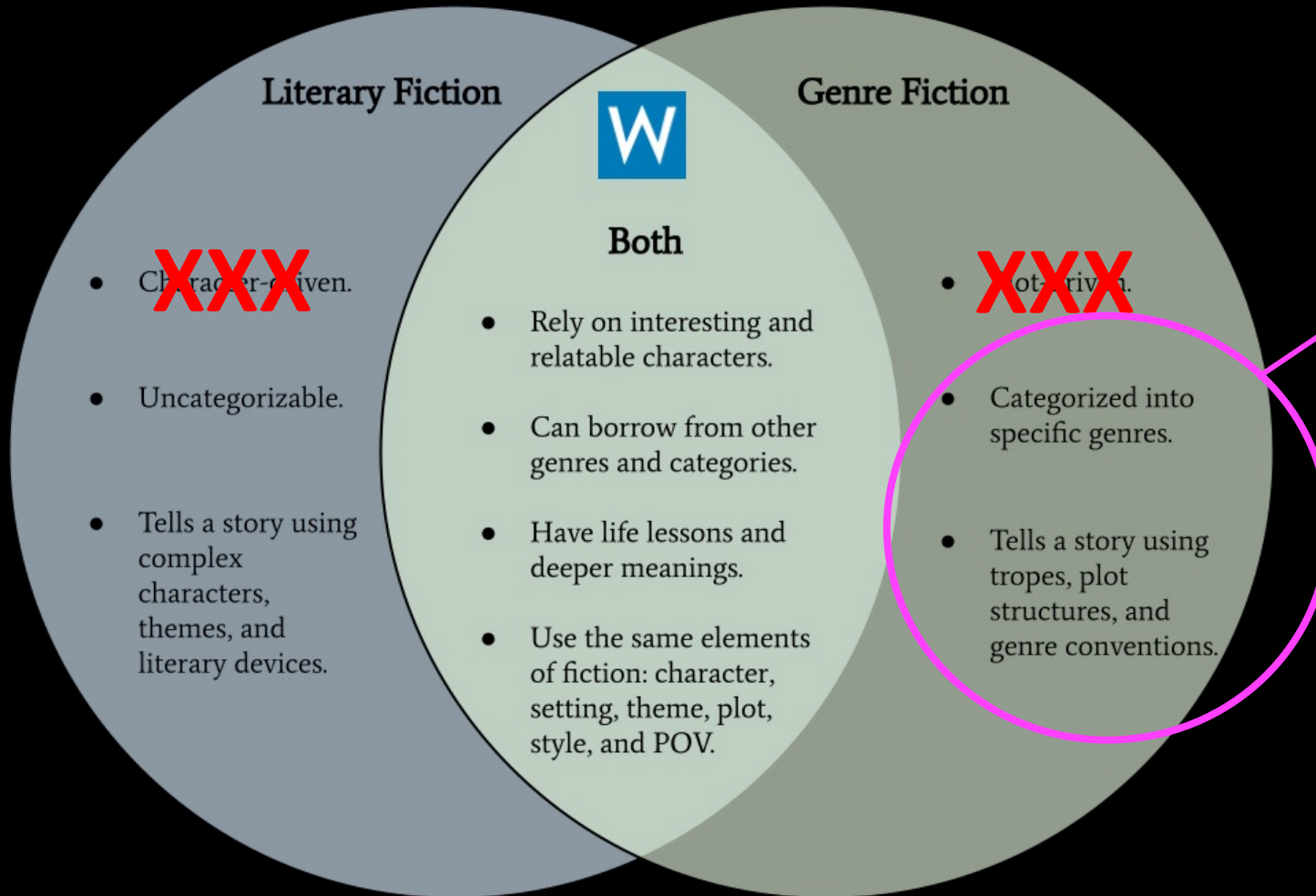
Download these slides at: <https://www.asamariabradley.com/shadle/>

The Plan for This Talk

- Genre Fiction Overview
- Some Definitions
- Tropes, Tropes, & More Tropes
- Some Resources
- Final Thoughts
- Questions



Genre Fiction Overview



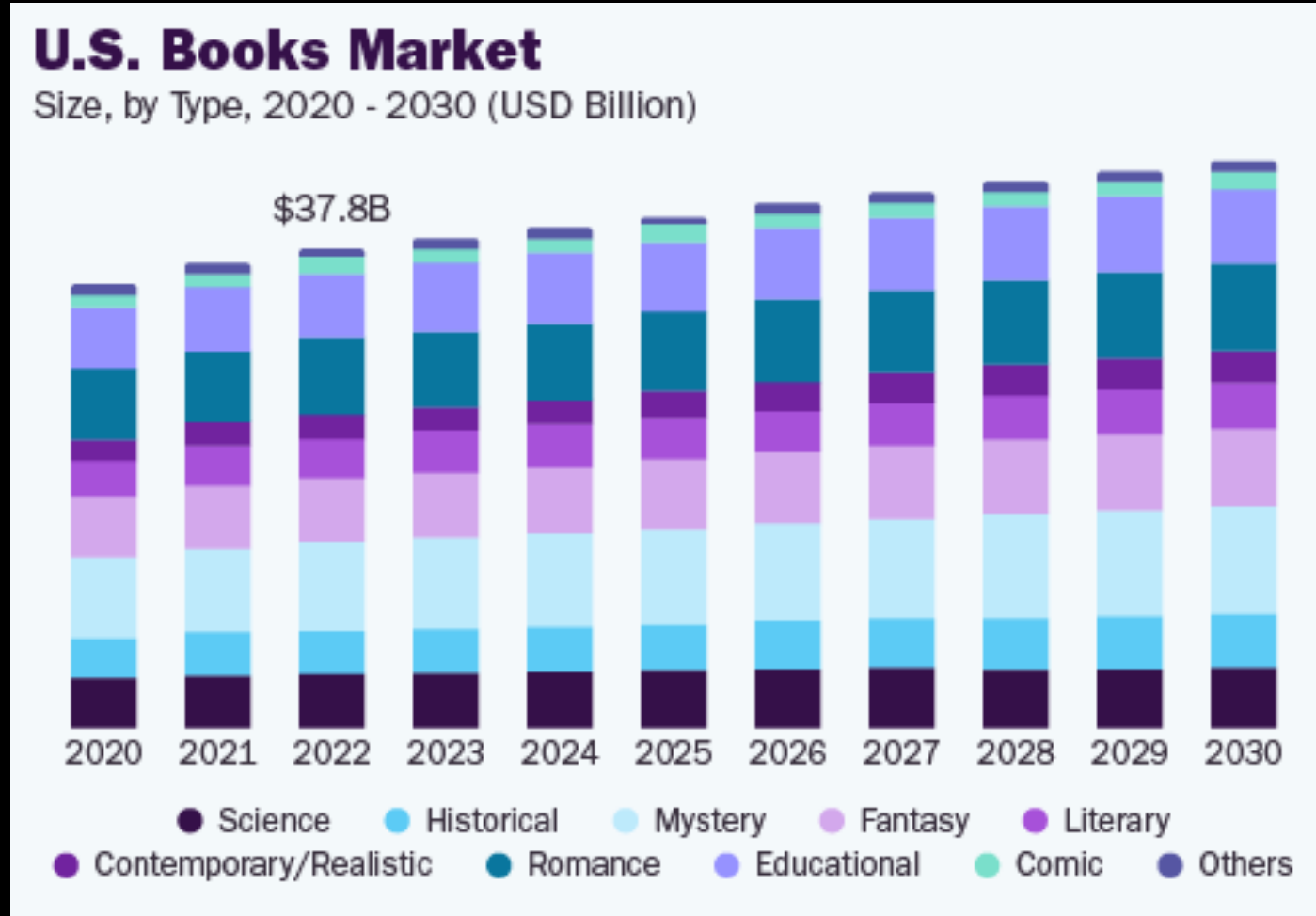
If you write genre fiction, you sign a contract with your reader in which you promise to deliver what they expect.

Think of genre as a short-hand method of telling your readers that you write what they like.



Genre Fiction Overview

The books market in the U.S. is expected to reach nearly USD 45 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.1%.





Genre Fiction Overview

The genre fiction categories that generated the most sales world-wide in 2021 are:

- **Romance** (\$1.44 billion)
- Crime/Mystery (\$728.2 million)
- Religious/Inspirational (\$720 million)
- Science fiction/fantasy (\$590.2 million)
- Horror (\$79.6 million)





Genre Fiction Overview

And there are genres within genres...

- ◀ Kindle Store
- Kindle eBooks**
- Arts & Photography
- Biographies & Memoirs
- Business & Money
- Children's eBooks
- Comics, Manga & Graphic Novels
- Computers & Technology
- Cookbooks, Food & Wine
- Crafts, Hobbies & Home
- Education & Teaching
- Engineering & Transportation
- Foreign Languages
- Health, Fitness & Dieting
- History
- Humor & Entertainment
- LGBTQ+ eBooks
- Law
- Literature & Fiction
- Medical eBooks
- Mystery, Thriller & Suspense
- Nonfiction
- Parenting & Relationships
- Politics & Social Sciences
- Reference
- Religion & Spirituality
- Romance
- Science & Math
- Science Fiction & Fantasy
- Self-Help
- Sports & Outdoors
- Teen & Young Adult
- Travel

- ◀ Kindle Store
- ◀ Kindle eBooks
- Romance**
- Action & Adventure
- Adaptations
- Alpha Male
- Amish
- Billionaires & Millionaires
- Clean & Wholesome
- Collections & Anthologies
- Contemporary
- Enemies to Lovers
- Fantasy
- Gothic
- Historical Romance
- Holidays
- LGBTQ+
- Later in Life
- Love Triangle
- Mafia Romance
- Multicultural & Interracial
- New Adult & College Romance
- Paranormal
- Polyamory
- Rockstar Romance
- Romance
- Romance in Uniform
- Romantic Comedy
- Romantic Suspense
- Science Fiction
- Small Town Romance
- Sports
- Time Travel
- Western & Frontier
- Workplace Romance

- ◀ Kindle Store
- ◀ Kindle eBooks
- ◀ Romance
- Paranormal**
- Angels
- Demons & Devils
- Ghosts
- Magic
- Psychics
- Vampires
- Werewolves & Shifters
- Witches & Wizards



Genre Fiction Overview

And there are genres within genres...

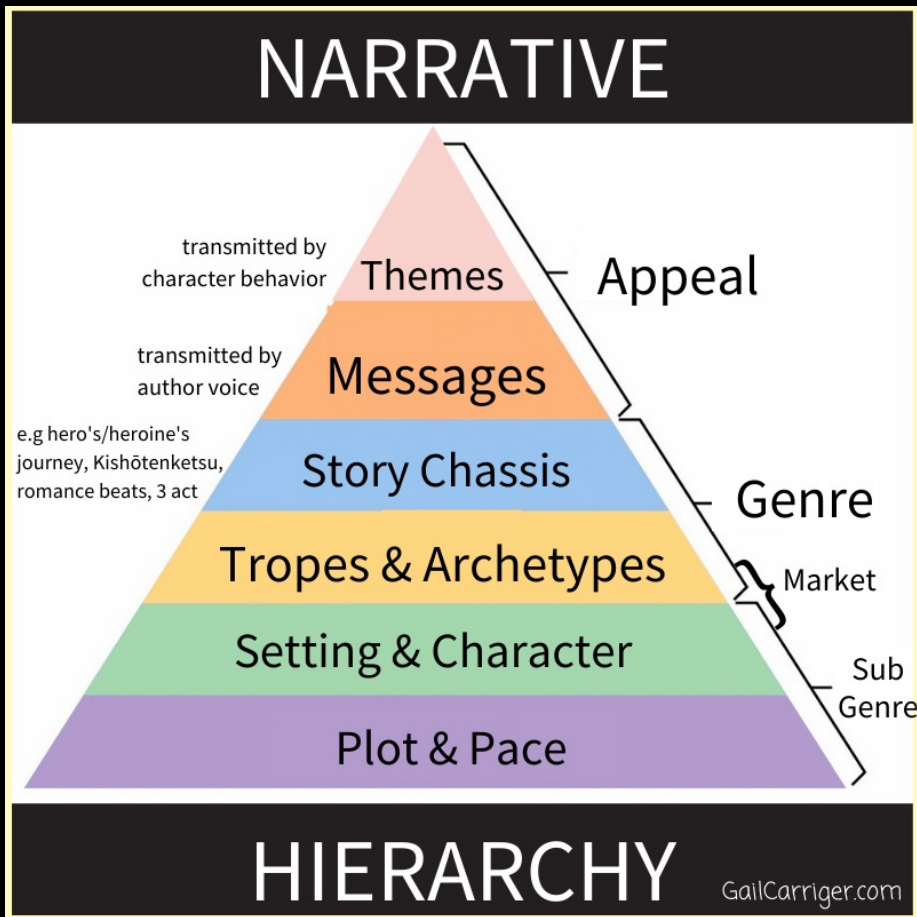
- ◀ Kindle Store
- Kindle eBooks
- Arts & Photography
- Biographies & Memoirs
- Business & Money
- Children's eBooks
- Comics, Manga & Graphic Novels
- Computers & Technology
- Cookbooks, Food & Wine
- Crafts, Hobbies & Home
- Education & Teaching
- Engineering & Transportation
- Foreign Languages
- Health, Fitness & Dieting
- History
- Humor & Entertainment
- LGBTQ+ eBooks
- Law
- Literature & Fiction
- Medical eBooks
- Mystery, Thriller & Suspense
- Nonfiction
- Parenting & Relationships
- Politics & Social Sciences
- Reference
- Religion & Spirituality
- Romance
- Science & Math
- Science Fiction & Fantasy
- Self-Help
- Sports & Outdoors
- Teen & Young Adult
- Travel

- ◀ Kindle Store
- ◀ Kindle eBooks
- Science Fiction & Fantasy**
- Fantasy
- Science Fiction

- ◀ Kindle Store
- ◀ Kindle eBooks
- ◀ Science Fiction & Fantasy
- Fantasy**
- Action & Adventure
- Alternative History
- Anthologies & Short Stories
- Arthurian
- Classics
- Coming of Age
- Dark Fantasy
- Dragons & Mythical Creatures
- Epic
- Fairy Tales
- Fantasy
- Gaslamp
- Historical
- Humorous
- LGBTQ+ Fantasy
- Metaphysical & Visionary
- Military
- Myths & Legends
- New Adult & College
- Paranormal & Urban
- Romantic
- Superhero
- Sword & Sorcery
- TV, Movie, Video Game Adaptations

- ◀ Kindle Store
- ◀ Kindle eBooks
- ◀ Science Fiction & Fantasy
- ◀ Fantasy
- Myths & Legends**
- Arthurian
- Asian
- Greek & Roman
- Norse & Viking

Tropes vs Archetypes vs Themes



From Gail Carriger's *A Heroine's Journey*:

- **Trope**: a socially shared concept that is imbued with social meaning that helps to create a predictable metaphor or outcome.
- **Archetype**: a recurring character or idea that's actually a symbol or motif. Examples: trickster guide, wise mentor.
- **Themes**: a central topic or implication of the story—an emotional response. Examples: self-discovery, betrayal.

Macbeth has a **theme** of unchecked ambition, uses the **trope** of a fated outcome, and has the evil witch **archetype** at the beginning of the story.

Discussions in the genre fiction world often use “**trope**” to mean all 3 of these.

Trope vs Cliche





The Power of Tropes

- Provides a predictable character, setting, plot, and/or type of story.
- Creates multi-dimensional characters by building tension.
- Strengthens conflict, both internal and external.
- Tells readers that you write what they like.





Trope Examples

Romance

- Enemies to Lovers
- Friend's Sibling
- Forced Proximity
- Secret Baby
- Arranged Marriage
- One Night Stand
- Fated Mates

Mystery/Thriller

- Loner/Scarred Sleuth
- Serial Killer
- Protector/Guardian
- Amnesia
- Amateur Sleuth
- Stalker
- Revenge

Fantasy

- Chosen One
- Quest
- Secret/Lost Heir
- Second Chance
- Misfiring Powers
- Time Travel
- Redemption

Mystery Blurb



Spy

Redemption

Former spy Maggie Bird came to the seaside village of Purity, Maine, eager to put the past behind her after a mission went tragically wrong. These days, she's living quietly on her chicken farm, still wary of blowback from the events that forced her early retirement.

Revenge

But when a body turns up in Maggie's driveway, she knows it's a message from former foes who haven't forgotten her. Maggie turns to her local circle of old friends—all retirees from the CIA—to help uncover the truth about who is trying to kill her, and why. This "Martini Club" of former spies may be retired, but they still have a few useful skills that they're eager to use again, if only to spice up their rather sedate new lives.

Complicating their efforts is Purity's acting police chief, Jo Thibodeau. More accustomed to dealing with rowdy tourists than homicide, Jo is puzzled by Maggie's reluctance to share information—and by her odd circle of friends, who seem to be a step ahead of her at every turn.

As Jo's investigation collides with the Martini Club's maneuvers, Maggie's hunt for answers will force her to revisit a clandestine career that spanned the globe, from Bangkok to Istanbul, from London to Malta. The ghosts of her past have returned, but with the help of her friends—and the reluctant Jo Thibodeau—Maggie might just be able to save the life she's built.

From Tess Gerritsen's *The Spy Coast*

Found Family



Women's Fiction Blurb

Once upon a time, the pressure to be the perfect daughter nearly broke Kayla Whitman. Desperate to find an outlet away from her controlling mother, she picked up a pair of drumsticks, forever altering the rhythm of her life. Since then, she's been determined to make her own way, finding her home with her bandmates even as she fights to keep her past and her present firmly separate.

Things were simple enough when the Lillys were playing local gigs at dive bars, but now they're on their first official tour—and all Kayla can see are warning signs. Desperate to escape the worry churning inside her, Kayla finds solace in quiet tour bus driver Ty Baldwin...and discovers in him a kindred spirit like no one she's ever met before.

Their connection is immediate and intense, but when increasing scrutiny from the press threatens to destroy Ty's newfound peace and Kayla's carefully guarded secrets, Kayla's forced to make an impossible choice: pursue her dream and risk destroying everyone around her? Or give in and lose the chance of ever becoming the person she's always known she could be.

From Xio Axelrod's *Girls with Bad Reputations*



Women's Fiction Blurb

Once upon a time, the pressure to be the perfect daughter nearly broke Kayla Whitman. Desperate to find an outlet away from her controlling mother, she picked up a pair of drumsticks, forever altering the rhythm of her life. Since then, she's been determined to make her own way, finding her home with her bandmates even as she fights to keep her past and her present firmly separate.

Found Family

Things were simple enough when the Lillys were playing local gigs at dive bars, but now they're on their first official tour—and all Kayla can see are warning signs. Desperate to escape the worry churning inside her, Kayla finds solace in quiet tour bus driver Ty Baldwin...and discovers in him a kindred spirit like no one she's ever met before.

Instalove

Soulmate/Fated Mate

Their connection is immediate and intense, but when increasing scrutiny from the press threatens to destroy Ty's newfound peace and Kayla's carefully guarded secrets, Kayla's forced to make an impossible choice, pursue her dream and risk destroying everyone around her? Or give in and lose the chance of ever becoming the person she's always known she could be.

From Xio Axelrod's *Girls with Bad Reputations*





Romance Blurb

Turns out the gorgeous stranger I had a one-night stand with is not only my sister's best friend but also my new employee.

Worse? I shared a whole lot more with Avery than one mind-blowing night.

I told her my deepest, darkest secret.

Despite my constant worry that she'll let the truth slip to my family, I can't stay away from her. And when we're tossed together for an out of town trip and forced to share a room with only one bed, the chemistry between us finally explodes...again.

I have no problem making her see stars—or breaking the bed. The trouble is, the longer our secret relationship goes on, the more I want to keep her.

But she's eight years my junior, the sunshine to my grump, and I know her free spirit wants more than the small town of Starlight Cove can offer.

I have no doubt no one will ever give her more pleasure than I will, but I refuse to hold her back.

Even if that means letting her go when her three month contract is up.

From Brighton Walsh's *Reckless Heart*





Romance Blurb

Turns out the **gorgeous stranger** I had a **one-night stand** with is not only my **sister's best friend** but also my **new employee**.

Worse? I shared a whole lot more with Avery than one mind-blowing night.

I told her my **deepest, darkest secret**.

Despite my constant worry that she'll let the truth slip to my family, I can't stay away from her. And when we're tossed together for an out of town trip and forced to share a room with **only one bed**, the chemistry between us finally explodes...again.

I have no problem making her see stars—or breaking the bed. The trouble is, the longer our **secret relationship** goes on, the more I want to keep her.

But she's **eight years my junior**, the **sunshine to my grump**, and I know her **free spirit** wants more than the **small town** of Starlight Cove can offer.

I have no doubt no one will ever give her more pleasure than I will, but I refuse to hold her back.

Even if that means letting her go when her three month contract is up.

From Brighton Walsh's *Reckless Heart*



Tropes in Marketing



GRUMPY SUNSHINE

ONE NIGHT STAND TO OOPS HE'S MY BOSS

BEST FRIEND'S BROTHER

HE WRITES SMUT

"GOOD GIRL"

PLEASURE DOM

BRAT TAMER

WHOOPS WE BROKE THE BED

"WHO DID THIS TO YOU?"

AGE GAP

STERN BRUNCH DADDY

kindleunlimited



THE LILLYS SERIES CONTINUES!

Women Who Rock

Found Family

Friends to Lovers

Word Nerds in Love

Pansexual MMC

Tour Bus Shenanigans

Girls with Bad Reputations
with
Reputations

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
XIO AXELROD

FEBRUARY 6 2024

Resources

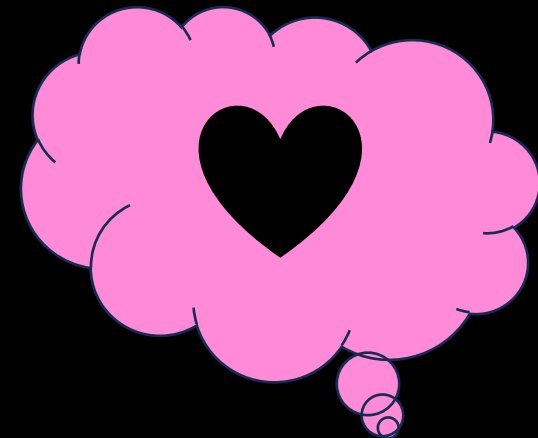


- *GMC: Goal, Motivation, & Conflict* by Debra Dixon
- *Save the Cat* by Blake Snyder
- *The Anatomy of Story* by John Truby
- *The Complete Writer's Guide to Heroes & Heroines* by Tami D. Cowden, Caro LaFever, & Sue Vider
- *The Trope Thesaurus* by Jennifer Hilt
- Romance Writers of America (rwa.org)
- Mystery Writers of America (mysterywriters.org)
- International Thriller Writers (thrillerwriters.org)
- Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers Association (sfwa.org)
- Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (scbwi.org)



Some Final Thoughts

- You don't have to learn everything before you write your story.
- Optimizing your manuscript to fit in the right genre doesn't happen in the first draft.
- Study the books within the genre you might want to write in.
- Have Fun!



Questions?

