

Genre Expectations at a Glance

A quick-reference guide for writers from Technica Editorial

When readers pick up a book in a specific genre, they're signing up for an emotional experience. This cheat sheet helps you meet that expectation and deliver a story that satisfies.



Mystery

- 🔍 A puzzle or crime to solve
- 🔍 A satisfying (often twisty) resolution
- 🔍 Red herrings, clues, and fair play
- 🔍 Justice or truth revealed by the end
- 💡 **Tip:** *Play fair, but keep the reader guessing.*



Romance

- 💕 Central love story
- 💕 Emotional conflict or stakes
- 💕 Intimacy, vulnerability, growth
- 💕 A “happily ever after” or “happy for now”
- 💡 **Tip:** *The romance must drive the plot, not just be a subplot.*



Thriller/Suspense

- 🔥 Urgency, danger, or high personal stakes
- 🔥 A fast-paced plot with a ticking clock
- 🔥 A sense of dread or tension throughout
- 🔥 Unexpected twists, reveals, and reversals
- 💡 **Tip:** *Keep your protagonist active—they must drive the story forward.*



Fantasy

- 🐉 Magic, myth, or alternate worlds
- 🐉 Strong internal logic and rules
- 🐉 Hero's journey or character arc
- 🐉 Immersive world-building
- 💡 **Tip:** *The magic system matters, but emotion and stakes matter more.*



Speculative Fiction / Magical Realism

- 🌀 Symbolic or thematic storytelling
- 🌀 “What if” scenarios rooted in the real world
- 🌀 Open or layered endings
- 🌀 Subtle magic or supernatural elements
- 💡 **Tip:** *Ground the unreal in emotional truth to keep the reader anchored.*



Historical Fiction

- 🏛️ Characters shaped by real-world events
- 🏛️ Authentic setting and time period details
- 🏛️ Themes of legacy, identity, or resistance
- 🏛️ Often based on true stories
- 💡 **Tip:** *Use research to enrich character, not just decorate scenes.*



Literary Fiction

- ✍️ Character over plot
- ✍️ Emphasis on voice, language, and interiority
- ✍️ Emotional or philosophical depth
- ✍️ Ambiguity, open-ended questions, quiet revelations
- 💡 **Tip:** *Use emotional change, not plot twists, as your main driver.*