

# Genre Vocabulary

## ***Fiction—a story that is not true***

**Fantasy:** Imaginative fiction in which events occur that do not follow the laws of nature (the events can't really happen). In fantasy an animal talks, miniature creatures inhabit a world beneath the floorboards, and a peach swells to the size of a house.

**Folklore:** Folklore has no known authors and has come to us through generations of storytellers. Long before humans had created cave paintings or a writing system to record their thoughts, storytellers practiced their craft around the hearth fires and in cave dwellings. Humans have a need for stories; they need them to explain their world, the workings of nature, and the struggle between good and evil. *Folktales, myths, and legends* were created to fulfill those needs. The social values and customs of a cultural group can be seen through its folklore.

**Fractured Fairy Tale:** This is a humorous story that changes a fairy tale in an unexpected way; like altering a character, adding modern language and events, or telling the story from another character's point of view.

**General Fiction:** Stories that have imaginary characters or events.

**Historical Fiction:** Stories that are based on actual events that happened in the past. However, many details may have been created by the author to let the reader know what life might have been like for the people who lived during a particular historical period.

**Mystery:** In a mystery the reader is given clues to solve a crime. These clues are given only as the character(s) discover them.

**Realistic Fiction:** Stories of characters with normal human powers and are set in the real world in *current* times. Realistic fiction contains characters who behave in ways that cause readers to say, "She /He acts just like I do."

**Science Fiction:** This type of story may be similar to fantasy, which is usually set in the future and deals with the impact of technology and science on humans. In science fiction, robots talk, people travel faster than light, and Martians exist.

**Tall Tale:** This is a specific type of folklore that includes exaggeration or hyperbole. It may be based on a real person, such as Davy Crockett, or an imaginary character like Slue Foot Sue.

**Western:** A story set in America when people rode horses and took care of cattle. The story may also fit into other genres such as adventure and mystery.

***Nonfiction—a story that is true and based on facts.***

**Autobiography:** This genre is similar to biography, but the author is the main character of the story.

**Biography:** This is a type of nonfiction that tells about an actual person's life. The events of this person's life are written through the author's eyes. The writer selects from the information available on a person and uses bits and pieces to create a complete story. Sometimes the author takes "liberties" with the facts. This means that parts of the story may not be based on reliable facts. Writers may choose to embellish the facts to create a believable account of a person's life. Some biographies are so fictionalized that they are not considered to be nonfiction and are labeled as juvenile fiction or historical fiction. Many writers, however, use only the facts when writing the biography.

**Scientific:** This type of writing may not be a story at all. It may provide facts about a certain item such as the moon or an animal.