


GENRE

A genre is a category, or type, of story. Some popular genres include: sci-fi, fantasy, comedy, action, romance, mystery, and horror. **What's your favorite genre?**

A night sky with a glowing UFO and a cityscape below. The UFO is a classic saucer shape with a bright purple and white light emanating from its center, casting a wide, blue-tinted beam of light across the sky. The background is a dark blue night sky filled with stars and a few wispy clouds. In the lower portion of the image, a cityscape is visible with lights reflecting on the ground. The overall scene is a classic sci-fi depiction of an alien encounter.

The 5th Wave is sci-fi, but I tried very hard to ground the story in very human terms... What, exactly, does it mean to be human? What remains after everything we trust, everything we believe in and rely upon, has been stripped away?

RICK YANCEY
author of *The 5th Wave*

WHAT'S YOUR GENRE?

FINDING THE "KIND" OF STORY YOU WANT TO TELL

Before we start writing, let's talk about **genre**. "Genre" means "category" or "type." In other words: What *kind* of story do you want to write? Here are ten popular genres. Look them over, then we'll do some activities to find *your* favorite genres.



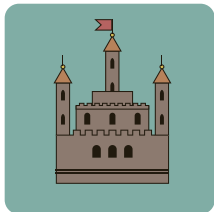
SCIENCE FICTION

Examples: Ender's Game, The Giver, The 5th Wave, A Wrinkle in Time.



DRAMA (REAL LIFE)

Examples: Hatchet, Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, Wonder, Echo.



FANTASY

Examples: Harry Potter, The Lightning Thief, The Hobbit, Charlotte's Web, The Witches.



ROMANCE

Examples: Stargirl, Shug, Romeo and Juliet, The Princess Diaries.



ACTION & ADVENTURE

Examples: Maximum Ride, I Am Number Four, Treasure Island, The Maze Runner.



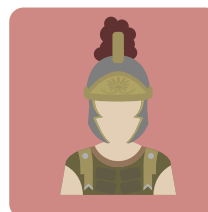
MYSTERY

Examples: Three Times Lucky, Holes, Sherlock Holmes, The Mysterious Benedict Society.



COMEDY

Examples: Flora & Ulysses, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Hoot, Judy Moody, Freaky Friday.



HISTORY

Examples: Island of the Blue Dolphins, Fever 1793, Number the Stars, Chains.



HORROR

Examples: Goosebumps, The Graveyard Book, Dracula, Coraline, Frankenstein.



BIOGRAPHY

Examples: I Am Malala, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Marley & Me.

WHAT'S YOUR GENRE?

ACTIVITY 1. TALK ABOUT GENRE

Talk about your favorite books and movies. What did you like about them? Which of the ten genres does each book or movie fit best? List *two* of your favorites books or movies below, and write the genre under each title.

Title: _____

Genre: _____

Title: _____

Genre: _____

ACTIVITY 2. CIRCLE YOUR FAVORITE GENRES

Now that you've explored some of your favorite stories, look over the ten genres again. Circle your *two* favorites.

Science Fiction

Drama (Real Life)

Fantasy

Romance

Action & Adventure

Mystery

Comedy

History

Horror

Biography

WHAT'S YOUR GENRE?

ACTIVITY 3. GENRE BLOB

Have you ever noticed that bookstores and libraries organize books by genre? Genres are a great way to find the kinds of stories you love. Genres also bring readers together. There are conventions, book clubs, and web sites where people meet to talk about their favorite genres. Let's try it now!

CLASS ACTIVITY

Pick *one* of the genres you circled on page 7. Your teacher will ask you to stand up and find people who like the same genre. I call this game, "Genre Blob." Here's how you play:

In a quiet voice, repeat your genre over and over as you walk around the room. When you meet someone with the same genre, link arms and keep going. Form a genre blob! When everyone is in a blob, look around. It's interesting to see which genres your friends like.

Now repeat the game using the *second* genre you circled on page 7.



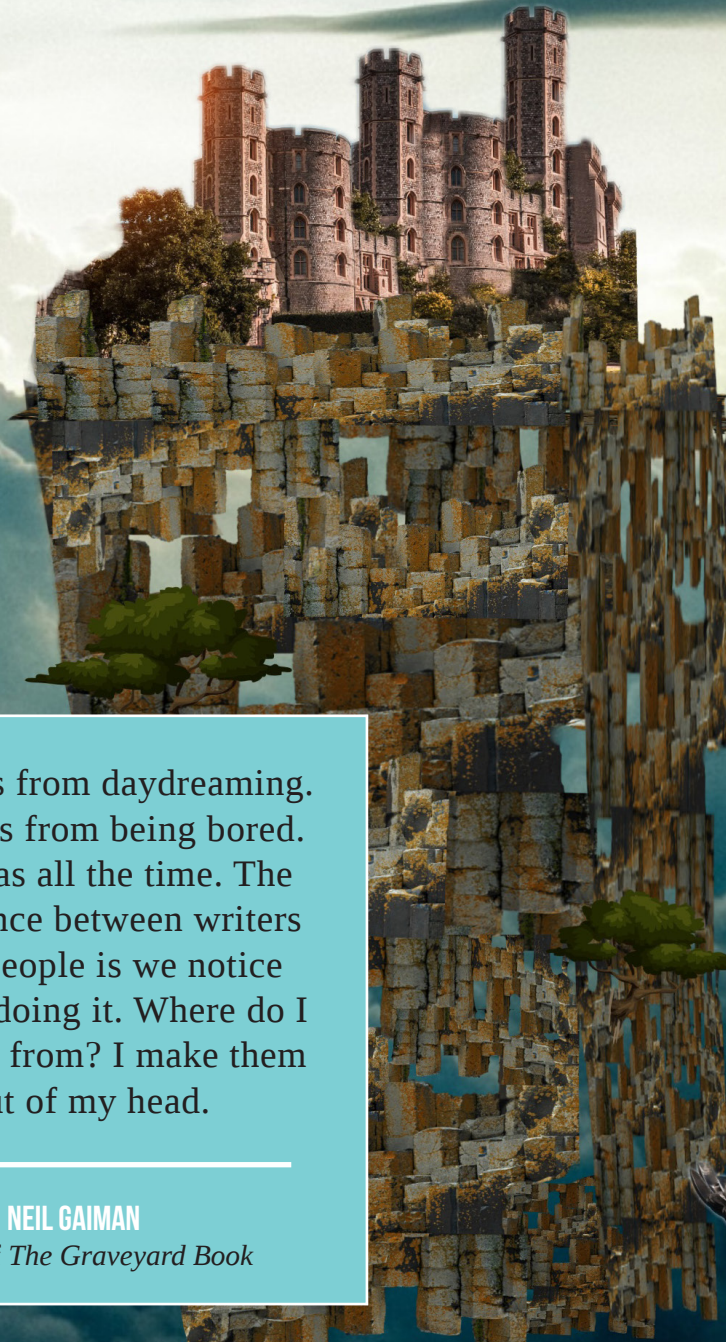
BIG IDEA! HOW GENRES HELP YOU WRITE

Readers expect certain things from the genres they love. Understanding what your readers expect can help you in two big ways:

- 1) You know what you have to do.** For example, if you're writing in the *action* genre, you know readers expect a fast-paced story with lots of danger.
- 2) If you know what your readers expect, it's easier to surprise them.** For example, if you're writing a science fiction story about aliens, your readers may expect the aliens to invade the earth. Maybe you can surprise your readers with aliens who are on a vacation, or who got lost and need help getting home.

IDEAS

Where do story ideas come from? Believe it or not, they come from you. They come from you asking, “What if...?” and daydreaming, “I wonder...”



You get ideas from daydreaming.
You get ideas from being bored.
You get ideas all the time. The only difference between writers and other people is we notice when we're doing it. Where do I get my ideas from? I make them up. Out of my head.

NEIL GAIMAN
author of *The Graveyard Book*



BUILDING YOUR IDEA

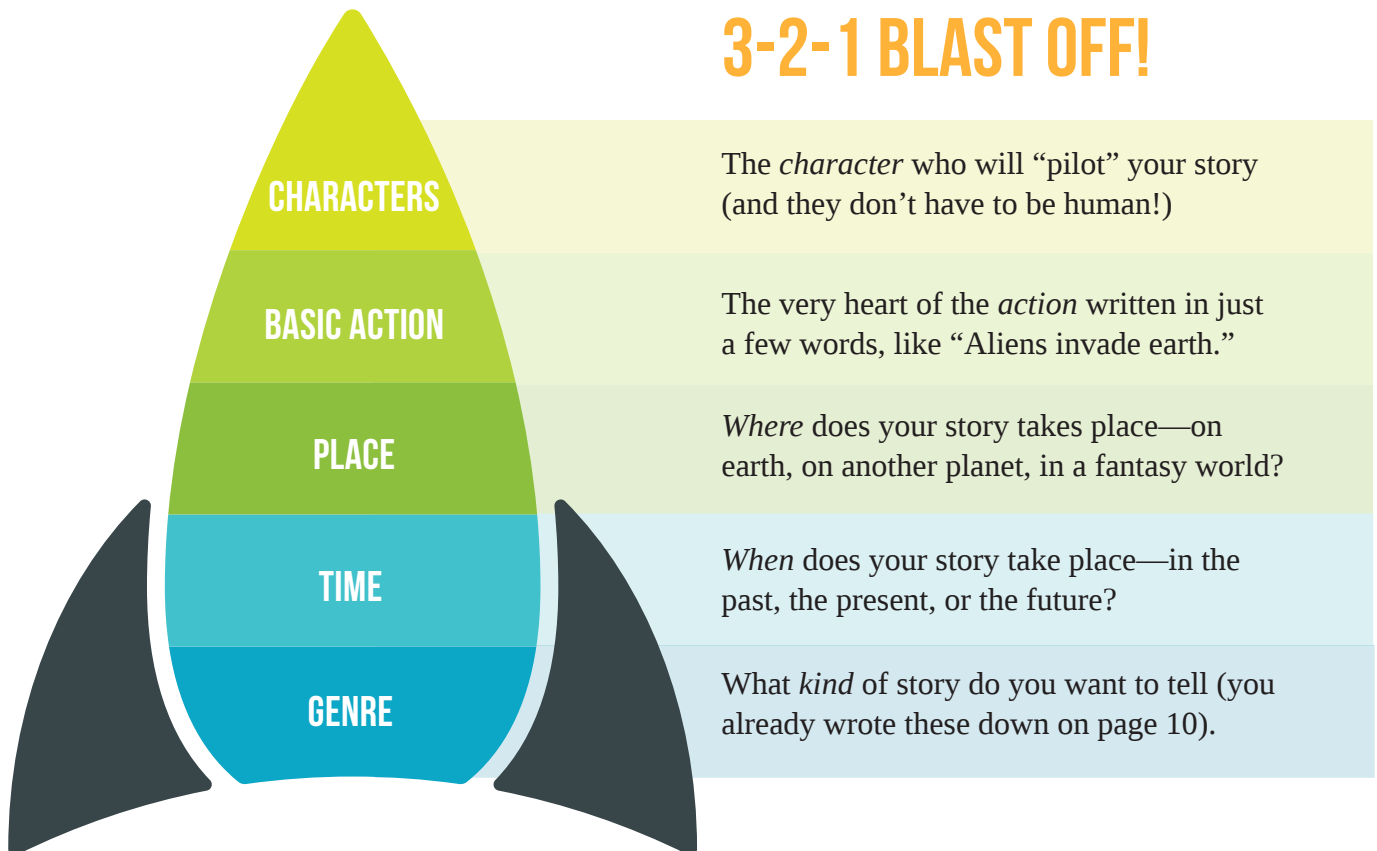
IDEAS ARE LIKE ROCKET SHIPS

Welcome back! In real life, I change my hair all the time, so I thought my avatar’s hair should change too. You know what else changes a lot? Ideas! As you start working on ideas for your story, watch how they change and grow. Ideas are a lot of fun—so let’s get started!

ROCKET SHIP IDEAS

Have you ever tried to read a book you don’t like? It’s even harder to write a story you don’t love. Your story should excite you!

There are a lot of different ways to come up with story ideas. Here’s one of my favorites. I call these ideas **Rocket Ship Ideas** because you build each idea like a rocket ship. Here are the 5 parts that make a Rocket Ship Idea fly:



BUILDING YOUR IDEA

YOUR ROCKET SHIP

This is where you'll build your Rocket Ship Idea.

1. For now, look at the two genres you wrote on page 10. Pick your favorite and write it in the **GENRE** section.
2. Set this page aside. We'll fill in all the other spaces as we go along.

