**HISTORICAL FICTION**

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| **DEFINITION:** One accepted definition of an historical novel is a story that is set at least a generation (25 years) prior to when it was written. In the best historical fiction, setting, character, and an involving plot combine to bring an historical period to life. These stories may center on real historical figures, real events, or fictional characters living in a particular time and place. By reading historical fiction, one can gain insight into lives and time of the past. The best historical fiction authors conduct extensive research to authenticate their novels’ settings and details and then meld that research seamlessly into the story. |

**CHARACTERISTICS:**Historical novels tend to be long, well-researched, and slow paced. They may focus on real people, fictional characters, or a mixture of the two. Generally, they take place over a long period of time, a matter of years rather than weeks or months. Their tone can range from highly romanticized to gritty realism and from straightforward stories intended to evoke an era to stories designed to comment or draw parallels to current day events.

**APPEAL:**Historical Fiction allows the reader to lose himself in another time. Their leisurely pacing and attention to detail allows for a “submersion” experience. They give the reader the opportunity to compare historic eras and past events to the present day. Female characters in historical fiction are often strong, independent characters.

**READERS:**Readers of Historical Fiction are often people who “like to learn something” while they read. They like to lose themselves in leisurely paced novels, often read over a longer period of time than just a weekend.  
Readers like to be taken to another place, both in time and geographically. Inaccuracies in the details may greatly bother some readers and others might be troubled by anachronistic characterizations.  Historical Fiction readers like it to be right. Most readers have a particular era they enjoy reading about.

**TRENDS:**Ancient eras are seeing a comeback with books set among the Romans, Greeks, and Hebrews. The first half of the twentieth century is gaining in popularity, especially with books set in the lead up to or during WWI. Writers are mining pockets of history until now overlooked: early Victorian and not just late Victorian, or American novels set in the 1800s that aren’t about the Civil War or Westward expansion.  
Writers are looking at the well-covered eras and coming at them from a new angle or from the point of view of lesser known, real-life characters. Writers are finding parts of the world long-neglected by the West: the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Far East.

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| Classic Authors | Thomas Bertrain Costain, Dorothy Dunnett, James Michener, Howard Fast, Margaret Mitchell, Jean Plaidy, Mary Renault, Sir Walter Scott, Irving Stone |
| Popular | Jean Auel, Sara Donati, Sarah Dunant, Diana Gabaldon, W. Michael and Kathleen O’Neal Gear, Margaret George, Philippa Gregory, John Jakes, Morgan Llywelyn, Colleen McCullough, David Nevin, Sharon Kay Penman, Steven Pressfield, Edward Rutherford, Jeff Shaara, James Alexander Thom, Susan Vreeland, Lisa See |