**SCIENCE FICTION**

|  |
| --- |
| **DEFINITION:** Science Fiction is speculative fiction based on plausible extrapolation from our current understanding of science and the physical world. The appeal of the genre is often the intellectual exploration of traditional ideas in non-traditional settings. The best Science Fiction evokes a “sense of wonder” in new worlds and new adventures.  The genre defies precise classification because Science Fiction authors experiment with themes, styles, and frames, blending technology with sociological ideas or adventure stories with far future settings. The list below groups authors in subgenres that reflect much of their writing. |

**CHARACTERISTICS:**Technology and science is both the framework and the forefront of the story. Xenophilia: or, a love of the strange, alien and new. The reader is routinely challenged to accept new cultures and unimagined technology. Setting and atmosphere contribute to this strangeness and “sense of wonder”. Generally plot-driven; very few novels are character studies. Pacing is moderate to brisk; again, very few dreamy, slow, unfolding stories. Short stories are very prominent, and readers have great affection for anthologies of both classic and new stories.

**APPEAL:** Readers like being intellectually challenged and are proud at the amount of tacit knowledge they must have to read and understand the genre. For SF set in our near future, the setting is very familiar, just ramped up. The adrenaline rush of military or space opera is a draw for both men and women. SF has become very feminist, and there are almost as many empowered heroines as there are in Romance!

**READERS:** Intelligent and young: the average age for SF /Fantasy discovery is 11! Often begin as media readers and discover other, more specific worlds. May disdain fantasy or adore it, but a constant is the love of escape and a willingness to use their imagination to learn new languages, memorize alien street names, and comprehend alien biology. Generally not big fans of libraries: they like to own their books and mistrust the librarian’s knowledge of the genre. Anecdotally, more male than female.

**TRENDS:** There are diminishing print sources of stories, but reprints and anthologies are booming: a good way to sample unfamiliar authors. The continued interest in science fiction films brings a larger audience to these stories.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Classic Authors | Isaac Asimov, Ray Brabury, Octavia Butler, Arthur C. Clarke, Robert Heinlein, Frank Herbert, Ursula K. LeGuin, Andre Norton, Theodore Sturgeon, Jules Verne, H.G. Wells |
| Adventure | Catherine Asaro, Louis McMaster Bujold, C.J. Sherryh, William C. Dietz, Sharon Lee/Steve Miller, Elizabeth Moon, John Ringo, Dan Simmons, Harry Turtledove  |
| Society | Kage Baker, John Barnes, Greg Bear, Orson Scott Card, Anne McCaffrey, Jack McDevitt, Kim Stanley Robinson, Robert Sawyer, Neal Stephenson, Charles Stross, Connie Willis |
| Technology | Peter Hamilton, Nancy Kress, Larry Niven, Robert Reed, Alastair Reynolds, Bruce Sterling, John Varley, Vernor Vinge, William Gibson |