**SUSPENSE/THRILLERS**

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| **DEFINITION:** Suspense and thrillers are two of the most popular genres for readers because of their fast pacing, plot twists, and emotional appeal. Suspense novels compress action into a short period of time, emphasize the psychological and physical danger the protagonist faces and appeal to the reader’s sense of unease. Emotionally the reader identifies with the survival of the central character. Thrillers, on the other hand, are complex stories that use a specific world such as the courtroom, medical laboratory, or government agency, often have exotic settings, and emphasize the defeat of the villain and his conspirators.  In both genres, the story is filled with tension, plot twists, and most recently graphic violence and sex. The distinctions between the two genres are blurring as writers use elements from both genres and the mystery genre in their books.  |

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Plot rules--often intricately woven plots--clever, often with a dash of history and science--fast pacing, frequent action, and resourceful heroes--Suspense, red herrings, and cliffhangers are used extensively.  Sense of foreboding--menacing atmosphere--danger--some violent action.  Twists and turns--layers of secrets--exotic locales

**APPEAL:**Reader identifies with dilemma of protagonist--feels the fear--can view violence from a safe distance. Pure entertainment--safe, predictable, fun. Riveting--quick moving stories--reader can be privy to secrets and can jump from one narrow escape to another. Clear delineation between good and evil.

**TRENDS:** Terrorism is the new arch enemy; Romance writers have turned to writing Romantic Suspense; Ancient as well as contemporary conspiracies ala *The Da Vinci Code* play key roles

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| Classic | Eric Ambler, Jeffrey Archer, Daphne DuMaurier, Ian Fleming, Graham Greene, Thomas Harris, Robert Ludlum |
| Conspiracy Thrillers | Steve Berry, Dan Brown, Joseph Finder, James Grippando |
| Detective Thrillers | Lee Child, Michael Connelly, Jeffrey Deaver, James Patterson, Ridley Pearson, John Sandford, Martin Cruz Smith |
| Espionage/Intelligence Thrillers | Stephen Coonts, Ken Follett, Alan Furst, John LeCarre, Daniel Silva |
| Forensic Thrillers | Patricia Cornwell, Kathy Reichs, Karin Slaughter |
| Legal Thrillers | William Bernhardt, D.W. Buffa, John Grisham, John T. Lescroat, Phillip Margolin, Steve Martini, Perri O’Shaugnessy, Lisa Scottoline, Scott Turow |
| Medical Thrillers | Robin Cook, Tess Gerritsen, Michael Palmer |
| Political Thrillers | David Baldacci, Vince Flynn, Stephen Frey, Richard North Patterson |
| Suspense | Mary Higgins Clark, Harlan Coben, Thomas H. Cook, Nelson DeMille, Linda Fairstein, Tami Hoag, Greg Iles, Dean Koontz, Dennis Lehane, Val McDermid, Ruth Rendell (Barbara Vine), Minette Walters  |