



Genres of Children's Literature

Classic – A widely read work recognized as outstanding in its field, remaining in print long after initial publications where it is translated, adapted, and issued in multiple editions; and continues to be the subject of criticism, commentary, study, and analysis

Example: *The Velveteen rabbit* by Margery Williams
Located: EASY PZ7.B4713 Ve 1983

Epic – Long stories of human adventure and heroism recounted in many episodes. Some epics are told in verse. Epics are grounded in mythology, and their characters are both human and divine.

Example: *The Song of Hiawatha* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Located: JUV PS2267.A1 1960

Fairy Tale – A fanciful story written for or told to children, usually containing at least one supernatural element (magic, dragons, elves, ghosts, hobgoblins, witches, etc.) affecting people, animals, and/or things. Most fairy tales are based on the traditional folklore of a specific culture.

Example: *The Princess and the pea* by Hans Christian Anderson
Located: EASY PZ8.A542 Pq 1978



Fable – A short tale in verse or prose that uses animal characters to express or teach a moral lesson. Very old form of storytelling related to **folktales**.

Example: *Aesop's fables* by Aesop
Located: JUV PZ8.2.A254 Pi 2000

Fantasy - used (in the context of children's literature) to describe works of fiction, written by a specific author (i.e. not traditional) and usually novel-length, which involve the supernatural or some other unreal element. Fantasy is closely related to the traditional fairy tale, and the birth of fantasy writing in Britain coincided with the 19th-century revival of interest in, and admiration for, the orally transmitted fairy tale.

Example: *The golden compass* by Philip Pullman
Located: JUV PZ7.P968 Go 1996

Folktale – A short narrative rooted in the oral tradition of a particular culture that may include improbable or supernatural elements. Many **fairy tales**, **myths** and **legends** began as folktales.

Example: *Tales from silver lands* by Charles J. Finger
Located: NEWBERY DISPLAY JUV PZ8.F494 Ta 1924

Fractured Fairy Tale – Traditional **fairy tales** with a contemporary twist or a tale told from a new perspective.

Example: *Briar rose* by Jane Yolen
Located: JUV PS3575.O43 B75 1992



Legend – A traditional story of a well-known event, sometimes concerning the life of a national folk hero, which may contain fiction or supernatural elements, but is considered to have some basis in historical fact.



Example: *Merlin and the making of a king* retold by Margaret Hodges
Located: JUV PZ8.1.H69 Me 2004

Mystery – A popular novel, short story, or drama about an unusual occurrence, such as a murder or disappearance. The plot in a mystery often hinges on the efforts of a professional or amateur sleuth to uncover the truth. Subgenres include detective fiction and suspense.

Example: *Bunnacula: a rabbit tale of mystery* by Deborah and James Howe
Located: JUV PZ7.H836 Bu 1979

Myth – From the classical Greek word *mythos*, meaning “story”. A narrative rooted in the traditions of a specific culture, capable of being understood and appreciated in its own right but at the same time a part of a system of stories (*mythology*) transmitted orally from one generation to the next to illustrate man’s relationship to the cosmos.

Example: *The Golden flower: a Taino myth from Puerto Rico* by Nina Jaffe
Located: EASY F1969.J34 1996

Poetry – Consciously created in metrical form, may use imaginative and symbolic language. Intended to express sublime thought and emotion and give aesthetic pleasure through the combination of well-chosen words and rhythmic phrases (sound and sense).

Example: *Once I ate a pie* by Patricia MacLachlan and Emily MacLachlan Charest
Located: EASY PS3563.A3178 O53 2006

Sci-Fi – A highly imaginative form of fiction based on scientific speculation, usually depicting life and adventure in the future or on other planets, usually involves space or time travel. A form of literary fantasy or romance that often draws upon earlier kinds of utopian and apocalyptic writing.

Example: *A wrinkle in time* by Madeline L’Engle
Located: NEWBERY DISPLAY JUV PZ7.L5385 Wr 1962

Short Story – A work of short fiction, usually 2,000 to 10,000 word in length, in which the author limits the narrative to a single character (or group of characters) acting in a limited setting, usually at a single point in time, to achieve a unified effect.

Example: *Edgar Allen Poe’s tales of mystery and madness* by Edgar Allen Poe
Location: JUV PZ7.P75152 Ed 2004

Sources used:

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