

The Twelve Most Common Genres

The twelve common genres compose 99 percent of storytelling forms today. Popular stories for teens and adults will combine three or four genres in one novel (Truby, 2022).

Classical Genres (introduced into literature before 1855):

1. **Myth—the life process.**
Classic Literature: *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.
2. **Love Story—the art of happiness.**
Classic Literature: Arthurian legends, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Pride and Prejudice*.
3. **Horror Story—confronting death.**
Classic Literature: *Frankenstein*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Jane Eyre*.
4. **Comedy—show others who you really are.**
Classic Literature: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *the Comedy of Errors*.
5. **Western—the rise and fall of civilization.**
Classic Literature: *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, and *Robinson Crusoe*.

Modern, Contemporary Genres (introduced into literature after 1855):

6. **Detective/Thriller—the rational/irrational mind.**
Literature: *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *And Then There Were None*, and *The Woman in White*.
7. **Memoir and Coming-of-Age—creating the self.**
Literature: *The Joy Luck Club*, *Hidden Figures*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
8. **Gangster—the corruption of business and politics.**
Literature: *The Great Gatsby*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *Heart of Darkness*.
9. **Crime—restoring fairness and justice.**
Literature: *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *In Cold Blood*, and *If Beale Street Could Talk*.
10. **Action—fighting all the way to success.**
Literature: *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Thomas Crown Affair*, and *Hoop Dreams*.
11. **Fantasy—finding magic in the world and in ourselves.**
Literature: *The Wizard of Oz*, *Peter Pan*, and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.
12. **Science Fiction—creating a better society.**
Literature: *The Time Machine*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and *The Hunger Games*.