

Waterstone's guide to science fiction and fantasy

Welcome to the Waterstone's guide to science fiction and fantasy, which has been put together by a panel of our booksellers to provide customers with a quick and easy reference guide to the best books and authors and to help you discover which story is right for you. We start with a beginners' guide to the major sub-genres. Next we look at the authors themselves with a 'If you like this, you'll love' section. Finally there is a list of selected series to help you decide on your next read.



Once you've finished all the books in your chosen genre, don't forget that our booksellers can help you find your next choice, or you can go to Waterstones.com for reviews and recommendations.

This is a rich and rewarding genre and I feel envious of anyone who is about to explore it for the first time!

Michael Rowley

SF & Fantasy buyer



Space opera

Usually set in space or across planets in interstellar civilizations, this is one of the most popular forms of science fiction. With plots that are often character driven, space opera has a broad canvas and features everything from pulp action adventures to complex social commentary.

Hidden Empire

by Kevin J. Anderson

Gridlinked

by Neal Asher

Consider Phlebas

by Iain M. Banks

Helix

by Eric Brown

The Reality Dysfunction

by Peter F. Hamilton

Dune

by Frank Herbert

Learning the World

by Ken Macleod

Engines of God

by Jack Mcdevitt

Revelation Space

by Alastair Reynolds

Hyperion

by Dan Simmons





Hard science fiction

Hard SF is perhaps the cornerstone of science fiction, usually involving a realistic extrapolation of possible future science and technology and often written by authors with a background in physical, biological and computer sciences.

Foundation

by Isaac Asimov

I, Robot

by Isaac Asimov

Time

by Stephen Baxter

Blood Music

by Greg Bear

Eon

by Greg Bear

Timescape

by Gregory Benford

Rendezvous With Rama

by Arthur C. Clarke

Permutation City

by Greg Egan

Red Mars

by Kim Stanley Robinson

Rainbow's End

by Vernor Vinge





Time travel, steampunk and alternate history

Time travel and alternate history are two of the staple themes in both classic and contemporary science fiction. Time travel is often, if not always a theme of the alternate reality 'what if' stories, where history has diverged at some point, often with far reaching consequences.

Time Patrol

by Poul Anderson

The End of Eternity

by Isaac Asimov

In The Garden of Eden

by Kage Baker

The Time Ships

by Stephen Baxter

The Man In The High Castle

by Philip K. Dick

The Difference Engine

by William Gibson
& Bruce Sterling

The Anubis Gates

by Tim Powers

The Guns of the South

by Harry Turtledove

The Time Machine

by H.G. Wells

Doomsday Book

by Connie Willis





Military science fiction

Often most easily described as the military side of space opera, this is a long standing and popular sub-genre of Science Fiction. While it does have its own specialist authors, this is a sub-genre that is touched upon by many writers with diverse styles, often to great critical acclaim.

Dauntless: The Lost Fleet Book One

by Jack Campbell

Weapons of Choice

by John Birmingham

Orphanage

by Robert Buettner

Death's Head

by David Gunn

The Forever War

by Joe Haldeman

Starship Troopers

by Robert A. Heinlein

The Warrior's Apprentice

by Lois McMaster Bujold

Trading in Danger

by Elizabeth Moon

Old Man's War

by John Scalzi

On Basilisk Station

by David Weber





Near future and future noir

From cyberpunk to biopunk and future noir to techno-thriller, there are a host of books that are mostly planet bound and in many cases on good old near-future Earth. With everything from nano-tech to cyberspace to choose from, there are many different sub-genres of which these are all worth a look.

Fairyland

by Paul J. McAuley

Pashazade

by John Courtenay
Grimwood

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

by Philip K. Dick

Mindstar Rising

by Peter F. Hamilton

Neuromancer

by William Gibson

River of Gods

by Ian McDonald

Altered Carbon

by Richard Morgan

Snow Crash

by Neal Stephenson

Distraction

by Bruce Sterling

Halting State

by Charles Stross





Classic science fiction

Some books are justly recognised as classics – this is a small selection of the very best science fiction has to offer.

Consider Phlebas

by Iain M. Banks

The Stars My Destination

by Alfred Bester

Fahrenheit 451

by Ray Bradbury

UBIK

by Philip K. Dick

The Left Hand of Darkness

by Ursula Le Guin

The Centauri Device

by M. John Harrison

Stranger in a Strange Land

by Robert A. Heinlein

Solaris

by Stanislaw Lem

Ender's Game

by Orson Scott Card

Last and First Men

by Olaf Stapledon

Tales of the Dying Earth

by Jack Vance





Heroic, epic and high fantasy fiction

With its roots in the fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Robert E. Howard, today's mainstream fantasy fiction is a combination of many styles, from the heroic tales of David Gemmell to the epic landscape of George R.R. Martin. Whether it's single or multiple character narratives, sweeping landscapes or urban decay, these are some of the best mainstream Fantasy books around today.

The Blade Itself

by Joe Abercrombie

Dawnthief

by James Barclay

The Sword of Shannara

by Terry Brooks

Scar Night

by Alan Campbell

The Magician's Guild

by Trudi Canavan

Magician

by Raymond E. Feist

Pawn of Prophecy

by David Eddings

Gardens of the Moon

by Steven Erikson

Legend

by David Gemmell

Wizard's First Rule

by Terry Goodkind

The Eye of the World

by Robert Jordan

The Ten Thousand

by Paul Kearney

The Lies of Locke

Lamora

by Scott Lynch

The Summoner

by Gail Martin

A Game of Thrones

by George R.R. Martin

Innocent Mage

by Karen Miller

The Name of the Wind

by Patrick Rothfuss

Winterbirth

by Brian Ruckley

Way of Shadows

by Brent Weeks

The Dragonbone Chair

by Tad Williams





Urban fantasy

This is a term used widely and often in quite diverse ways, having strong links to the horror genre, alternate reality and magical realism. For the purposes of this guide, however, it more specifically describes stories with a contemporary setting that include magical or fantasy elements, often to do with wizards, supernatural creatures or other themes from popular folklore.

Storm Front

by Jim Butcher

Ill Wind

by Rachel Caine

Someone Comes to Town, Someone Leaves Town

by Cory Doctorow

American Gods

by Neil Gaiman

Black Magic Woman

by Justin Gustainis

Into the Nightside

by Simon R. Green

Moonheart

by Charles de Lint

Never the Bride

by Paul Magrs

Un Lun Dun

by China Miéville

The Good Fairies of New York

by Martin Miller





Classic fantasy

These are some of the books that helped form and influence modern fantasy fiction; classics one and all.

The Broken Sword

by Poul Anderson

Time and the Gods

by Lord Dunsany

**The Complete
Chronicles of Conan**

by Robert E. Howard

**The First Book
of Lankmar**

by Fritz Leiber

**The Lion, The Witch
and The Wardrobe**

by C.S. Lewis

Lud-in-the-Mist

by Hope Mirrlees

Elric of Melnibone

by Michael Moorcock

**The Gormenghast
Trilogy**

by Mervyn Peake

The Lord of the Rings

by J.R.R. Tolkien

**The Book of
the New Sun**

by Gene Wolfe





Comedy science fiction & fantasy

Comedy is a relatively small but treasured sub-genre of fantasy and science fiction, dominated by a small number of authors, but often with a huge readership.

**The Hitchhiker's Guide
To The Galaxy**

by Douglas Adams

**Dirk Gently's Holistic
Detective Agency**

by Douglas Adams

Fat

by Rob Grant

Barking

by Tom Holt

Good Omens

by Neil Gaiman
& Terry Pratchett

A Dirty Job

by Christopher Moore

The Colour of Magic

by Terry Pratchett

Equal Rights

by Terry Pratchett

Mort

by Terry Pratchett

The Anti-Pope

by Robert Rankin





If you like this, you'll love. . .

This section is designed for readers who like certain authors but are unsure who to go onto next. Designed with a deliberately crossover theme, with this list of ten popular authors you should be able to read on and discover new books in your favourite styles, especially useful for those authors who write along several different themes.

Iain M. Banks

Peter F. Hamilton
Neal Asher
Alastair Reynolds
Ken MacLeod
Charles Stross
Kevin J. Anderson
Richard Morgan
Dan Simmons
John Scalzi
Eric Brown
Robert Reed
Vernor Vinge
Jack McDevitt
Joe Haldeman.

Arthur C. Clarke

Isaac Asimov
Stephen Baxter
Gregory Benford
Greg Bear
Greg Egan
Adam Roberts
Kim Stanley
Robinson
Vernor Vinge.

Philip K. Dick

William Gibson
Neal Stephenson
Bruce Sterling
Jon Courtenay
Grimwood
Philip K. Dick
Cory Doctorow
Michael Marshall Smith
Ray Bradbury
Joe Haldeman
Ian McDonald
China Mieville
Tricia Sullivan.

Joe Haldeman

Robert A. Heinlein
Charles Stross
John Scalzi
William Gibson
Robert Charles Wilson
Jack McDevitt
Ian McDonald
Peter F. Hamilton
Iain M. Banks.

Elizabeth Moon

John Scalzi
David Drake
John Birmingham
Orson Scott Card
David Weber
Jack Campbell
Kevin J. Anderson
Peter F. Hamilton.



If you like this, you'll love...

Continued...

Trudi Canavan

Karen Miller
Robin Hobb
Fiona McIntosh
Gail Martin
Kate Elliot
J.V. Jones
Katherine Kerr
David Gemmell
Brent Weeks
Naomi Novik.

David Gemmell

Joe Abercrombie
Scott Lynch
James Barclay
K.J. Parker
Brian Ruckley
Gail Martin
Brent Weeks
Trudi Canavan
Alan Campbell.

Raymond E. Feist

Robert Jordan
Robin Hobb
George R.R. Martin
Patrick Rothfuss
Terry Brooks
Alan Campbell
Brian Ruckley
Tad Williams
Terry Goodkind.

George R.R. Martin

Steven Erikson
Tad Williams
Greg Keyes
Sean Russell
Terry Goodkind
Robert Jordan
Patrick Rothfuss
Ian C. Esslemont
Joe Abercrombie
Brian Ruckley
Alan Campbell.

Neil Gaiman

Terry Pratchett
William Gibson
China Mieville
Neal Stephenson
Cory Doctorow
Charles de Lint
Mervyn Peake
Stephen Hunt
Graham Joyce
Christopher Priest.



Selected series

As readers of science fiction and fantasy, we quickly become used to reading books in a series, sometimes many, many books. Hopefully this selection from the top series will help you discover which one to read next...

Douglas Adams

The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy

1. The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
2. The Restaurant at the End of the Universe
3. Life, the Universe and Everything
4. So Long, and Thanks for all the Fish
5. Mostly Harmless

Dirk Gently

1. Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency
2. The Long, Dark Tea-Time of the Soul

Isaac Asimov

Foundation Series

1. Prelude to Foundation
2. Forward the Foundation
3. Foundation
4. Foundation and Empire
5. Second Foundation
6. Foundation's Edge
7. Foundation and Earth

Iain M. Banks

Culture

1. Consider Phlebas
2. The Player of Games
3. The State of the Art
4. Use of Weapons
5. Excession
6. Inversions
7. Look to Windward
8. Matter

Terry Brooks

Shannara

1. The Sword of Shannara
2. The Elfstones of Shannara
3. The Wishsong of Shannara

Heritage of Shannara

1. The Scions of Shannara
2. The Druid of Shannara
3. The Elf Queen of Shannara
4. The Talisman of Shannara

Voyage of the Jerle Shannara

1. Ilse Witch
2. Antrax
3. Morgawr



Selected series

Continued...

High Druid of Shannara

1. Jarka Ruus
2. Tanequil
3. Straken

Word and the Void

1. Running with the Demon
2. A Knight of the Word
3. Angel Fire East

Genesis of Shannara

1. Armageddon's Children
2. The Elves of Cintra
3. The Gypsy Morph

Jim Butcher

Dresden Files

1. Storm Front
2. Fool Moon
3. Grave Peril
4. Summer Knight
5. Death Masks
6. Blood Rites
7. Dead Beat
8. Proven Guilty
9. White Night
10. Small Favour
11. Turn Coat

Trudi Canavan

The Magician's Apprentice

1. The Magician's Apprentice

Black Magician Trilogy

1. The Magician's Guild
2. The Novice
3. The High Lord

Age of the Five

1. Priestess of the White
2. Last of the Wilds
3. Voice of the Gods

Arthur C. Clarke

Space Odyssey

1. 2001: A Space Odyssey
2. 2010: Odyssey Two
3. 2061: Odyssey Three
4. 3001: The Final Odyssey

Arthur C. Clarke with Steven Baxter

Time Odyssey

1. Time's Eye
2. Sunstorm
3. Firstborn



Selected series

Continued...

Stephen Donaldson

Chronicles of Thomas Covenant

1. The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever (Omnibus)
2. The Second Chronicles of Thomas Covenant (Omnibus)
3. The Runes of the Earth
4. Fatal Revenant

David Eddings

Prequels and Codex

1. Belgarath the Sorcerer
2. Polgara the Sorceress
3. The Rivan Codex

Belgariad

1. Pawn of Prophecy
2. Queen of Sorcery
3. Magician's Gambit
4. Castle of Wizardry
5. Enchanters Endgame

Malloreon

1. Guardians of the West
2. King of the Murgos
3. Demon Lord of Karanda
4. Sorceress of Darshive
5. The Seeress of Kell

Elenium

1. The Diamond Throne
2. The Ruby Knight
3. The Sapphire Rose

Tamuli

1. Domes of Fire
2. The Shining Ones
3. The hidden City

Steven Erikson

Malazan Books of the Fallen

1. Gardens of the Moon
2. Deadhouse Gates
3. Memories of Ice
4. House of Chains
5. Midnight Tides
6. The Bonehunters
7. Reapers Gale
8. Toll the Hounds

Raymond E. Feist

Riftwar

1. Magician
2. Silverthorn
3. A Darkness at Sethanon



Selected series

Continued...

Serpentwar

1. Shadow of a Dark Queen
2. Rise of a Merchant Prince
3. Rage of a Demon King
4. Shards of a Broken Crown

Conclave of Shadows

1. Talon of the Silver Hawk
2. King of Foxes
3. Exile's Return

Darkwar

1. Flight of the Nighthawks
2. Into a Dark Realm
3. Wrath of a Mad God

Terry Goodkind

Sword of Truth

1. Wizard's First Rule
2. Stone of Tears
3. Blood of the Fold
4. Temple of the Winds
5. Soul of the Fire
6. Faith of the Fallen
7. The Pillars of Creation
8. Naked Empire
9. Chainfire
10. Phantom
11. Confessor

Peter F. Hamilton

Greg Mandel

1. Mindstar Rising
2. A Quantum Murder
3. The Nano Flower

Night's Dawn Trilogy

1. The Reality Dysfunction
2. The Neutronium Alchemist
3. The Naked God

Commonwealth Saga

1. Pandora's Star
2. Judas Unchained

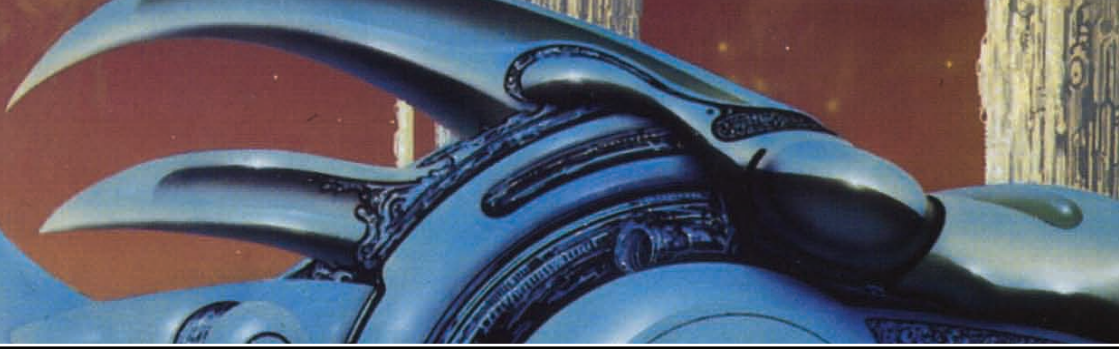
Void Series

1. The Dreaming Void
2. The Temporal Void

Frank Herbert

Dune

1. Dune
2. Dune Messiah
3. Children of Dune
4. God Emperor of Dune
5. Chapterhouse: Dune



Selected series

Continued...

Robin Hobb

Farseer

1. Assassin's Apprentice
2. Royal Assassin
3. Assassin's Quest

Liveship Traders

1. Ship of Magic
2. The Mad Ship
3. Ship of Destiny

Tawny Man

1. Fool's Errand
2. The Golden Fool
3. Fool's Fate

Soldier Son

1. Shaman's Crossing
2. Forest Mage
3. Renegade's Magic

Robert Jordan

Wheel of Time

1. The Eye of the World
2. The Great Hunt
3. The Dragon Reborn
4. The Shadow Rising
5. The Fires of Heaven
6. Lord of Chaos

7. A Crown of Swords
8. The Path of Daggers
9. Winter's Heart
10. Crossroads of Twilight
11. Knife of Dreams
12. The Gathering Storm

Ken MacLeod

Fall Revolution

1. The Star Fraction
2. The Stone Canal
3. The Cassini Division
4. The Sky Road

Engines of Light

1. Cosmonaut Keep
2. Dark Light
3. Engine City

Anne McCaffrey

Dragonriders of Pern

1. Dragonflight
2. Dragonquest
3. The White Dragon
4. Dragons Eye
5. Dragon's Kin (with Todd McCaffrey)
6. Dragon's Fire (with Todd McCaffrey)
7. Dragon Harper (with Todd McCaffrey)



Selected series

Continued...

George R.R. Martin

Song of Ice & Fire

1. A Game of Thrones
2. A Clash of Kings
3. A Storm of Swords: Steel and Snow
4. A Storm of Swords: Blood and Gold
5. A Feast for Crows

Karen Miller

Kingmaker, Kingbreaker

1. The Innocent Mage
2. The Awakened Mage
3. The Prodigal Mage

Godspeaker

1. Empress
2. The Riven Kingdom
3. The Hammer of God

Richard Morgan

Takeshi Kovacs

1. Altered Carbon
2. Broken Angels
3. Woken Furies

Terry Pratchett

Discworld

1. The Colour of Magic
2. The Light Fantastic

3. Equal Rites
4. Mort
5. Sorcery
6. Wyrd Sisters
7. Pyramids
8. Guards! Guards!
9. Eric
10. Moving Pictures
11. Reaper Man
12. Witches Abroad
13. Small Gods
14. Lords and Ladies
15. Men at Arms
16. Soul Music
17. Interesting Times
18. Maskerade
19. Feet of Clay
20. Hogfather
21. Jingo
22. The Last Continent
23. Carpe Jugulum
24. The Fifth Elephant
25. The Truth
26. Thief of Time
27. Night Watch
28. Monstrous Regiment
29. Going Postal
30. Thud!
31. Making Money



Selected series

Continued...

Robert Rankin

Brentford

1. The Antipope
2. The Brentford Triangle
3. East of Ealing
4. The Sprouts of Wrath
5. The Brentford Chainstore Massacre
6. Sex and Drugs and Sausage Rolls
7. Knees Up Mother Earth
8. The Brightonomicon

Armageddon

1. Armageddon, the Musical
2. They Came and Ate Us:
The B-Movie
3. The Suburban Book of the Dead:
The Remake

Cornelius Murphy

1. The Book of Ultimate Truths
2. Raiders of the Lost Car Park
3. The Greatest Show Off Earth
4. The Most Amazing Man Who
ever Lived

Brent Weeks

Night Angel Trilogy

1. The Way Of Shadows
2. Shadow's Edge
3. Beyond The Shadows

Tad Williams

Memory, Shadow and Thorn

1. The Dragonbone Chair
2. The Stone of Farewell
3. To Green Angel Tower

Otherland

1. City of Golden Shadow
2. River of Blue Fire
3. Mountain of Black Glass
4. Sea of Silver Light

Shadowmarch

1. Shadowmarch
2. Shadowplay