

Title of Session: Genre: Fantasy (general)

Creator: Janet Beasley

Curriculum: Genre: Fantasy (general) NOVICE and ADVANCED

Definition: Genre refers to any category regarding the arts (literature, art, music). In today's fictional literature multiple genres are often combined. i.e. Paranormal Romance, Mystery Suspense, Enchanted Epic Fantasy, or Science Fiction (being that FICTION is used to show that the science facts are correct, and are wrapped around a fictional story) to name a few.

The fantasy genre is considered fiction. In general, fantasy will include magic and other experiences that are NOT subject to the laws of physics, and serve as a prominent element of the story and plot. Imaginative worlds and fantastical/enchanted flora and fauna, created by the author, are common throughout the genre. Fantasy distinctly separates itself from science fiction by steering clear of a scientific theme.

Goal: By the end of the session enthusiasts will be able to identify the fantasy genre as a whole through key elements, and begin to develop laws regarding their fictional work.

Tools:

Wipe off board or flip chart and appropriate markers

Choice A Ice Breaker: Imagination Rock

Large smooth stones, one for each enthusiast

All of the following are suggestions – feel free to use these or branch out on your own:

Ribbon

Fake gems (flat backed rhinestones, etc.

Paint for rocks

Beads

Glitter

Feathers

Small metal gears

Thin jewelry wire

Thin plastic or leather jewelry cord

Permanent markers

Fabric swatches

Glue dots

Choice B Ice Breaker: Magic Wand

18” dowel rods (wooden), one for each enthusiast

All of the following are suggestions – feel free to use these or branch out on your own:

Ribbon

String

Beads (large)

Thin jewelry wire

Leaves

Sand (plain or color)

Glitter

Mish mash of metal trinkets such as gears

Mish mash of faux gems

Aluminum foil

Craft paint for wood

Permanent markers

Glue dots

Ice Breaker:

- **Choice A:**
 - Enthusiasts will craft an Imagination Rock: using the supplies provided enthusiasts should decorate a rock in the theme or their fantasy piece they are working on.
 - After Imagination Rocks are made, go around the room asking enthusiasts to explain what they have represented on their rocks regarding their manuscript.

- **Choice B:**
 - Enthusiasts will craft a magic wand: using the supplies provided, they should decorate the dowel rod to represent good or evil, old or new, etc. The theme of their wand should fit the story they are working on in some way.
 - After wands are crafted go around the room and ask enthusiasts to “create a spell” using their wand, and share that “spell” with the other enthusiasts.
 - Have the other enthusiasts guess from the “spell” whether the wand is one of good, evil, old, new, etc. Then have the other enthusiasts come up with laws to govern the magic of the participating enthusiast’s magic wand.

Activity:

- **Play video - Fantasy Genre Meet Author Janet Beasley**

Write the following bullet points on your wipe off board or flip chart: Let enthusiasts give the definitions which are included on the Fantasy General Handout

- **High Fantasy**

- A fictional story that takes place in a fictional or secondary world. It may start on Earth, but then travel to another world. Though most fantasy worlds hold mostly the same concepts of the real world, it will differ in the fact that laws of certain elements will be different i.e. a day may consist of 15 clock hand rotations rather than 24 hours. Night time may not appear as black, but rather dark green. High fantasy also includes elements of magic and/or fantastical imagination, and characters may include elves, dragons, fairies, dwarves, wizards, and sometimes demons.

The stories hold a serious tone and deal with massive struggles that can be against make believe forces be it characters, terrain, or creatures. You will often find a quest involved, especially for the protagonist.

Exposition plays a very important part in describing the elements. And the stories themselves can be epic.

- **Epic Fantasy**

- Refers to a large series. It can be high, urban, or dark fantasy in nature with high fantasy being the most recognized when someone is speaking of Epic Fantasy in general. Another fantasy sub genre that is popular in the epic realm is sword and sorcery.

When completed the epic story will be at least a trilogy if not several volumes.

Epic fantasy normally takes the reader through years of back story, a quest, or both.

As in high fantasy, exposition will be a key in presenting details when it comes to worlds, universes, and creatures.

Characters will have the opportunity to develop over time. Often times in Epic fantasy you will be introduced to more characters than usual.

The most popular epic fantasies run around 150,000+ to over 300,000 words.

- **Urban Fantasy**

- Urban fantasy is recognized by place, normally a city. An urban fantasy is the complete opposite of a high fantasy as urban takes place in a real world, as opposed to fictitious. It can represent the past – present – or future. But don't let the real world city locations fool you, there is still a supernatural element in addition to other make-believe elements such as transportation that hovers over the road to travel rather than wheels rolling on it.

- **Dark Fantasy**

- Dark fantasy blends its magic and imagination with the horror genre. Terms such as dark, gloom, despair, and dread are used to describe works in this sub genre.

Ask enthusiasts to give you their ideas of what each of these fantasy sub genres might include. Ask them to name some novels and/or movies that go with each and why they think that it does.

If any enthusiasts are interested in learning the sub genres in detail, each of the above mentioned can be found in the Journey To Publication Advanced Curriculum.

Facts for Enthusiasts:

- Writing fantasy is all about making the unrealistic fully believable.
- Every element of your fantasy must be believable: magic, imagination, world, battles, creatures, characters, dwellings, and flora.
- If your elements are not believable you will find your readers won't have too much good to say about your story.
- An imagination is a wonderful thing, putting it on paper and writing it to come across realistic is another.
- A good practice is to ask yourself many questions before you begin to set your laws into place.

- The uses of magic and imagination require laws. Consequences must be set in place
 - These laws are left up to you, the author as are the consequences for misuse or breaking of the laws set forth.
 - One of the most difficult parts of creating your laws of magic and imagination will surface in continuity as you go through your story.
 - Whether you have created an outline or not, there is still a chance that a law may wreak havoc while you're in the middle of writing a chapter.
 - You may find that you have written yourself "into a corner" when it comes to a law you have set in place. This is no major concern, but it will entail you having to go back and change the law, delete the law, or recreate the law.
 - No matter whether you choose to delete, change, or recreate that particular law it must be believable to your readers.
 - Keep in mind that doing one of the three above mentioned choices can also affect the other laws you've put in place.

- **Where Can Make Believe Magic and Imagination Be Delivered From?**

Gather ideas from the enthusiasts of what they think magic or imagination is delivered from. Write their suggestions on the wipe off board or flip chart. Then if the following have not been included, write them down and discuss the points and examples listed beneath each.

 - Wands
 - Wands cannot "fix all" or "destroy all." As crazy as it sounds, those two things make the wand unbelievable to your readers.
 - Wands are not normally used to bring life back to someone who dies, unless it is a one time use and the wand operator understands this. If this is the case you can go into much more depth regarding...
 - How the wand operator discovered such news
 - When will the wand operator know to use it
 - Extreme conflict could arise should the wand operator have to choose only one of two very special characters to bring back to life
 - How long will the revived person live – a few days, weeks, months, or will they become immortal – possibly unknowingly
 - Once the character is revived to life the magic wand goes to half power for a specific duration
 - Will the magic of bringing back someone from the dead kill the wand operator
 - Will bringing someone back to life destroy the wand
 - Will bringing someone back to life cause the wand to convert to its opposite – good wand turns into evil wand, or evil wand turns into good wand

- Hands and Fingers
 - Hand movements can become a crucial part to your laws
 - Snapping fingers of the one possessing the magic or imagination can cause wanted or unwanted results
 - “Casting” lightning from fingertips is common, and can be used for good or evil
 - If the one who possess the magic or imagination claps their hands it could cause destruction, things to appear or disappear, or other characters to freeze
 - If the one who possesses the magic or imagination raises his or her hands to the sky it could summon in-climate weather
- Eyes
 - Eyes can hold powers just as easily as hands and fingers
 - Eyes can change colors to produce the wanted effect
 - Eyes can shoot fire or lightning
 - Eyes can cause death by staring at a character
- Words
 - Words are used in large with spells, imaginations, and props such as a crystal ball. Words too have their laws they must abide by, set by the author.
 - Every time the imaginative character say “Phooey” he or she turns green
 - If one word is mis-spoken while casting a spell it could cause the wanted effect to enlarge or shrink
 - If a character looks into a crystal ball and repeats the words dark as night – sharp as a double edged sword a black rose would appear hovering in a mist, and that could mean the other character present is the special evil one.
 - A series of words must be sung to bring about the magic

Write the following topics (not details) on your flipchart or wipe off board. Ask enthusiasts to give their answers before discussing the details listed

- **Giving Life to Characters or Creatures Who Have Laid Dormant**
 - Magic or imaginations can be used to bring dormant creatures to life, but not without consequences. Below are some consequences to think about when adding such a feature
 - If a character or creature is brought to life from a dormant state they cannot die
 - If the character who possesses the power to perform such a task he or she will become an old, haggard troll of the woods for eternity
 - If the human character performs such a task he/she must give up their real legs and the human legs will be replaced with legs of an Ostrich

- When the dormant characters/creatures come to life they are in a rampage state for weeks, but then will turn into gentle giants who will help those of good battle against those who are evil
- **Timing**

(Ask the enthusiasts to elaborate on the following)

 - A new wizard could learn that when the battle starts he/she will only have a few minutes to use a certain effect
 - The character must complete a task before he or she can possess magic or imagination
 - A spell must be cast at an exact time or it will not be effective
 - The character must become a certain age to possess the powers
 - The character possessing the magic or imaginative tool to keep the town from being overthrown by evil must unleash all of his or her power into a designated artesian well before the clock strikes midnight on October 13
- **Dirty Magic**
 - Usually associated with evil or wicked characters when in use
 - Is used on good characters and creatures to tear down, destroy, confuse, restrict, torture, etc.
 - Laws can be looser, however there can always be one major thing that causes the dirty magic to destroy itself
- **Worlds**
 - There are many factors that go into creating a realistic world. These details are covered in our Journey To Publication Advanced Curriculum
- **Maps**
 - Like worlds, there are many factors that go into creating a believable map. These details are also covered in our Journey To Publication Advanced Curriculum
- **Character Types**
 - Character types in fantasy are usually represented as but not limited to elves, orcs, fairies, unicorns, dragons, wizards, and dwarves.
 - In some cases, such as in Janet Beasley's Hidden Earth Series, you will find a new creation of some character and creature types such as chukkons, etherealians, wightlings, toucanthias, cryptoderms, and equinarchs. It is perfectly acceptable for the author to create new types of beings, but again, they must be believable.

Discussion:

- Which sub genre interests you most and why?
- Do you prefer using what has already been created when it comes to elves, dwarves, orcs, etc., or are you venturous and wanting to create your own? Why did you choose the answer you did? If wanting to create your own do you have any in mind?
- What do you consider to be the most effect fantasy element and why?

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Does Fantasy include any sub genres?

Yes. There are several.

What are the definitions of the most prominent fantasy sub genres? (*The following sub genres mentioned are covered in detail in the Journey To Publication Advanced Curriculum*).

Though the below are listed separately, they often times intertwine.

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- Dark fantasy blends its magic and imagination with the horror genre. Terms such as dark, gloom, despair, and dread are used to describe works in this sub genre.

Do certain fantasy elements such as magic have to have laws?

Yes. You don't want to use a magic wand that can fix or destroy any and everything because your story is going to end up short and appear totally unrealistic.

Who creates the laws for magic and other fantastical elements in my story?

You, the author. The key thing to remember is all of the laws you create must hold their continuity so the results are believable to your readers.

Some Elements to Consider When Writing the Magical or Imaginational Elements into your Fantasy.

- Wands
- Hands and Fingers
- Eyes
- Words

Other magical and/or imaginative effects you can use when writing fantasy.

- Giving Life to Characters or Creatures Who Have Laid Dormant
- Timing
- Dirty Magic
- Worlds
- Maps
- Character Types

