Spotlight on Sci-fi

Created by Inaburra Senior Library, 2016

What is sci-fi?

Science fiction, or sci-fi, is a speculative fiction genre that explores the possibilities of science. Many stories are set in the future, and most look at the consequences of scientific and technological development.

The history of sci-fi

Sci-fi began in the 1800s with stories like 'Frankenstein'(1818), which looks at the negative consequences of science, and '20,000 leagues under the sea' (1870), which looks at the positive outcomes of science.

In the early 1900s pulp magazines published sci-fi short stories and comic strips.

Whether sci-fi views scientific and technological progress as a good or bad thing often depends on what was happening in the world when the story was written.

Eg.   Frankenstein is about negative consequences because it was written at a time when science was viewed as challenging God.

Jules Verne's stories celebrate science because they were written during a time of great scientific discovery.

Sci-fi written during the Cold War in the 1950s and 60s, when people were worried about the nuclear bomb, often features dystopian themes and stories about the consequence of nuclear war.

A common theme in current sci-fi stories is the future impact of climate change and the way the internet and our devices are affecting us.

Originally sci-fi stories were scientifically plausible, but as time went on this has become less important to sci-fi authors.

Many fictional inventions in sci-fi novels have gone on to become actual things.

Common sci-fi themes

Alternate histories, where real historical events ended differently

Space travel and stories set on other planets

Dystopian or post-apocalyptic stories

Alien invasion

Parallel worlds

What it means to be human

Humans creating technology that gets out of control

Stories set in the future

Time travel

Environmental disasters

Biological experiments

Humans with special powers

Famous sci-fi authors
Ursula Le Guin
Phillip K. Dick
Douglas Adams
Aldous Huxley
Ray Bradbury
Isaac Asmiov
Orson Scott Card
Pierce Brown
Andy Weir
Michael Crichton
John Wyndham
H.G. Wells
Arthur C. Clarke
Jules Verne