

# The Secret Language of Books

A Guide to Appeal

2<sup>nd</sup> edition

*now with  
character appeal*

**NoveList**<sup>®</sup>

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# Welcome

Appeal—the “chemistry” of readers’ advisory—is a way of determining why people enjoy the books they read. Some readers already have a good vocabulary for talking about the books they love, while some do better talking about books they never want to read again. Framing these conversations in appeal is the foundation for helping people find what to read next.

When we added appeal terms to NoveList in 2010 (building on the groundwork laid by people like Joyce Saricks, Nancy Pearl, and Neal Wyatt), we envisioned a vocabulary that would grow and change in response to readers, librarians, and the world of books. With this “second edition,” we are excited to introduce a few fun changes, including character appeal!

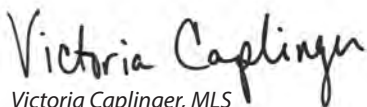
Our character appeal vocabulary is not intended to be an exhaustive list of character types or character names—we have subject headings for that. Instead, we decided to talk broadly about how fiction authors handle characterization as a whole—are the characters likeable? Flawed? Does the reading experience

involve intimate knowledge of the characters, or are they appealing but not especially complex? Snarky and quirky, or brooding and introspective? If you don’t mind spoilers, you can even search for unreliable narrators!

This edition also reflects the regular and ongoing changes that we make to our appeal vocabulary—we sometimes broaden or narrow the reading levels of given terms (there really are some darkly humorous books for preschoolers!).

We spend a lot of time evaluating our appeal cataloging, and we welcome feedback from all librarians and readers who are willing to share with us. Seriously! My email address is [vcaplinger@ebSCO.com](mailto:vcaplinger@ebSCO.com)—bring on your suggestions & questions!

Happy reading—there’s a whole multiverse out there!



*Victoria Caplinger, MLS  
Adult Cataloging Supervisor, NoveList*

# Starter Questions

Use these to start conversations with readers

Can you tell me about a book you've read and enjoyed?

What movies and TV shows have you enjoyed?

Which of your favorite authors or series do you wish had a new book?

What are you in the mood for today?

# Pace

**Pace is the rate at which a story unfolds for the reader. We identify books at either end of the spectrum. We also tag those that start slowly, then accelerate as the story progresses.**

## **Fast-paced:**

Events in these exciting books unfold rapidly, moving the reader quickly through the story.

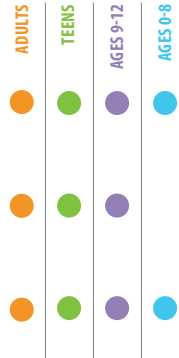
## **Intensifying:**

These books gradually build in momentum throughout the story, resulting in a gripping conclusion.

## **Leisurely paced:**

Due to descriptive language, focus on detail, or careful development of character or setting, these books unfold slowly, allowing the reader to savor the narrative.

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:



Why so few pace terms? According to Neal Wyatt, nobody's really looking for "medium-paced" books – it's only an active appeal when it stands out on the spectrum.

# Making Comparisons

Use comparisons to dig deeper into reading preferences. Do you prefer **action-packed** or **character-driven** stories? **Fast** or **leisurely paced**? **Heartwarming** and **homespun**, or **disturbing** and **creepy**?



# Storyline

**Storyline is a quick way to determine a book's focus and structure.**

## **Action-packed**

Pulse-pounding, high-octane excitement is the rule!

## **Character-driven**

Interior growth and development of characters is important.

## **Intricately plotted**

These books have intricate, complicated, or elaborate storylines, often involving multiple plots or numerous narrative twists and turns. \*

## **Issue-oriented**

Issue-oriented books explore controversial themes, which may cover emotional, ethical, or social problems.

## **Nonlinear**

Instead of being portrayed chronologically, events in these books shift between time periods.

## **Open-ended**

Instead of providing answers, these books invite readers to ponder events long after the last page.

## **Plot-driven**

Events rather than characters propel these stories forward.

## **Sweeping**

These sprawling stories span decades or generations and frequently include multiple locations and historical events. \*

## **World-building**

These books immerse the reader in vivid imaginary worlds of invented histories, languages, geography, or cultures.

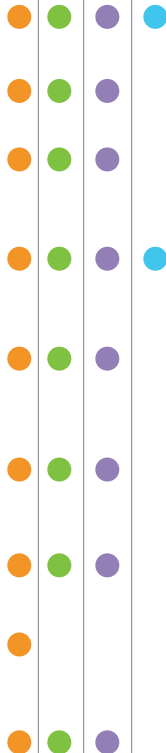
AUDIENCE(S) THIS  
TERM APPLIES TO:

ADULTS

TEENS

AGES 9-12

AGES 0-8



# Using Tone to Narrow a Genre

How much sex is too much?  
Whether romance readers are  
looking for some good, clean fun,  
or a down and dirty romp,  
appeal can help find their  
safe word (or comfort  
zone).

## SWEET ROMANCES

TRY  
Chaste  
Heartwarming  
Homespun

## MILD ROMANCES

TRY  
Mildly sensuous  
Upbeat

## HOT ROMANCES

TRY  
Explicit  
Moody  
Steamy

# Tone

**Tone is the feeling that a book evokes in the reader. In many cases, this category best answers the question, “What are you in the mood for?”**

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:

ADULTS

TEENS

AGES 9-12

AGES 0-8

## **Amusing**

They may not make you laugh out loud, but these stories have a light humor that sometimes accentuates more serious themes.

## **Angst-filled**

Characters in these books experience problems associated with adolescence, such as questions about sexuality, popularity, or social standing.

## **Atmospheric**

These books evoke the story’s setting, whether it’s a gothic mansion or a small Midwestern town.

## **Bittersweet**

A mixed emotional edge—both pleasant and painful—that is sustained throughout the story.

## **Bleak**

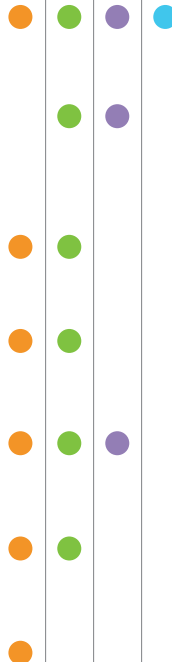
A dark outlook, frequently devoid of faith in human nature and tending away from hope or optimism.

## **Chaste**

These books about romantic relationships focus on the emotions of the characters, and contain no sex or descriptions of sexual activity.

## **Conservative**

Represents a conservative (often Republican) perspective on American politics and social issues such as the environment, poverty, and the economy. (*Nonfiction use only.*)



# Tone

## Creepy

Unsettling in a visceral, skin-crawling way, these books make the reader uneasy, and may often have supernatural elements and eerie settings.

## Darkly humorous

The humor in these books derives from ironic or grimly satiric treatment of death, suffering, and other morbid subjects. \*

## Disturbing

Approaching the darker side of human nature, these books are unsettling and often portray socially marginal or dysfunctional individuals.

## Dramatic

These cinematic books feature exciting and larger-than-life stories, depicting anything from historical events to space warfare.

## Emotionally intense

Conveying great depth or complexity of emotion, these books explore the inner lives of characters in detail.

## Explicit

These books contain lots of vividly described sex, ranging from the plainest (but plentiful) vanilla to the kinkiest of kink.

## Feel-good

A gentle, comfortable, and hopeful feeling (not just a happy ending).

## Funny

Laugh-out-loud humor characterizes these books.

## Gossipy

Actions and people in these books tend to be over-the-top, dramatic, and salacious.

## Gross

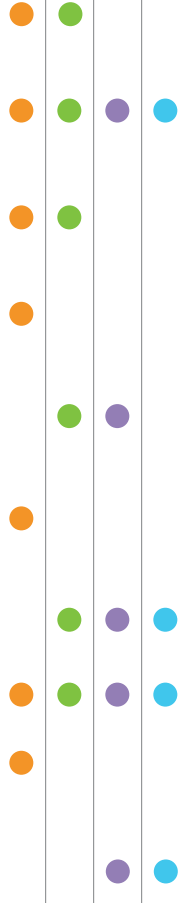
Yuck! Including lots of nasty, oozy, or disgusting facts or details, these books may be educational or purely for entertainment.

ADULTS

TEENS

AGES 9-12

AGES 0-8



# Tone

## Gruesome

Not for the squeamish, these books include a significant amount of explicit gore or other grisly elements.

## Haunting

Often because of hard-hitting storylines, these books have a memorable, unforgettable quality that stays with the reader.

## Heartwarming

These uplifting stories ultimately leave readers feeling emotionally satisfied.\*

## Heartwrenching

These books convey emotions that are keenly distressing, hitting a nerve with readers and deeply affecting them.

## High-drama

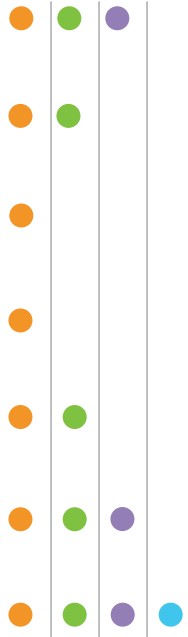
Juicy, sensational, and melodramatic, these books deal with back-stabbing social scenes and/or angst-filled personal traumas.

## Homespun

Simplicity is key, often with a rural or small-town setting and characters that are unpretentious and cherish old-fashioned values.\*

## Hopeful

While addressing serious issues, these books express belief in humanity's ability to strive for improvement and make things better. (*Nonfiction use only.*)



Humor comes in many varieties, so you'll want to get specific... Are you looking for light humor? Try **amusing**, **funny**, **irreverent**, **offbeat**, or **silly**. Want something a little edgier? Look for **darkly humorous** or **sardonic**.

# Tone

## Impassioned

These books convey strong emotions to readers because the authors are forcefully advocating a particular point of view, making an argument, or telling an emotional story. *(Nonfiction use only.)*

## Inspiring

These books have an inspirational, enlightening, or uplifting quality, which may or may not be religious in nature.

## Irreverent

No institutions, people, or beliefs are off-limits in these humorous (and sometimes subversive) books.

## Liberal

Represents a liberal (often Democratic) perspective on American politics, politicians, and social issues such as the environment, poverty, and the economy. *(Nonfiction use only.)*

## Melancholy

While not grim or hopeless, these books are sad, somber, or gloomy.

## Menacing

A sense of threat or menace pervades, evoking feelings of dread.

## Mildly sensuous

Sex is present, but it's not given pride of place. Relationships are most important, but sometimes characters act on their attractions.

## Moody

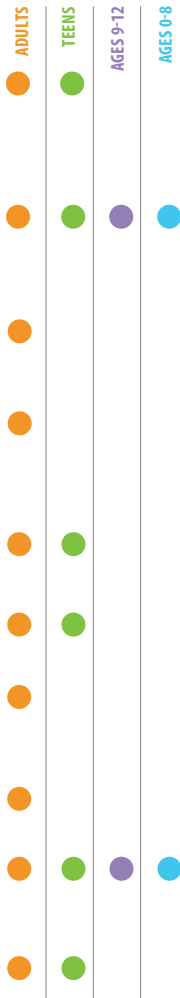
A dark and brooding tone that borders on melodrama.

## Moving

Emotionally resonant books that make readers feel invested in both the characters and the story.

## Mystical

Touching on spiritual themes, these books often explore archetypes and incorporate metaphysical events.



# Tone

## Noisy

Because of rousing, energetic pictures or text, these stories lend themselves to loud readings.

## Non-spiritual

These nonfiction books represent a non-spiritual outlook on issues related to religion and spirituality. *(Nonfiction use only.)*

## Nostalgic

Characters reminisce, or the book looks back toward a particular place or time with longing and wistfulness.

## Offbeat

Through plot twists, bizarre humor, and unique personalities, these quirky books recount unconventional, idiosyncratic, or unusual stories.

## Quiet

Soothing, low-key stories that have a calming effect on young readers.

## Patriotic

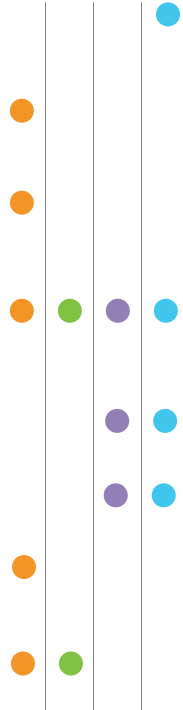
These books celebrate and show pride in one's country and its achievements.

## Racy humor

Including coarse or risqué material; these books refer to sex in a humorous way.\*

## Reflective

Contemplative books featuring characters who think seriously about their lives and place in the world.



Some tone words are just for kids – for example, **gross, noisy, quiet, silly, scary, & sweet** are all terms that can help you find the perfect book for storytime, read-alouds, or (best of all!) naptime.

# Tone

## Romantic

Not genre romances, but featuring strong romantic elements—either between characters or in the story itself. Happy endings not guaranteed!

## Sad

Issues in these books may be very serious (such as death), or less serious but still challenging (such as a friend moving away).

## Sardonic

Dry humor and biting wit set the tone in these stories. \*

## Scary

These spooky books have a frightening or menacing feeling that will make young readers uneasy.

## Self-deprecating

Never taking themselves too seriously, the authors humorously expose their own embarrassments, making readers sympathize, laugh, and sometimes cringe! (*Nonfiction use only.*)

## Serious

Marked by seriousness, gravity, or solemnity, these books confront social issues such as war, poverty, gender, or racial concerns.

## Silly

The class clowns of literature, these books are often quite absurd and ridiculous but lots of fun. \*

## Sobering

Addressing weighty social issues, these serious and hard-hitting books present a perspective that may be revelatory to the reader.

## Spiritual

These nonfiction books represent a spiritual outlook on religion and spirituality. (*Nonfiction use only.*)

ADULTS

TEENS

AGES 9-12

AGES 0-8



# Tone

## Steamy

In adult books, the sex is pretty vivid and goes beyond just innuendo. In teen books, there is still an unmistakably sexy aura, although perhaps not as much graphic detail.

## Strong sense of place

Powerfully depicted locales—real or imaginary—come alive and give a good sense of what makes a place unique.

## Suspenseful

Ranging in intensity from subtle psychological unease to nail-biting suspense, these books keep readers on edge.

## Sweet

With a light tone and appealing innocence, these endearing books are cute, playful, and otherwise delightful.

## Thought-provoking

More than just telling a story, these books take on big ideas—anything from philosophical quandaries to time paradoxes.

## Upbeat

These fun books are lighthearted, hopeful, and optimistic.

## Violent

Not for the faint of heart, these books contain explicit or graphic violence.

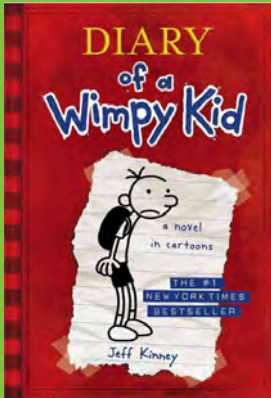
## Whimsical

These fanciful and playful books will charm and enchant readers, and often include fairy tales or other elements of fantasy.



For readers with a passion for place, direct them to books with a **strong sense of place**, and then pair it with a subject heading for a location—anything from Paris to Westeros to St. Petersburg!

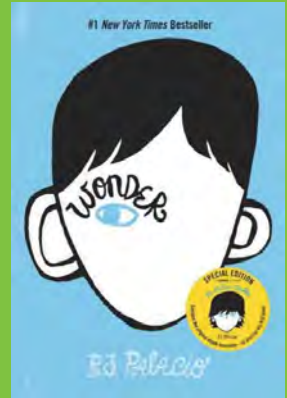
# Characters readers love (or, love to hate)



Middle-schooler Greg is undeniably **sarcastic**, but that's precisely the reason why these books are so entertaining.



Readers are kept guessing about the true nature of Amy Dunne, but her **twisted** character makes for a thrilling story.



Auggie Pullman, who struggles with being “different” from other kids, is a great example of the appeal of **ability diverse** characters.



# Character

## Complex

Intriguing and complicated, these multi-dimensional characters have conflicting motivations and desires.

## Courageous

These brave and often self-sacrificing characters have strong convictions and face challenges with determination, despite the odds against them.

## Culturally diverse

These books may feature characters from racial and ethnic minorities living in the United States, Europe, Canada, or Australia, as well as characters from non-white cultural groups living in other parts of the world.

## Exaggerated

These larger-than-life characters often delight readers by adding to the humor or uniqueness of a story.

## Flawed

These characters do not always act in their own best interests, and their sometimes misguided decisions form a central theme in the story.

## Introspective

These characters examine their own feelings, thoughts, and motives, and what they find often has major repercussions for the story.

## Large cast of characters

Whether because of sprawling storylines, epic scopes, or intricate plots, these books contain lots of characters—how well readers get to know them depends on the author.\*

ADULTS	TEENS	AGES 9-12	AGES 0-8
●	●		
●	●	●	●
	●	●	●
●	●	●	●
●	●		
●	●	●	
●	●	●	

# Character

## **LGBTQIA diverse**

Identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or just questioning, these characters are not stereotypes and are important to the story (even if in a secondary role).

## **Likeable**

These appealing characters engage readers, and are likeable despite flaws.

## **Mischievous**

These child characters frequently get into trouble or cause minor disasters due to their curiosity or intentional disregard for the rules.

## **Quirky**

Eccentric and idiosyncratic, these characters range from peculiar to bizarre, and generally add to the charm or humor of the stories in which they appear.

## **Relatable**

Because their emotions and experiences are recognizable, readers are able to identify with these characters and their dilemmas.

## **Religiously diverse**

These characters follow or have a background in a religion other than Christianity. While their active level of involvement in the religion may vary, the character's religious beliefs are an important element in the story.



Responding to the recent call for more diversity (#weneeddiversebooks) in children's literature, we call out different kinds of diversity in our character appeal terms. Look for **ability diverse**, **culturally diverse**, **LGBTQIA diverse**, and **religiously diverse** characters.

# Character

## Sarcastic

These young characters sometimes employ sarcasm for humor, and sometimes to respond to difficult or challenging situations.

## Sassy

These books feature characters (usually women) with outsized personalities and a bottomless well of one-liners and comebacks.

## Snarky

These characters employ sarcasm, irony, and biting wit in their approach to life (and often have fun with it!).

## Spirited

These lively characters are full of energy and vigor.

## Spunky

Feisty and scrappy, these characters have pluck and determination.

## Strong female

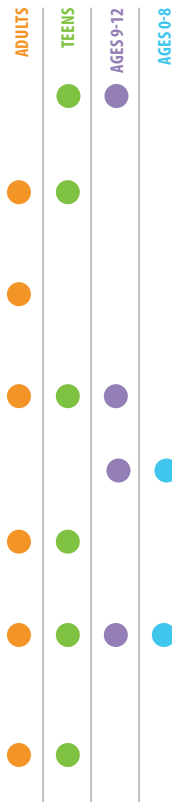
Whether catching criminals or saving the world, these take-charge women and girls are at the top of their game.

## Sympathetic

While sometimes dealing with difficult situations or making poor decisions, these characters are presented in such a way that readers empathize with them.

## Twisted

Deviant and often unsettling, these characters push the boundaries of literature through behavior that ranges from disturbing to illegal.



# Character

## Unlikeable

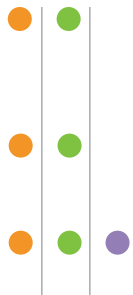
Deliberately painted in an unflattering light, these characters will not gain the sympathy of readers, so there is less emotional investment if and when bad things happen to them.

## Unreliable narrator

Readers may not be able to trust the version of events narrated to them in these complex and sometimes disturbing stories.

## Well-developed

Sometimes appearing in more plot-driven stories, these characters rise above others in the strength of their development.



Have a reader who doesn't mind going to some uncomfortable places? Try books with **unlikeable** or **twisted** characters, or with **unreliable narrators**.

# Different Writing Styles

Appeal helps compare very different styles ...

DIALOGUE-DRIVEN

WITTY

I am born not long from the time  
or far from the place  
where  
my great-great-grandparents  
worked the deep rich land  
unfree  
dawn till dusk  
unpaid  
drunk cool water from scooped out gourds  
looked up and followed  
the sky's mirrored constellation  
to freedom.

-- from *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline  
Woodson

Where was Incandesto when you  
needed him?  
Not that Flora really believed in super-  
heroes. But still.  
She stood at the window and watched  
as the squirrel was vacuumed up.  
*Poof. Fwump.*  
"Holy bagumba," said Flora.

--from *Flora & Ulysses* by Kate DiCamillo

LYRICAL  
THOUGHTFUL

# Writing Style

**Writing style terms tell us how a book is written, from the complexity of the language to the level of detail in the background.**

AUDIENCE(S) THIS TERM APPLIES TO:

## **Accessible**

These books explain a complicated or technical issue in an approachable manner. (*Nonfiction use only.*)

## **Attention-grabbing**

Irresistible to young readers, these books instantly draw them in.

## **Banter-filled**

These books are characterized by snappy repartee. \*

## **Browsable**

Information is arranged in short sections and is often accompanied by illustrations or other graphics to encourage browsing. (*Nonfiction use only.*)

## **Candid**

The narrative style of these books is frank and forthcoming, even when discussing potentially sensitive or uncomfortable subjects.

## **Compelling**

These powerful books draw readers irresistibly into the story.

## **Comprehensive**

These wide-ranging books thoroughly cover the background (and sometimes personalities!) of the subjects they explore. (*Nonfiction use only.*)

## **Concise**

Without wasting a word, these nonfiction books deliver a wealth of information in a succinct format. (*Nonfiction use only.*)

## **Conversational**

Written informally, these read as if a close friend were telling a story.

## **Descriptive**

Full of elaborate descriptions, with illustrative, expressive language.

ADULTS

TEENS

AGES 9-12

AGES 0-8



# Writing Style

## **Dialect-filled**

Regional language, lingo, or slang brings the setting to life.

## **Easy-to-understand**

These make hard-to-understand things a little easier. *(Nonfiction use only.)*

## **Engaging**

These books capture the imagination of readers through narrative style, character, or use of detail.

## **Experimental**

The language or narrative structure in these books is unusual or unexpected.

## **Gritty**

Characterized by a narrative style that includes dark and unsettling details, these books often depict violence.

## **Impartial**

Presents a balanced view of a contentious subject. *(Nonfiction use only.)*

## **Jargon-filled**

These books use the specialized, technical language of a particular group, trade, or profession.

## **Journalistic**

Written about newsworthy issues, these books are well-researched but conversational, rather than scholarly. *(Nonfiction use only.)*

## **Lush**

Descriptive language evokes the senses, making readers feel as if they are experiencing what is being described.

## **Lyrical**

Elegant, beautiful language, often with a rhythmic or poetic quality.

## **Minimal text**

Generally used with young children, these have few words per page. The words tend to be simple, and sentences are short.

ADULTS

TEENS

AGES 9-12

AGES 6-8



# Writing Style

## **Persuasive**

These books may present both sides of an issue, but this is frequently used to bolster a specific opinion. (*Nonfiction use only.*)

## **Richly detailed**

Details enrich these stories, sometimes focusing on a special body of knowledge (e.g., forensics, music, history, etc.).

## **Scholarly**

Thoroughly researched and addressing complicated issues, the language in these books is academic or technical. (*Nonfiction use only.*)

## **Slang-heavy**

Characters in these books make frequent use of slang, which often aids in character development.

## **Spare**

The writing in these books is minimal and elegant. Words are seldom wasted, and great attention is paid to the use of language.

## **Stylistically complex**

Due to sophisticated language and narrative structure, these stories can often be read on a number of levels.

## **Thoughtful**

Despite covering a sensitive or controversial topic, these books are considerably written and handle the subject with respect.

## **Well-crafted dialogue**

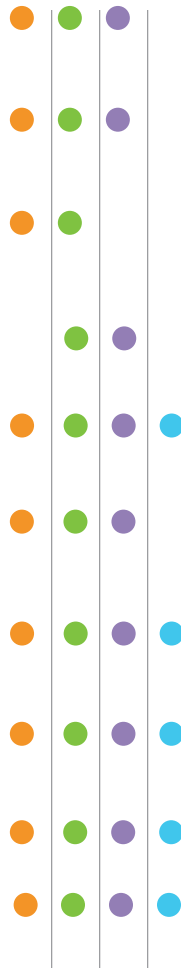
These books contain well-crafted, notable, or remarkable dialogue. \*

## **Witty**

These cleverly written books use language in an inventive and often humorous way. \*

## **Wordplay-filled**

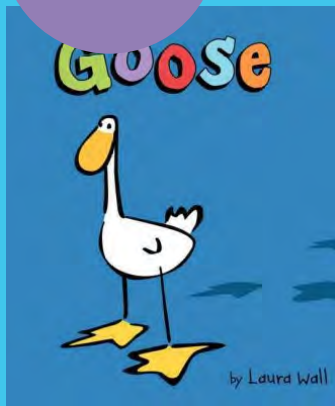
These books are full of puns, palindromes, anagrams, and other clever uses of language.



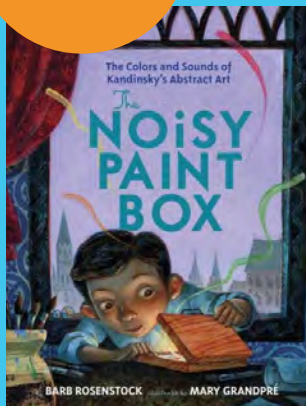
# Different kinds of Illustrations

Need a storytime book? **Big and bold** illustrations can be seen from across a crowd. **Detailed** books give young readers a chance to pore over the pictures. **Colorful** books can also be eye-catching!

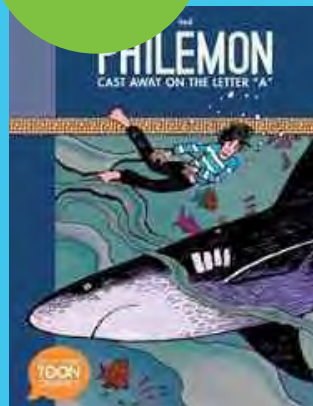
**Big and  
Bold**



**Detailed**



**Colorful**



# Illustration

Both picture books and graphic novels have a unique set of qualities important to their readers, from color and drawing style to the mood evoked by the illustrations.

## Abstract

These illustrations deliberately distort perspective and proportion so that objects and people are removed from reality.

## Big and bold

The contrast between bright colors and bold lines make the pictures visible from a distance. A great choice for storytime!

## Black-and-white

The artwork is in black and white only, and may range from pen and ink drawings to watercolor-like effects in shades of gray.

## Bold

The artwork consists of simple, basic, or block-like shapes, and the lines are dark, distinct, or thick.

## Cartoony

This style features characters drawn with exaggerated, simplified features. Often humorous, it can be used to lighten difficult themes.

## Charming

The illustrations are often cute and playful, and offer visual support for the light or upbeat tone in a story.

## Colorful

The full-color illustrations in these books feature vibrant colors. The artwork may vary widely, but the color palette is vivid.

## Dark

Often used for emphasis in stories with a bleak, menacing, or serious tone, these illustrations are full of shadows and dark corners.

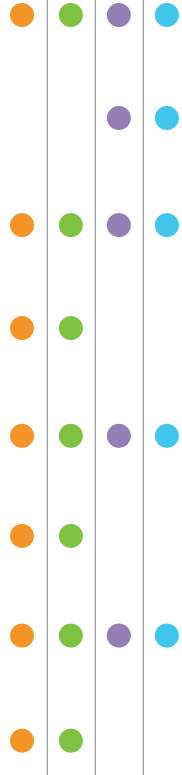
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# Illustration

## **Photographic**

These books use photographs as the primary method of illustration.

## **Realistic**

These illustrations use correct proportions and accurate perspective. The content may not represent reality, but the drawing does.

## **Rough-edged**

These illustrations are not sophisticated, polished, or elegant; instead, they have jagged lines and imperfect images.

## **Sepia-toned**

Sepia-toned illustrations are reddish-brown in color, often used to indicate nostalgia, reminiscence, or events that took place in the past.

## **Simple**

Without much ornamentation, these uncomplicated illustrations use basic or primary forms, sometimes as a way to contrast with the emotional depth of the story.

## **Surreal**

These illustrations have a dreamlike or unreal quality, and express the workings of the subconscious. Typically done in a realistic style, they use unexpected juxtapositions of people or objects.

## **Textured**

The visible texture of these illustrations adds realistic depth and detail.



# Appeal to Different **Listeners**



## All About the Voices

Find your new  
favorite narrator!

### **SEARCH FOR:**

Character accents  
Energetic  
Folksy  
Multiple narrators  
Read by the author  
Youthful



## A Story and a Show

Prefer lots of  
showtime extras?

### **SEARCH FOR:**

Audio drama  
Full cast  
Live audience  
Musically enhanced  
Sound effects



## Hooked on a Feeling

Looking to evoke a  
mood or feeling?

### **SEARCH FOR:**

Comedic  
Detached  
Emotionally connected  
Engrossing  
Intense  
Somber

# Audio

**Audio appeal covers everything from the performance (full cast or read by the author) to voice quality, tone, and artistic delivery.**

## **Audio drama**

These are either original audio productions, or were changed significantly from a book to a more dramatic form of the work.

## **Approachable**

Through their clear and well-paced performances, these narrators make challenging concepts or language easier for listeners to understand.

## **Brisk**

These narrators move their stories along with quick, agile readings.

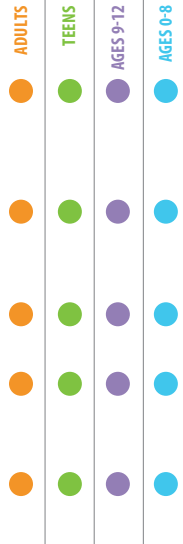
## **Character accents**

Incorporating accents into their performances, these narrators bring both characters and settings to life with their vocal versatility.

## **Comedic**

Through good use of comic timing, these narrators channel the humor of the stories they read and convey it to listeners.

AUDIENCE(S) THIS  
TERM APPLIES TO:



Notice that all the audio terms apply to all audiences? Since they describe the narrator's performance, voice, or the overall production, these terms can apply to audiobooks at any reading level.

# Audio

## **Commanding**

These narrators deliver strong and authoritative performances.

## **Crisp**

These narrators read in clear tones, with precise enunciation.

## **Deadpan**

The humor in these books—sometimes wry and sometimes riotous—is delivered in a cool, understated manner.

## **Detached**

These performances are emotionally removed from the story, which separates the listener from the impact of violent or disturbing events.

## **Distinctly voiced**

Narrators provide a multiplicity of voices for their characters, sometimes through accents, pitch, intonation, or tone. The result is that listeners can easily identify who is speaking.

## **Emotionally connected**

Because of their connection with the characters, these narrators capture the emotional content of the books they read.

## **Energetic**

These narrators imbue their performances with spirit, animation, and enthusiasm; adding to the humor, excitement, or drama.

## **Engrossing**

These narrators skillfully draw listeners into the story, providing a memorable listening experience.

## **Folksy**

These narrators highlight regional speech patterns, cadences, and dialects; often the characters they portray will be from rural areas, including but not limited to the South.



# Audio

## Full cast

In these performances, multiple narrators perform as individual characters during an interactive reading.

## Gentle

These soothing voices are easy on the ear. Sometimes this narrative style can make difficult subject matter easier to process.

## Gravelly

These narrators have husky, raspy, and throaty voices.

## Immersive

Narration that captures the sensation of a time and place and immerses the listener in the story's setting.

## Intense

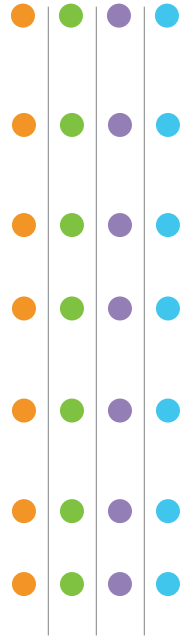
Through dramatic, suspense-filled performances, these narrators keep listeners on the edges of their seats.

## Live audience

Narrators or actors perform in the presence of a live audience.

## Melodious

Lilting, dulcet voices offer a pleasing and almost hypnotic listening experience.



What's the difference between **multiple narrators** and **full cast**? In a **full cast** audiobook, the performers interact with each other while **multiple narrators** typically read alternating chapters or a unique character's part.

# Audio

## Multiple narrators

These performances include more than one narrator, often reading sections or chapters told from one character's perspective.

## Musically enhanced

Including anything from a few musical accents to a full musical score, this is most often found in full cast performances or in juvenile audiobooks.

## Read by the author

In these performances, authors double as narrators, and listeners get the chance to hear the text as voiced by the author.

## Resonant

These pleasing voices wash over the listener in rich and sonorous tones.

## Sincere

With their heartfelt performances, narrators of these nonfiction audiobooks imbue their readings with genuine conviction.

## Somber

These performances underscore the serious nature of the stories.

## Sound effects

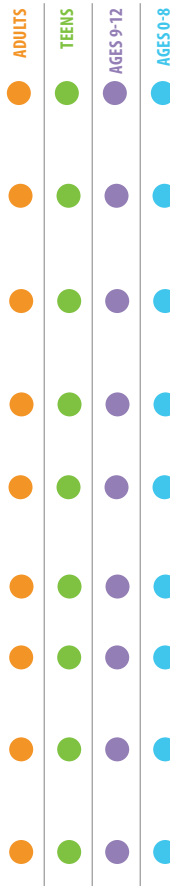
Most often found in full cast performances or in juvenile audiobooks, these productions rely heavily on added audio elements.

## Understated

While they may not be all bells and whistles, these restrained performances provide quietly memorable experiences.

## Unhurried

These narrators take their time with the stories they read, using slower cadences and measured rhythms.



# Audio

## **Warm**

These appealing voices have pleasant, inviting tones.

## **Well-characterized**

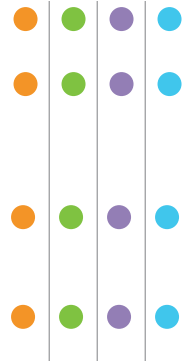
More than by simply differentiating their voices, these narrators inhabit the characters in a way that is authentic and convincing, bringing one or more personalities to life for the listener.

## **Wry**

These books are read by narrators who excel at drawing out subtle humor, ranging from understated irony to acerbic wit.

## **Youthful**

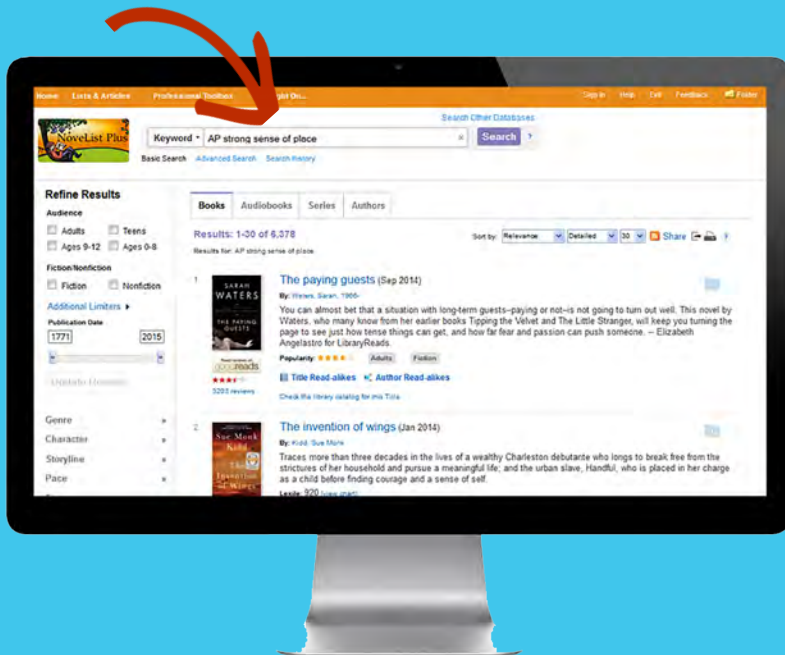
These voices often impart an air of innocence and buoyancy to the stories they read.



Not sure where to start with audiobooks?  
**Well-characterized** is always a good choice because it is used when an audiobook is generally outstanding!

# Appeals in NoveList

Try a quick search for an appeal term using the field code 'AP'. For example, type "AP strong sense of place" in the search box.



# Search Tips

Need an atmospheric, gritty, fast-paced historical novel at the drop of a hat? NovelList can help! Using two or more appeal terms together can help increase the precision of the search results. Here are some of our favorite combos!

## **Atmospheric AND Creepy**

Readers who love psychological suspense should try searching for **atmospheric** and **creepy**. This will lead them to gothic fiction options (or ghost stories and horror, if they're feeling up to it).

## **Quiet AND Muted**

Parents looking to help their kids wind down after a busy day might want to avoid noisy, gross, or silly picture books, and instead search for **quiet** ones with illustrations that are **muted**.

## **Noisy AND Silly**

Likewise, adults looking to get some energy going during storytime could look for **silly** picture books that are **noisy**. Maybe add **quirky** or **mischievous**, too.

## **Gossipy AND Candid**

Readers looking for the dish on celebrity life or popular culture can search for **gossipy**, along with **candid** and/or **conversational** to find that perfect insider-scoop.

## **Folksy AND Character Accents**

We love listening to accents, especially Southern accents (NovelList is based in North Carolina, after all!). A search for **folksy** and **character accents** will find audiobooks with a truly distinctive voice.

## **Dialogue-driven AND Gritty**

A combination of **dialogue-driven** and **gritty** is perfect for teens looking for authentic, issue-oriented realistic fiction that doesn't pull any punches.

## **Thought-provoking AND Engaging**

This a great combo for readers who enjoy nonfiction on **thought-provoking** topics to really make them think, but also written in a very readable and **engaging** style.

## **Strong female AND Culturally diverse**

There will be something to inspire everyone in books that feature **strong women** from **culturally diverse** backgrounds.

# Acknowledgements

This book is the result of the work of many people. Thank you to the teams below and also to all the librarians who work tirelessly on behalf of readers.

Entries marked with an asterisk (\*) were edited prior to reprinting in 2016.

## **Appeals Team**

Victoria Caplinger, Elizabeth Coleman, Leslie Gardner, Lauren Kage, Cathleen Keyser, Amy Morgan, Renee Young

## **Booklet Planning & Design**

Danielle Borasky, Cassi Broach, Victoria Caplinger, Shauna Griffin, Kathy Stewart, Renee Young

Looking for more information about NoveList  
and our work with appeal?

Visit our website:

*[www.ebscohost.com/novelist](http://www.ebscohost.com/novelist)*



“In appeal, there are no correct answers, only impressions that we share with other readers.”

— Joyce Saricks



NovelList<sup>®</sup>