

**"How do the texts/extracts you have studied in class reflect elements of the fantasy genre?
In your response discuss the following: *characters, plots/settings and themes.***

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A genre is a specific category that can identify a text by the conventions it uses. The texts, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by J.K. Rowling (1997), Northern Lights by Phillip Pullman (1995), A Wrinkle In Time by Madeleine L'Engle (1962) and Ready Player One by Ernest Cline (2011), are all fantasy texts that can be identified through their use of fantasy conventions in relation to the elements of characters, themes, plot and settings.

Within the fantasy genre readers expect there to be certain themes such as good versus evil, human potential, friendship and honourable qualities. In Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone the protagonist, Harry Potter takes the reader on a series of battles and challenges where good must triumph over evil in the magic world for them to all survive. In the quote "There is no good and evil. There is only power, and those too weak to seek it". Rowling uses the high modality contrast of good and evil here to maintain the plot through the juxtaposition of the concept of power and ultimately helps build the interest of the responder and makes them pick a side as they read. It also explores 'human' potential as it sets the challenge for Harry to overcome. Fantasy novels use specific themes that can be easily identified such as good versus evil which helps captivate reader and makes them think about specific themes in life that they may experience and what they mean.

Fantasy texts use both human and magical characters as part of their conventions to captivate and entertain the audience. Pullman starts his journey in the real world with humans and takes them on an adventure where they encounter a variety of magical characters and animals both alive and dead. "Iorek Byrnison was the first bear to get a daemon, but it should have been you, I would much rather be your daemon than his, that's why I came". The use of dialogue between magical characters uses anthropomorphism to give a non-human, human like qualities and normalises the magical character as seen in this quote. Therefore the bear being able to talk, walk and lead the fight against evil with the protagonist is part of a fantasy that could never exist in real life. The human and magical characters in The Northern Lights take the responder on a dangerous and magical journey between the real and fantasy worlds as part of the genre conventions that captivate the responder further.

The plot of a fantasy text typically has a hero on a mighty quest to save another character, the world or recover a lost or stolen object. In Ready Player One the main character 'Lyra, who is orphaned, establishes a quest to save the world through an

orientation, complication, rising and falling action structure with the resolution not reached until the final scenes. Lyra says boldly in the quote, "Unless I wanted to sign a five-year indenturement contract ... was about as appealing as rolling around in broken glass in my birthday suit". Here Lyra uses a sarcastic simile, alliteration and colloquial language as part of his initial denial in his role of the quest. The effect of these devices shows the responder that the protagonist is unwilling to accept his fate and take on the journey and is part of the plot structure. Fantasy novels typically use the journey-based structure as they are interesting and take the reader on an exciting adventure with multiple points of climax before the good guys ultimately win.

Fantasy texts can start in real worlds and then take the responder to magical or out of this world locations. In A Wrinkle in Time the author sets the story on earth and other magical planets. "They are very young. And on their earth, as they call it, they never communicate with other planets. They revolve about all alone in space". In this quote L'Engle uses third person dialogue and anthropomorphism of alien animals to make a comment on how earth could be seen by other planets and even that there could be aliens out there. The effect being that the author makes us think that these worlds could possibly be out there. A Wrinkle In Time is a classic fantasy text that uses the conventional settings of out of this world which also makes responders intrigued and not want to put the book down as it is really good and takes them to places one could only ever dream about.

In summary the four texts we have used in class, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, Northern Lights, Ready Player One and A Wrinkle In Time are all perfect examples of the fantasy genre as they all use a variety of the specific fantasy conventions in relation to the elements of characters, themes, plot and settings and take their responders away to fantasy worlds with adventures that inspire and captivate them.