

# Readers' Advisory

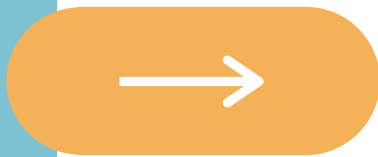
Exploring Ways to Talk  
About Books





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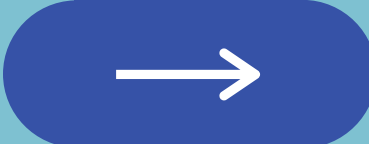
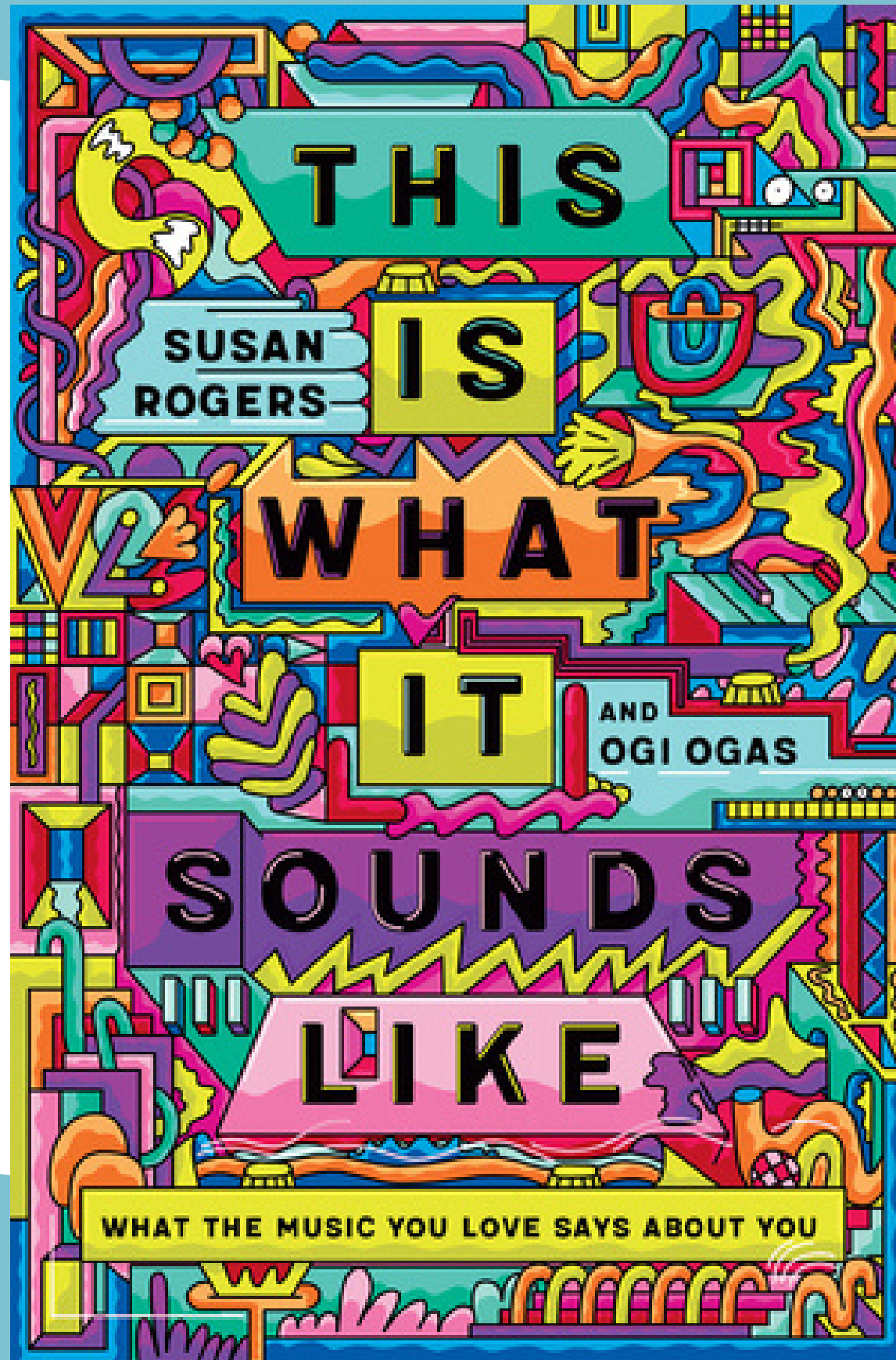


# Objectives

1. What is Readers' Advisory
2. How to Do Readers' Advisory
3. Explore Resources that Help



**What was the last good book you  
read?**





**not a book review or  
in-depth summary**

**spontaneous**

**planned**



# Booktalk Guidelines

1. Quick 1 to 1.5 minutes or less
2. Brief plot description or what's interesting
3. Appeals (3)



# What is Readers' Advisory?



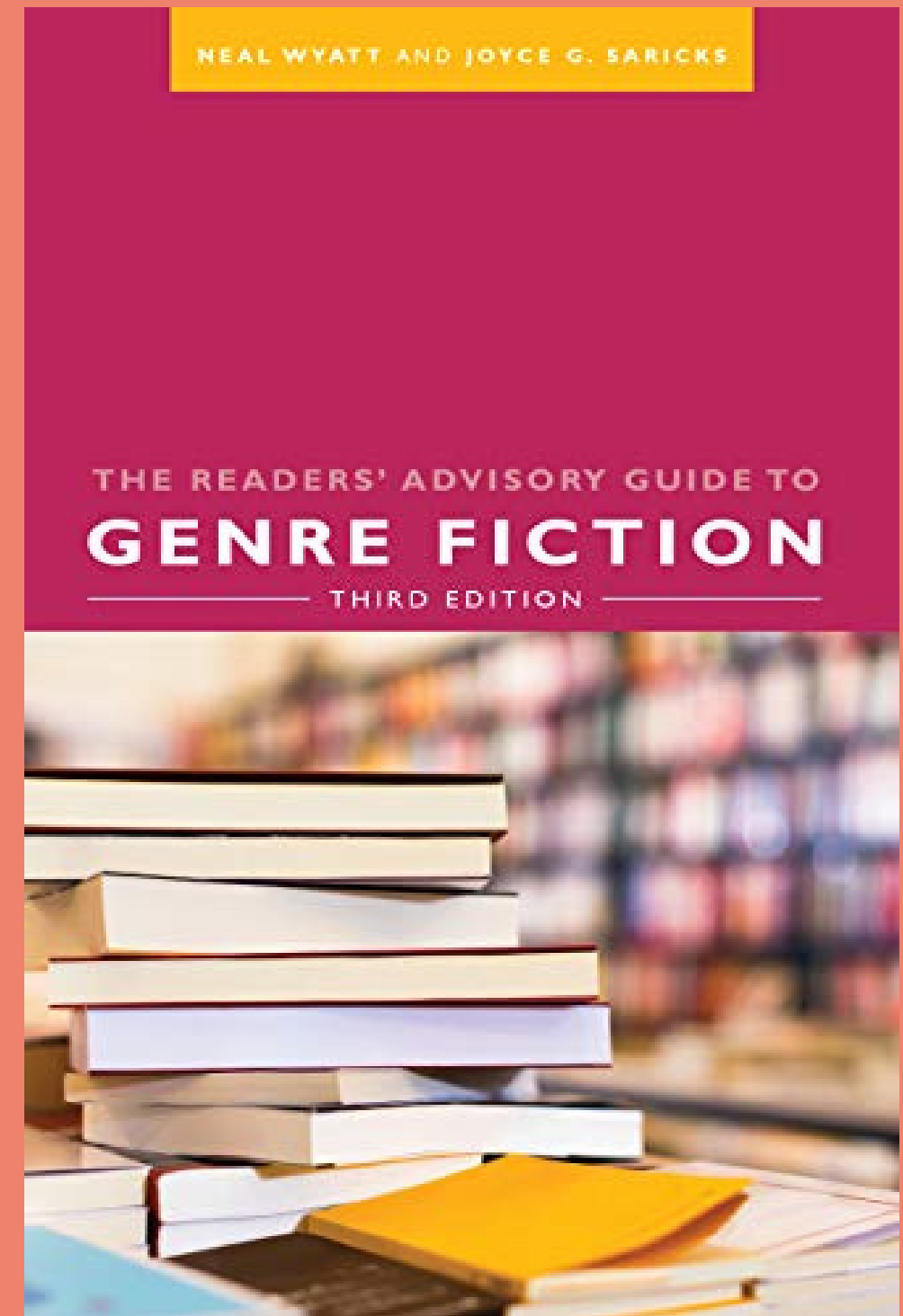




New Haven Free Public Library  
New Haven, Connecticut

**"The goal of readers' advisory service is to help readers discover titles they are currently in the mood to read," p. XV.**

**The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction:  
Third Edition**  
by Joyce G. Saricks and Neal Wyatt





# Public Library Readers' Advisory Survey Report

April 2021

Sponsored by: **NoveList**  
Empowering Librarians... Enriching Readers

**METHODOLOGY:** *Library Journal* developed the readers' advisory survey questions in coordination with NoveList, and with input by representatives from Library Reads, ARRT, and RUSA CODES. A survey invite, with branding from all our partners, was emailed to a random list of public libraries on March 5, 2021, with a reminder on March 15. *LJ* also advertised the survey via social media and the *LJ Xpress* newsletter. Our partners also pushed the survey to their members. A drawing to win a \$100 Visa® electronic gift card was offered as incentive to reply.

The survey closed on March 22, 2021 with 1,211 U.S. responses. Hosting, tabulation, and data analysis were conducted by *Library Journal*. The data in this report is unweighted.

## Library Journal Survey



NoveList®

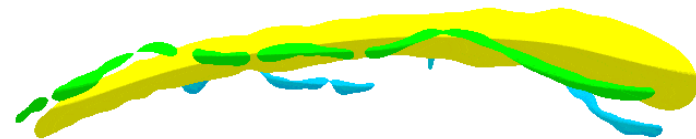


**Q. What is the status of each of the following types of RA services in your library?**

	Currently offer	On hold due to COVID	Plan to add in future	Do not offer
Personalized suggestions (one-on-one conversations, #askalibrarian on social, form-based RA, etc.)	90%	3%	3%	4%
Displays on library website or elsewhere online	87%	1%	4%	I 8%
Book clubs: virtual	86%	1%	3%	10%
Digital staff suggestions (In newsletters, book-themed emails, library/librarian blogs or podcasts, etc.)	86%	0%	5%	9%
Displays in the library	73%	25%	0%	1%
Browsable collections (shelf talkers, collections broken up by genre, face-out shelving, etc.)	72%	20%	3%	5%
Catalog enrichment (patron ratings, read-alike suggestions in the catalog, etc.)	66%	1%	6%	26%
Printed staff suggestions (bookmarks, booklists, etc.)	55%	17%	8%	20%
Book clubs: in-person	8%	87%	1%	4%



**"The 2021 survey proves that readers' advisory has become an embedded and expected service in libraries."**



Wyatt, N. (2021, July, 23). Public library readers' advisory survey report: RA by the numbers. Library Journal.



# How Do You Do Readers' Advisory?



## Public Services Competencies

Designs, implements and sponsors library programs for older adults that provide information, entertainment and opportunities for lifelong learning

- Acknowledges the knowledge and experience of older adults and provides opportunities for them to use these lifetime strengths in volunteering with the library
- Creates programs that provide older adults with an opportunity to interact and share their knowledge, experiences and stories
- Actively involves older adults in planning, implementing and evaluating programs
- Promotes the library's programs to the older adult community in coordination with marketing efforts
- Recognizes the challenges and opportunities that digital literacy provides for older adults and provides learning assistance to foster confidence and learning
- Understands the potential of games and other group and individual activities to foster cognitive and mental stimulation and social involvement, and identifies a variety of methods to meet those needs

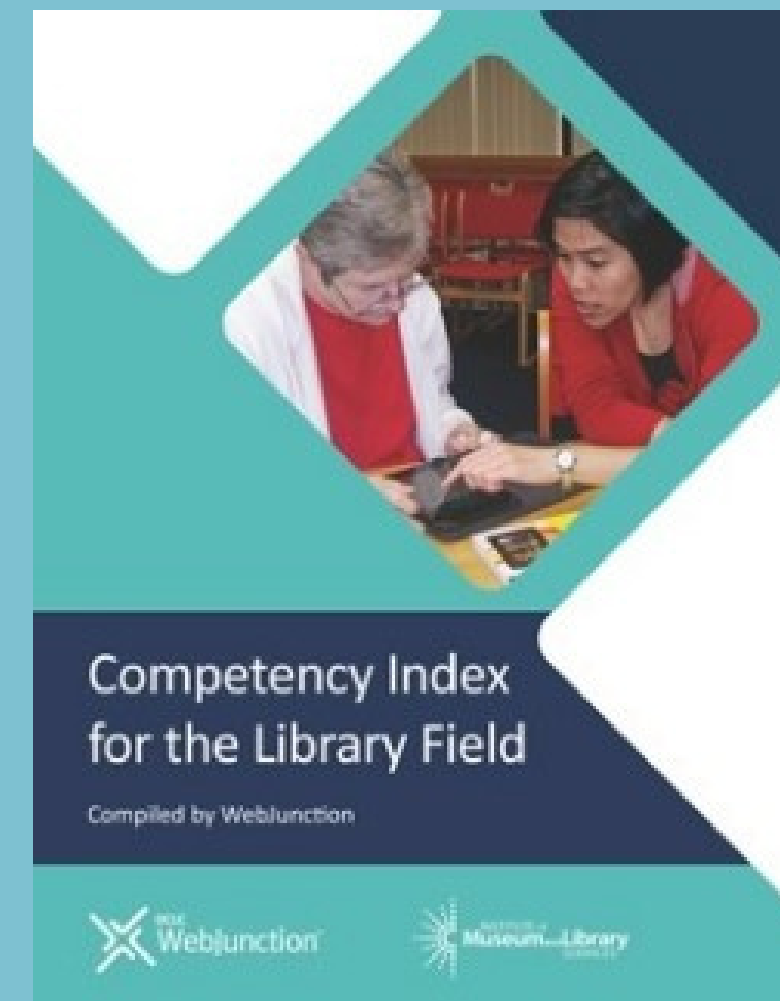
### Readers' Advisory

Assists users with choosing popular and recreational reading, viewing and listening choices

- Demonstrates a broad knowledge of the library's collection and of a wide range of materials of interest to library readers
- Demonstrates the ability to read widely, formulate connections between resources and converse with users about the resources
- Understands the theory of appeal, listens carefully to information elicited from the user and bases recommendations on an interpretation of what appeals to the user
- Communicates succinctly but effectively the character and appeal of a book, both in writing and speaking
- Identifies and recommends a selection of materials that align with what appeals to the user
- Seeks feedback from readers on recommended materials and adjusts future recommendations accordingly
- Creates booklists, read-alikes, read-arounds, book-talks, displays, electronic documents and other special tools to increase access to library resources and promote their use
- Engages with users virtually as well as face-to-face for readers' advisory interactions
- Uses social networking sites and tools to spark conversations with community members about titles, authors and reading

# WebJunction

## Readers' Advisory Competencies



## Readers' Advisory

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## **Develops strategies and sources to stay well-informed as a readers' advisor**

- Identifies and uses a variety of readers' advisory resources to identify materials
- Maintains an ongoing knowledge of major new authors, fiction genres, nonfiction subjects and current releases
- Keeps current with popular culture through a variety of channels
- Connects with professional communities to seek and share best practices for readers' advisory



working with unfamiliar  
genres or authors

1

time to give thoughtful  
suggestions

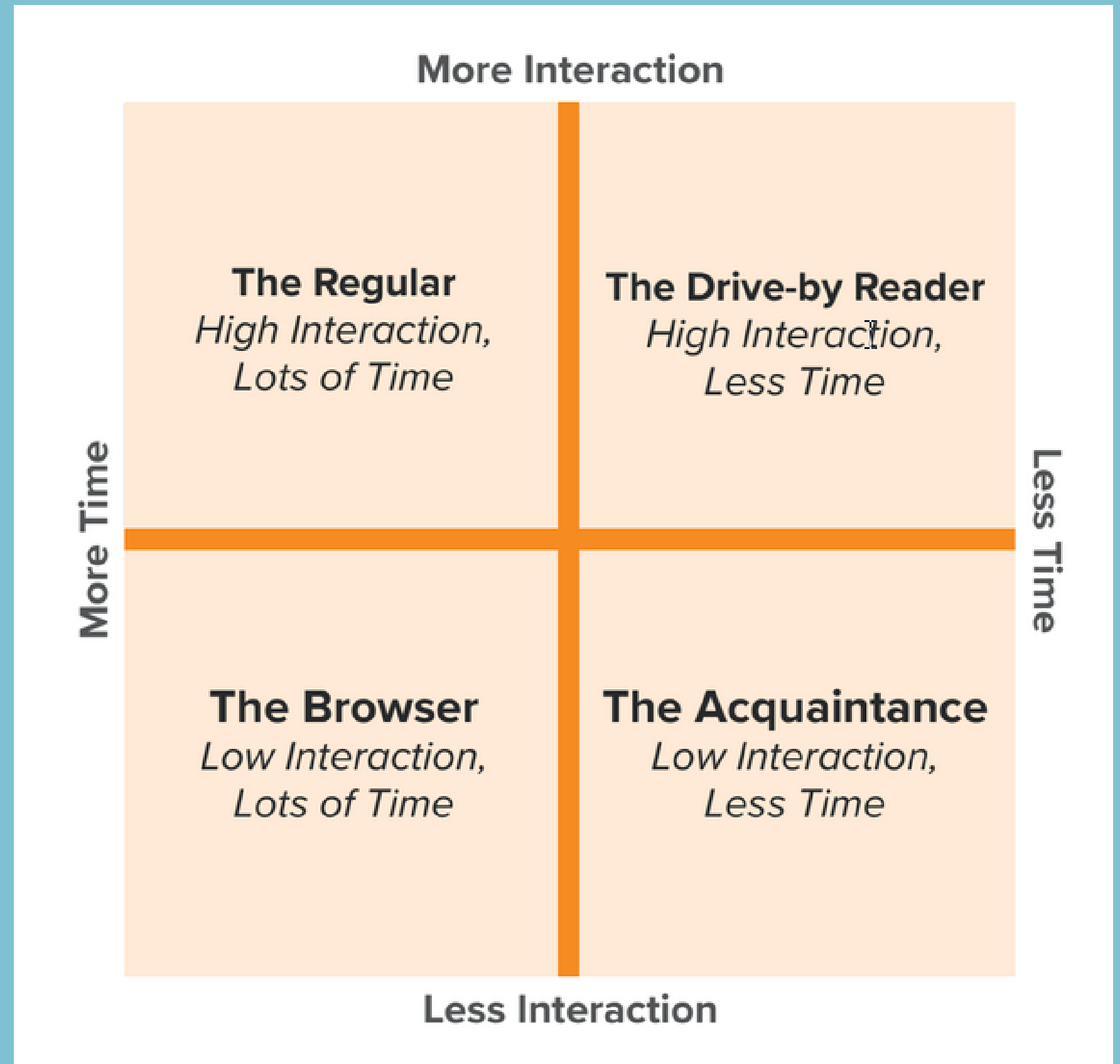
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keeping up with new  
titles

3

# Different kinds of readers and staff

readers



## The Browser | *Low Interaction, Lots of Time*

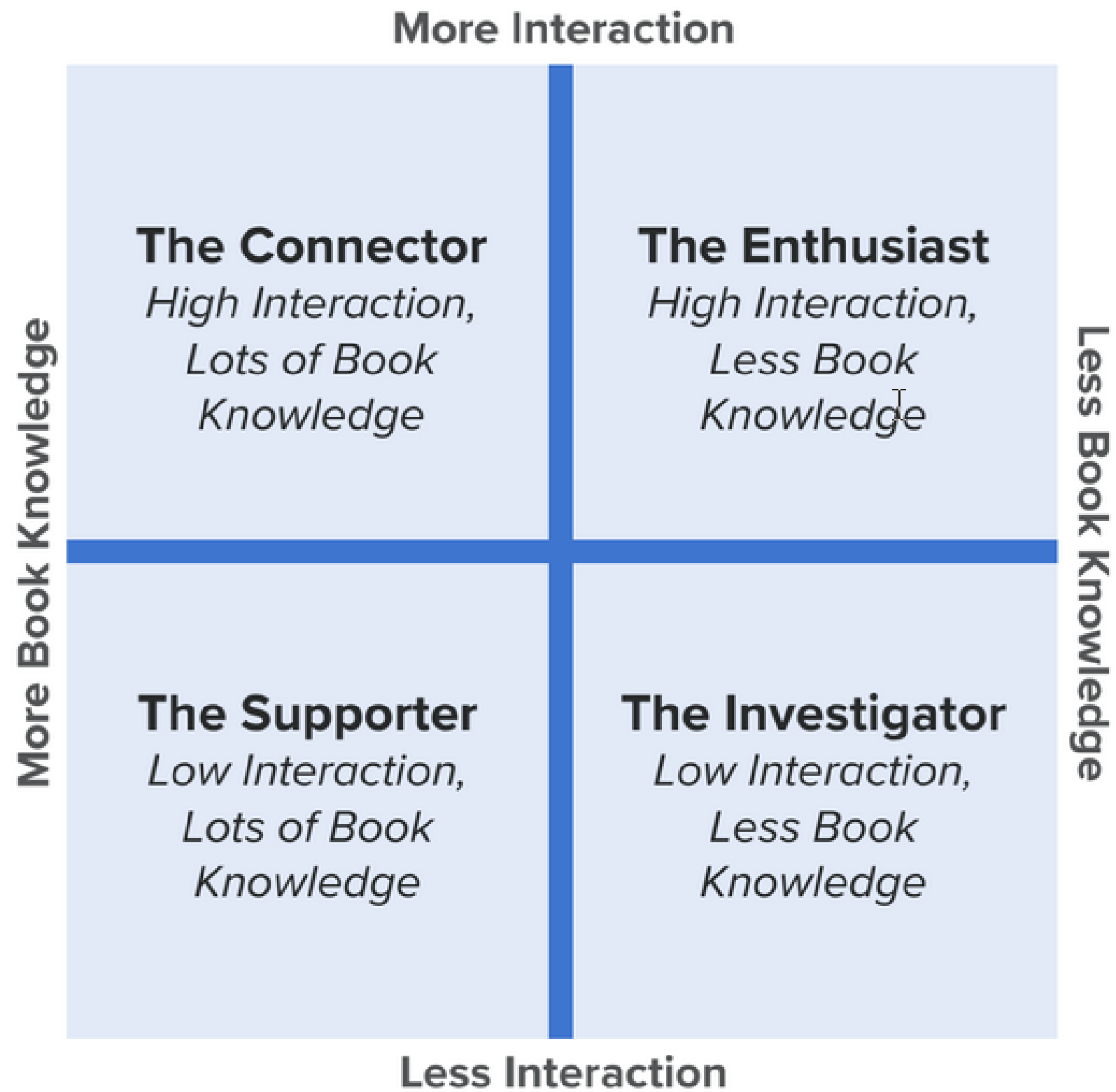


materials and options available to help them explore on their own.

These are your readers who roam up and down your stacks and stop by your book displays waiting for the right book to “speak” to them. For these self-directed readers, the library is a place to discover books and so it's important to have an array of

### ***Some of your services that might fit here:***

- ✓ Book suggestions in your catalog
- ✓ Newsletters
- ✓ Author events
- ✓ Book displays on your website
- ✓ Bookmarks, book flyers, and other “consumable” or readable book guidance like genre guides, spine labels, series information, and shelf-talkers



staff

## The Investigator | *Low Interaction, Less Book Knowledge*



Not everyone likes talking to people and not everyone knows a lot about books. Your library may have shelvers who fit in this category, or maybe staff who help process new materials. These staff members are often working in areas where they can see

opportunities for promoting your collection in ways the more patron-facing staff don't. Use their different view of the library to your advantage and listen to where they see your collection can be promoted.

### ***Some places this staff member might shine:***

- ✓ Rethinking your browsable collections strategy
- ✓ Filling displays and stocking print RA materials
- ✓ Preparing book bundles
- ✓ Adding collection promotion to holds



# Recap

**The goal of RA is to assist patrons with discovery.**

**Patrons expect readers' advisory.**

**There are different kinds of readers and staff.**





## Resources that Help





working with unfamiliar  
genres or authors

1

keeping up with new  
titles

2

time to give thoughtful  
suggestions

3



## working with unfamiliar genres or authors

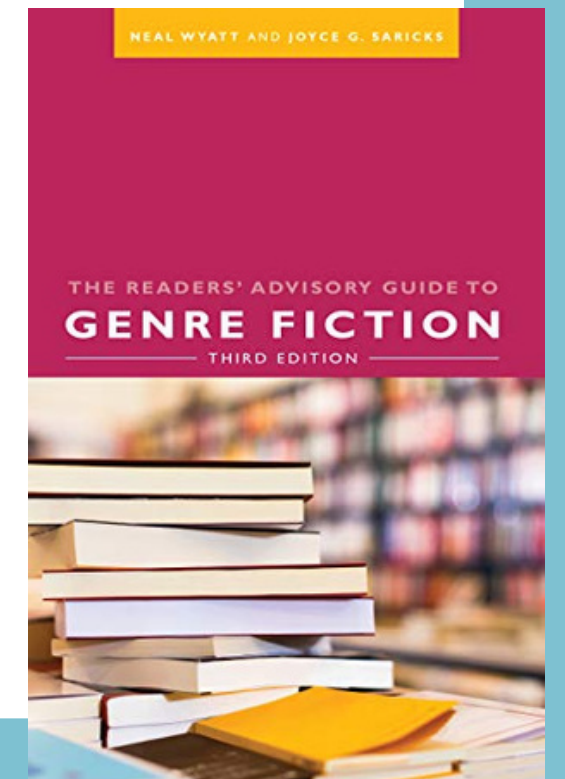
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1. The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction, 3rd Edition by Neal Wyatt and Joyce G. Saricks

2. ARRT Popular Fiction List Self-Evaluation

3. NoveList Read-alikes

4. Staff



# AART Self-Guided Study Resource

## The ARRT Popular Fiction List

Fifth edition

A Self-Evaluative Bibliography  
for Readers' Advisors



Compiled and Published by the Adult Reading Round Table Steering Committee

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Adult Reading Round Table of Illinois

## SPECULATIVE FICTION

Speculative fiction explores the wide world of "what if." The appeal for readers is in the otherworldly quality of the stories. They like to follow the characters into a setting where the impossible is possible. The intricate world-building in these novels often means the elaborate settings are used in long-running series. In speculative fiction the "what-if" could arise by magic, science that is not yet possible, a supernatural monster, or anything else the author can dream up. The speculative genres and the authors who write them also have a tendency to overlap and blend with each other; however, most readers of these genres both understand and expect this. Fans crave stories which ask them to look at their current world from a different perspective. The speculative fiction genres include: science fiction, fantasy, horror, and other explorations of the unreal.

### Science Fiction

Science fiction is speculative fiction based on science and technology. The science may seem improbable, but it is plausibly extrapolated from our current understanding of the physical and material world. Although typically set in the future, science fiction stories give insight to the historical moment of their creation. The appeal of the genre is often the intellectual exploration of traditional ideas in non-traditional settings.

### SUBCATEGORY

#### Alternative History/Time Travel

Alternative histories explore events that diverge from actual world history (such as a different side winning a war). Alternative history sometimes blends with time travel, which involves characters from the past, present, or future moving backward or forward in time.

POPULAR AUTHORS	R	RA	H	NH
Adam Christopher				
Sarah Gailey				
Lavie Tidhar				
Peter Tieryas				
Harry Turtledove				
Connie Willis				
Ben Winters				

R-I've read this author

H-I've heard of this author (patron or colleague comment)

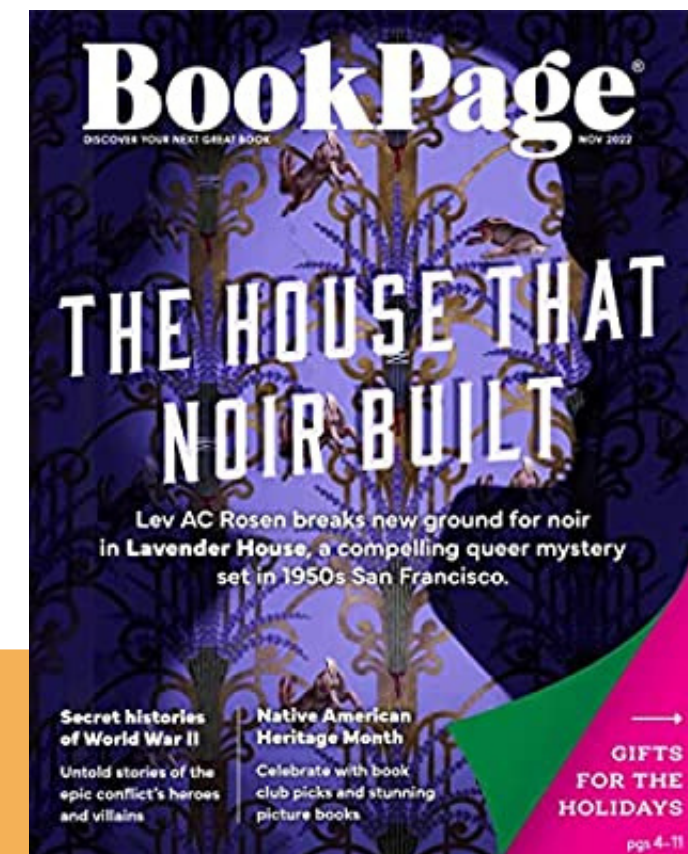
RA-I've read about this author (reviews, interviews, etc.)  
NH-I've never heard of this author



keeping up with new  
titles

2

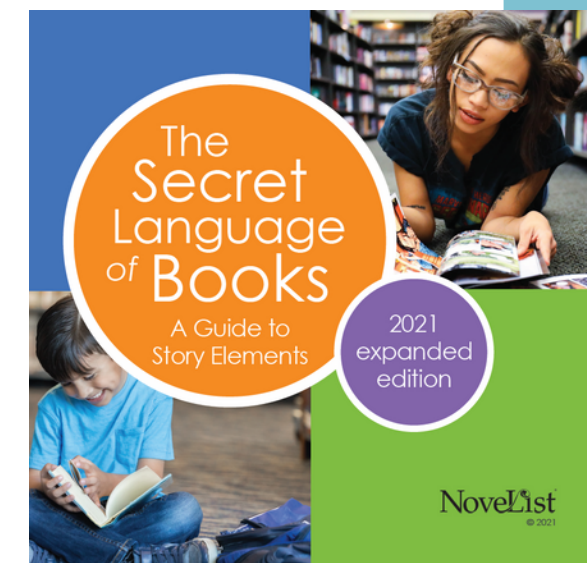
1. BookRiot Newsletters/Check Your Shelf
2. Library Reads
3. Goodreads News & Articles
4. BookPage



time to give thoughtful  
suggestions

3

1. The Secret Language of Books & NoveList Appeal Mixer
2. NPR Books We Love
3. Goodreads Choice Awards



# Appeal



pacing  
storyline  
characterization  
tone  
writing style

**Appeal is the  
"feel" of the  
book.**

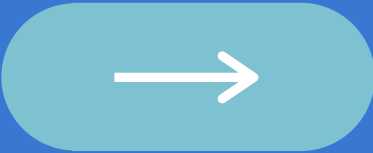


NovelList®



**What resource(s) are  
you excited to explore  
right now?**









# Questions & Comments





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