What is Fantasy Literature
Essential Questions

- Where do stories come from?
- What is the relationship between fantasy and truth?
- What truths about the world does fantasy literature uncover?
- How does fantasy literature help us better understand ourselves?
Fantasy Genre Elements

- Often based on myth or legend
- Detailed settings
- Magic generally involved
- Fight between good and evil (good usually wins)
- Often features a quest for/with a Talisman
- "Coming of Age" theme
- Treachery
- Fictional creatures and creations
- Romance/Strong Friendship
Fantasy writing must be grounded in both truth and life experience if it is to work. It can be as inventive and creative as the writer can make it, a whirlwind of images and plot twists, but it cannot be built on a foundation of air.
Terry Goodkind
- Author The Sword of Truth Series

- Fantasy allows you to bend the world and the situation to more clearly focus on the moral aspects of what’s happening. In fantasy you can distill life down to the essence of your story.
Fantasy opens the door to experiencing the magic that is in the world around us and more importantly the magic in ourselves. As a genre, fantasy is about moving from our world into the world of experiences beyond. By tapping into those experiences we come to know more about ourselves.
There are only two worlds - your world, which is the real world, and other worlds, the fantasy. Worlds like this are worlds of the human imagination; their reality, or lack of reality, is not important. What is important is that they are there. These worlds provide an alternative. Provide an escape. Provide a threat. Provide a dream, and power; provide refuge, and pain. They give your world meaning. They do not exist; and thus they are all that matters.
Subgenres of Fantasy

Literature
- Arthurian Fantasy
- Comic Fantasy
- Dark Fantasy
- Epic Fantasy
- High Fantasy
- Fairy Tales and Mythology
- Magical Realism
- Modern Fantasy
Arthurian Fantasy

Relates to story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table

- Merlin
- Guinevere (Arthur’s Wife)
- Igraine (Arthur’s Mother)
- Uther Pendragon (Arthur’s father)
- Morgan Le Fay
  - (Arthur’s sister - and my favorite Arthurian character)
- Lancelot
- Sir Gawain
- Tristan & Isolde
- Lady of the Lake
- Mordred
- Pellinore
- Green Knight
The Mists of Avalon
by Marion Zimmer Bradley
The Once and Future King
by T.H. White
Comic Fantasy

- Stories that are spoofs of serious fantasies or are light-hearted tales
M.Y.T.H. Series
by Robert Asprin
The Discworld Series
by Terry Pratchett
Dark Fantasy

- The nastier, darker side of fantasy
- Nightmarish
- Evil creatures and magic
Interview With The Vampire by Anne Rice
Epic/High Fantasy

- **EPIC**: Young nobody shoved into a struggle; often has a large cast of characters and takes place over a vast area of a fantastical world; focuses on good versus evil
- **HIGH**: Almost Middle Ages feel; wizards, dragons, etc.; hero is often “muscle-bound sword-wielding” type
Fairy Tale/Mythology

- The original fantasy literature:
  - Myths of ancient cultures
  - Fairy Tales for young (and old) children
  - Often a lesson is learned (moral to the story)
Grimm’s Fairytales
The Lightning Thief

- A Percy Jackson story
- By Rick Riordan
Magical Realism

- “In magical realism, the supernatural is not displayed as questionable. While the reader realizes that the rational and irrational are opposite and conflicting polarities, they are not disconcerted because the supernatural is integrated within the norms of perception of the narrator and characters in the fictional world” (Lindsey Moore. “Magical Realism”)
Magical Realism

- Magic realism fuses:
  - (1) lyrical and, at times, fantastic writing with
  - (2) an examination of the character of human existence and
  - (3) an implicit criticism of society, particularly the elite.

http://www.iskl.edu.my/~Boone_O'Reilly/Chronicle2/page2.html
One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriela García Marquez
The Night Circus

- By Erin Morgenstern
Modern Fantasy

- A sub-genre of fantasy which posits that magic exists in our modern-day world, and often wrestles with contemporary issues.

Good Omens
by Neil Gaiman
and
Terry Pratchett
Beautiful Creatures

By Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl