SCIENCE FICTION
Science Fiction as a genre

genre |ˈ zhänr|
noun
a category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.
ORIGIN early 19th cent.: French, literally ‘a kind’ (see gender ).
Characteristics of the Sci-Fi genre:

science fiction (abbr.: SF or Sci Fi)
noun

fiction based on imagined future scientific or technological advances and major social or environmental changes, frequently portraying space or time travel and life on other planets.
Robert A. Heinlein stated: "...a handy short definition of almost all science fiction might read: realistic speculation about possible future events, based solidly on adequate knowledge of the real world, past and present, and on a thorough understanding of the nature and significance of the scientific method."

"The mere fact that a novel or film deals at length and seriously with science and technology does not necessarily mean that it's honest-to-goodness SF....Traditional SF, on the other hand, tends toward the hypothetical and has a decidedly more prophetic or apocalyptic goal. The SF writer, that is to say, is more concerned with future scenarios and vivid alternatives, with provocative extrapolations and exciting possibilities, than with the naturalistic transcription of current circumstances. In short, true science fiction is visionary writing about science and technology."

Simpson, David,
http://condor.depaul.edu/~dsimpson/awtech/scifi.htm
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. What’s the “science” in Science Fiction? How/why is it used?
2. In what ways does Science Fiction reflect current social issues?
3. How does Science Fiction explore and/or expose significant political, cultural, and environmental concerns?
SF ELEMENTS

Ø Futuristic: space travel, advanced technology, Artificial Intelligence, time travel, aliens

Ø Scientific elements: based on real science and may also be speculative and include theories, principles, and advancements

Ø Life on other planets, colonization, terraforming

Ø Intellectual and physical adventure

Ø Alternate and parallel worlds that are recognizably earth variant
More SF Elements

Ø Psionics (psychic powers incl. mind control)

Ø Characterization: characters not main focus (situations and events are); characters may be stereotypes

Ø Setting: “otherness” of time and place

Ø Utopian/dystopian society, often featuring a totalitarian government (one world, galaxy, universe)

Ø Investigates moral, physical, technical, and intellectual, social possibilities/issues
“THE BIG THREE”

Robert A. Heinlein

Arthur C. Clarke

Isaac Asimov

OTHER:
Ray Bradbury

H.G. Wells
Research Assignment:

Author information:

Personal Life
Social/cultural beliefs and contributions
Contributions to science fiction
Contributions to REAL science