

## Science Fiction

- **Introduction**

science fiction A science fiction (SF) story is a narrative set in an alternative or altered reality. Many SF stories describe experiences beyond the confines of normal human experience, such as space exploration or time travel; others imagine the familiar human world transformed by new technology, ecological change or alien visitation. Some SF stories are concerned with utopia and utopian visions, while others are dystopian or apocalyptic. Science fiction often provides straightforward escapism, but equally imagines scenarios that provoke serious questions about what it is to be human, the nature of reality, perception and power. Concepts such as atomic energy, cyberspace and robotics were all first conceived in science fiction stories.

### **The Term 'Science Fiction'**

The term 'science fiction' was first used, it seems, in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, in William Wilson's *A Little Earnest Book upon a Great Old Subject*. Having cited Thomas Campbell's remark that 'Fiction in Poetry is not the reverse of truth, but her soft and enchanting resume balance, Wilson goes on to say: 'Now this applies Wilson goes to Science-Fiction, in which the revealed truths of Science may be given, interwoven with a pleasant story which itself circulation by Hugo Gernsback (1894-1967), who had originally coined the word 'scientifiction'. 'Science fiction' gradually replaced the term 'scientific romance'.