Genre Worksheet

When you're planning to write a book you need to understand one basic fact, most people aren't going to read it.

There are about 231 million English speakers in the United States alone. The vast majority of them will have no interest in your book. James Patterson, the bestselling author alive, averages 2.3 million sales for each of his novels. He is only reaching .0009 percent of his potential audience.

However, one of the reasons he is the bestselling author alive is he targets the segment of the population he wants to reach every time he sits down to write.

The moral of that story is: You should probably do the same. Reading books that are selling in the genre you plan to write in is one of the best ways to learn your market. Study what the popular authors are doing.

I suggest a trip to the library with a list of recent award winners and best sellers in hand. Put as many of those books as you can find on a table (at least eight to ten), and make notes on the following:

1. Titles: Are there any similarities in the titles? Are they long? Short? One Word? Are there common words or themes?

2. Length: How many pages are they? How many chapters? Are the chapters long or short?

3. P.O.V.: Is it written in first person? Third person close? Third person distant? How many P.O.V. characters are there?

4. Style: How long are the sentences? What kind of language is used? How much white space is on the page? How much descriptive language? How much dialogue?

5. Plot: Are there common themes in these titles

6. Opening Hook: How does the author hook you into the story? How does the story start?

7. What did you learn? How has your research changed your plans?