

This season we'll take a journey of the senses, and immerse our readers in everything that's possible for a human to experience—and beyond. Remember: This is a reference sheet only; check the Season Themes page on GoHavok.com to verify which months are open for submissions and which are closed.

TOUCH (DEADLINE: May 3, 2020)

Caress, deep pressure, temperature, vibration, pain—they're the first sensations we develop, and they connect us on an almost spiritual level to each other and to the world around us. Can an android truly be afraid if he can't feel the chill crawling across his titanium exoskeleton? What is the source of Earth's increasing barometric pressure, and can it be stopped before it's too late? Can a young peasant boy withstand the burning love of a fire elemental? There's no end to the depth of human feeling, so get creative and send us a touching story. We can't wait to get our hands on it! (*Publishes in July, so think heat of summer, cool creek water, and summer love. But no erotica, please!*)

TASTE (DEADLINE: June 7, 2020)

Closely tied to smell and textural touch, taste stands apart in its unique ability to keep us alive. Poison is bitter. Rotten foods are sour. Nutrient-rich foods are salty or sweet. Protein-rich foods are savory. And, as we know, variety is the spice of life. So imagine the joy of a dragon that experiences a medium rare sheep for the first time. Or the fear of a hated dictator's taste-tester as he takes his first sip of tomato soup. Or the confusion of a celebrity food critic who wakes up with all her taste buds reversed. Or the suspicion of a virtual reality programmer when he notices the flavor of chicken in the "real world" is a little... off. Make your stories so tasty that they leave us salivating or so bitter that we cringe. Ideally, leave a good taste in our mouths so we come back for seconds. (*Publishes in August, so don't forget the BBQ sauce and fresh summer harvests.*)

HEARING (DEADLINE: July 5, 2020)

March to the beat of your own eardrum in this theme that celebrates the sense of sound. From the deepest bass to the highest ultrasonic waves, we're bombarded by noise every second of the day. Raindrops on a tin roof can remind us where to find the murder weapon. An amplified dog whistle can drive us to madness without us ever knowing. The thrumming of cosmic frequencies can lead us to intelligent life among the stars. A near-forgotten chant can open magical doors to untold treasures. And a viral pop song can completely ruin our day. So whether these ideas ring true or strike a note of the impossible, don't miss the chance to let your story be heard! (*Publishes in September, so consider the sounds of changing weather and the cacophony of school hallways.*)

SIXTH SENSE (DEADLINE: August 3, 2020)

What if a detective could see sound or taste light? Give us some synesthesia, a perceptual phenomenon in which stimulation of one sense elicits a response from a different sense. Or how about proprioception? That's the sense responsible for letting you close your eyes and touch your finger to your nose. Imagine a ninja with superhuman proprioception! Go classic with extra-sensory perception. Do your characters see dead people, sense the past of objects when they touch them, or wake up with premonitions of alien invasions? Then there's the heightened senses of the animal kingdom—sensitivity to electricity, magnetism, x-rays, and sonar! Show us what life could be like beyond the five senses. We're only human, but we're capable of imagining so much more. (*Publishes in October, so this is your chance for ghost stories and other supernatural encounters.*)

SMELL (DEADLINE: September 7, 2020)

Smell is closely tied to memory. And with our nose's ability to smell over one trillion scents, it only makes sense (ha!) that the stories that could sprout from this outrageous olfactory organ are endless. Confused bloodhounds on the trail of a scent-specializing chemical engineer. A time traveler who follows the scent of honeysuckle to find the buried treasure. A young prankster who has to find his stink bomb before someone accidentally sets it off. A crowded pub with a thousand familiar smells, one of which may just be tied to an ancient curse. A giant who can't smell the blood of an Englishman because he's got a stuffy nose. Get your nose out of a book and don't be afraid to write a story that smells fishy or stinks to high heaven, as long as you take a deep breath and put your words where your nose is. (*Publishes in November, so remember the aroma of pumpkin spice lattes and the Thanksgiving meal!*)

SIGHT (DEADLINE: October 5, 2020)

Light in a relatively narrow window of wavelengths bounces off the back of our eyeball to create color and motion, foreground and background, orientation and shadow—the world as we see it, for better or worse. But sometimes, not all is as it seems. Optical illusions, sight-related disabilities, hallucinations, or even visions from beyond this reality can all alter our perception. A beloved painting is suddenly missing a key element that's always been there. A bat tries to raise money for Lasik eye surgery. An imploding star flares from blinding supernova to bewildering black hole. A beautiful Hawaiian wedding ceremony is watched through a sniper's scope. Can you see where we're going with this? Show us your talent by letting your vision become a reality. (*Publishes in December, so we'd love to see Christmas lights, the sparkle of ice and snow, and the sight of a loved one arriving for the holidays.*)

Using the season themes to inspire you, send us a story that fits any of the following daily flash genres:

MYSTERY MONDAY: From cozy to crime scene, start your week off with a bit of mystery. Creep through downtown foggy London Town, spy on secret agents at a midnight meeting, catch up with an old friend who may or may not be a cat burglar, or just figure out who stole your homework before the last bell rings. It doesn't have to be a classic mystery with detectives, clues, murder, or theft. If it's mysterious, uncertain, or unknown, take us on a journey through the dark and shine a bit of light on the hidden—and maybe even startling—truth.

Sub-genres: Amateur sleuth (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*), cozy/whodunit (Agatha Christie), crime (*The Departed*), legal/medical (*A Few Good Men*), noir (*Blade Runner*), police procedural (*Silence of the Lambs*), professional sleuth (Sherlock Holmes), supernatural (*The Woman in Black*), psychological horror (*Sphere*)

TECHNO TUESDAY: As your week hits its stride, don't be afraid to ask, "What if..." What if NASA really is covering for the aliens? What if your new cell phone comes with a free brain implant? What if a radioactive spider gives you super powers? What if time travel vacations are a thing of the past? With Havok, even the mysteries of the universe aren't too great to explore over your morning cup of coffee.

Sub-genres: Hard sci-fi (*The Martian*), soft sci-fi (*Spider-Man*), military (*Starship Troopers*), space opera (*Star Wars*) (*Dune*), steampunk (*The Time Machine*), cyber/bio/nanopunk (*The Matrix*), voyages extraordinaire (Jules Verne), gothic (*Frankenstein's Monster*), dystopian (*The Hunger Games*)

WACKY WEDNESDAY: Halfway done, and who couldn't use a little humor over their lunch break? Well, embrace the lighter side of Havok as you laugh your stress away, 1,000 words at a time. Whether you're running alongside a hilariously unfortunate private eye, hitching a ride across the galaxy, helping a kid defend his home from Christmas burglars, enjoying a "sick day" with a high school adventurer, or going on an epic quest to find a holy grail, you can rest assured that your adventure will be anything but serious.

Sub-genres: Forget 'em! What would Wacky Wednesday be with a bunch of rules? If it's funny, lighthearted, and downright entertaining, you're hitting the mark.

THRILLER THURSDAY: As your week races to a close, get caught up in some heart-pumping excitement. Run down a terrorist before time runs out. Infiltrate a secret society before they collect the last relic. Untangle a sociopath's plot before he pins the whole thing on you. Take down a crime boss before he takes you down. And do it all before your kids wake up from their afternoon nap.

Sub-genres: Action (*James Bond*), adventure (*Indiana Jones*), conspiracy (*The Da Vinci Code*), crime (*Die Hard*), medical (*Outbreak*), man vs. nature (*Jaws*, *Twister*)

FANTASY FRIDAY: TGI fantasy! Now, sit back and drift into another world filled with high elves, amateur wizards, magic wardrobes, suave vampires, and gun-slinging monster hunters. With Havok, there's no limit to how far the story will take you as you kick your feet up and usher in another fantastic weekend.

Sub-genres: Fairy tales (*Cinderella*), horror (*Dracula*), high fantasy (*The Lord of the Rings*), low fantasy (*Harry Potter*), magical realism (*Midnight in Paris*), medieval (*A Game of Thrones*), portal (*The Chronicles of Narnia*), urban/paranormal (*The Dresden Files*)