

Conflict in Stories



Conflict

Conflict is the dramatic *struggle* between *opposing* forces in a story. Without conflict, there is no plot.



Protagonist vs. Antagonist

- The protagonist (main character) struggles against the antagonist in the story's main conflict.
- The antagonist can be a person, idea, emotion, decision, nature, rules and laws.



Protagonist vs. Antagonist



- It is easiest to think of the protagonist and antagonist characters as the "good guy" (hero) and the "bad guy" (villain) respectively.
- To remember which is which, remember that the prefix pro- means *good*, or positive, and the prefix ant- means *bad*, or negative.

Protagonist

- The protagonist is the central character of a story. The protagonist can be male or female, and is written as being “good” most of the time, but in some instances can be “bad.”
- The plot of a story is often written from the protagonist's point of view. Consider the story “The Three Little Pigs.” In the original story, the three pigs are the protagonists and the wolf is the antagonist.
 - *The Real Story of The Three Little Pigs* is written from the wolf's point of view. In it, the wolf becomes the protagonist and the pigs are the antagonists.

Antagonist

- The character that causes or leads the conflict against the protagonist is called the antagonist.
 - The antagonist is not always human, but can be a group or force as well.
 - The antagonist is the mirror of the protagonist. Whatever the protagonist does that is good, the antagonist will work to counteract.
 - Usually the antagonist attempts to disguise him/her/itself. This usually creates the suspense in a story.

Six Types of Conflict

- Character vs. **Self**



- Character vs. **Character**



- Character vs. **Society** (this

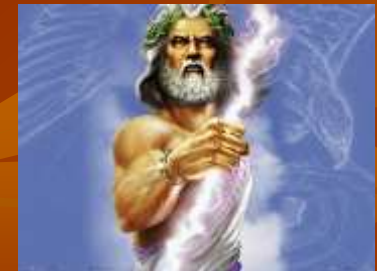


includes Character vs. **Technology / Machine**)

- Character vs. **Nature**



- Character vs. **Supernatural**



- Character vs. **Destiny**



Internal and External Conflicts

Internal

Internal Conflict takes place inside of the mind



External

External Conflict takes place outside of the mind



Character vs. Self (Internal)

within the character--making a tough decision or overcoming guilt, fear, sadness or a personal issue.



Character vs. Character

The struggle is **between** two or more characters in the story.



Character vs. Society

In many stories, the protagonist battles against an element of government or culture.





Character vs. Nature

This type of conflict pits a story's main character or characters against a natural force such as a flood, fire, blizzard, or disease epidemic.



Character vs. Supernatural

Refers to a conflict between a character and typically unbelievable or supernatural phenomena, such as vampires, aliens, ghosts, etc.



Character vs. Destiny

A character struggles between his or her own destiny or predetermined fate.



Practice

Decide what type of conflict is being illustrated in the following pictures

1. Character vs. ?



2. Character vs. ?



3. Character vs. ?



4. Character vs.



5. Character vs. ?



6. Character vs. ?



7. Character vs. ?



Practice

Now that you have mastered pictures, let's try some text!

8. Character vs. ?

*“If she had only proceeded more slowly.
If she had only taken the Southerly route,
avoiding the icebergs. If only the watch
had had a pair of binoculars.”*

(news story about the Titanic)

9. Character vs. ?

Charles decided to break all the rules the day he decided to steal that car. He was immediately arrested and sent to jail to await his trial. He should have known better than to mess with the “rules.”

10. Character vs. ?

“I don’t care who you talk to!” screamed Sarah to West. “I just wish I had never met you!”

11. Character vs. ?

After the light in the cave was completely gone Tom began to stumble through the cave blindly cutting his hands on what appeared to be sharp rocks.

12. Character vs. ?

Tom found a dry spot to sit down in the dark and began to feel guilty over an argument he had had earlier in the day with his mother in which he had said, “I hope I never see you again!”

A miniature figure of a warrior with a sword and a large red mallet in the background. The warrior is on a small base, wearing a dark tunic and boots. The mallet is a large, red, cylindrical object with a textured surface. The background is a warm, brownish-gold color.

CONFLICT

AS SEEN IN LITERATURE

MAN VS. SELF



INTERNAL STRUGGLE WITH ONESELF

MAN VS. MAN



CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO OR MORE PEOPLE



MAN VS. SOCIETY

CONFLICT BETWEEN ONE OR MORE INDIVIDUALS AND A CONSTRUCT OF SOCIETY



MAN VS. TECHNOLOGY

CONFLICT BETWEEN ONE OR MORE INDIVIDUALS AND ANY TYPE OF TECHNOLOGY

MAN VS. NATURE



CONFLICT BETWEEN ONE OR MORE INDIVIDUALS AND A NATURAL OCCURRENCE

A dark, atmospheric room with a window on the left showing autumn foliage. A white sheet is draped on the floor in the center-right, suggesting a ghostly presence. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window and a small light fixture on the wall.

MAN VS. SUPERNATURAL

CONFLICT BETWEEN ONE OR MORE INDIVIDUALS AND ANY "OTHER WORLDLY FORCE"

MAN VS. DESTINY



CONFLICT BETWEEN A CHARACTER AND HIS OR HER OWN DESTINY OR PREDETERMINED FATE.