

Six Types of Conflict

The Plot Thickens

What's a **Conflict**?

A **conflict** is a problem that the main character or characters face.

Examples

An arctic adventurer struggles to survive hunger and cold.

A brother and sister fight over control of the television.

Every story worth reading has a **conflict.**

If there is no **conflict, there is no tension.**

Some stories has multiple **conflicts.**

Overview of **Conflict** Types

- 1. Person vs. Person**
- 2. Person vs. Self**
- 3. Person vs. Society**
- 4. Person vs. Nature**
- 5. Person vs. Supernatural**
- 6. Person vs. Technology**

Person vs. Person

The central character faces opposition from another person or group of people.

Examples

- *Two girls compete for the same role in the school play.*
- *A ninja warrior fights a rival clan to avenge his master's death.*

Person vs. **Self**

The central character faces an internal struggle.

Examples

- *A young man goes through hard times after losing his father in a car accident.*
- *An Olympic athlete pushes his performance to the limit despite his physical disability*

Person vs. **Society**

The central character or group of characters battles against traditions, institutions, or laws.

Examples

- *A student takes his fight against the school dress code all the way to the Supreme Court.*
- *A group of students protest in front of a university known for its unfair and racially motivated admission practices.*

Person vs. **Nature**

The central character struggles against animals, the elements, or other natural forces.

Examples

- *A castaway washes up on an island and must learn to survive with the available resources.*
- *A ship captain pursues a great white whale through stormy seas.*

Person vs. **Supernatural**

The central character is challenged by forces that are not of this world.

Examples

- *A boy wizard must use his powers to protect his community from evil monsters.*
- *A group of teenagers sleep in a haunted house and begin disappearing one by one.*

Person vs. **Technology**

The central character struggles with or against the forces of technology.

Examples

- *A group of strangers gets stuck in an elevator.*
- *A teenage boy is pursued by robots from space that transform into cars.*

Practice

Read each description, identify the antagonist (opposing force) and the type of conflict.

Example

An archeologist attempts to escape a hidden temple overrun by a vampire army.

Antagonist: *Vampire army*

Conflict Type: *Person vs. Supernatural*

1

An elderly man struggles to learn how to use his new phone.

Answer

Antagonist: Cell phone

Conflict Type: Person vs. Technology

2

Two boxers who were formerly friends compete for the championship belt.

Answer

Antagonist: Former friend

Conflict Type: Person vs. Person

3

A young woman fights to gain admittance in an elite prep school that was only for boys.

Answer

Antagonist: Boys prep school / sexism

Conflict Type: Person vs. Society

4

A group of colonists struggle to survive the winter in a strange land

Answer

Antagonist: Cold weather / hunger

Conflict Type: Person vs. Nature

5

A student's struggles against the urge to procrastinate and play video games rather than to do his homework.

Answer

Antagonist: Laziness / Procrastination

Conflict Type: Person vs. Self