

Six Types of Conflict

The Plot Thickens

What's a **Conflict**?

A **conflict** is a problem that the central character encounters.

Examples

A young boy gets lost on a camping trip

Two twin brothers want to take the same girl to prom

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

- *A new student is bullied by a bigger, older student.*
- *A terrorist group has kidnapped the President's daughter and only one man can save the day.*

Person vs. **Self**

The central character faces an internal struggle.

Examples

- *A teenage girl must come to terms with her body image and confront her anorexic tendencies.*
- *A soldier struggles to fit back into society after returning from a high intensity combat zone.*

Person vs. **Society**

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

Examples

- *A group of immigrants fight for equal pay and fair treatment in the work place.*
- *A whistleblower leaks documents showing his government's unconstitutional surveillance programs*

Person vs. **Nature**

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

Examples

- *A tornado chaser attempts to get footage from a powerful storm.*
- *A hunter gets lost in the jungle and is pursued by a man-eating lion.*

Person vs. **Supernatural**

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

Examples

- *A family moves into a house on a Civil War battle ground that turns out to be haunted.*
- *A teenage girl falls in love with both a swamp monster and a mummy and must choose between them.*

Person vs. **Technology**

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

Examples

- *A young boy is pursued by a robotic killing machine.*
- *A girl fights a vending machine to get back her dollar.*

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

A small group of human survivors resist a conquering robot army.

Answer

Antagonist: Robot army

Conflict Type: Person vs. Technology

2

Two former friends compete for the same scholarship.

Answer

Antagonist: Former friend

Conflict Type: Person vs. Person

3

A young boy digs a hole in his backyard and finds a gateway to another dimension, one which is filled with monsters.

Answer

Antagonist: Monsters / Other Dimension

Conflict Type: Person vs. Supernatural

4

A team of arctic fisherman struggle to survive after they are shipwrecked.

Answer

Antagonist: Arctic weather / hunger

Conflict Type: Person vs. Nature

5

An African American man challenges the practices of racial profiling and police brutality in his community.

Answer

Antagonist: Societal practices and perpetrators of police brutality / racial profiling

Conflict Type: Person vs. Society