

CHARACTER

A character is a person (or sometimes an animal or another entity) in a story. Writers use characters to perform the actions and speak dialogue, moving the story along a plot line. A story can have only one character and still be a complete story. This character's conflict may be an inner one (within him/herself), or a conflict with something natural, such as climbing a mountain. Most stories have multiple characters interacting, with one of them as the antagonist, causing a conflict for the protagonist.

TYPES OF CHARACTERS

- **Protagonist:** the main character – often portrayed as the 'good guy', but not always. The decisions made by this character will be affected by a conflict from within, or externally through another character, nature, technology, society, or fate.
- **Antagonist:** the main villain, enemy or source of conflict for the protagonist. Can be a single person or sometimes a whole group of people.
- **Flat characters:** have only one main trait and are less realistic
- **Rounded characters:** are more nuanced and complex, show both virtues and flaws, which makes them more realistic
- **Static characters** don't change or experience growth during the novel
- **Dynamic characters:** go through a process of learning, growing or changing during the events of the novel.

When we read novels, the characters show us how people react in various situations. We can internalize what these characters are going through: how they react, how they work through their problems. This can help prepare us for our own life's circumstances

If you can't relate to the character or don't like them, you can still learn something: how you'd prefer NOT to respond to situations!

Characters make the plot happen. Their actions, thoughts and motivations are the driving force of the whole story. They also develop the theme – the author often gives clues/hints in the text that show what they think about a character's actions. They might use loaded words and positive/negative connotations when describing their actions, or they might show good motives or deeds rewarded and bad characters suffering the consequences. The way a character is described or portrayed in a novel can give you a clue what the author thinks about them, or wants YOU to think about them. This doesn't necessarily just mean what they look like. It's their actions and how they do them.

The characters in an autobiography or memoir are real people who actually existed, not fictional characters. This means they don't always follow satisfying or logical plot arcs as they might in fiction. The characters in an autobiography are also influenced by the author's personal perspective. Even if the author is making an effort to tell events exactly as they happened, they are still telling it from THEIR point of view which will inevitably change the way they see them.