

Lesson 1: Types of Conflict

What is conflict in literature?

Conflict is the struggle between **two opposing forces**. Conflict is just another word for a problem. It is typically the conflict that the story is centered around; it is what drives the story forward and makes it interesting. There are 4 main types of conflict:

Types of Conflict

Character vs. Character

The main character struggles with another character



Character vs. Nature

The main character struggles with a force of nature



Internal vs. External Conflicts

Conflict can either be *Internal* or *External*.

What does this mean?

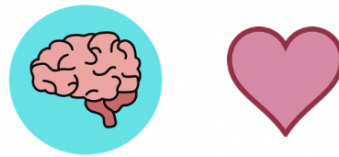
External Conflict

A struggle between a character and an **outside** force. This conflict can be seen physically.



Internal Conflict

A struggle that takes place **inside** the character's mind or body. This conflict cannot be seen physically.



Examples:

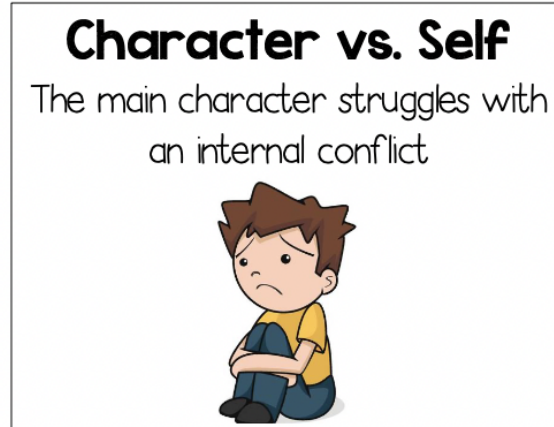
Brandy is caught in a rainstorm and misses her bus. → **External Conflict**

Jacob lost his job because due to a global pandemic. → **External Conflict**

Matilda caught her friend Suzy stealing from a classmate. Now Matilda must choose between keeping her friendship, or doing the right thing. → **Internal Conflict**

In the past year, Connor never made the time to go visit his grandma. She recently passed away and Connor is struggling with the guilt of not having spent enough time with her. → **Internal Conflict**

Character vs. Self



- Internal conflict
- Struggling with a personal problem
- Must make a difficult decision

Examples:

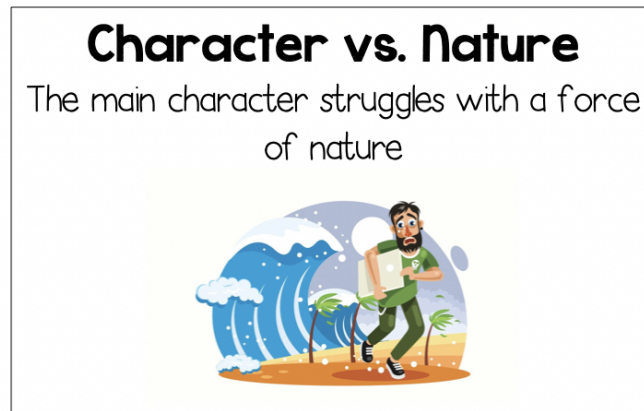
- Bernadette is suffering from depression. She often finds it difficult to get out of bed in the morning and enjoy the day. Oftentimes, her depression gets in the way of her making friends since she struggles with being confident in who she is and what she has to offer the world.
- Tony is applying for jobs this summer. He receives two employment opportunities. One job is his dream job, but the pay is low. The other job doesn't interest Tony at all, but it makes a ton of money. Tony struggles to decide which job to take.



Take a look at this video from the movie **Tangled**. Notice how Rapunzel struggles with the choice that she has made.

<https://youtu.be/FxAwA18UKx8>

Character vs. Nature



- A struggle involving Mother Nature that is out of the characters control.
- Natural forces are the cause of the conflict
- **External** conflict

Examples:

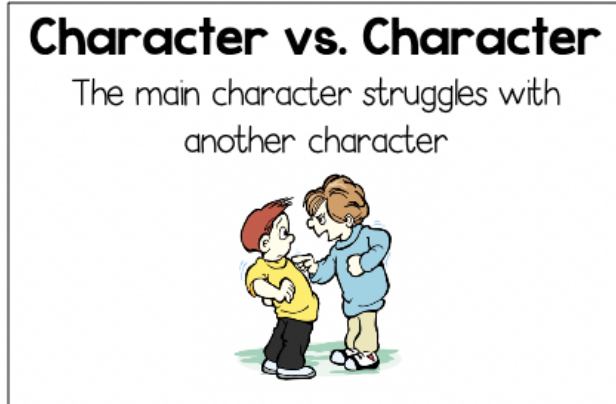
- Carly and her family are driving home from a fun day of skiing on the mountain when they get caught in a treacherous blizzard. Suddenly, Carly's mom loses control of the car because of black ice on the road. The car slides erratically, causing it to slam into a tree.
- In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, forcing people to social distance and isolate. Brad catches the virus and struggles to recover from the deadly virus.



Watch the video to see how the movie **Moana** demonstrates Character vs. Nature conflict. Moana wants to discover what's beyond the horizon, but nature (the ocean) has different plans. She struggles to make it past the waves.

<https://youtu.be/vR3QHzmgJ24>

Character vs. Character



- A mental or physical struggle between the main character(s) and one or more character(s)
- An external conflict

Examples:

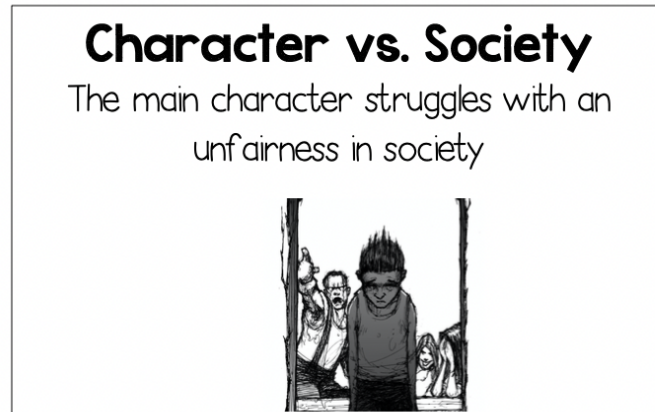
- Gretta is dealing with a group of girls who are cyberbullying her. They spread malicious rumours about her and make fun of her on a daily basis.
- The Avengers are responding to a supervillain attack. Together, they battle the enemy in order to save New York city.



Watch this video to see how the movie **Despicable Me 3** demonstrates **Character vs. Character** conflict.

https://youtu.be/m9Gg_VQP2zw

Character vs. Society



- Fighting against society's rules or laws
- Being treated unfairly by society
- External conflict

Examples:

- Mark is sent to prison, wrongly convicted of a crime that he did not commit. The court and the public will not listen to him when he tells them he is innocent.
- Bailey is a young girl living in Afghanistan. Since she is a girl, it is illegal for her to gain an education or go out of the house without a male present. Bailey longs to attend school and learn about the world but is prohibited under the Taliban's law.



In the movie, **Horton Hears a Who**, Hortons community doesn't believe him when he says there are little people living on the clover. They rally up against him and his "Hullabaloo". Take a look at the clip below to see Character vs. Society in action.

<https://youtu.be/474nLRbfJ6o>

Activity 1: In the boxes below, write a definition and an example for each type of conflict.

<p>Character vs. Self</p>	<p>Character vs. Character</p>
<p>Character vs. Nature</p>	<p>Character vs. Society</p>



Activity 2: Using your knowledge of Types of Conflict, watch each clip and note what the main type of conflict is. Justify (provide evidence for) your answer.

Title and Link	Main Type of Conflict	Justification
<u>Franklin in the Dark</u>		
<u>The Bear That Wasn't</u>		
<u>The Wizard of Oz – It's a Twister!</u>		
<u>Spoon</u>		