

Conflict

Conflict happens every day in our lives so it is no surprise that it is a major part of the stories we tell. Conflict is a struggle or disagreement between two different forces.

In a narrative, conflict generally takes on 4 different TYPES:

1. Conflict between 2 or more people is referred to as **PERSON vs PERSON**. This can sometimes (but not always) be a physical struggle or fight between people.

For example: two women are in love with the same pair of shoes and they fight over them while standing at the bargain bin at the shoe store. Another example would be if you and another person were both trying to get the same job. You might not get into a physical fight over it but you are in conflict with each other because only one of you can get the job (person vs person).

2. Conflict between a character and an element of nature is called **PERSON vs NATURE**. Elements of nature include animals (shark attack, mauled by a squirrel), weather (storms, lightning strikes, extreme temperatures), and wilderness survival (lost in the woods, on a desert island, life raft at sea) just to name a few.

3. When a person is trying to overcome a fear or make an important decision it is called **PERSON vs SELF**. The conflict is internal, caused by conflicting emotions. Getting over a bad breakup, overcoming a fear of heights, and deciding whether to report your buddy for robbing a bank. These are all things that cause an internal conflict in the heart and mind.

4. Our family, friends and even the community we live in has certain expectations of us. There are rules, laws and common beliefs that we are expected to obey. When we go against these expectations we are in conflict with society. In a literary context we call this conflict **PERSON vs SOCIETY**. This can involve breaking laws for good reasons (law is unfair or discriminatory) or for bad reasons (want money so you steal money, angry so you punch a guy). This type of conflict can pit a character against their family, friends, or community. It can be about what they are expected to do, what plans for them (who they are expected to marry, what career they choose).