

Protagonist

The protagonist is the central person in a story, and is often referred to as the story's main character. He or she (or they) is faced with a conflict that must be resolved. The protagonist may not always be admirable (e.g. an antihero, see definition below); nevertheless s/he must command involvement on the part of the reader, or better yet, empathy. Anti-hero: a major character, usually the protagonist, who lacks conventional morals, and who struggles for values which are not considered admirable

Antagonist

The antagonist is the character(s) (or situation) that represents the opposition against which the protagonist must contend. In other words, the antagonist is an obstacle that the protagonist must overcome.

Foil

A foil is any character (usually the antagonist or an important supporting character) whose personal qualities contrast with another character (usually the protagonist). By providing this contrast, we get to know more about the other character.

Stock

Stock characters are those types of characters who have become conventional or stereotypical through *repeated use* in particular types of stories. Stock characters are instantly recognizable to readers or audience members (e.g. The damsel in distress, the mad scientist, the geeky boy with glasses, and the faithful sidekick). Stock characters are normally one-dimensional, flat characters.

Flat

A flat character is the opposite of a round character. This literary personality is notable for one kind of personality trait or characteristic.

Round

A rounded character is anyone who has a complex personality; he or she is often portrayed as a conflicted and contradictory person.

Static

A static character is someone who does not change over time; his or her personality does not transform or evolve.

Dynamic

A dynamic character is a person who changes over time, usually as a result of resolving a central conflict or facing a major crisis. Most dynamic characters tend to be central rather than peripheral characters, because resolving the conflict is the major role of central characters.