

Name _____

Date _____

Conflict

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. In literature and film, conflict is the struggle or problem a character must overcome. It's one of the five elements of a story; the others are plot, character, setting and theme. Conflict is used to drive and direct the plot of a story. The point of the plot is to resolve the conflict. As the conflict grows, the tension and drama build. The climax of the story is the turning point of the conflict. That's when one character defeats another character or makes a choice or a change. When the conflict is resolved, the action can wind down. Conflict creates all the action in a story. Without conflict, characters would just float around aimlessly, and the story wouldn't be very interesting.

Based on the passage, which of the following is **not** a role that conflict plays?

- A. guiding the plot
B. adding tension and action
C. changing the reader's mind
D. making the story more interesting
2. A book, film or play usually has one central conflict that drives the plot. In the central conflict, the protagonist, or main character, is pitted against the antagonist. The antagonist is often another character, but it can also be any force that works against the protagonist. Weather, the environment, religion and societal norms can act as antagonists. Sometimes, if the character is struggling inside his or her mind, the protagonist can also be the antagonist.

In addition to a central conflict, stories also often contain one or more smaller conflicts. These smaller conflicts add even more action and tension to the plot. They can involve the protagonist or other less important characters.

According to the passage, the main antagonist always

- A. is another character in the story.
B. acts against the protagonist.
C. loses in the central conflict.
D. has an evil plan.

3. Character vs. character may be the easiest conflict to recognize. Think Batman vs. the Joker, Matilda vs. Miss Trunchbull or Harry Potter vs. Voldemort. These are the classic conflicts we see in books and film. In this type of external conflict, one character struggles, fights or has a problem with another character. This gives the author and reader a chance to explore two opposing viewpoints, opinions or ideas. Character vs. character conflicts are often, but not always, a battle of good against evil.

Which of the following is a character vs. character conflict?

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|--|---|
| A. Frodo and Sam set out on a journey together through Middle Earth. | B. A powerful tornado whisks Dorothy and Toto away to the land of Oz. |
| C. After visiting the neighbors, Beth gets a severe case of scarlet fever. | D. The queen is so jealous of Snow White that she gives her a poisoned apple. |

4. When a character struggles against the forces of the natural world, it's called character vs. nature. Natural forces include weather, climate, environment, wild animals, disease and other elements the character cannot control. This type of external conflict is central to the novel *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen. In the book, 13-year-old Brian is stranded in the forest and must learn to survive on his own. He faces natural hazards like wolves, a bear, a tornado and more. He eventually develops skills that help him deal with these forces of nature.

Which of the following is **not** an example of a character vs. nature conflict?

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|--|---|
| A. Amrita was camping in the woods when she had a big fight with her friend Priya. | B. Grace wanted to reach the mountaintop, but the strong wind made it hard. |
| C. A hurricane threatened to take the roof off my family's house. | D. James got drenched in the sudden thunderstorm. |

5. Character vs. society is another type of external conflict. A character stands against the dominant religion, morals, culture, rules or beliefs of the people around him or her. One example of character vs. society appears in the novel *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. The protagonist, Cassie, and her family struggle against racism in their Mississippi society during the Great Depression. They face injustice from their neighbors, teachers and the law.

A character vs. society conflict

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| A. is a type of internal conflict. | B. can only take place in a work of historical fiction. |
| C. involves a person or small group standing against the majority. | D. happens when two characters have differing morals or cultures. |

6. Internal conflict, also known as character vs. self, occurs inside a character's mind. This is the only type of conflict where the protagonist and antagonist are the same person. The "protagonist" and "antagonist" viewpoints represent two different ways of looking at an issue. For example, in *The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins, Katniss wavers between her romantic feelings for Peeta and Gale. The part of her mind that favors Peeta works against the part of her mind that favors Gale, leaving her unable to make a decision. This is one of the smaller conflicts in the trilogy. The main conflict in each book is external; Katniss struggles to survive, and then fights against the brutal and powerful Capitol.

Which of these characters faces an internal conflict?

- A. Daniel is so angry that he pushes Nathan into a locker. In response, Nathan gathers his strongest friends and tries to fight Daniel after school.
- B. Ana must decide if she should keep her promise and not tell anyone Jeremiah's secret or break her promise to help him stay safe.
- C. A cat chases a mouse around the house, but the mouse is able to escape.
- D. Thea doesn't want to go to the show, but her mom forces her to.