

# Character Types

A look at the different  
types of characters found  
in narrative writing



# Characters

Characters are one element of a piece of narrative writing, but they are central to what happens in the story. Characters can be human, animal and they can even be inanimate objects like a car or a teddy. Authors attempt to get the reader to identify with one of the characters in the story.

# Major Vs Minor

Major, or main, characters are central to the plot of the book/story. They appear most frequently, are described in great detail and the storyline revolves around them. Minor characters do not appear as frequently, they are usually described in less detail and only have a small role in the storyline.

# Round Vs Flat

Round characters are those characters in a story who are given fully-rounded personalities by the author. They are described in great detail and the reader can imagine them in their mind. On the other hand, flat characters remain almost as one-dimensional creations on the page, they are difficult to imagine.



# Round Vs Flat



Round characters are usually associated with one of the main characters in the book/story, while a flat character is usually one of the minor characters.

# Hero Vs Antihero

The Hero character is usually the one who saves the day, displays bravery in the face of adversity and is a character that the reader admires. The Antihero is sometimes the villain in the story, but occasionally has redeeming qualities. He/she is the character that the reader usually loves to hate.

# Sympathetic Vs Unsympathetic

The Sympathetic character is used by the author to gain the sympathy and support of the reader. The Unsympathetic character is there to raise the ire of the reader. Both types of character get the reader emotionally involved in the storyline.



# Sympathetic Vs Unsympathetic



Sympathetic characters are usually seen as the “good guys”, the characters that the reader wants to win. The Unsympathetic characters are the “baddies”, the villain of the piece, the one the reader hopes gets caught and pays the price.



# The Foil

The Foil is usually a minor character in the book/story. They may not be well described and their purpose is to highlight or draw out the features of another character. They are usually a contrasting character to one of the main characters – eg. if the main character is seen to be intelligent, the Foil may be portrayed as stupid to highlight the intelligence of the main character.

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