**Types of Characters**

**Major or Central Characters**

* These characters are vital to the development and resolution of the conflict. In other words, the plot and resolution of conflict revolves around these characters.
* **Protagonist:** The protagonist is the central person in the 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, for example an anti-hero; but nevertheless s/he must command involvement on the part of the reader, or better yet, empathy.
* **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.

**Examples**

* **Protagonists:** Harry Potter, Katniss Everdeen, Tris Prior, Percy Jackson, Frodo Baggins.
* **Antagonists:** Lord Voldemort, President Snow, Jeanine Matthews, Sauron.

**Additional Types**

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

**Examples**

* **Dynamic:** Ebenezer Scrooge, Scout Finch, Neville Longbottom, Haymitch Abernathy
* **Static:** Primrose Everdeen, Bob Ewell, Bruce the Shark (*Finding Nemo*)

**Additional Types**

* **Round:** A rounded character is anyone who has a complex personality. He or she is often portrayed as a conflicted and contradictory person.
* **Flat:** A flat character is the opposite of a round character. It is a literary personality that is notable for one kind of personality trait or characteristic.

**Examples**

* **Round:** Elizabeth Bennet, Gandalf the Grey/White, Four, Annabeth Chase
* **Flat:** Miss Maudie, Benvolio (*Romeo and Juliet*), Crabbe and Goyle, Mr. Collins

**Additional Types**

* **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 femme fatale, the cynical but moral private eye, the mad scientist, the geeky boy with glasses, and the faithful sidekick). Stock characters are normally one-dimensional flat characters, but sometimes stock personalities are deeply conflicted, rounded characters (e.g. the "Hamlet" type).
* **Symbolic:** A symbolic character is any major or minor character whose very existence represents some major idea or aspect of society. For example, in *Lord of the Flies*, Piggy is a symbol of both the rationality and physical weakness of modern civilization; Jack, on the other hand, symbolizes the violent tendencies (the Id) that William Golding believes is within human nature.

**Additional Types**

* **Anti-Hero:** A major character, usually the protagonist, who lacks conventional nobility of mind, and who struggles for values not deemed universally admirable. Examples: Holden Caulfield, James Bond, Artemis Fowl, Jay Gatsby.
* **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. Examples: Draco Malfoy and Harry Potter.