

# CONFLICT IN LITERATURE

A **CONFLICT** is a struggle between two opposing forces. In literature there are 4 main types of conflict that are either external or internal.

This conflict plays out between the **PROTAGONIST** (the central character) and the **ANTAGONIST** (the opposing force).

**External Conflict** – between a character and someone/something in the outside world

**Man vs. Man** – a conflict between 2 characters (example: hero vs. villain)

**Man vs. Nature** – a conflict that places a character against the forces of nature (examples: a storm; a virus or disease)

**Man vs. Society** – a conflict that places a character against the laws/ideas of the society (examples: rich young lady falls in love with a poor man, but her family won't allow it; a character who goes against an unjust and cruel government)

**Other external conflicts: Man vs. Technology, Man vs. Supernatural**

**Internal Conflict** – within the character

**Man vs. Self** – a conflict within the character's own mind/heart. He/she may struggle to make the right decision, with how to feel about a person or situation, with fear, with trying to find a true identity.

**Inciting Incident (Force)** – the event that triggers every other event in the story. It drives the plot and begins the conflict.

Conflict centers itself within the story's themes.

**Theme** – a recurring idea or message found throughout a text

(The main message the author is trying to send you)

Some examples are:

- Teenage love
- Friendship and loyalty
- Courage and heroism
- Coming of age (growing up)
- Strength of character
- Alienation/Isolation/Depression (feeling trapped)
- Humanity (what it means to be human)
- Unfair treatment of people (racism, persecution)