

Types of Characters

*Mini Lesson on Seven Types of
Characters Students Will
Encounter in Fictional Texts*

Seven Common Character Types

1. **Flat**
2. **Round**
3. **Dynamic**
4. **Static**
5. **Stock**
6. **Foil**
7. **Confidant**

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ROUND OR FLAT

How do authors decide the amount of detail they include about each character?

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Which character do we know more about in the book/movie?

Bruce the Shark

Nemo



Flat

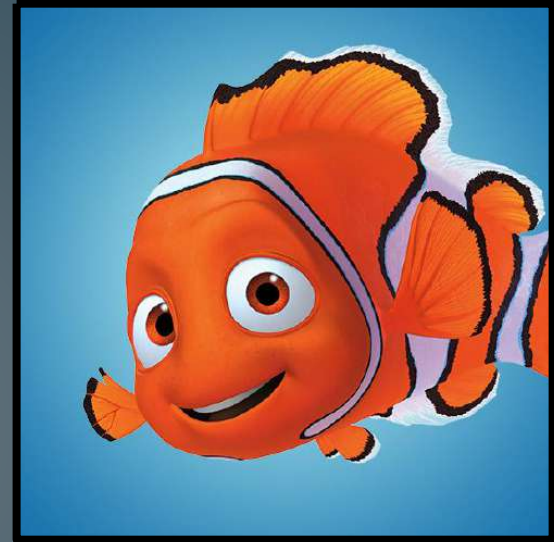


Round

Round

- Characters that are described in depth, with many details, are well-rounded characters. They are called round characters.
- The main character in a story is ALMOST ALWAYS round.

Examples of round characters



Flat

- Characters that are not described well —that you are not given much information about — are flat characters.



- **Consider a drawing:** a three-dimensional drawing gives more detail than a one-dimensional drawing.
- If you draw a one-dimensional, flat, picture of a house, you can only see one side of it. You miss three of the four sides.
- A flat drawing is like a flat character; you only receive a few details. There are many things you cannot “see,” or many details you are not given by the author.

Flat



Round



Static or Dynamic?

How do characters change or remain the same throughout a story?

Which character changes the way he feels about a problem?

Scar



Static

Simba



Dynamic

Static or Dynamic?

- The key word when dealing with the difference between **static and dynamic characters** is *change*.
- The type of change, though, is specific. We are only concerned with *internal changes* —changes that occur within the character herself/himself.
- *Internal changes* include a change in his or her...
 - personality;
 - outlook/point of view towards an issue;
 - values; OR
 - an overall change in the nature of the character.

Static

- **Static** = not moving or changing
(ex: *static electricity* stays still unlike current electricity which is moving!)
- In order for a character to be considered a **static character**, the character must *remain the same* throughout the entire story.
- The character does NOT undergo any *internal changes*.

EXAMPLES OF STATIC CHARACTERS



Dynamic

- A dynamic character is a character that undergoes an *internal change* sometime between the beginning and end of the story.
- The change in the character usually is *crucial* to the story itself.

Dynamic EXAMPLES

- Say a main character goes through a life-altering experience, such as a race car driver getting into an accident. If the driver's *personality* changes, and he is no longer willing to take on the risk of driving a race car, the character would be dynamic.



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stock, foil, and confidant

How do certain characters reveal more about setting, theme, plot, or other characters?

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Stock Character

A stock character is...

- a special kind of flat character who is instantly recognizable to most readers.
- They may be called “stock,” “typecast,” or “*stereotypical*” characters.
- Examples include:
 - the ruthless businessman
 - the shushing old, white-haired librarian
 - the popular jock
- They are NOT focus characters, nor are they developed in the story.
(They fulfill *background* or “filler” roles.)

EXAMPLES OF STOCK CHARACTERS

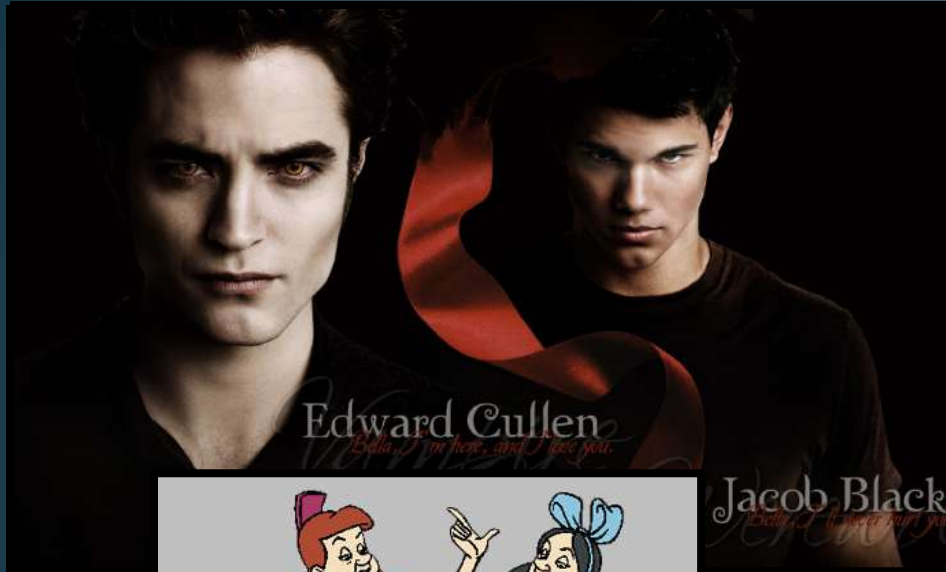


Foil Character

A foil character is...

- a special kind of character who is used to enhance another character through *contrast*.
- As opposites, they highlight qualities of a central character.
- Usually static
- Examples of foil characters from film include:
 - the mean step-sisters contrast to Cinderella's character
 - Anna and Elsa as a sibling "Yin-Yang" in *Frozen*
 - Villains: the Joker → Batman (*Batman*), Scar → Mufasa and Simba (*Lion King*), Wicked Witch of the West → Dorothy (*The Wizard of Oz*)
- They are not focus characters, nor are they developed in the story.
(They help us learn more about another character or aspect of a story.)

Examples of foil characters



Confidant Character

A confidant character is...

- a special kind of character who the main character *confides in*.
- Usually static
- When the main character confides (shares with/trusts), the confidant *reveals* qualities, thoughts, and feelings of the main character.
- Examples of confidant characters from film include:
 - Pocahontas confides in Grandmother Willow, which reveals her inner feelings about her father's wishes and the European settlers.
 - Simba confides in the baboon, Rafiki, which reveals his inner feelings about his father's death and taking his place as king.
- A confidant helps us *learn more* about our central/main character.

Examples of confidants

