

Creating Conflict

Once you've completed your **Character Questionnaires**, you'll know a good amount about the major players in your novel. Then it is time to figure out what your characters are going to do by answering some deeper questions about your characters' hopes and fears in order to create the conflicts that will make your novel interesting.

Literary conflict is primarily about the clashing of one person's desires with his or her own faults, the desires of others, and the circumstances surrounding them.

Most stories are ultimately about the same thing—the journey of the protagonist to get what the protagonist wants. Whether the protagonist's goal is to find true love or cure cancer, the journey is never easy, and your character will encounter many setbacks along the way. Though they're painful for your protagonist, these obstacles are what will make your novel exciting to read.

The **external conflict** is the one between your protagonist and antagonist.

The **internal conflicts** are the fears and insecurities that your protagonist has to overcome in order to get what your protagonist wants.

Your Protagonist

✍ *More than anything in the world, my protagonist wants:*

✍ *But my protagonist is afraid of:*

✍ *My protagonist greatest weakness is (for example, "too trusting" or "a fear of spiders" or "allergic to grasses"?):*

Physical Antagonist

✍ *More than anything in the world, my antagonist wants (for example, "to humiliate the protagonist" or "world domination"):*

✍ *My antagonist's "beef" with the protagonist is:*

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✂ *My antagonist is afraid of (long-haired bunnies?):*

✂ *My antagonist's greatest weakness is:*

Abstract Antagonist

✂ *The antagonist in my novel is not a living, breathing being. It is ...*

✂ *If my protagonist does not battle against this antagonist, it will eventually ... (ruin my protagonist life, cause my protagonist's death?)*

✂ *My protagonist is battling against this antagonist by:*

External conflict and **internal conflict** are the two basic ingredients for an excellent story. Know that your internal and external conflicts will overlap throughout your novel. Once your characters find out about each others' fears and weaknesses, you better believe they will use them against each other mercilessly as they fight to make their dreams come true.

Questions to consider when creating conflict for your novel

- *Does the conflict really count as a conflict?*
- *Would your characters really have that kind of conflict?*
- *Is the conflict engaging?*
- *Is it enough to write an entire novel about?*