



Conflict

Short Stories



What is Conflict?

Conflict in a narrative is created when the main character wants something. When something else gets in the protagonist's way, a conflict arises. All stories contain conflict.

There are two categories of conflict: internal and external.

Man vs. Self

"Man vs. Self" is the only true version of internal conflict you will find in literature.

The conflict takes place within the mind of the main character, and often involves the character making a decision between right and wrong, or other mixed emotions. This struggle could also exist in the form of a character battling mental illness.



Man vs. Man

"Man vs. Man" is probably the most common form of external conflict.

This lies at the heart of all dramatic arts and places the struggle directly between the protagonist and the antagonist -- otherwise known as the good guy and the bad guy.

In a man vs. man conflict, the protagonist wants something, and the antagonist obstructs the protagonist from getting what he wants.



Man vs. Society

This mode of external conflict occurs when the protagonist is placed at odds with a government or cultural tradition.

For example, if a child gets in trouble for sneaking out, he is in conflict with the societal tradition that children are expected to obey their parents.



Man vs. Nature

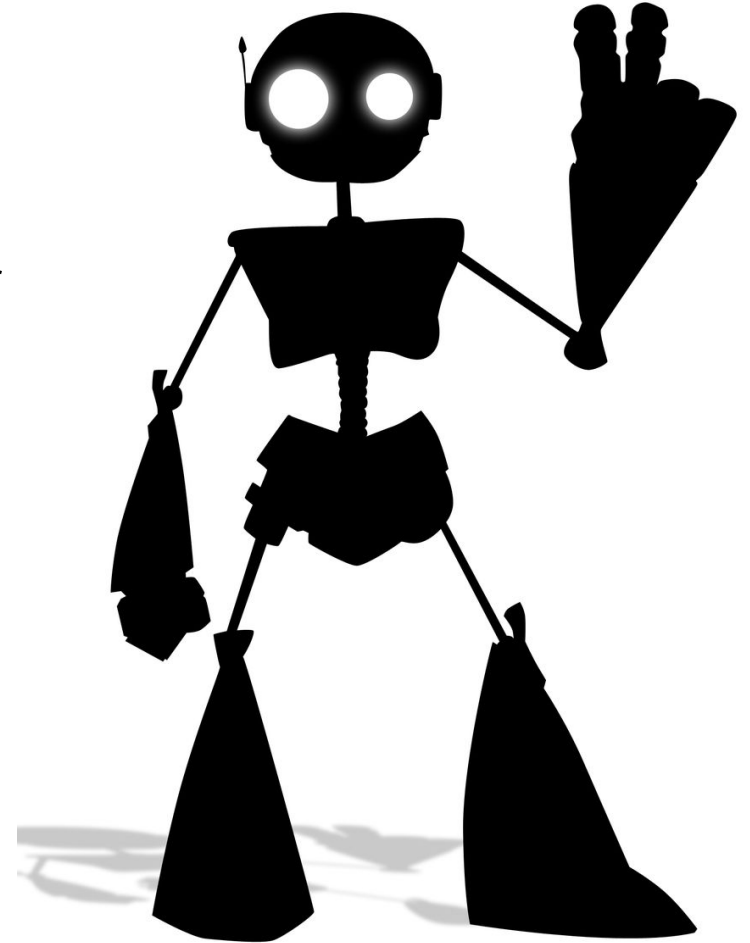
"Man vs. Nature" pits the main character against the forces of nature -- in the form of a natural disaster or a similarly dangerous situation.



Man vs. Machine

"Man vs. Machine" can mean that a person is in direct combat with robots, in the context of science fiction, or it could mean simply that technology stands in the way of the protagonist getting what she wants.

In the science-fiction version, the same attributes of a man vs. man conflict apply.



Man vs. Supernatural

"Man vs. the Supernatural" occurs when a character battles that which is beyond nature. It can't be explained by natural law. This could be witches, vampires, mythical creatures, and so forth.

