



### Using internal and external conflict in stories

#### 1. Make both types of conflict obstacles

What interior faults get in a character's own way? And what events beyond their control?



#### 2. Plan how both types of conflict relate

E.G. Does a character's short temper affect resolution in an explosive work disagreement?



#### 3. Make characters' inner conflicts clash

How do characters' key faults (e.g. being too abrasive or not speaking up enough) clash?



#### 4. Use greater and lesser conflicts

What smaller conflicts might arise as your characters grow and develop over time?



#### 5. Plan key conflicts into character arcs

Create character profiles including summaries of major and minor conflicts they could encounter.



Create character profiles and an easy story outline:  
[www.nownovel.com/start-writing-a-book](http://www.nownovel.com/start-writing-a-book)

### Quick tips

- Tension: Because of conflict's uncertainty, we want to know how it resolves and keep turning pages to find out
- Stakes: Conflict suggests worst-case outcomes and makes resolution urgent (the hero must overcome the antagonist/environment or themselves 'or else...')
- Character development: Conflict allows for dramatic incidents and confrontations that test characters and cause them to learn and adapt

#### HOW?

1. Inner/External types of obstacles
2. Inner/External conflicts influence one another
3. Characters oppose inner conflicts
4. Multiple, related inner/external conflicts
5. Plan character arcs together with inner/external conflicts e.g.

# STORY LOGIC NET

## Instructions

Print out the card and give it to a student or a group of students as a helping prompt in order to understand what a conflict is and what types of conflicts exist. Conflict is opposition and struggle, whether between characters who have opposing goals, or between a character and their own inner demons. Sometimes conflict lies between characters and their environment.

Conflict supplies the stakes and odds that create rising and falling action. Conflict also is a crucible in which characters can grow and change. Through facing inner and/or external adversity, characters gain new insights and strengths. They overcome flaws or give in to them. Conflict is thus a key agent of change

Use the following information to assist the students through a reflective/guided discussion:

- **Internal Conflict:** It is a common type of conflict, usually based on inner feelings and/or values. The character struggles with a choice, decision, or issue they must face and deal with.
- **External Conflict:**
  - Person against person. This is the most common type of conflict, usually between the protagonist and the antagonist
  - Person against nature. The protagonist struggle against the forces of nature or external environment. This is common in survival stories.
  - Person against society. For example, the main character stands up to support his beliefs and struggles against society or a group of people.
  - Person against the supernatural. Similar to “Person against nature”, but for or with supernatural or difficult to understand elements (e.g. sorcery).
  - Person against technology. A conflict rising from a new discovery, a scientific breakthrough, etc.

Also consult the following TedEd video which explains external and internal conflict

<https://ed.ted.com/on/2AiUn1bS>