

Understanding the Five Types of Conflict

1. Person vs. Person: The protagonist experiences conflicts with another character.

Example: In *The Giver*, Jonas develops a conflict between himself and his father after he watches the video feed showing his father “release,” or kill, the smaller newborn twin.

2. Person vs. Society: Conflicts arise from institutions like school, home, or the law.

Example: In *Bud, Not Buddy*, Bud Caldwell has been an orphan since he was 6. But he runs away from a foster home after being abused by the family.

3. Person vs. Nature: A natural disaster such as a twister or a blizzard causes conflicts.

Example: In *Drowned City* by Don Brown, Hurricane Katrina is a natural disaster that affects all the people in New Orleans.

4. Person vs. Fate: An event beyond the protagonist’s control causes conflicts: the character’s family situation, the death of one or both parents, being homeless, and so on.

Example: In *Terrible Typhoid Mary*, by Susan C. Bartoletti, the fact that Mary is a carrier of typhoid fever is something she did not purposefully do, nor can she change or control it.

5. Person vs. Himself/Herself: Internal conflicts arise from emotions, difficulty making a decision, or acting to resolve a conflict.

Example: Charlotte in *Riding Freedom* doesn’t want to behave like a proper girl; she wants to do what boys can do, like drive a stagecoach and vote. Charlotte turns this gender conflict into a plan that lets her lead life, in the 1800s, on her terms.