

Literary Conflict



External vs. Internal

External

External Conflict takes place outside of the body



Internal

Internal Conflict takes place inside of the body/mind



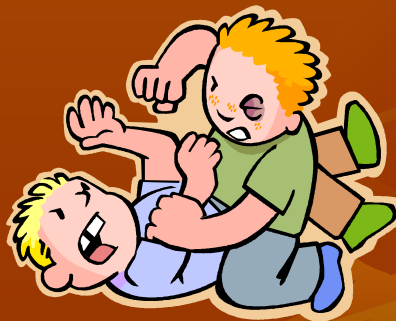
External

There are three types of
external conflict

External

Man vs. Man

The most straightforward type of conflict pits the protagonist directly against another character with apparently opposing aims.



External

Man vs. Nature

This type of conflict pits a story's main character or characters against a natural force such as a flood, predatory animal, or disease epidemic.



External

Man Against Society

In many stories, the protagonist battles an unjust element of government or culture.



Internal

There is one type of
internal conflict

Internal

Man vs. Self

Some literary conflicts take the form of a character struggling to overcome fear, addiction, emotional damage or other crippling personal issue.



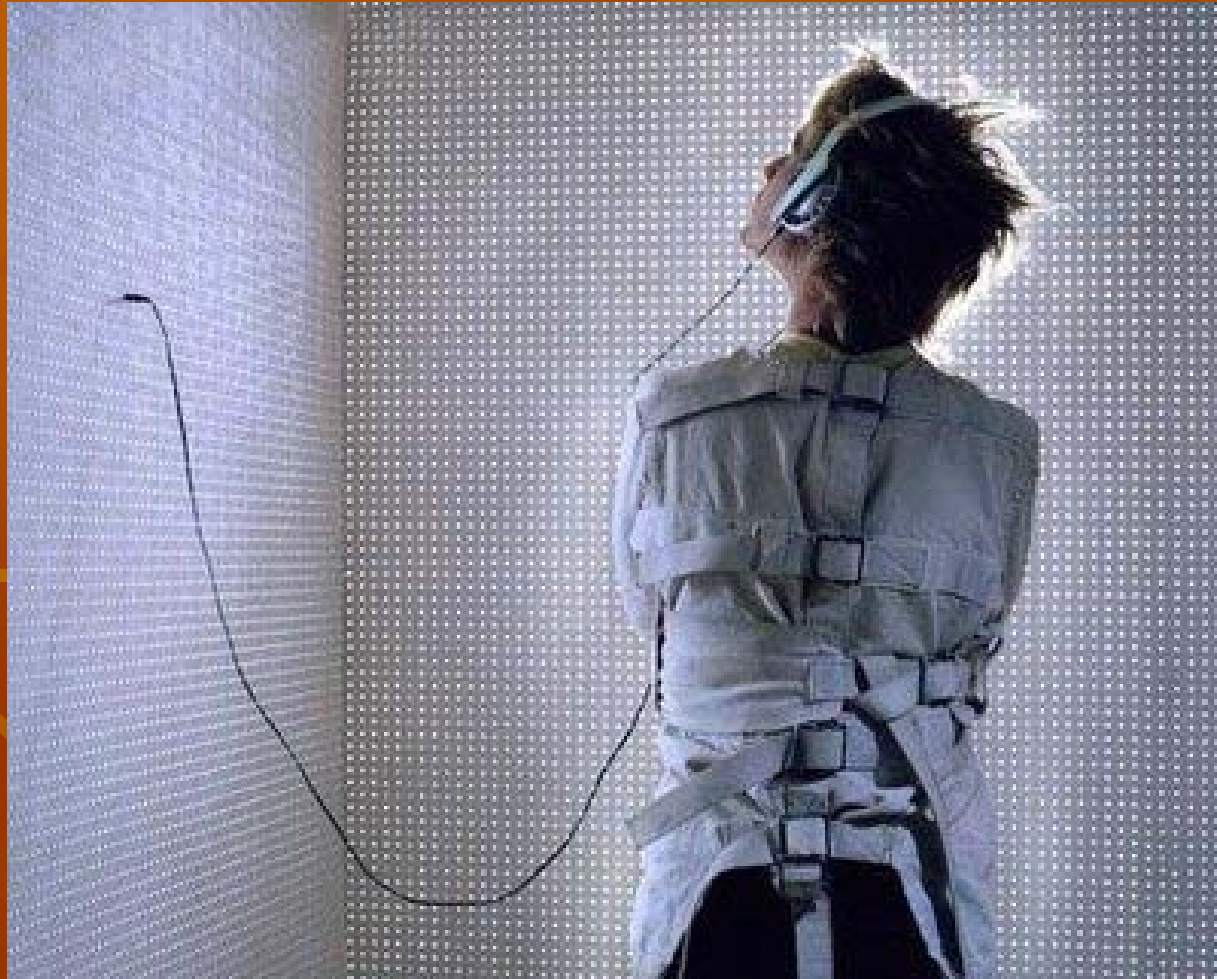
Practice

Decide what type of conflict is being illustrated in the following pictures

1. Man vs. ?



2. Man vs. ?



3. Man vs. ?



4. Man vs.



5. Man vs. ?



6. Man vs. ?



7. Man vs. ?



8. Man vs. ?



Practice

Now that you have mastered pictures, let's try some text!

9. Man vs. ?

*“If she had only proceeded more slowly.
If she had only taken the Southerly route,
avoiding the icebergs. If only the watch
had had a pair of binoculars.”*

(news story about the Titanic)

10. Man vs. ?

Charles decided to break all the rules the day he decided to steal that car. He was immediately arrested and sent to jail to await his trial. He should have known better than to mess with the “rules.”

11. Man vs. ?

“I don’t care who you talk to!” screamed Sarah to West. “I just wish I had never met you!”

12. Man vs. ?

After lowering himself into the damp and dark cave Tom began to reprimand himself for not having replaced his flashlight batteries. Tom's terror slowly began to take over as the light around him grew dimmer and dimmer and dimmer.

13. Man vs. ?

After the light in the cave was completely gone Tom began to stumble through the cave blindly cutting his hands on what appeared to be sharp rocks.

14. Man vs. ?

Tom found a dry spot to sit down in the dark and began to obsess over an argument he had had earlier in the day with his mother in which he had said, “I hope I never see you again!”

15. Man vs. ?

Tom's mother was upset that he wanted to skip going to college in order to go spelunking in all of the world's greatest caves before he turned thirty. Tom didn't understand the big deal, he didn't really believe in structured "learning" anyway.

Conflict in your writing

What kind of conflict would you include in your writing?

Have you ever experienced an internal conflict? How would you write about it?