

## **Round character examples**

A round character in a novel, play, or story is a complex personality. Like real people, they have depth in feelings and passions. For instance, in the movie "Shrek," the main character says "'Ogres are like onions," which means that, what appears to them is not the only truth. Rather, there is something more inside them. Similarly, a round character has many layers of personality. Writers define a round character fully, both physically and mentally. It is the character stics of a Round Characters are major characters in a story, who encounter contradictory situations, and undergo transformation during this phase. Therefore, these characters do not remain the same throughout the narrative, making their traits difficult to identify from beginning until the end. These characters are more realistic, their personalities somewhat inconsistent. They are fully developed and show complex traits, like real people.Round characters are also known as "main characters," or "major characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters, " because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters are also known as "main characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters are also known as "main characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters are also known as "main characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters are also known as "main characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters are also known as "main characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters are also known as "main characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters are also known as "main characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters are also known as "main characters," because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.Major characters, "because they are suitable to surprise the readers, "because they are surprise th thirty-nine years old, serves his whole life for the Ministry of Truth, and rewrites history. Then he goes against the rules of the Party and falls in love with Julia, which is a rebellious act written in his diary. There is no past and no future for Smith. He is a round character whose mind is inconstant, while he undergoes his character development during the course of the story. Smith is the main character who knows the danger he will encounter. For instance, he knows from the very beginning that the members of Party will find his diary. They will use the things he has written in it against him. He also knows that the Police will reveal his illegal affair with Julia. Therefore, he does not stay consistent and is a round character. Example #2: Elizabeth Bennet, Pride and Prejudice (by Jane Austen)Elizabeth Bennet is another good example of a round character of Jane Austen)Elizabeth develops into a new woman, with different choices and behaviors that have an impact on the people around her. In the beginning, Elizabeth is prejudiced, which is her major flaw, though later she transforms and changes her opinions. In fact, slowly and gradually Elizabeth is prejudiced, which is her major flaw, though later she transforms and changes her opinions. In fact, slowly and gradually Elizabeth evolves to understand her true feelings - showing a great example of a round character. Example #3: Hamlet, Hamlet (by William Shakespeare)Yet another great example of a round character is Hamlet. He is a complex, enigmatic, and thoughtful by nature. Hamlet makes hasty decisions, yet he delays his revenge. His contemplative nature also becomes his tragic flaw, and his lack of timely action becomes the cause of his tragedy. Hamlet's personality is contradictory, while he also encounters many contradictory, while he also encounters many contradictory situations. Example #4: Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald has introduced a complex and round character in Gatsby. Gatsby is a tragic hero with a fatal flaw - that of obsession over his beloved Daisy. He is a man of great mystery, because no one knows his whereabouts, or how he becomes rich. Readers learn about his different traits. He appears to them as scared, mysterious, friendly, angry, happy, disappointed, and frustrated man throughout the novel. Through Nick's narration, readers get an insight into his human mind, and all his emotions and whims. Function of Round Characters bring surprise to the readers' expectations by undergoing a significant metamorphosis at the end of a narrative - as compared to what they were in the initial phases. Hence, due to this development, the audience can relate their own lives to this transformed character. By the end, after development, the audience can relate their own lives falls into one of two categories: flat characters and round characters, it's a useful distinction to help guide your own character writing. What is a flat character? It has nothing to do with their shapes—the two terms are set apart based on the character's depths and complexities. Generally, the main characters are round, and the supporting ones are flat—but you'll soon see this isn't always the case. Let's take a look at the distinction between flat character vs. round characte look at several round and flat character examples in literature. Round Character Definition: What is a Round Character? A round character examples in literature. Round character describes any character describes any character? definition: any character whose depth and complexities are apparent throughout the story. Round characters exhibit the psychological complicatedness that all of us share as human beings. Of course, writing a round character is easier said than done. In order for a fictional human being to reflect the complexities of real world people, the author must unravel several aspects of human psychology in that characters. Most round characters will have the following: External conflict: No one gets along with everyone, and your characters will have their own flaws, insecurities, philosophies, and problems to overcome. Desires and motives: The conflict of a story is generated from your protagonist having certain motivations. Truly complex characters are riddled with internal contradictions. For example, a character might desire love, but push away every potential suitor that tries to give them that love. Speech patterns: The dialogue of a round character is informed by their personality, the region they grew up in, their profession, their generation, their generation, their generation, their generation, their generation and even the words they simply like and dislike. Backstory: When we first encounter a character, they are born, that character's backstory is essential to understanding their complexities, traumas, feelings, desires, and flaws. Relatable traits: Most round character's are relatable, if not likable. Something about them must be relatably human for the reader to connect with them on a personal level. Fatal flaws: Also known as a hamartia, a character's fatal flaw is the thing that prevents them from growing and overcoming the obstacles necessary to their successful resolution of the conflict. Do note that some characters might not have all of the above components, such as a fatal flaw or internal contradictions, depending on their place in the story. Nonetheless, these items seem like a lot to fit into one character, right? Later on, we'll offer some resources for crafting effective round characters. Who is the round character in literature? Generally (but not always), main characters are round. This includes your protagonist and perhaps their closest relationships, but it also includes your story's antagonist, too. Round Character examples The following round character examples come from classic works of literature. Note: we do not analyze each character's speech patterns, as it would take far too long to detail how a person's speech is informed by their entire life. Round Character Examples: Quentin Compson in The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner The Sound and the Fury is a novel about the Compson family's fall from grace in the postbellum south. story. Quentin, the most intelligent of the Compsons, is a freshman at Harvard who grapples with issues of justice, purity, and meaninglessness in the world. He is obsessed with Caddy, his sister, whom he tries and fails to protect from the awful facts of life. External conflict Most of Quentin's relationships are antagonistic. His father burdens him with an overwhelming sense of nihilism. He is overly protective of Caddy, whom he loves, which fosters his hatred of Dalton Ames, who may have impregnated Caddy. He also finds Caddy's brief husband, Herbert Head, repulsive. Nonetheless, none of these conflicts materialize during the present day that Quentin's story is narrated. Internal conflict Quentin's large internal world is, in part, his fatal flaw. Quentin thinks critically and seriously about everything to the point of insanity, not unlike Shakespeare's Hamlet. He obsesses over concepts like justice, purity, and the meaninglessness of life, often searching for a reason to stay alive. He believes in justice and chivalry, finding hope in the purity of people like his sister Caddy. And yet, Caddy is, in Quentin's eyes, no longer pure, due to her sexual promiscuity and status as a single mother. By fixating on the perceived injustice of Caddy's impurity, Quentin desires meaning order, justice, and purity. He is motivated by a search for reason, value, and beauty in the world. Contradictions Despite believing in justice and chivalry, Quentin's relationship to Caddy is rather patronizing and possessive. He wants Caddy's purity for himself. At one point, he lies to his father that he and Caddy have committed incest, hoping his father will banish the two of them so they can be exiles with each other. Quentin hopes that, by being responsible for Caddy's sin, he can absolve her of impurity and make her his reason for being alive. Backstory Quentin's family has lost its honor and prestige since the end of the American Civil War. The Compsons have lost much of their wealth and are ridiculed by townsfolk. Quentin himself laments the South's loss in the Civil War. While these details are not immediately relevant to Quentin's desire for meaning in a world that seems to have abandoned him. Relatable traits Quentin's desire for justice is admirable. Additionally, Faulkner writes much of Quentin's story using stream of consciousness, which gives the reader a clear window into Quentin's thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the world. Of course, Quentin is hardly likable in the modern age, considering his willingness to lie about incest, his obsession with Caddy's virginity, and his desire for a slaveholding South. But, his need for meaning in the world is certainly relatable to most, a common trait of many round character examples. Fatal flaws Quentin thinks too much. He obsesses to the point of insanity, driving himself mad with abstract thoughts and memories. given that these desires stem from a selfish need for order and honor. Eventually, Quentin's inability to find justice and meaning in the world drive him to suicide. Round Character Examples: Ivan in The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoevsky Impossible to summarize, The Brothers Karamazov is a novel about the three sons of a small town's wealthy but crass "sponger." Ivan, the middle child, is both deeply intelligent and deeply troubled. He is an academic and essayist, and often talks about issues of religion, atheism, and man's cruelty. He is in love with the fiancée of his brother, Dmitri. External conflict Ivan does not like most people. He thinks his father is a buffoon, he dislikes Dmitri's hedonism, and he regards his brother Alyosha-the novel's lovable protagonist-with little appreciation. Most of Ivan's problems are internal, however. Internal conflict Ivan is deeply discomforted by man's cruelty. He often laments the awful reality of human nature. Because of this, Ivan is deeply atheistic, as he believes no omnibenevolent God would allow for the suffering of innocent people. These beliefs contribute to his later psychosis in the novel. He begins to hallucinate conversations, Ivan constantly revokes the idea of a higher power. Nonetheless, the "Devil" makes Ivan confront the reality that logic alone cannot heal the world. For a brief period of the novel, Ivan goes insane as a result of these dialogues. Desires and motives Behind Ivan's aloofness is a strong sense of idealism, and a desire to mend the world's suffering, but he himself contributes to that suffering. In his aloofness and pretensity, Ivan locks himself into the world of his mind, doing little to alleviate the suffering of others. Additionally, at one point he tells a family servant to kill Ivan's father. Backstory Ivan, like his brothers, grows up emotionally estranged from his father. Each brother confronts this estrangement in different ways, but for Ivan, he becomes increasingly aware of his inability to help. A born philosopher and thinker, Ivan retreats into his mind and tries to intellectualize man's inherent cruelty, constantly thinking about the fate of mankind. Relatable traits Although Ivan comes off as aloof and pretentious, he has a deep seated hatred for the suffering of mankind. His reaction to suffering isn't always logical, but then again, whose is? Fatal flaws Ivan's reliance on logic is also his downfall. He tries to intellectualize suffering and pain, but logic is not the only way to understand human psychology. Additionally, Ivan uses logic as a means of distancing himself from his own emotions, which don't abide by logic. Despite Ivan's atheism, he cares a lot about the fate of mankind, and one can argue he secretly desires a God to worship anyway. Ivan's reliance on logic contributes to his psychosis, which he cannot intellectualize his way out of. Round Character Examples: Jane Eyre in Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte Jane Eyre, the titular protagonist of Jane Eyre, is a headstrong and resilient woman in 19th century England. Jane's novel charts her path from an abusive childhood to a life of her own choosing, and her independence and strong sense of justice prove quite controversial for the culture of her time period. Jane's character and life are difficult to summarize, as Jane Eyre is one of the first novels to discuss its protagonist's social, moral, and psychological development with great depth and clarity. External conflict Jane grows up in an abusive family and also has a headstrong nature, so she routinely encounters conflicts with other people who try to influence how she should behave. Jane's aunt and cousins are spiteful; her headmaster and many of her teachers are also keen on guilt and punishment. Jane's employer and eventual husband, Edward Rochester, both teases Jane and makes her jealous with other women, while also having a secret wife. Finally, Jane's cousin, St. John Rivers, proposes to marry Jane, but only out of duty, not love. Each of these conflicts shape Jane's character and help her form a sense of self and a personal philosophy in a cold, often selfish world. Internal conflict Jane's awful childhood shapes much of her internal conflicts. The ambiguous relationship she had with her family shapes much of her future relationships: on the one hand, she desires love, intimacy, and connection; on the other, she desires her freedom and independence. On top of this, the level of trust involved in meaningful relationships, particularly with men, demands more of her than she is sometimes willing to give. This constant conflict between desiring others and prioritizing the self recurs throughout the novel, and also informs some of the novel's themes of feminism and sexuality. Desires and motives Jane desires both independence and connection. These competing desires make her difficult to understand as a character. Difficult, but not impossible: if anything, the reader can relate to Jane's resolve to be herself and desire for connection. These two motives may contradict each other, but more specifically, they coexist in a woman who struggles to navigate the social realities of 19th century England. Backstory Much of Jane's backstory has been summarized above, but it's important to understand that, on top of her horrible family, Jane's schooling was also a very lonely experience. She and the other students were often publicly shamed for minor wrongdoings, and they were frequently neglected of food, medicine, and care. At one point, this neglect contributes to the death of Jane's good friend Helen. Relatable traits A major aspect of Jane Eyre's enduring success as a novel is the likability of Jane. She is earnest both in her independence and her desire for intimacy. When she doesn't receive the care she seeks and deserves, her adverse reactions, though intense, feel familiar to readers of all stripes. Flat Character lacks the depth, complexity, and nuance typically reserved for protagonists and antagonists. That's not to say the character lacks depth entirely, only that their depth is not crucial to the story. Flat characters fulfill a specific role, often an archetype, for the purpose of advancing the plot. Flat characters populate both literary and genre fiction, but they are often (not always) a key characteristic of genre fiction protagonists. Sherlock Holmes, for example, is a decisively intelligent character, but his interior life and personal emotions are irrelevant to solving the story's mystery, so the reader simply has access to his speech patterns, logical mind, and problem-solving provess. What are the traits of flat characters? These include: Understandable: Nuances, contradictions, and complexities aren't necessary for these characters. Predictable: If you drop a flat character in the middle of any scene, you can predict what kind of response they will have. Easy to summarize: You can explain a flat character in the middle of any scene, you can predict what kind of response they will have. Sam Spade from The Maltese Falcon: Wry, jaded, and driven, Sam Spade is San Francisco's finest and grittiest private investigator. Plot driven: The decisions drive the plot, it is the plot which decides the actions of flat characters. Built on tropes and archetypes: Often, these sorts of characters and archetypes. For example, a flat engineer might be dry, awkward, and focused on work; a flat prom queen might be dry, awkward, and focused on work; a flat engineer might be dry, awkward, awkward, awkward, awkward, awkward, awkward, awkward, awkward, awkward, literary fiction, these characters are usually secondary or tertiary, but still important to advancing the story's plot. Flat Character Examples: Hercule Poirot, a recurring character in Agatha Christie's mystery novels Hercule Poirot is Agatha Christie's myste most renowned protagonist. In novels like Murder on the Orient Express and The ABC Murders, Poirot's deft understanding of human psychology paves the way for his tricky, exciting detective work. Additionally, his quirks of speech and distinct mustache have made him an icon for both literature and murder mystery TV. Understandable Poirot is an easy character to understand because his goal is always to dissect human behavior and solve mysterious crimes. Predictable After you've read a few of Agatha Christie's novels, you understand that Poirot is economical with information and great at setting up psychological traps. Plot driven Everything Poirot does is to catch the murderer. The pursuit of justice drives Poirot's actions and investigations. Built on tropes and archetypes Poirot is a distinctly original character, but his intelligence, wit, psychological provess, and quirky detective behavior are all entertaining conventions of the murder mystery genre. Examples: Madame Defarge in A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens Madame Defarge is the primary antagonist of A Tale of Two Cities. She is cold, ruthless, and cynical. Defarge tirelessly works to bring down the royalty and the bourgeoisie during the French Revolution, having been hurt repeatedly by French aristocrats. She symbolizes both the Reign of Terror and the Fates, as she uses her knitting to encode messages about whom the revolutionaries will kill next. Understandable Defarge's motivations and behavior are easy to comprehend. Her own family has been killed by the Evremondes, an aristocratic family, and her sister was sexually assaulted as well. It's possible to argue that Defarge's motives are complex, given that her tireless need for revenge extends to the innocent family members of the Evremondes. Nonetheless, revenge drives Madame Defarge's nature as a tireless, ruthless, driven revolutionary makes her a predictable Defarge's nature as a tireless. one of the novel's protagonists, despite his innocence; his association with the Evremonde family is reason enough to kill him. Plot driven Madame Defarge's role as the novel to a close. Because she imprisons and tries to execute Charles Darnay, a different and similar looking character, Sydney Carton, decides to trade places with Charles and receive his execution. This allows the novel, and specifically Carton, to muse on questions of death, progeny, and hope for mankind. Built on tropes and archetypes Because A Tale of Two Cities was written before the modern day conventions of genre fiction, it would be difficult to argue she's filled with tropes. Nonetheless, her tireless rage and search for revenge is typical of many antagonists in both literary and genre fiction. Flat Character Examples: Nick Bottom is a comic relief character in A Midsummer Night's Dream. A trickster fairy, Puck, accidentally turns Nick's head into a donkey's. Separate from this, Oberon, the jealous Fairy King, casts a spell on the Fairy Queen Titania to make her fall in love with the first thing she sees, and also to awaken when something vile comes near. Titania's romance with the donkey-faced Bottom, as well as Bottom's continuous bumblings and verbal errors throughout the play, drive much of the play's comedy. Understandable Like other comic relief characters, the audience understands that Bottom's role is to screw things up and, quite literally, make an ass of himself. Predictable Comic relief characters in Shakespeare's plays are distinct for their situational irony, their sexual jokes, and their frequent use of puns. Plot driven Bottom appears with nearly every character at some point or another in the play. Despite this, his actions are entirely plot driven, as he must scare away certain characters, miscommunicate to other characters, or act in A Midsummer Night's Dream's play-within-a-play. Built on tropes and archetypes Nick Bottom is a typical comic relief character of Shakespeare's. Shakespearean plays needed to appeal to people of all social strata, so while his plays often involved main characters who explored deep, complex, and literary themes, comic relief characters who explored deep, complex, and literary themes, comic relief characters who explored the opposite, entertaining the audience (and especially the lower class audience) with bawdy humor. Flat Characters vs. Round Character What are the differences between flat characters? A round character is: Fully developed—the reader has access to their thoughts, feelings, complexities, conflicts, internal contradictions, hopes, desires, etc. We know what makes a round character seem like a living human being. The driver of the plot—the story advances because of the decisions that a round character makes. The story takes its shape because of this character's flaws. If they were perfect, they probably wouldn't have an interesting story in the first place. By contrast, a flat character is: Two dimensional—the reader does not need access to a flat character's interiority, complexities, or contradictions. Merely knowing their basic traits, conflicts, and desires is enough to propel the story forward. Plot driven—the decisions made by a flat character serve to advance the plot towards a specific conclusion. For example, they might do something to solve the murder, advance the story's tension, or goad a round character along their own plotline. Flawless—the flat character does not have any flaws which the story must address and resolve. Flat Character vs. Round Character vs. Round Character vs. Round Character vs. round character are summarized in the following Venn Diagram. Relationship to Static and Dynamic character will character will character are summarized in the following Venn Diagram. the story's conflict and plot. Static characters, by contrast, do not change, either because they have no reason to change or because their static nature is an intentional artistic decision. You might assume that round characters are always dynamic, and flat characters are always dynamic, and flat characters are always static. both. You might assume that round characters are always dynamic, and flat characters are always static. While this is often true, there are instances of the opposite for both. A good example of a static round character is Albus Dumbledore from the Harry Potter series. Dumbledore is certainly fleshed out as a character: we have access to his backstory, his complexities, his desires, and his flaws. However, he does not undergo significant change by the end of the series, a good example of a dynamic flat character is Ginny Weasley. Ginny is certainly flat, as we don't often have access to her interiority or complexity, and she primarily exists as Harry's love interest or Ron's sister. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the series, she becomes much more confident and outspoken. However, this change isn't necessarily a reaction to the story's conflict (a key distinction for dynamic characters); Ginny simply grows up. To learn more, check out our article on Static Characters vs. Dynamic Characters, take a look at the following articles: Develop Flat and Round Characters at Writers.com Character development is an essential aspect of all story writing. Whether your stories are plot driven or characters with Writers.com! Our upcoming online writing courses will help you explore your characters' psychologies, complexities, and intricacies. We don't live in two dimensions. But what about characters? Saying they are multi-dimensional or "round" is a compliment frequently paid to characters, but there is often some confusion to what the term "round" really means. This can make it difficult to tell if a fictional figure is round or not, and why it even makes a difference. So, what is a round character? Are they, by definition, better-written? In this post, we define the qualities of a round character, illustrated by multiple examples from literature which demonstrate what makes round characters are lifelike figures with complex, multifaceted personalities. They possess depth and dimension, and often undergo personal development over the course of a story. Round characters are considered an asset to any narrative as they: Make stories more realistic and authentic in their emotion. They have behaviors and personalities we recognize from real life. Generate intrigue via their complexities and surprising actions. We want to know more about them. Are memorable and relatable. We identify and empathize with them, and become invested in the outcome of their story. Readers often refer to "round characters" in describing those that seem recognizably real — like they could exist in our world. These characters feel like real people because their motivations, goals, weaknesses, and personal story lines have been fleshed out in nuanced detail. In other words, there is more to them than what exists on the page. FREE COURSE How to Develop Characters have little complexity or depth of personality. They can be captured by just a few words or by their "type": mad scientist, evil stepmother, animal sidekick. Despite the common assumption, it is important to note that there is nothing inherently "better" about a round character over a flat one — flat characters can be highly effective and entertaining in supporting roles or in plot-driven stories, adding color and assisting the development of the primary characters. But many of the most memorable and relatable figures from fiction are likely to be round characters: these fictional figures seem deeply human, creating life on the page that speaks to our own experiences. The concepts of "round" and "flat" characters were first introduced in E.M. Forster's 1927 book, Aspects of the Novel, where he wrote: The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round. [A round character] has the incalculability of life about it — life within the pages of a book. In other words, a round character is one whose actions are both inevitable and unpredictable. A round character is not necessarily dynamic character is one whose worldview is changed by the end of a story – undergoing a major shift in perspective or personality. While a round character may be dynamic (and many of the most compelling heroes and villians evolve in their values or undergo change), they might also have static personalities and beliefs. "Roundness" refers to the depth and dimension of the character and does not require change. Albus Dumbledore, the Hogwarts headmaster from Harry Potter, is one such character. A man of many secrets and contradictions, he changes very little over the course of the series, and his attitude and worldview remain constant. Albus Dumbledore has a round persona, yet is static and stable as he leads Hogwarts. (Warner Bros.) Characteristics of round characters: a guide for writers In his definition, Forster hits on two essential aspects of the round characters: 1) they behave in a way that is surprising, but 2) they must also be convincing. Rather than being completely predictable or formulaic, they appear human — like people you know in real life. Round characters will often feature: Personalities with multiple facets and depths Internal conflict Flaws and Contradiction Emotional development and discovery Let's look at each of these features in more detail, to see how a writer might apply them to their own characters to round out their personas. Depth of personality While a round character may adhere to elements of stereotypes, they shouldn't be bound by a single one. If your characters and compelling reasons for doing the things they do. Not all characters will appear fully-formed and rounded on their very first page: they may start as a stereotype but show their depth as they progress through the story. The multiple facets to a round character's personality are often revealed to the readers gradually, adding greater nuance and dimension to the portrait. Character's personality are often revealed to the readers gradually, adding greater nuance and dimension to the portrait. at home or embark upon a dangerous path allows him to rise in three dimensions from the page and feel like he might enter into real life. Creating a detailed character, such as: Where are they from? What are their goals for the future? What are they passionate about? What scares them? Round characters have a sense of fullness to their lives, which the stories and imagine everything that occupies and energizes them beyond the bounds of the plot. Top Tip: Download a handy character questionnaire to help you flesh out your characters: FREE RESOURCE Reedsy's Character Questionnaire 40 questions to help you develop memorable characters. Internal and external conflicts, and reveal their values and motivations through the choices they make and the approaches they take to confronting challenges. These conflicts may take several different forms. It might be an epic battle or consuming existential crisis. Or it could be a failed romantic relationship or an internal struggle to confront guilt over past actions. them. Flat characters often face external conflicts, but round characters are further distinguished by the fact that they face both external and internal conflicts. For instance, Batman battles the villainous Joker but also confronts the dark impulses within himself. beliefs, rounding out their psyche. There is often a push and pull between what a character wants and how they wish to be perceived by others which can work as an engine for creating further depth. Top Tip: Use internal conflict to help reveal qualities of round characters, such as: Values: How do they react to conflict? Desires: How do they ultimately want this conflict to be resolved? Fears: What is the worst-case scenario of this conflict? How confident does the character? Batman/Bruce Wayne is often as much at war with himself as he is with Gotham's villains. (DC Comics) Flaws and Contradiction While round characters may have defining strengths and positive traits, they should also have weaknesses and contradictions that prevent them from veering into cliches. They are complex, stimulating readers' interest and imagination as they conflict with others or themselves in believable ways that challenge their values and provoke further introspection and development. This is what Forster meant when he talked about round characters being "surprising" — we can't always guess exactly what they are feeling or how they might act. The idiosyncrasies and contradictions should not exist for contradiction's sake, but be motivated by a desire to reveal something new about the characters. Think of Dexter's Dexter Morgan, a serial killer who murders people, but only those also guilty of evil crimes. The contradiction between the apparent evil of Dexter's murders and his strong moral code, make him a round protagonist. Characters' vulnerabilities and idiosyncrasies remind us that even heroes or villains are still relatable, and realistic — revealing something new about them that feels essential to who they are, not random. Emotional discovery To further add to Forster's element of surprise, round characters can surprise us in their development, evolving from the person we thought we knew and revealing who they truly are. Alongside this continued character development, we often see them have moments of self-discovery and growth. They don't have to undergo world-shattering epiphanies, but often face mental and emotional changes as they pursue their goals or confront their fears, grappling with their weaknesses or seeing their dreams in a new light. Frankenstein's Victor Frankenstein seeing their dreams in a new light. torment him with guilt and terror. We might start off seeing only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the full emotions and thematic soul of their stories, but as their journeys progress, they start to discover their true depths, prompting new revelations for themselves and for readers. Top Tip: Identify your character's moment of realization: what is their moment of revelation or emotional breakthrough? Examples of round characters As we mentioned earlier, many of the favorite protagonists you feel closest to are likely to be round. But how are their complexities revealed? Now that you have a clearer idea of what makes a round character, let's look at some examples to illustrate how multidimensionality is created in different genres. 1. Elizabeth Bennet in Pride and Prejudice Defining characteristic: contradictions Elizabeth Bennet has a defining flaw — her pride — but she contains multitudes. Witty, whip-smart, and able to elevate herself above the snobby gossip of English society, Lizzy is also prone to making hasty judgments — as she does about Mr. Darcy, a wealthy estate owner she finds haughty. Her internal contradictions and eventual ability to recognize her misconceptions make her a round and relatable heroine. Elizabeth Bennet may be quick to judge, but readers' assessment of her as a lovably complicated heroine is spit-on. (Focus Features) 2. Scout Finch in To Kill a Mockingbird Defining characteristic: Self-discovery Scout is a misfit tomboy growing up in the American South. She has been raised by her father to have a strong moral compass, but due to her young age, she is naive to the racism rife in her small-town setting. to have a more nuanced view of good and bad and develop her own ethical consciousness and sense of justice. 3. Jay Gatsby in The Great Gatsby Defining round characteristic: tension between the image he wishes to portray and his reality. sweetheart. He has multiple sides — he is the exorbitantly wealthy Jay Gatsby who has achieved mythological status thanks to his lavish, high-society parties in East Egg. But he is also the vulnerable and hopeful James Gatz who has humble beginnings in rural North Dakota. He faces immense emotional conflict and insecurity behind his millionaire facade, as he desperately tries to assert his status to win back the woman he loves, and this insecurity seeps into every facet of his being, right down to the unique way he speaks. 4. Celie in The Color Purple Creates profound empathy for its protagonist, Celie, giving readers insight into her most private thoughts and moments of emotional revelation. Celie is an uneducated Black woman in the American south who lacks rights and endures horrific abuse. But she remains resilient in spirit, her nuanced and hopeful outlook making her compelling to root for and relate to. Celie is also a dynamic character, undergoing a journey of self-actualization to become reborn as an independent and confident woman who loves herself and the world in all its vibrant color and her resilient spirit soars off the page. (Warner Bros.) 5. Hamlet in Hamlet Defining round characteristic: his internal conflict of indecision. Hamlet is a man who cannot make up his mind. Hamlet's father has been murdered, and he believes his uncle Claudius is responsible, but Hamlet remains indecisive about avenging his father's death. He remains unsure whether his uncle actually did murder his father. unsure when he should kill Claudius in revenge... or whether he should kill him at all. Hamlet undergoes intense psychological conflict and contemplation, which illuminates the depths of his philosophical profile and makes him one of Shakespeare's most challenging roles to play. 6. Holden Caulfield in The Catcher in the Rye Defining round characteristic: his depth of personality, petulant on the outside, and sensitive underneath. Holden, a wandering boarding school reject, has a strong sarcastic voice that makes him a realistic teenager. Yet he is also an unreliable narrator, providing confusing accounts of events and inconsistent judgments on people around him. We learn more about him through his actions and behaviors, which are often surprising and self-destructive, slowly peeling back Holden's layers of defenses as we see how troubled and sensitive he is underneath the persona he has put up. Holden feels like a real person, not simply a "phony," becoming one of the most enduringly relatable protagonists for teenagers and non-teenagers alike. FREE COURSE How to Write Believable Dialogue Master the art of dialogue in 10 five-minute lessons. 7. Severus Snape might initially appear to be a flatly villainous character, tormenting Harry Potter and always looking on with a menacing stare. Yet as the series progresses, he constantly keeps readers guessing about his true nature and allegiances. Ultimately, Snape reveals the heart behind his sarcastic and scathing exterior and the love and loyalty that drives him. 8. The narrator in Invisible Man Defining round characteristic: his internal identity crisis. Living as a Black man amidst racial prejudice in 1930s America, the nameless narrator feels socially invisible, consistently humiliated by powerful white people and denied a presence in white-dominated society. He struggles with how to feel seen while maintaining his Black self, uncertain about getting involved with various racial reform or Black nationalist movements. He undergoes a constant identity crisis, trying to find his place as an individual while considering his commitments to broader political and social causes. Many of the characters that stick with us are round characters that stick with us are round characters. seeing the world through their eyes. The deeper and more complicated your characters, the more realistic and relatable they feel. They become not just text on the page but flesh-and-blood beings — creating life that leaps right from the story and into the minds and memories of your readers.