Character

A <u>character</u> is a person presented in a fictional work, one fitting a type and fulfilling a function.

- <u>Types of characters</u>: A **static character** does not change throughout the work, and the reader's knowledge of that character does not grow, whereas a **dynamic character** undergoes some kind of change because of the action in the plot. A **flat character** embodies one or two qualities, ideas, or traits that can be readily described in a brief summary. They are not psychologically complex characters and therefore are readily accessible to readers. Some flat characters are recognized as **stock characters**; they embody stereotypes such as the "dumb blonde" or the "cruel stepfather." They become types rather than individuals. **Round characters** are more complex than flat or stock characters, and often display the inconsistencies and internal conflicts found in most real people. They are more fully developed, and therefore are harder to summarize.

- <u>Functions of characters</u>: A hero or heroine, often called the **protagonist**, is the central character who engages the reader's interest and empathy. The **antagonist** is the character, force, or collection of forces that stands directly opposed to the protagonist and gives rise to the conflict of the story. A **first-person narrator** may be either a major or minor character. A **foil** is a character who through contrast underscores the distinctive characteristics of another. Usually a minor character serves as a foil for a major character. A **confidant/confidante** is a character who is not integral to the action but who receives the intimate thoughts of the protagonist without the use of an omniscient narrator. A **mentor** is a character who serves as a guide for the protagonist.