

Standards Focus: Conflict

Which would you rather watch:

- ❖ A movie about a tree...just a tree...growing in a field. That’s it!
- ❖ A movie about vicious scoundrels and virtuous citizens in a race to find a long-lost treasure.

If you are like most people, you would probably choose the second movie. Watching a tree grow isn’t very interesting because nothing much is happening. But, watching people who are good and evil compete to find a treasure sounds like it might be an exciting story. That movie would have conflict. Like movies, good stories have **conflict**.

Conflict is the problem or problems that move the story forward, make it exciting and keep you reading. Conflict creates the tension that makes a novel a “page turner” because we want to know how the conflict is **resolved**.

There are two main types of conflict: *internal* and *external*.

- ❖ **Internal** conflict is the problem a character has within himself or herself. An example of internal conflict is a character deciding whether or not to tell the truth.
- ❖ **External** conflict is a problem a character has with someone or something else. An example of external conflict is a character who always fights with his sister.

Part I

Directions: Identify the following scenes as having external or internal conflict. Explain the reasoning for your answer. The first one has been done for you.

The Conflict	Internal?	External?	My Reasoning
Should I do my homework or go play with my friends?	X		<i>I chose internal because the conflict is just between me and my conscience. I don't want to be ashamed of myself for going against my parents' wishes, but I really want to go play.</i>
A man cannot fix the car.			
Sally cannot decide what to wear to the football game.			
Clyde would like a snack before dinner, but he knows it will spoil his appetite.			
Stanley is neat and Fred is sloppy. They share a locker.			

Name _____

Period _____

The Conflict	Internal?	External?	My Reasoning
The Jones family must agree on a place to go for vacation.			
Gloria thinks her school should change the recess policy. She has started a campaign and plans to speak to the principal.			

Part II

Number the Stars contains both internal and external conflict. Answer the following questions about conflict in the novel. You may want to work with a partner.

1. Review the end of Chapter Three. What *internal* conflict is Annemarie experiencing?

2. Think back over the chapters you've already read. Name two *external* conflicts that Annemarie and the Danes experience.

Part III

The conclusion or solution of a conflict is called **conflict resolution**. Sometimes, the conflict lasts for nearly the entire novel; other times, the conflict ends quickly. Sometimes a new conflict will begin as soon as another is resolved. Answer the following questions about conflict resolution.

3. When Mama buys Kirsti the fish shoes, how do Kirsti's actions create conflict?

4. How is the conflict resolved? _____
