

The Outsiders Handout 2

Characters

Primary Characters:

The main characters, without which, there is no big story.

Secondary Characters:

Reoccurring characters who are less important than the main characters, as the story is not about them, but they can have their own sub-plot and develop as individuals. They are more complex than tertiary characters, and are needed to help the storyline and the primary characters move forward and take shape.

Tertiary Characters:

They appear in perhaps one or two scenes, often generic characters, and have no individual personal development within the story. They are there for a specific purpose and are then gone, or they can just make up numbers in the background.

Individual characters arcs

Static: they don't change throughout a story. As a character they have not developed in any way. Sometime it's because that is part of their character, e.g. Scarlet O'Hara in *Gone With The Wind*, or Jeeves and Wooster, sometimes it's because they have another role that they have to perform throughout the whole story, e.g. the light comic relief, the archetypal parent, or as a foil.

Dynamic: they change and develop throughout a story, be it in a positive or negative way. Most of the main characters will develop in some way, as otherwise it would lead to a lot of dull stories, but not always.

Individual characters

Flat: 2D characters that have one or two major character traits, and not much else. They are there for a specific role, and are often very black and white (good or bad), e.g. the henchmen in *101 Dalmatians*.

Rounded: 3D characters. Far more interesting characters that display a mixture of good and bad traits. More like real people, with the same level of complexity, emotions and difficult navigating relationships.

Stock: The simplified stereotypes, who are always both flat and static. Their behaviour is predictable and so is their outcome in the story. They are there as a cultural short-cut, e.g. the grumpy teenager, or the tyrant mother, or they can fulfil a standard job description, e.g. the doctor. Minimal time is spent on them by the author, as we all already know those characters inside out. E.g. Shakespeares fools.

Symbolic: Symbolism (using something to represent a concept - e.g. the rainbow after the storm) but with characters. A character who represents a much larger concept than themselves, e.g. Aslan in *The Narnia Chronicles*.

Character role

The Narrator - The one who is telling the story.

It may be a character within the story (written in the first person - I), but can also be a someone outside of the story (written in the third person - they).

Sometimes they know everything that is going on within the story - an omniscient narrator, and sometimes they know less than you the reader - a naive narrator (often used when a child is the narrator).

They determine which point of view the reader sees the story from.

The protagonist - The hero or anti-hero (the one we all love and relate to, but who isn't exactly a moral or ethical character, e.g. Artemis Fowl, Hans Solo).

They have strong backstories, personal motivation within the story, and character development throughout the course of the story.

In many cases the narrator is the protagonist, but even when they are not, the story is still often told from their point of view.

The antagonist - The villain of the story. They may, or may not be a developed character, and are sometimes not a character at all, but a situation or an emotion, such as fear.

Deuteragonists - The second person (or people) in importance to the protagonist.

They can also be the confidant, the villain, the love interest or anything else, but they are right behind the protagonist in importance.

The whole point of having multiple focuses within a story is to highlight the complexities within relationships and between characters, but not all stories have deuteragonists, they just have one lead character and a series of lesser characters, e.g. Call of the Wild.

The confidante - This best friend or 'sidekick' of the protagonist, e.g. Samwise Gamgee, or Batman's Robin.

They can often have whole storylines of their own, and be as fully rounded a character as the protagonist, but sometimes they are rather empty and don't really progress as a character, e.g. Ron in Harry Potter.

The love interest - The love interest is the protagonist's object of desire. Again, doesn't have to be a person, and doesn't have to be a romantic love, e.g. Kes in Kestrel for a Knave. This role is greater in romantic stories, such as Twilight, and less in say action or crime fiction, e.g. Sherlock Holmes.

The Mentor - They direct, guide and give helpful words of advice to the protagonist and sometimes their companions, to help them on their way. Often depicted as an older person, such as Dumbledore or Gandalf. Not all stories have mentors, they're not always 'good' characters and they're not always people. Some develop as characters, and others are just there to help the protagonist develop.

The foil - A character that is primarily there to highlight the protagonist's qualities, by being the exact opposite, e.g. Dudley to Harry Potter, Malfoy to Harry, Crabbe and Goyle to Malfoy

List of characters in The Outsiders

Greasers

Ponyboy Michael Curtis: 14. His parents have been killed in a car accident, and he lives with his two brothers.

Soda(pop) Patrick Curtis: 16, going on 17. Middle Curtis brother. High school dropout and works at the local gas station. He is "movie-star" handsome and easy going.

Darrel (Darry) Shayne Curtis: 20. Oldest Curtis brother and legal guardian of Ponyboy and Soda. He works too hard and too long, and would be in college, if life had turned out different.

Dallas (Dally) Winston: 17. Originally from New York City. Tougher than the others already been to prison.

Johnny Cade: 16. The "gang's pet." Physically small, abused by parents, 'jumped' by Socs and Dally is his hero.

Steve Randle: 17. Soda's best friend and works at the gas station with Soda.

Keith (Two-Bit) Mathews: 18. Despite being one of the oldest he is still a junior in high school. The comedian of the gang.

Tim Shepard: Leader of another Greaser gang, but also a hood, so more dangerous.

Curly Shepard: Tim's younger brother who was in prison.

The Brumly Gang: more hoods.

Socials

Sherri (Cherry) Valance: 16. A cheerleader and girlfriend of Bob. Cherry and Ponyboy meet at the drive-in and become friends. Cherry is attracted to Dally.

Marcia: 16. Cherry's friend.

Bob Sheldon: The Soc who originally attacked Johnny, attacks both Johnny and Pony in the park, and is killed by Johnny Cade when some Socs try to drown Ponyboy.

Randy Adderson: The owner of the blue Mustang that haunts Johnny. He is Bob's best friend and talks to Ponyboy before the rumble.

David: The guy who tried to drown Ponyboy

Paul Holden: Used to be a friend of Darry's at school, but fights Darry in the rumble.

Other characters

Buck Merrill: Mid-20s. Dally's friend and rodeo partner. He lends Dally his T-bird.

Johnny's parents: Fight and drink a lot. Physically abuse and neglect Johnny.

Jerry Wood: School teacher with the children in the church, and goes with Ponyboy in the ambulance.

Mrs O'Briant: another teacher with the children in the church

Mr Syme: Ponyboy's English teacher

The Judge, policeman, doctor and nurses

Characters we never meet

Curtis boy's parents: Died in a car crash.

Evie: Steve's girlfriend we never meet

Sandy: Sodapop's girlfriend

Sylvia: Dally's girlfriend who cheated on him when he was in prison, again we never meet them.