**Getting Started**
First, since we’re becoming friends now, I can let you in on a little secret. There is a belief out there that every story has already been told. Say what? Yup.

So, you might ask, “then why are we ‘writing our story?’” Well, because there remains an infinite number of new ways to tell them – yours, mine, anyone’s. I love the word infinite. Don’t you. Anyway, that’s half the fun of being a writer. It’s like you’re revealing a secret that only you see with your imagination. You can tell the stories that really only you can tell.

The way we use all the elements of basic storytelling is what makes our stories unique.

**Knowing basic storytelling elements provides a master key to unlocking just how.**

**Character/Characterization**
Characters are the people, ancestors, creatures, vampires, nymphs, gargoyles, or whatever personified entity that your story happens to be about, and they’re essential because they drive the story; they bring the story alive through the plot.

3 is a magic number
There are three main types of characters – protagonists, antagonists, and minor (secondary) characters.

Sing it. “Protagonists, antagonists, minors, oh my!” Ok, jk…

**Protagonists**
The protagonist is the character who the story is focused around. Often times the protagonist is thought of as the s/heroe of the story.

Like, in “The Hate You Give” Starr is the protagonist.

The protagonist usually has something they want to accomplish and/or to get and something they need to learn to achieve that want.

**Wants**
The protagonist’s want can be identified as something specific, some “thing” s/he/it wants to achieve or get. Think of the “want” as a particular goal like a college degree, or a well-written novel, or a trip to Africa, or a team that wants to win the cheerleading competition and the protagonists comes up with the cheer that allows her team to win.

**Needs**
Needs have to do with a psychological requirement for the character to develop. Something is needed to make the character “whole”… For instance a character that needs to ask for forgiveness for something she’s done.

Here’s the thing, just like in “real life,” most of the time the character has to take care of his/her need in
order to achieve goal/want.

**The protagonist’s “want and need” are central to every other aspect of the story.**

**Character needs - Advanced**
To learn more about how to develop a character’s needs – think of their weakness(es)

Here’s a great video by a youtuber named [Nick](#) on the topic. Thank you, Nick!

**Antagonists**
The antagonists are the bad guys. They can be thought of as the character that presents the greatest
callenge(s) for the protagonist.

Somewhere you might have heard it said that antagonism is about...
...the conflict in stories that shows up as:

- Wo/man against wo/man
- Wo/man against nature
- Wo/man against society
- Wo/man against creature
- Wo/man against himself

The antagonist often wants to achieve or get the same thing as the protagonist but for the different
reasons. Either way, s/he/it presents the greatest obstacles to the protagonist’s efforts to overcome
need and succeed in achieving the want/goal.

**Minor/secondary characters**
Minor or secondary characters exist in the world of the story, and they are sometimes wrapped into the
main plot and/or the subplots.

**“I get it” exercise.**
Name some of your favorite characters. Identify if each one is a protagonist, antagonist, or secondary
character.

See you in the next lesson.

Happy Writing!