

Act Two

Types of Conflict

Conflict is a literary term indicating the struggle between two or more opposing forces. If conflict is written well, it can create a feeling of suspense, tension, and intrigue. There are several types of conflict:

- 1) *man versus man*—struggle between two or more characters
- 2) *man versus himself*—struggle between a character and his conscience, morals, or physical limitations
- 3) *man versus nature*—struggle between a character and a force of nature such as weather or the environment
- 4) *man versus society*—struggle between a character and the rules, beliefs, or pressures of a society or community
- 5) *man versus fate*—struggle between a character and the “forces” of the universe, such as God, destiny, or chance happenings

In addition, conflict can be divided into external or internal conflicts. **External conflicts** are man versus man, man versus nature, man versus society, and man versus fate. The **internal conflict** is man versus himself.

Directions: For each of the following quotes from Acts One and Two, decide who or what is involved in the conflict, and which type of conflict is being represented (see 1-5 above). Then decide whether his conflict is a main or subordinate conflict in the play. An example has been done for you.

Ex. Parris urges Abigail to tell him the truth about what happens in the woods: “It must come out—my enemies will bring it out. Let me know what you done there. Abigail, do you understand that I have many enemies?”

Opposing forces: Paris versus certain members of the community

Type of conflict: man versus society

Main or subordinate?: subordinate

1. Abigail defends her name in the town: “She hates me, uncle, she must, for I would not be her slave. It’s a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman, and I will not work for such a woman!”	
Opposing forces:	
Type of conflict:	
Main or subordinate?:	
2. John Proctor rejects Abigail: “Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I’ll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind. We never touched, Abby.”	
Opposing forces:	
Type of conflict:	
Main or subordinate?:	
3. Giles comments on recent events: “Wherefore is everybody suing everybody else? Think on it now, it’s a deep thing, and dark as a pit. I have been six time in court this year—”	
Opposing forces:	
Type of conflict:	
Main or subordinate?:	

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4. Parris and Putnam threaten to whip and hang Tituba, and she begs for her life: "No, no, don't hang Tituba! I tell him I don't desire to work for him, sir."

Opposing forces:

Type of conflict:

Main or subordinate?:

5. Proctor attempts to convince his wife: "Woman. I'll not have your suspicion any more...I'll not have it!"

Opposing forces:

Type of conflict:

Main or subordinate?:

6. Proctor is plagued with guilt: "But I wilted, and, like a Christian, I confessed. Confessed! Some dream I had must have mistaken you for God that day. But you're not, you're not, and let you remember it! Let you look sometimes for the goodness in me, and judge me not."

Opposing forces:

Type of conflict:

Main or subordinate?:

7. Hale questions Proctor: "I thought, sir, to put some questions as to the Christian character of this house, if you'll permit me."

Opposing forces:

Type of conflict:

Main or subordinate?:

8. Elizabeth learns of Abigail's charge: "Abigail were stabbed tonight; a needle were found stuck into her belly—"

Opposing forces:

Type of conflict:

Main or subordinate?: