

Review:

Conflict in a story is a problem to be overcome. It can be **internal** (a character is attempting to overcome something inside of him or herself-- usually a physical or personality trait), or it can be **external** (a character is attempting to overcome something outside of him or herself-- society, nature, or another character). Conflict is not always resolved (**resolution**, or outcome) successfully, and there can (and usually is) more than one conflict in a work of fiction.

Another way to think about conflict and resolution is the Somebody-Wanted-But-So strategy of separating out the plot elements of a story. For example, using Charles Perrault’s version of the Red Riding Hood story, you would come up with something like this:

Somebody	Wanted	But	So
Red Riding Hood	to deliver food to her grandmother in the woods	a wolf tricks her into taking a longer path	the wolf gets there first and eats Little Red Riding; she does not achieve her goal
or:			
a wolf	a “meal” (a sexual metaphor)	he cannot do it openly without drawing attention to himself	he tricks a little girl into isolating herself so she is helpless, eating her up; he does achieve his goal

A larger **theme** can be inferred from the “So” portion of the chart. If the resolution is desirable (from the point of view of the text-- not the character), then the author is asking the reader to approve of the actions or attitudes that made the resolution possible. If the resolution is undesirable (again, from the point of view of the text-- not the character), then the author is warning the reader about the actions or attitudes that made the resolution possible. For our example above:

Desirability of Outcome: negative

What Made the Resolution Possible: trusting the wolf

Theme: Do not trust strangers.

1. The two variations of the Red Riding Hood Story (“Little Red Cap” and “The Story of Grandmother”) have many of the same details, but different emphases, different resolutions, and different messages. Complete a Somebody-Wanted-But-So chart for EACH of the two stories along with the three entries for theme (Desirability of Outcome, etc.). Do this from the point of view of the **protagonist** (the main character), not the **antagonist** (the one who is in conflict with the main character). Make sure you are labelling which story goes with each.
2. Though “Little Red Cap” and “The Story of Grandmother” are clearly related to one another, they differ greatly in terms of the way they characterize the protagonists. **Characterization** is the method a writer uses to reveal the personality of a character in a literary work. Thus, for example, it would not be significant to the characterization of the protagonist that one wears a red outfit and one does not. While that *might* suggest something about their personalities, what it would suggest has little bearing on the way the story develops or resolves.

Little Red Riding Hood variants

Choose contrasting personality characteristics of the two protagonists that are revealed by their actions in the two stories. This can be some obvious way that they differ or it can be a question of degrees (for example, Goldilocks in “The Three Bears” is less trustworthy than George Washington when he was confronted with the accusation of cutting down a cherry tree).

Once you have done this, write a paragraph that defends your argument with text evidence. At this point, the evidence can either be paraphrase (summary) or quotation, but very soon “evidence from the text” will *always* mean quotation (unless otherwise instructed). End the paragraph with some concluding statement that establishes the “so what?” of your observation.

Here is an example comparing Little Miss Muffet to the King of Hearts from the previous activity:

In the two rhymes, the King of Hearts is much more decisive and capable of solving conflicts. For example, when the King of Hearts “called for the tarts,” only to discover their theft by the Knave, he takes charge of the situation. Bringing the Knave to justice, he arranges for a beating until the stolen pastries are returned. In this way he resolves the conflict to his satisfaction and gets his way. By contrast, Little Miss Muffet is paralyzed with fear when confronted with the unknown. As the spider “[sits] down beside her,” rather than attempt to negotiate the space or establish her priority to the tuffet, Little Miss Muffet simply flees. In other words, when given the chance to solve the conflict in a way favorable to her, her passivity ensures that this does not happen, forcing her to make other eating arrangements. Read side-by-side, then, the two rhymes suggest that when you do not take control of your life, bad things follow.

→ This is my topic sentence. It is what I am going to prove.

→ Evidence One: It is introduced with a transition, and it is clear from which rhyme it comes.

→ Explanation One: It explains how the evidence proves I am right.

→ A transition statement (“by contrast”) introduces the set-up to Evidence Two.

→ Explanation Two: It explains how the second piece of evidence proves I am right.

→ Short concluding statement: This establishes the significance of my argument.

The pattern in double evidence paragraphs is always CLAIM → EVIDENCE → EXPLANATION → EVIDENCE → EXPLANATION, **not** CLAIM → EVIDENCE → EVIDENCE → EXPLANATION → EXPLANATION. When you incorporate evidence, some sort of analysis or explanation should immediately follow-- **not** grouped together at the end. This just ends up being confusing to the reader.