

Name:

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To do:

1. Please make a copy of this “View only” document and title it → Class Name-Last Name-Archetypes.
2. Click “Add-ons” at the top of your Google Document and click “Get add-ons.” Search for “Texthelp Study Skills.”
3. As you read this text on archetypes, actively annotate. Highlight key words and phrases with the Texthelp Study Skills and leave written annotations by clicking “Insert”>”Comment” (keyboard shortcut: option+command+m).
4. As you read the different archetypes, add a comment identifying an example for each using classic stories, books or movies.
5. When you are done, click “Share” and select “Anyone with the link” can edit and complete the this [form](#).

Definition of Archetype

In literature, an archetype is a typical character, an action or a situation that seems to represent such universal patterns of human nature.

An archetype, also known as universal symbol, may be a character, a theme, a symbol or even a setting. Many literary critics are of the opinion that archetypes, which have a common and recurring representation in a particular human culture or entire human race, shape the structure and function of a literary work.

Carl Jung, Swiss psychologist, argued that the root of an archetype is in the “collective unconscious” of mankind. The phrase “collective unconscious” refers to experiences shared by a race or culture. This includes love, religion, death, birth, life, struggle, survival etc.

These experiences exist in the subconscious of every individual and are recreated in literary works or in other forms of art.

Examples of Archetypes in Literature

Below is the analysis of common archetypes that exist in literature.

Archetypes in Characters

Example #1

The Hero: He or she is a character who predominantly exhibits goodness and struggles against evil in order to restore harmony and justice to society e.g. *Beowulf*, *Hercules*, *D'artagnan* from "The Three Musketeers" etc.

Example #2

The Mother Figure: Such a character may be represented as Fairy Mother who guides and directs a child, Mother Earth who contacts people and offers spiritual and emotional nourishment, and Stepmother who treats their stepchildren roughly.

Some examples are:

In Literature: *Lucy* and *Madame Defarge* from Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities", *Disely* from Faulkner's "The sound and The Fury", *Gladriel* from "Lord of the Rings", *Glinda* from the "Wizard of Oz" etc.

In Fairy Tales: Characters such as the stepmother in "Cinderella", *fairy godmothers*, *Mother Goose*, *Little Red Riding Hood* etc.

In Mythology: The mythological figures of *Persephone*, *Demeter*, *Hecate*, *Gorgon*, *Medusa*.

Example #3

The Innocent Youth: He or she is inexperienced with many weaknesses and seeks safety with others but others like him/her because of the trust he or she shows in other people.

Usually, the experience of coming of age comes in the later parts of the narratives such as *Pip* in Dickens' "Great Expectation", *Nicholas* in Dickens' "Nicholas Nickelby", *Joseph* from Fielding's "Joseph Andrews" etc.

Example #4

The Mentor: His or her task is to protect the main character. It is through the wise advice and training of a mentor that the main character achieves success in the world e.g. *Gandalf* in "The Lords of Rings", *Parson Adams* in Fielding's "Joseph Andrews", and *Senex* in L'Engle's "A Wind in the Door" etc.

Example #5

Doppelganger: It is a duplicate or shadow of a character that represents the evil side of his personality. Examples are in popular literary works such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Poe's *William Wilson*, Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* etc.

Example #6

The Scapegoat: A character that takes the blame of everything bad that happens e.g. *Snowball* in Orwell's "Animal Farm" etc.

Example #7

The Villain: A character whose main function is to go to any extent to oppose the hero or whom the hero must annihilate in order to bring justice e.g. *Shere Khan* from Kipling's "The Jungle Book" stories, *Long John Silver* from Stevenson's "Treasure Island" etc

Archetypes in Situations

Example #8

The Journey: The main character takes a journey that may be physical or emotional to understand his or her personality and the nature of the world. For example, Dante's "The Divine Comedy", Fielding's "Joseph Andrews", Swift's "Gulliver's Travel" etc.

Example #9

The Initiation: The main character undergoes experiences that lead him towards maturity. We find such archetypes in novels like Fielding's "History of Tom Jones, a Foundling", Sterne's "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman", Voltaire's "Candide" etc.

Example #10

Good Versus Evil: It represents the clash of forces that represent goodness with those that represent evil. Examples of this archetype are in famous literary works like Shakespeare's "King Lear", Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" etc.

Example #11

The Fall: The main character falls from grace in consequence of his or her own action e.g. *Oedipus* from Sophocles "Oedipus Rex", *Lear* from Shakespeare's "King Lear" etc.

Function of Archetype

The use of archetypal characters and situations gives a literary work a universal acceptance, as readers identify the characters and situations in their social and cultural context. By using common archetype, the writers attempt to impart realism to their works, as the situations and characters are drawn from the experiences of the world.

"Archetypes." *Literary Devices*. N.P 2014. Web. 3 April 2013.

<http://literarydevices.net/archetype>