

Anti-Hero

Definition of Anti-Hero

Anti-hero is a literary device used by writers for a prominent [character](#) in a play or book that has characteristics opposite to that of a conventional hero. The [protagonist](#) is generally admired for his bravery, strength, charm, or ingenuity, while an anti-hero is typically clumsy, unsolicited, unskilled, and has both good and bad qualities.

The origin of this literary device is marked in the 18th century, but there have been literary figures who believe that the concept of an anti-hero existed well before that. Recently, the usage of anti-hero in television and books has increased and became bolder than ever. Nowadays, there are thousands of shows, books, and movies that portray such characters, who are widely admired by audiences.

Common Anti-Hero Examples

The ship has sailed to the far off sh
She ate seven sandwiches on a sunny Sunday last year.
Shelley sells shells by the seash

Examples of Anti-Hero

The majority of television shows these days portray dark characters. The most celebrated TV shows have anti-heroes who seem to possess both positive and negative traits. Many have successfully explored and impressively depicted the darkest aspects of a human life, fantasies and psyches. Particular characters from these shows are discussed below:

Example #1: *Dexter* (By Jeff Lindsay)

Dexter Morgan – the primary character of the celebrated TV series *Dexter* – is one of the most celebrated anti-heroes of recent times. He is a blood spatter analyst for the Miami Police Department. He is a kind and loving father, friend, and husband who has an anti-social personality that makes him murder criminals.

The idea of killing only the guilty people does not seem such a bad thing to do at first. Rather, to some extent, it sounds rational but it is not. Dexter did not become a serial killer to rid society of crime. He did so because he took pleasure in it, while the social cleansing part came in as a spinoff. The show depicts that he is slowly moving towards redemption, and that is what keeps the [audience](#) glued. This is a good case of a modern anti-hero.

Example #2: *Lord of the Rings* (By J. R. R. Tolkien)

There is a wide array of opinions on whether or not Tolkien's character Gollum should be considered an anti-hero. He does not really have any good or useful characteristics, but his character is a perfect example of the struggle that we go through in our daily lives when choosing between good and evil.

Gollum is portrayed as a swamp creature who warns those who want the ring. The good side of him that occasionally surfaces makes him a loyal servant. The dark side of him that is infected by the greed to have the ring makes him do evil things, which eventually leads to his death. Thus, Gollum can justly be called an anti-hero of the novel.

Function of Anti-Hero

Anti-hero can serve a great purpose if used skillfully. An anti-hero brings the spice and flavor to a script that an ordinary hero-villain format cannot. The more secular approach to the idea of using anti-hero shows that it has much more potential as compared to the conventional [style](#). It can be used to represent many things at the same time, such as social flaws, human frailties, and political culture.

An anti-hero is usually given the most prominent role after the protagonist, and is represented as an amalgamation of both good and evil. Instead of having two different people to represent two extremes, an anti-

hero combines both into one person, and thus shows the real nature of humanity.

This is why people associate themselves with some stories better than others. Gulliver of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and Jean Valjean of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* are two such characters. They have been portrayed to have flaws, but still they held fast to their natures. These two characters can exemplify anyone who has suffered all through their lives, but they are not the kind of characters one can look up to.

Moreover, in modern society when we are presented with a character that is overly righteous and upright, we find it too good to be true. The social turmoil that the entire world as a [community](#) has been facing recently has disposed us to be skeptical of almost everything. The greatness that a conventional [antagonist](#) shows is something we do not witness in society, which is why we find it far from reality. Suffering and sorrow are a part of human life. So, we relate better to a character that has suffered through life, and who has both good and bad sides, than a character that is only seen doing good.