

Round Character

Definition of Round Character

A round [character](#) in a novel, play, or story is a complex personality. Like real people, they have depth in feelings and passions. For instance, in the movie “Shrek,” the main character says “*Ogres are like onions*,” which means that, what appears to them is not the only truth. Rather, there is something more inside them. Similarly, a round character has many layers of personality. Writers define a round character fully, both physically and mentally. It is the character with whom the [audience](#) can sympathize, associate with, or relate to, as he seems a character they might have seen in their real lives.

Characteristics of a Round Character

Round characters are major characters in a story, who encounter contradictory situations, and undergo transformation during this phase. Therefore, these characters do not remain the same throughout the [narrative](#), making their traits difficult to identify from beginning until the end.

These characters are more realistic, their personalities somewhat inconsistent.

They are fully developed and show complex traits, like real people.

Round characters are also known as “main characters,” or “major characters,” because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.

Major characters must be round characters to be believable.

Examples of Round Characters in Literature

Example #1: Winston Smith, *1984* (By George Orwell)

George Orwell named his novel’s hero Winston Smith, after a great English leader, Winston Churchill. Smith is thirty-nine years old, serves his whole

life for the Ministry of Truth, and rewrites history. Then he goes against the rules of the Party and falls in love with Julia, which is a rebellious act written in his diary. There is no past and no future for Smith. He is a round character whose mind is inconstant, while he undergoes his character development during the course of the story.

Smith is the main character who knows the danger he will encounter. For instance, he knows from the very beginning that the members of Party will find his diary. They will use the things he has written in it against him. He also knows that the Police will reveal his illegal affair with Julia. Therefore, he does not stay consistent and is a round character.

Example #2: Elizabeth Bennet, *Pride and Prejudice* (by Jane Austen)

Elizabeth Bennet is another good example of a round character. She is the main character of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, who does not remain the same innocent girl whom readers meet in the first part of the story. Elizabeth develops into a new woman, with different choices and behaviors that have an impact on the people around her. In the beginning, Elizabeth is prejudiced, which is her major flaw, though later she transforms and changes her opinions. In fact, slowly and gradually Elizabeth evolves to understand her true feelings – showing a great example of a round character.

Example #3: Hamlet, *Hamlet* (by William Shakespeare)

Yet another great example of a round character is Hamlet. He is a complex, enigmatic, and mysterious character that is knowledgeable, philosophical, intelligent, and thoughtful by nature. Hamlet makes hasty decisions, yet he delays his revenge. His contemplative nature also becomes his [tragic flaw](#), and his lack of timely action becomes the cause of his [tragedy](#). Hamlet's personality is contradictory, while he also encounters many contradictory situations.

Example #4: Gatsby, *The Great Gatsby* (by Scott Fitzgerald)

In his novel, *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald has introduced a complex and round character in Gatsby. Gatsby is a [tragic hero](#) with a fatal flaw – that of obsession over his beloved Daisy. He is a man of great mystery, because no one knows his whereabouts, or how he becomes rich. Readers learn about his different sides and different traits. He appears to them as scared, mysterious, friendly, angry, happy, disappointed, and frustrated man throughout the novel. Through Nick's narration, readers get an insight into his human mind, and all his emotions and whims.

Function of Round Character

In play writing and [fiction](#) writing, authors develop round characters to make their stories more believable and effective. These characters bring surprise to the readers' expectations by undergoing a significant metamorphosis at the end of a narrative – as compared to what they were in the initial phases. Hence, due to this development, the audience can relate their own lives to this transformed character. By the end, after developing new traits, a round character also demonstrates new facets of human behavior.