

Character Archetypes

- Various character types appear throughout literature. In fantasy, mythology and fairy tales, these are easy to spot. In more realistic fiction, the reader has to infer that a character fits a certain type.
- A character may be both an archetype and a round character; he or she may perform the role of an archetype throughout or just at one point of the story.

Female Archetypes

- **Beautiful enchantress**: a woman who has “power” over men (see femme fatale)
- **Crone/witch/hag**: old, wise, infertile, life-cycles (especially death, literal or figurative)
- **Damsel in distress**: vulnerable woman needing help, often used as a trap for the hero
- **Earth Mother**: fertility, birth, nurturing
- **Femme fatale**: woman who causes great disaster, often the destruction of men

More Female Archetypes

- Lady Luck: female personification of luck or fortune; sometimes lady luck likes you, but she's fickle
- Lady of the Hearth: associated with the home, nurturing and hospitality (the good hostess)
- Sovereign queen: most powerful woman
- Spear maiden: a warrior woman, or a determined, focused woman, a "fighter"
- Spring maiden: woman associated with new life, spring, and youth
- Wild Woman: a woman who lives outside society and in union with nature, often associated with creativity, instinct and feeling (as opposed to intellect or reason)

Exclusively Male Archetypes

- King: the top male, often either benevolent or cruel, may not take kindly to being advised; strongly associated with concepts of right and wrong, in law or morality
- Knight/ Warrior: chivalric, loyal, gets the job done, honorable, protects the princess
- Mentor/wise old man: helps the hero with advice and instruction; often the hero loses his help partway through the story

Gender Neutral (may be listed as male, but could just as easily be female)

- **Blind seer**: physically blind (or blind to what's going on around him/her) but can "see" the truth or the future
- **Christ-figure**: self-sacrificing, good with kids, may perform "miracles"
- **Everyman**: ordinary guy who represents every "man"
- **Gentle Giant**: monster/monstrous-looking human but with a kind heart, often not smart
- **Guide**: usually a spiritual guide (See crone & wise old man)
- **Healer**: provides physical, mental and/or spiritual healing for another character; usually there is more to it than mere medicine (often the healer is a wounded healer, able to cure others but not himself)
- **Naïve young man from the country**: usually leaves the country and is exposed to more complicated, dangerous world
- **Respected arbiter**: typically a woman who acts as a judge or peace-maker

More Gender Neutral

- **Shadow**: represents negative attributes the reader or hero represses or would like to eliminate in themselves. The shadow can appear as a separate character, an antagonist, usually, and is a worthy opponent of the hero. Not necessarily a villain.
- **Shapeshifter**: his/her alliances and personality change often, keeping the hero and reader guessing; often a romantic interest for the protagonist
- **Sidekick**: loyal and supportive, often bound to the hero and often weaker or lesser than hero
- **Threshold guardian/ Gatekeeper**: tests the hero before letting him or her “through”
- **Trickster**: works for either hero or villain; often humorous and lightens the mood; puts wit against the powerful or strong (and often wins)
- **Wise fool**: on the surface seems foolish or discreditable, but speaks or reveals the truth or wisdom