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# ROUND & FLAT CHARACTERS



Think about round and flat characterization like a painting. If you are an artist, you must first decide how much detail to put into your painting. Do you want many lines and shapes, colors, and textures? Or do you want just an outline and black and white colors?



Likewise, authors must make a decision as to how much detail to include about each character. Will they give lots and lots of detail about a character? What the character looks like? Emotions they go through? Background on the character? The character's relationships and occupation? The character's hobby? Or will they create a character that they don't offer much information about?

**ROUND** Characters that are described with many details are well- rounded characters. We know a good amount about them as the author has given us a lot of information. These characters are described as round. Main characters in stories are almost always round.

**FLAT** Characters that the author doesn't really describe as much are called flat characters.

Think of it this way. A three-dimensional drawing gives more detail than a one-dimensional drawing. If you draw a flat picture of a house, for example, you can only see three of the four sides. This is how a flat character is; you can only see a few characteristics of the character. There are many things you can't "see," or many details you aren't given by the author.



So how do you decide if a character is round or flat? As (or after) you read, jot down characteristics of the character. Ask yourself the question, “What do I know about this character?” If you can make a list of lots of information and characteristics, the character is most likely a round one. If you don’t know much, the character is flat.

