The Epic hero
The epic hero is a man who typically embodies the great est characteristics of a certain culture. He is not an ordinary man, but a man with outstanding quality and greatness about him. His traits may include...

- bravery
- knowledge or wisdom
- strength
- descended/blessed by the gods
- meets a challenge/quest

Famous examples would include...
- King Arthur
- Harry Potter
- Superman
- Beowulf
- El Cid
- Odysseus
- Robin Hood

The Tragic hero
The tragic hero is a man of noble stature. He is not an ordinary man, but a man with outstanding quality and greatness about him. His traits may include...

- noble birth
- *hamartia* (tragic flaw-sin)
- *hubris* (overarching pride)
- *peripeteia* (reversal of fortune)
- doomed by fate
- tragic downfall

Famous examples would include...
- Macbeth
- Hamlet
- Oedipus
- Joe Keller in *All My Sons*
- Othello

The Byronic (Romantic) hero
This heroic character is often attributed to the famous Romantic poet Lord Byron. The first version of Byron’s hero appears in the opening stanzas of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, canto 1, written in 1812 when the author was 21. At this stage, the Byronic hero is rather crudely depicted as a young man, prematurely sated by sin, who wanders about in an attempt to escape society and his own memories. The Byronic hero’s attributes may include...

- moody & introspective
- loner, rejected by society
- distaste for tradition & social norms
- being an exile, an outcast, or an outlaw
- lack of respect for rank and privilege
- troubled past
- cynical, demanding, arrogant
- self-destructive

Famous examples would include...
- Lucifer in *Paradise Lost*
- Childe Harold (Byron)
- Manfred (Byron)
- Don Juan (Byron)
- Faust (Goethe)

The Anti-hero
An anti-hero is a protagonist who lacks the traditional heroic attributes and qualities. Instead, this character is riddled with weaknesses and confusion. His lack of courage, honesty, or social grace reflects “modern man’s ambivalence toward traditional moral and social virtues.”

Famous examples would include...
- Scooby Doo
- Inspector Clouseau
- Chance Gardner in *Being There*
- Yossarian in *Catch 22*
- Don Quixote by Cervantes