

Unit 1 · Advanced Craft & Voice

— A writing class

Character *Engine*

Desires, *Flaws*, & the Internal Conflict

Why the story happens — not just how it's told.

Creative Writing 2 • 45 minutes · in your writer's notebook

*keep one eye on this —
it's the engine.*

Today.

A 45-minute arc through want, flaw, and the friction between them.

- **Learning objective**

You will establish internal motivators — a core desire and a key flaw — for a character, and draft a scene where internal conflict drives the action.

The arc • 45 min

01 Do Now • notebook

5 minutes

02 Mini-lesson • wants & flaws

10 minutes

03 Guided practice • the keycard

10 minutes

Essential question

How do a character's desires and flaws create the tension that moves a plot forward?

04 Draft your scene

15 minutes

05 Pair-share & exit ticket

5 minutes

*Builds on Week 2: **narrators** told us how — today we ask **why** the story happens.*

Notebook entry

A character, *without* a body.

Write a **3-sentence** description of a character. No physical features, no clothing, no age. Focus only on *something they desperately want* in this moment — and *one internal bad habit or fear* holding them back.

No body

No phone

No age

— only want & one flaw.

Timer



Skip the easy “tall, dark hair, blue eyes” answers. We’ll start with what fuels the story — want meeting friction.

Perspective tells us *how* a story is told —
internal conflict tells us **why** it happens.

01 The Want

Core *desire*

The external goal — or internal status — a character pursues across the story.

freedom

recognition

safety

belonging

control

to be loved

What keeps them awake at night?

02 The Flaw

Internal *obstacle*

The personality trait, fear, or distorted belief that keeps them from getting the want cleanly.

pride

insecurity

impatience

stubbornness

fear of failure

control

What do they keep doing that makes it worse?

Maya.

a sixteen-year-old, hoping for first chair

Want + Flaw = engine



Desire

To win first chair in the school orchestra.

— an external goal + a private ache to be recognized.

Flaw

Excessive pride — refuses to ask for help.

— what looks like confidence keeps her from correcting what needs correcting.

The plot engine

Her pride prevents her from correcting a small technique flaw — so a routine audition quietly becomes the highest-stakes moment of her year.

*A student finds a **keycard** that opens every door in the school.*

Option A **Social gravity**

Desire • Popularity

to be seen, chosen, admired

Flaw • Insecurity

believes they're only worth the room they can fill

*Invites classmates into restricted spaces to feel important —
and trades every locked door for a sliver of clout.*

Option B **Forward motion**

Desire • Justice

to fix what they know is unfair

Flaw • Impulsiveness

acts first, calculates the wreckage later

*Walks straight to the main office —
keycard out, consequences still forming behind them like a storm.*

A paradoxical flaw.

*Take a trait that's usually a strength —
and push it past the point where it stops being one.*

Transformation

deep loyalty

————— → —————

*blind obedience
to a harmful friend*

the same devotion, opened too wide.

Transformation

honesty

————— → —————

*cruelty disguised
as truth-telling*

the same blade, swung at anyone nearby.

Transformation

courage

————— → —————

*recklessness
that mistakes movement
for bravery*

the same fire, fed no air to think.

Planning *blueprint*

Set this up in your notebook before drafting.

01 Desire • the want

02 Flaw • the obstacle

03 The crucible moment

What good looks like

- a. Specific.** Not “to be happy” — but a goal your character can chase this week.
- b. Internal.** A trait, fear, or distorted belief — not bad luck.
- c. A decision.** Two roads — the flaw makes one of them louder.

*Messy is fine.
You’re sketching,
not carving.*

A menu, if you want one.

Some writers reach for choices — some prefer to find their own. Both are real craft.

Support — *when you want concrete starting points*

Some desires to choose from

safety

truth

belonging

to be heard

Some flaws to push against

fear of failure

jealousy

stubbornness

people-pleasing

Mix only one desire with one flaw.

That's already enough.

Extension — *when your scene feels too easy*

Try a paradoxical flaw:

a strength pushed past the point where it stops being one.

deep loyalty → *blind obedience*

carefulness → *paralysis*

optimism → *denial*

Same engine. Harder traction.

Now, *draft*.

Let the flaw do its damage. Twelve minutes, no edits, no apologies.



i. **Begin with the want**

Show what they're reaching for before you show what's holding them back.

— let us feel it pulse first.

ii. **Let the flaw interfere**

*Put the trait between them and the want.
Watch what it costs them.*

— friction is the engine, not the obstacle.

iii. **Arrive at the crucible**

End on a decision: two roads, one of them louder, and the flaw leaning in.

— you don't have to resolve it.

— Phones down. Notebooks open.

Read it out loud. Read it *to* someone.

a. Pair-share

Exchange notebooks with a partner.
Read their scene silently, slowly.

b. Underline one line

Underline one line of dialogue,
action, or internal monologue. In the
margin, label it:

“this highlights the flaw because...”

c. Exit ticket

At the bottom of your page, two or
three sentences.

Exit ticket

What is your character’s **primary desire**, and how will their **internal flaw** complicate the next scene?

You began a character in *45 minutes*.

Today you wrote

a blueprint, a scene, and a clear sense of the friction inside them.

Carry this with you

the scene has more to say. The flaw isn't done with them yet.

*Trust your character.
They'll do the next part.*

Thank you

CREATIVE WRITING 2

Week 03 of Unit 1

12 · 12