




12 Questions

to ask when Creating
Character Profiles

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Whether you are a fiction or nonfiction writer, we all need to create good characters to draw in the reader and keep them turning the pages. First, what makes a good main character?

A main character in a book is anyone who plays a significant role in the plot line- they bring the plot from point A to point B. A good character must engage with that plot somehow or else it is not a main character.

A good character entices the audience to change as a result of resolving the main conflict- successful stories are ones in which the bad guy has a change of heart, the underdog wins, and balance and peace is restored in a world once fraught with chaos and turmoil.

Good characters are relatable- the best characters to do is that are just like us. It is as if we, as readers, get to live vicariously through them. We get to struggle and sympathize right along with them, but we don't have to experience it.


**The most important rule of character development is:
Make the reader care.**


In our on- the- go world, people are busy. Therefore, they will keep their interest in your book if you captivate them from page one. An editor at one of the conferences I attended said she used to be an editor for screenplays. She said, "if they didn't have me at page one, they didn't have me." Make them care if the character succeeds or fails, wins or loses lives or dies.

How do you do that?

Make the character charismatic- make that character's presence stand out on the page. They don't have to be good looking or especially witty, but there must be that something special that makes your reader take notice.

Make your character likeable- the ability to relate to a character plays a role here. Even in sci-fi and fantasy, characters display traits that make us want to join their side, or root for their demise. Either way it makes for a good character. Make your audience feel something for that character. Will your character display good traits or bad ones? Even villains have a likable quality to them.







Make the character both ordinary and extraordinary- think about the best- selling films or books Harry Potter, twilight etc. Ordinary people who can do extraordinary things. They do things that we want to be able to do which is why we root for them and become involved in their story.

Make the character well- motivated- every character must have a purpose or goal. Writers need to state that clearly and allow the character to realize that goal. The character doesn't have to meet that goal or even fully achieve it. But they must have some reason to engage in the plot and essentially keep those pages turning.

Have a great character in mind for your next short story or novel but don't know how to create one? Here are some questions to get you started?

13 questions to ask when creating character profiles-

1. **What is their name?** there is much meaning and significance in a name. Choosing it can bring a great dynamic to your character.
 2. **How old are they?** Old? Young? This makes a difference in executing a plot around a strapping young man versus a sickly old man.
 3. **What do they look like?** what is their body shape? Fat? Thin? Color of eyes? Paint a word picture so it gives the reader a mental picture of that character.
 4. **Do they use any props?** Anything you need to let the reader know of that will give a hint to a plot line.
 5. **How do they speak?** British accent? Southern drawl? It is important to match with the setting.
 6. **What are they like as a person?** What are their spiritual beliefs? Are they cheery? Generous? Evil? Mean spirited or kind- hearted?
 7. **What do they like and dislike?** What makes him cringe or applaud?
 8. **Who do they know?** Who are the most important people in his or her life? Grandparents? Siblings? Parents?
 9. **Where do they live?** There is a big difference between living on the streets of New York versus a mansion and posh Beverly Hills.
 10. **What do they do?** Is it their dream job? If not, what is?
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11. **What's in their past?** What skeletons can you tease your reader with? Can you hint at a possible shady past that makes your reader want to read more?
 12. **What is their role in the story- In what way will they bring the plot from point A to point B?** In
 13. **What way will the character change as a result of your story?** You do not have to hold spiritual beliefs, we can bring glory to God by bringing about redemption in our characters. Some of the best stories are redemptive ones.

Some material taken from www.novel-writing-help.com

