

Characters

Character refers to a person, an animal or an object in a story.

Great characters are:

- Believable
- Consistent
- Multidimensional
- Memorable

Great Character Development Considerations

1. Physical Description
 - How does the character look and dress?
 - How does the character walk, stand, sit, etc.?
 - Does the character have distinguishing habits such as a tic, biting the nails, shaky hands, talking too loud, too soft, in riddles or rhyme, etc?
 - What traits make the character unique? Is the character skillful, persistent, friendly, thoughtful, lazy, intelligent, dishonest, etc.?
2. Name
 - Sometimes a name is carefully chosen to represent something about the character and/or the story.
3. Attitude
 - The character's attitude is how the character appears to feel about what is happening to him/her in the story.
4. Dialogue
 - Dialogue is the way in which a character talks.
 - Dialogue includes the character's choice of words and syntax, and it also includes tone and diction when the character speaks.
 - What does the character say, and what do others say to or about the character?
5. Thoughts
 - The thoughts of a character can only be known if we are inside the head of the character. Think of ways a character's thoughts can be known without the audience being told.
6. Relationships with Others
 - How do other characters in the story react to or treat another character? Character reactions can tell you if the character you are analyzing is liked or disliked, popular, honest, trust-worthy, etc.
 - Reactions include verbal responses, physical responses, or emotional displays.

7. Motivation

- A character's motivation is what makes him/her think, feel, or act in a particular way. A character can be motivated by feelings of fear, guilt, greed, anger, revenge, etc.
- A character can also be motivated by actions of other characters or by an incident.
- A character's motivation determines the way the character develops as the story develops.

8. Physical/Emotional Setting

- The physical setting of a story is where the story is actually taking place and can affect the way a character develops.
- The emotional setting of a story is the series of emotions that the character deals with throughout the story.

9. Actions

- What does the character do? What doesn't the character do?

Character Test Questions

1. Is the character believable? What about the character seemed real and true?
2. Is the character's behavior consistent with what we know about him or her? Does the behavior remain consistent throughout the skit?
3. Does the character's behavior show that the character is a unique individual?
4. Do you identify with the character? How would you have reacted if you were the character?
5. Is the character memorable? Will people still be talking about this character next year?

Exercises to Enhance Character Development

1. Your character has asked another character from the skit to lunch. Where do you meet? What is ordered? What do you talk about?
2. Your character is required to write a letter of introduction to your audience describing yourself, your goals and motivations.
3. It's a Sunday afternoon and your character's responsibilities are complete. What does your character do to relax for the rest of the day?
4. You have to change a flat tire in the rain with another character from your skit. Describe the experience and include your dialogue.
Another character from your skit invites you to his/her place for dinner. What sort of home does he/she have? How is it furnished? Any family, roommates, pets? What is served?
5. Your character decides to put up a personal homepage. How does he/she go about it? Does he/she have the skills to start building one, or will assistance be necessary? What sort of information will he/she want on it?
6. List the contents of your character's purse, pockets, grocery cart, backpack or closet. Then write a short scene in which someone other than your character is looking for something in the purse, car or whatever.

