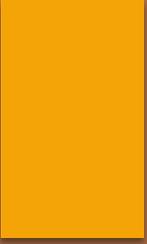




# Lesson 3: Character Development



## Lesson 3: Character Development

**WARM-UP:** With your partner, discuss and describe a favorite character from a book or a movie. Why were they interesting and compelling?





The **CHARACTERS** in a story provide two essential elements. The first is the human element (whether the characters are people, talking animals, aliens, etc.) that allows readers to *connect* with and imagine themselves in the story. Good characters, especially the protagonist and the antagonist, are the entry points for your reader.

A relatable character generally needs two things:

- 1) A comprehensive physical description
- 2) A strong sense of who they are as a person



The second element is that characters should fuel the plot. This is important to consider when you are conceptualizing a story, because you will have to balance three aspects:

- 1) The character
- 2) The plot
- 3) The moral or philosophical message

If you simply start your story concept from the perspective of just 2 & 3 then you run the risk of getting stuck in over-reflection and making your characters flat and boring. The characters should not exist only to serve the plot or an ideological message; they should be the plot.

# Types of characters

Protagonist – The primary character that moves the story forward. He or she can be a hero or a villain, but the story revolves around this character's choices. Examples: Harry Potter, Rey, Batman

Antagonist – This person opposes the protagonist and can be a rival or an enemy. Examples: Voldemort, Kylo Ren, the Joker

Foil – a secondary character that contrasts with the main character and reveals something about the main character. Examples: Draco Malfoy, BB-8, Robin

Other characters - Supporting characters who are important to the plot; minor characters who exist to populate the world and make it more fully realized

### Exercise 3 - Pockets

Ask the main character of your story to empty their pockets or bag out onto a table. What comes out? Why does your character have these things? Now let your character choose an object and ask them to tell you why it's important to them.



## **Exercise 4 - Developing Your Main Characters**

For the protagonist and antagonist of your story, ask yourself what their best and worst memories are. How do these memories and experiences affect them? How do they affect their relationships, their actions and their goals?



## **Exercise 5 - Developing Your Secondary Characters**

Think about other characters that will live in your story. Ask yourself what their best and worst memories are. How do their experiences affect them? How do these affect their relationships, their actions and their goals in relation to the main protagonist and main antagonist?



## Exercise 6 – Profiles

Think about your main protagonist and antagonist and make profiles for them. Ask yourself “who, what, when, where, how, why” questions. Although you may change these over the course of the story, it is good to have as many aspects of your main characters as possible.



## B. Character, Motivation & Conflict

The link between your characters and the plot is **MOTIVATION**. Have you ever read something and thought: 'they wouldn't do that; it's just not believable.' What you're noticing is a disparity between the way the author has revealed the character and your expectations about how they should or could behave. The fault here will either be with the characterization or with the plot.



## **Exercise 1 - What Do You Want?**

Take one of your main characters and ask yourself what he or she wants. Is this desire big enough to carry the entire plot? What might they do to achieve this?



## **Exercise 2 – You're in My Way!**

Now that you've determined what your character wants, ask yourself what stands in his or her way. What creates the conflict? Brainstorm possible conflict with characters, external situations outside your characters' control, and an inner emotional conflict.