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## Get to Know Your Characters

**Who are your characters?** What makes them tick? If you want to understand the characters populating your story, here are some questions you can ask to get to know them better. Think of it as an icebreaker with your characters: you can answer as many of these questions as are helpful, and skip ones that aren't!

By the way, it's totally normal to not have a sense of who the heck your characters are until after you finish writing your first draft. So don't worry if you feel like you don't have a hold of your characters yet, or if they start changing on you as you write. That's part of the process!

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# The Three Big Character Questions

1. What does your main character want more than anything in the world?

2. What major flaws (internal problems) and obstacles (external problems) will stand in their way? What virtues (internal aid) and support (external aid) will help them?

3. Will your character achieve what they want? Will they change significantly over the course of the story? Why or why not?

# Character Questionnaires

*(Excerpted from the Young Novelist Workbook)*

## Section One: Major Characters

**Complete this section for all your important characters, starting with the **protagonist**.** You may want to copy and paste the questions for as many characters as you answer them for, or just add the character's name next to their answers.

1. Name:

2. Age:

3. Race/ethnicity/nationality:

4. Physical appearance (height, body type, eye color, hair color, etc.):

5. Strange or unique physical attributes:

6. Favorite clothing style/outfit?

7. Defining gestures/movements (i.e., gesturing with their hands when they speak, always keeping their eyes on the ground, etc.):

8. Speaking style (fast, quiet, monotone, etc.):

9. Pet peeves:

10. Favorite memory:

11. Hobbies/interests:

12. Special skills/abilities:

13. Social status/class:

14. Temperament (easy-going, easily angered, etc.):

15. Something about themselves they either love best or would most like to change:

16. Things that upset them:

17. Things that embarrass them:

18. This character is highly opinionated about:

19. Things they're afraid of:

20. Things that make them happy:

21. Culture/place they grew up:

22. Family dynamic:

23. Deepest, darkest secret:

24. Reason they kept this secret for so long:

25. Other people's opinions of this character (What do people like about this character? What do they dislike about this character?):

26. Things this character thinks about themselves... that aren't really true or accurate. (This can be good or bad - maybe they think they're a good friend when they're actually being pretty awful to someone; or maybe they think they're not funny when they're actually really clever and can make everyone laugh if they try.)

27. Favorite bands/ songs/ type of music:

28. Favorite movies/ TV shows/ other types of entertainment:

29. Favorite books/ stories:

30. Favorite foods:

31. Favorite sports/sports teams:

32. Political views:

33. Religion/philosophy of life:

34. Physical health:

35. Dream vacation:

36. Description of their home:

37. Description of where they sleep:

38. Any pets?

39. Best thing that has ever happened to this character:

40. Worst thing that has ever happened to this character:

41. Three words to describe this character:

42. If a song played every time this character walked into the room, what song would it be?

## Section Two: Supporting Characters Only

Complete this just for your supporting characters.

1. How do they know the protagonist?

2. What do they love about the protagonist?

3. What do they disagree with the protagonist about?

4. Similarities to protagonist:

5. Differences from protagonist:

## Section Three: Antagonist Only

**Complete this just for your antagonist.** If you don't have a physical antagonist, make up four other questions to answer about the challenge your hero is facing.

1. Why are they getting in the way of your protagonist?

2. How do they feel about the protagonist? Why?

3. Do they have any likeable qualities, or are they just plain evil?

4. Do they have any secret weaknesses?

## Section Four: Abstract Antagonists Only

**Abstract antagonists** are when big events, forces of nature, or ideas are the primary thing getting in the way of your protagonist.

1. What is your abstract antagonist? Is it a disease like cancer, a social ill like poverty, or something larger than life, like grief?

2. How is this antagonist affecting the protagonist?

3. Do other characters notice? How does this antagonist affect the other people in your novel?



