

Historical Fiction Identity Wheel

Choose **at least EIGHT** of the attributes from the table and describe your character. Provide the source of information you include when applicable. You will eventually have to demonstrate how the character's identity would likely impact them within their historical setting. Consider doing more than eight to help guide the creation of your character.

Check off each attribute that you are incorporating for your main character. Then, describe each selected one in the chart below.

☐ Language	☐ Class	☐ Gender
☐ Citizenship	☐ Body size	☐ Sex
☐ Location	☐ Age	☐ Ethnicity
☐ Education	☐ Ability	☐ Race
☐ Politics	☐ Sexuality	☐ Religion

Character Name: Carlos Rivera

Be sure to choose a character name that is appropriate for the time period and identity of your character. You can do a quick Google search to find common names from a specific time period.

Time Period	1980s
Theme/Topic:	Modern Civil Rights/Social Movements: LGBTQ+ identity and activism during the AIDS epidemic
LANGUAGE	The language that a person speaks and communicates in.
<i>Description/Notes</i>	Carlos speaks both English and Spanish. As a second-generation Puerto Rican American, he grew up bilingual in New York City, navigating both cultures.
<i>Sources</i>	Spanish Harlem: El Barrio in the '80s (https://photoville.nyc/exhibition/spanish-harlem-el-barrio-in-the-80s/)
CITIZENSHIP	The position or status of being a citizen of a particular country or countries.
<i>Description/Notes</i>	Carlos is a U.S. citizen by birth. His citizenship grants him legal rights, but his ethnic identity and sexuality expose him to systemic discrimination.
<i>Sources</i>	Puerto Ricans in the United States, 1900–2008: Demographic, Economic, and Social Aspects (https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1027&context=clacsl_pubs)

LOCATION	Where the person is geographically located in the world currently.
Description/Notes	Lives in the East Village, Manhattan, a hub for LGBTQ+ culture and activism. The neighborhood is also deeply affected by the AIDS crisis.
Sources	Interviews from the ACT UP Oral History Project. (https://www.actuporalhistory.org/numerical-interviews)
EDUCATION	Formal education opportunities such as K-12 education and Higher Education Institutions.
Description/Notes	Carlos attended public school and earned an associate degree in graphic design. His education allows him to contribute to activist art and protest materials.
Sources	Interviews from the ACT UP Oral History Project. (https://www.actuporalhistory.org/numerical-interviews)
POLITICS	The political parties or ideologies that a person supports and identifies with.
Description/Notes	Carlos is politically active, aligning with progressive movements. He is critical of the Reagan administration's response to AIDS and supports grassroots organizing.
Sources	Interviews from the ACT UP Oral History Project. (https://www.actuporalhistory.org/numerical-interviews)
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS	Social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation.
Description/Notes	Working-class background. Carlos works freelance gigs and lives paycheck to paycheck. His economic status limits healthcare access and amplifies vulnerability during the epidemic.
Sources	Interviews from the ACT UP Oral History Project. (https://www.actuporalhistory.org/numerical-interviews)
BODY SIZE/CHARACTERISTICS	The size of a person's body and other physical characteristics as they relate to beauty, health, and moral standards, defined by the socio-political, cultural, and historical context.
Description/Notes	Carlos has a lean, wiry build shaped by stress, limited healthcare, and his HIV-positive status. His punk-inspired style of dyed hair and bold fashion challenges 1980s beauty norms and expresses queer resistance.

Sources	Interviews from the ACT UP Oral History Project. (https://www.actuporalhistory.org/numerical-interviews)
AGE	The amount of years and life a person has experienced.
Description/Notes	Carlos is 28 years old in 1985. He came of age during the sexual liberation of the 1970s and now faces the devastating impact of AIDS on his community.
Sources	The AIDS Epidemic in the United States, 1981-early 1990s (https://www.cdc.gov/museum/online/story-of-cdc/aids/index.html)
ABILITY + NEURODIVERSITY	The ability of a person relative to the default or expected cultural norm.
Description/Notes	Carlos is HIV-positive. He experiences fatigue and stigma, but remains active in advocacy. His diagnosis shapes his urgency and resilience.
Sources	The AIDS Epidemic in the United States, 1981-early 1990s (https://www.cdc.gov/museum/online/story-of-cdc/aids/index.html)
SEXUALITY	A person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually attracted or not attracted to.
Description/Notes	Carlos identifies as gay. His sexuality is central to his identity and activism, but also subjects him to discrimination and marginalization.
Sources	Interviews from the ACT UP Oral History Project. (https://www.actuporalhistory.org/numerical-interviews)
GENDER	The social construction used to signify differences among human appearance which also takes into account gender expression and gender identity.
Description/Notes	Carlos identifies as a cisgender man. His gender expression is fluid, often challenging traditional norms through fashion and art.
Sources	Never Above 14th Street A Photo Journal (https://www.phillips.com/article/116467258/never-above-14th-street-contemporary-art-exhibition-new-york-basquiat-haring-wojnarowicz)

SEX	Sex refers to a person's biological status and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex.
Description/Notes	Biologically male. His sex aligns with his gender identity, but does not shield him from gendered expectations or homophobia.
Sources	Interviews from the ACT UP Oral History Project. (https://www.actuporalhistory.org/numerical-interviews)
ETHNICITY	A grouping of people who identify with each other on the basis of shared attributes that distinguish them from other groups such as a common set of traditions, ancestry, language, history, society, culture, nation, religion or multi-generational social treatment.
Description/Notes	Puerto Rican American. His ethnicity connects him to a vibrant cultural heritage and a community often underrepresented in mainstream LGBTQ+ activism.
Sources	El Museo del Barrio (https://www.elmuseo.org/)
RACE	The social construction used to divide humans based on shared physical characteristics, including skin color.
Description/Notes	Carlos is racialized as Latino. He faces racism within broader society and sometimes within the LGBTQ+ movement itself.
Sources	Interviews from the ACT UP Oral History Project. (https://www.actuporalhistory.org/numerical-interviews)
RELIGION + CREED	A professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship.
Description/Notes	Raised Catholic, Carlos now identifies as spiritual but not religious. He struggles with the Church's stance on homosexuality and AIDS.
Sources	What Comes Next? The Church From 1980s to 2013 (https://media.benedictine.edu/what-comes-next-the-church-from-1980s-to-2013)

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the idea that a person's identity is composed of multiple parts, such as race, gender, class, age, and ability. These parts can combine to affect how they are treated in society.

Once you've completed four characteristics and asked AI about intersectionality, summarize the response in your own words in the table below.

His Puerto Rican American ethnicity and sexuality resulted in discrimination, despite his ability to navigate both English and Spanish-speaking communities. Simultaneously, his residence in the East Village placed him at the heart of LGBTQ+ activism during the AIDS crisis. His graphic design education became a source of empowerment, allowing him to use his skills to create powerful protest art for the movement. These identity characteristics meant he experienced a complex mix of both exclusion and opportunity, which ultimately affected his rights and how he was treated by society.

Once you've completed eight characteristics and asked AI about intersectionality, summarize the response in your own words in the table below.

Carlos was a bilingual Puerto Rican American and a U.S. citizen, but he still faced racism and homophobia. Living in the East Village during the AIDS crisis, he used his graphic design skills to support LGBTQ+ activism. His working-class background and HIV-positive status made it hard to get healthcare. His bold, punk-inspired style challenged beauty standards and showed pride in his identity. After growing up during the sexual freedom of the 1970s, he now faced fear and loss in his community. All these parts of Carlos's identity came together to shape his life, giving him strength as an activist but also making him vulnerable.

After completing the table, create a short bio that could appear in a historical archive or museum exhibit. Use at least eight identity traits to describe your character's life, challenges, and contributions.

Carlos Rivera was a Puerto Rican American graphic designer and LGBTQ+ activist living in Manhattan during the height of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. Raised bilingual in English and Spanish, Carlos navigated life as a gay, HIV-positive man in a society that often marginalized both his sexuality and ethnicity. He lived in the East Village, where his punk-inspired style and lean frame became symbols of resistance and self-expression. Politically engaged, Carlos aligned with grassroots movements like ACT UP, challenging the Reagan administration's neglect of the epidemic. Despite limited access to healthcare and economic hardship, Carlos used his education and artistic skills to amplify the voices of his community.