

# Bringing Your Characters to Life

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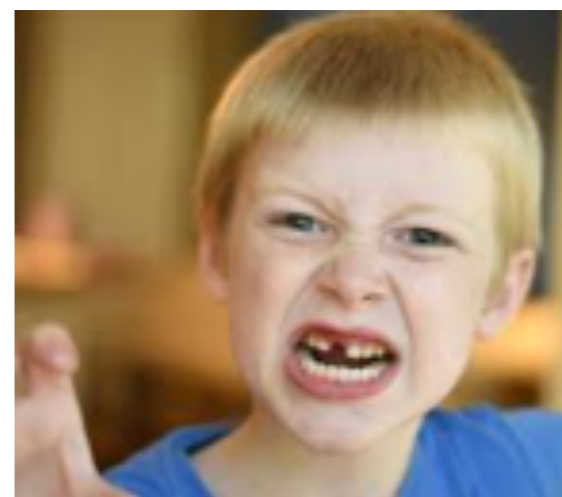


Characters are the beating heart of fiction. It's through your characters that your reader connects to what you are trying to tell them, perhaps seeing a reflection of themselves; perhaps getting the opportunity to experience lives, thoughts and personalities completely different (and even at odds) to their own. Without your characters, there is no story.

That's why it's so important to create believable, fully-rounded characters. You can do this by getting to know them inside and out. That way you will know who they are, why they respond to things in certain ways, what their backstory is and what their strengths, weaknesses and flaws are. This mini-guide will help you do that. Have fun – and happy writing!



**Character Board**



# Interview Your Character

**Choose one of the people from the Character Board on the previous page. Ask them the following questions. Then delve a little deeper by asking ‘Why?’ about each of their answers.**

1. What’s your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where do you live?
4. What is your family like?
5. What do you do for a living (if anything?)
6. What’s your favourite...
  - colour?
  - food?
  - person?
  - place?
  - item of clothing?
7. What do you love?
8. What do you hate?
9. What scares you?
10. You have a secret... What is it?

# Put Your Character on the Page

Now you've created your character by interviewing them, try these short exercises to bring them to life.

A metaphor is where a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally true (i.e. 'Her arms were seaweed waving helplessly in the current'). Write a list of 5 metaphors which describe your character, then incorporate them into a piece of writing.

Your character is inside something or somewhere – where are they? There is something on the wall (or surface) beside them – what is it? Write about your character and the situation they find themselves in.

Imagine your character is a witness to an important event. Write about them telling someone else what happened, using only dialogue. You can include the second person's dialogue too. What twists and turns are there? What sort of stories emerge?

Write a letter from your character to their past self, reflecting on a significant event in their life (this could be the secret you uncovered when you interviewed them). What happened to them? What were the consequences? What would they do differently if they could go back?