

CHARACTER PROFILE SHEET

Character's Name: _____

Character's Gender: _____

Character's Birthdate: _____ **Age:** _____

Character's Family Life:

Character's Life at School:

Character's Physical Description (traits):

Other Character Traits (characteristics):

What the Character Thinks About:

What Others Say About the Character:

Other Details:

BRINGING YOUR CHARACTERS TO LIFE

- 1. FIND THE RIGHT NAME:** A character's name can say a lot about them, whether you choose a name with symbolic meaning, or just one that has a good sound. Quite often, characters seem to arrive already named, but sometimes it can take forever to find the perfect thing to call them. The wrong name will probably irritate you, and will never seem quite right, so take the time to choose one that fits.
- 2. GIVE THE CHARACTER A HISTORY:** Even if you never mention a character's past in the novel or story, the fact that they have one will make the character more alive for you -- and that will translate into a more realistic character for the reader. Think about where the character came from. Where did they grow up? What was their childhood like? What things have happened to them?
- 3. CONSIDER PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:** Is your character short or tall? What color is their hair? What color are their eyes? These are all details that may or may not make it onto the page, but YOU need to know them. Having a concrete look for a character gives you something to picture while you write about them. Image how hard it would be to write about someone you can't even picture.
- 4. GIVE THEM A SENSE OF STYLE:** We all make judgments of some kind about people based on what they look like. One person's clothing may tell us they are a Goth, while another person may wear only the most expensive designer fashions. Figure out what kind of clothing and accessories your character wears and why. What does their clothing say about them and what do THEY think it says?
- 5. THINK ABOUT TASTES:** What does your character like and dislike? What are their favorite foods and colors? The things a person likes can say a lot about them. Again, how much of this information you will use in the piece of fiction you write will vary, but knowing your character well means you can write more effectively.
- 6. FIND A UNIQUE MANNER OF SPEAKING:** While you don't want every character to have strange vocal quirks or a bizarre vocabulary, making each person speak in a different way helps make each character distinct. Ideally, a reader should be able to tell which character is speaking without looking at the dialogue tags, but you also don't want to exaggerate their uniqueness.
- 7. THINK ABOUT BEHAVIORS AND MANNERISMS:** Do you have some little gesture you make when you're nervous? Do you tilt your head or stick out the end of your tongue when you concentrate? Everyone has little quirks and mannerisms, and so should your characters. As with everything else, you don't want to overdo it, but a unique gesture or repeated mannerism can give a character more personality.

Tips:

- 1. Take your time and really think about your characters.**
- 2. Don't overdo any of the techniques.**
- 3. Remember that many characteristics will appear as you write; you don't have to fully develop a character before you write about them.**
- 4. You don't have to use every detail that you discover/invent.**

Source: <http://teenwriting.about.com/>