

Have You Completed A Character Questionnaire?

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By Nick Vernon

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Creative Writing Tips -

Complete a character questionnaire for each of your main characters or even secondary characters that play a vital role in your story. This way you will know your character(s) well before you start writing about them.

Fill in as much information about them as possible. Don't only answer what you will need in your story. The objective here is to get to know your character till he becomes a 'live' person in your mind.

So let's begin...

In a few sentences write down a summary of the plot

Character's personal details First name Surname Age

In a few sentences write down the character's back story (a bit about his background)

The role of the character in your story What are character's goals? What are character's motivations? What is the character's conflict? How will the conflict stop the character from reaching his goal? What is he going to do to overcome the conflict? What problems will crop up during the story? How will those problems get worse? What will the character do to overcome those problems? How will he resolve the conflict? How will your character's background influence how he behaves in your story? What is the relationship with other characters, if any, in your story?

Physical Descriptions Height Eye colour Hair colour Hairstyle Hair length Complexion
Shape of face Body type Weight

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How does his expression change when... He's with a loved one He's with someone he dislikes
He's with his boss He's with a colleague

Personality Type? (shy, outgoing, insecure, dominant etc) Distinguishable traits? Mental scars?
(Complexes etc) Ambitions? Sense of humour? Fears? Anxieties? Phobias? Overall
personality? How does his personality change when he's experiencing different emotions? How
does he act when he feels confident? How does he act when he feels inadequate? What gestures
does he use when he talks and thinks? How does he walk? With confidence? Does he slouch or
stride? What mannerisms does he have? (Does he fold his arms? Does he flick his hair?) How
does he speak? (Clearly, mumble, confidently, drawl etc.) His voice? (Rich, loud, soft, etc) His
vocabulary? (Casual, formal, illiterate etc) What does he think when he's alone? Does he have any
secrets he hasn't disclosed to anyone? His prejudices? Dominant motives? Values most?
Desires most? How does he treat those around him? (children, superiors, etc) Any vices or virtues?

Likes and dislikes Favourite colour, food, etc Favourite music? Taste in clothing? Does
character like something in particular? Does character dislike something in particular?

Lifestyle Where does the character live (country, city)? Does character live in a house, apartment
etc Does character like where he lives? Does where he lives reflect what kind of person he is?
Does he have a favourite room? (Or a piece of furniture or other object etc) Does he have a car?
What type? Does the car reflect the person he is? Any hobbies? Personal habits (neat, sloppy etc)

Background Parents names Parents occupations Describe relationship with parents Any
siblings? Describe relationship with siblings What kind of childhood did the character have? What
kind of adolescence did the character have? What kind of schooling did character undergo? (Private
or public? Has this shaped who he is?) What was the highest-level achieved in school?
Citizenship/Ethnic Origin? In which country does he currently live? If the country he lives in is not
where he was born, why does he live there?

Character's current position Any friends? Any enemies? Acquaintances? Has character been
married before? Has the character been engaged before? Any children? Most meaningful
experience? Any disappointments? What is the character's goal in life? Attitude towards the
opposite sex? Attitude towards life?

Employment What kind of job does character currently have? What kind of jobs has the character
had previously? Is character content in current employment? If not, what would be their dream job?

What do you feel for this character? Admire Love Hate Dislike Like Pity Envy

Whatever you feel for this character, your emotions must be strong. If they are not, either build on this
further or begin building another character altogether.

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information,
articles and readers' funny stories. Visit

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If The Viewpoint Character Is A Secondary Character, Have You Established Who He is?

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Creative Writing Tips -

I have said above that if a secondary character tells the story of the main character, then the spotlight should be kept on the main character.

This shouldn't be taken to the extreme though.

In other words, you don't just write the story of the main character without telling your readers a bit about your secondary character.

Unless the reader understands the reason a secondary character is telling the story, it will seem peculiar that the main character isn't telling it himself. It is, after all, the main character's story.

So, the following have to be answered... Who is this secondary character? Why is he telling the story instead of the main character? What is his connection with the main character?

Weave in some information about the secondary character so we can gain a better understanding of his role in the story.

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