In several of his interviews, **S. S. Rajamouli** has mentioned that when he and his father (V. Vijayendra Prasad, the writer of most of his films) develop characters, they don’t just “decide traits” in a superficial way. Instead, they go through a **long Q&A process** for each character.

For example, they ask questions like:

* What is this character’s deepest desire?
* How will he/she react when faced with betrayal?
* What is his/her relationship with parents, siblings, friends?
* How does this person walk, talk, eat?
* What’s his/her biggest weakness?
* How would this character react to success, failure, or humiliation?

This “interrogation” of the character builds a **psychological and emotional framework**, so that later when writing scenes, the character’s responses come naturally and stay consistent.

Rajamouli has admitted it’s a **tiresome process** because for every major character they may spend **weeks just answering questions** before even writing the actual screenplay. But this is what gives his films (like *Baahubali*, *RRR*, *Eega*) strong, distinct characters that feel believable, rather than one-dimensional heroes or villains.

A **one-dimensional character** (or one-dimensional hero) is a character who is written with only a **single trait or quality**, without depth, layers, or believable motivations.

They usually exist to **serve the plot** rather than feel like a real person.

**Example traits of a one-dimensional hero:**

* Always brave, never afraid (no self-doubt, no growth).
* Always “good” with no flaws or internal conflict.
* Acts in predictable ways (you already know what they’ll do in every situation).
* Doesn’t change or evolve throughout the story.

**For instance:**

* A hero who is only about “revenge” and does nothing else, doesn’t care about family, doesn’t struggle with morality—just revenge from start to finish.
* A villain who is “evil because evil” with no reason, no backstory, no human side.

These characters can feel flat because real people are **multi-dimensional**: they can be brave but also insecure, loving but selfish, confident but sometimes make mistakes.

**Rajamouli Style of Character building:-**

Perfect 👍 Let me give you a **Rajamouli-style Character Development Template** — basically the kind of questions he and Vijayendra Prasad would keep asking until the character feels *real*.

**📝 Character Question Template (Inspired by Rajamouli Method)**

**1. Core Identity**

* What is the character’s **name, age, background**?
* What is his/her **primary goal or desire** in life?
* What is his/her **biggest fear**?
* What is his/her **moral compass** (what lines will they never cross)?

**2. Family & Relationships**

* How is their relationship with parents?
* Do they have siblings? Friends? Rivals?
* How do they treat people who are weaker than them?
* How do they behave in love/romantic relationships?

**3. Personality & Traits**

* What are their **strengths** (bravery, intelligence, charm)?
* What are their **weaknesses/flaws** (anger, arrogance, greed)?
* What’s their **sense of humor** (if any)?
* How do they react when insulted or humiliated?
* What makes them angry instantly?

**4. Everyday Habits**

* How do they **walk, talk, eat, sit**?
* What kind of **clothes** do they prefer?
* Do they have **quirks** (like chewing nails, cracking knuckles, never looking people in the eye)?
* How do they spend a **normal day** when no crisis is happening?

**5. Decision Making**

* What will they do when given **two equally bad choices**?
* Do they act with **heart** (emotions) or **mind** (logic)?
* Will they betray someone for their goal?
* How do they handle failure?

**6. Backstory Shaping the Present**

* What **childhood incident** shaped their nature?
* What **trauma or memory** still haunts them?
* What **dreams/ambitions** did they abandon?
* Who is the most **influential person** in their life?

**7. Conflict & Growth**

* What is their **internal conflict** (fear, guilt, doubt)?
* What is their **external conflict** (enemy, system, society)?
* How will this character **change** from the start of the story to the end?
* If they don’t change, why not?

**8. Symbolism & Image**

* If this character were represented by a **color, animal, or element**, what would it be?
* What kind of **music/theme** suits them?
* What’s the **first impression** they give to strangers?

👉 By answering these questions, you end up with a **multi-dimensional character** who feels alive. That’s why Rajamouli says the process is *tiresome*—but it gives depth.

**🔥 Character Breakdown: Alluri Sitarama Raju (RRR)**

**1. Core Identity**

* **Name / Background**: A British Indian police officer, secretly working to infiltrate the British system. Based on the real-life revolutionary Alluri Sitarama Raju (fictionalized in RRR).
* **Primary Goal/Desire**: To obtain weapons for his people’s rebellion by rising through British ranks.
* **Biggest Fear**: Failing the revolution, letting his father’s dream of freedom die.
* **Moral Compass**: Willing to sacrifice personal happiness, even his reputation, for the larger cause.

**2. Family & Relationships**

* **Parents**: Father was a revolutionary; his shadow defines Raju’s mission.
* **Friends**: Deep bond with Bheem, but torn between friendship and duty.
* **Weaker people**: Protects them, but sometimes appears cold because he prioritizes long-term goals over short-term emotions.
* **Love**: In love with Sita (his fiancée). Keeps her waiting, showing his loyalty to both love and cause.

**3. Personality & Traits**

* **Strengths**: Strategic thinker, disciplined, patient, fearless under pressure.
* **Weaknesses**: Appears ruthless, hides emotions, isolates himself.
* **Sense of Humor**: Rarely jokes; serious, duty-focused.
* **Reaction to insult**: Calmly absorbs it—because he’s focused on bigger battles.
* **Instant anger trigger**: Injustice against Indians, insult to freedom.

**4. Everyday Habits**

* **Walk/Talk/Eat**: Precise, controlled movements; formal speech when with British, honest speech with loved ones.
* **Clothes**: British police uniform (a disguise for his real self). Later adopts revolutionary attire.
* **Quirks**: Always calculating, always observing—never careless.
* **Normal day**: Blends in as a loyal officer while secretly plotting rebellion.

**5. Decision Making**

* **Two bad choices**: Always picks the one that serves the larger mission, even if it hurts personally.
* **Heart or Mind?**: Mostly mind (logical, calculated) — the opposite of Bheem.
* **Betrayal**: Appears to betray Bheem (arresting him), but it’s actually sacrifice for a bigger purpose.
* **Failure**: Endures silently, re-strategizes. Never quits.

**6. Backstory Shaping the Present**

* **Childhood incident**: Raised on his father’s dream of freedom. Trained to sacrifice everything for the cause.
* **Trauma**: Saw his people suffer without arms to defend themselves.
* **Abandoned dream**: Personal happiness with Sita—put on hold for freedom.
* **Influence**: His father and the idea of a free India.

**7. Conflict & Growth**

* **Internal conflict**: Friendship vs. Duty. Should he protect Bheem (the friend) or stay loyal to the revolution (the cause)?
* **External conflict**: British empire, and the perception of being a “loyal police officer.”
* **Change**: Learns that he cannot fight alone. Needs allies like Bheem. Shifts from cold strategist to someone who embraces brotherhood.
* **If no change**: He would have remained a tragic figure, sacrificing himself without forming bonds.

**8. Symbolism & Image**

* **Symbol**: Fire 🔥 (discipline, destruction, passion for freedom).
* **Music/Theme**: Intense, militaristic beats with revolutionary undertones.
* **First impression**: Loyal British officer.
* **True self**: A revolutionary who bleeds for India.

**🔄 Bheem vs. Raju (Contrast that Rajamouli built)**

* **Bheem** = Heart ❤️ → fights for *one girl → then his people → then his country*.
* **Raju** = Mind 🧠 → fights for *country first*, even if it means hurting people close to him.
* Together: **They complete each other** → Heart + Mind = unstoppable revolution.

👉 This is why Rajamouli says the **“questioning process” is tiresome**—because you see how every detail (walk, clothes, fear, anger, family ties) makes the character feel *real and layered*

**🩸 Sandeep Reddy Vanga–Style Character Design Template**

**1. Core Obsession**

* What does this character want so badly it drives everything else?
* Is it love? Family approval? Obsession with power? Revenge?
* How far will they go for it—hurt themselves, hurt others, break rules?

**2. Flaws & Extremes**

* What is their **biggest weakness or toxic trait**? (anger, ego, possessiveness, self-destruction)
* How does this flaw hurt the people around them?
* Do they even realize it’s a flaw—or do they think it’s strength?

**3. Relationships as Volcanoes**

* Who do they love with intensity (lover, parent, sibling, friend)?
* What does love mean to them—protection, possession, obsession, sacrifice?
* How do they react if this bond is threatened? (rage, violence, silence, destruction)

**4. Triggers & Explosions**

* What is the **red button** that instantly makes them lose control?
* Do they become violent, self-destructive, reckless?
* What’s the **ugliest side** of them that comes out under stress?

**5. Masks & Real Face**

* How do they appear to society (polite, successful, composed)?
* What is their **private truth** when the mask comes off? (addiction, obsession, loneliness)
* Do they hide their intensity or wear it openly?

**6. Self-Destruction vs Redemption**

* Does their obsession destroy them, or do they find redemption?
* What’s the lowest point they’ll fall to (alcohol, violence, betrayal)?
* What’s the one moment where they show humanity that redeems them (if any)?

**7. Tone & Presence**

* If this character had a **theme song**, what would it sound like? (raw rock, haunting melody, violent beats)
* What **body language** do they carry (slouching, aggressive, restless)?
* What kind of **silence** do they have? (brooding, tense, unsettling)

**🔑 Key Difference from Rajamouli-style:**

* Rajamouli: *“What is this character’s full world, past, habits, philosophy?”*
* Vanga: *“What is this character’s flaw, obsession, and how badly will it explode in relationships?”*

✅ Example:

* **Arjun Reddy** → Obsession = Preeti. Flaw = anger + addiction. Lowest point = alcoholism, breakdown. Redemption = maturity at the end.
* **Ranvijay (Animal)** → Obsession = Father’s love. Flaw = violent masculinity. Lowest point = endless killing spree. Redemption = father finally acknowledging him.

**🎬 Sandeep Reddy Vanga’s Character Design Approach**

**1. Personal & Emotional Projection**

* Vanga often says his characters are drawn from **personal observation and emotional projection**.
* For example, *Arjun Reddy/Kabir Singh* was partly inspired by his college days and people he knew.
* He doesn’t sit with a 100-question template like Rajamouli. Instead, he asks:
  + *“What if this person, with this particular flaw, is put in an extreme situation?”*

**2. Flaws Before Strengths**

* Unlike Rajamouli, who builds **heroes with moral cores**, Vanga starts with **flaws** (anger, obsession, toxicity).
* Arjun Reddy/Kabir Singh → uncontrollable anger, possessiveness.
* Ranvijay in *Animal* → obsessive love for father, violent masculinity.
* He then pushes these flaws to the **maximum limit** and builds drama out of it.

**3. Intensity of Relationships**

* His characters are always defined by **extreme relationships** (love, family, father-son bond).
* Instead of asking “What would this character eat, wear, or do daily?” (Rajamouli’s way), he asks:
  + *“How madly can this person love?”*
  + *“How violently will he react if love/family is threatened?”*

**4. Realism Mixed With Shock Value**

* He doesn’t care if characters are “likable” → he cares if they’re **honest and raw**.
* That’s why his heroes may seem toxic, arrogant, or self-destructive, but still feel **believable**.
* He builds characters to **provoke emotion** (love, hate, admiration, disgust).

**5. Cinematic Treatment**

* Rajamouli → archetypal myth, symbolism (fire, water, etc.).
* Vanga → raw realism, handheld camera, long takes, aggressive music.
* Character design is supported more by **tone and treatment** than long backstories.

**🎬 How Different Directors Build Characters**

**1. Screenwriting-Formula Approach (Hollywood-style)**

* Many directors follow structured writing methods like **Joseph Campbell’s Hero’s Journey** or **Save the Cat beats**.
* Characters are built around **arcs**:
  + Want → Conflict → Growth → Resolution.
* Example: **Christopher Nolan** — his characters (Cobb in *Inception*, Cooper in *Interstellar*) are defined by personal loss or obsession, but built within a tight, logical arc.

👉 **Focus** = “How does this character’s personal journey fit the story structure?”

**2. Psychological Depth (Auteur-style)**

* Some directors build characters by diving into **psychology, inner struggles, and contradictions**.
* They write diaries, inner monologues, or backstories to understand the psychology.
* Example: **Mani Ratnam** (*Roja*, *Alaipayuthey*, *Dil Se*) → characters are flawed but emotionally complex, caught between personal and political conflicts.

👉 **Focus** = “What is happening inside the character’s mind and heart?”

**3. Slice-of-Life & Observation**

* Filmmakers inspired by **real life, society, and small details**.
* They observe people, mannerisms, speech, and recreate them.
* Example: **Hrishikesh Mukherjee** (*Anand*, *Golmaal*) or **Vetrimaaran** (*Asuran*, *Visaranai*) → characters feel like real people you’d meet in your neighborhood.

👉 **Focus** = “Make characters authentic and relatable to real people.”

**4. Archetypes & Symbolism (Epic/Mythical Style)**

* Like Rajamouli, but many directors do this too → create characters as **symbols of larger ideas** (good, evil, love, betrayal).
* Example: **Shankar** (*Indian*, *Robot*) → his heroes symbolize justice or revolution, often exaggerated to inspire the audience.
* Example: **Zack Snyder** (*300*, *Man of Steel*) → heroes framed like gods or legends.

👉 **Focus** = “Character is larger-than-life, represents an idea, not just a person.”

**5. Improvisation & Actor-Centric**

* Some directors don’t write too deeply in advance — instead, they rely on **actors to build characters on set**.
* Example: **Anurag Kashyap** (*Gangs of Wasseypur*), **Ram Gopal Varma** → give actors situations and let them improvise dialogues and body language.
* Characters come alive through performance, not long questionnaires.

👉 **Focus** = “Let actors breathe life into characters, even change the script if needed.”

**6. Theme-First Writing**

* Some filmmakers start with a **theme or message** and then build characters to represent different sides of that theme.
* Example: **Rajkumar Hirani** (*3 Idiots*, *PK*) → his characters often embody social commentary (conformity vs individuality, blind faith vs questioning).
* Example: **K. Balachander** → his films often explore gender, social roles, middle-class struggles.

👉 **Focus** = “Characters are tools to explore a theme or moral question.”

**⚖️ Summary**

* **Rajamouli** → Structured myth-building (lots of questions, depth, symbolism).
* **Sandeep Reddy Vanga** → Flaw-driven, instinctive, obsessional, raw.
* **Hollywood Formula Writers** → Arc-based (Hero’s Journey, Save the Cat).
* **Mani Ratnam / Psychological Writers** → Emotionally layered, inner contradictions.
* **Vetrimaaran / Slice-of-life** → Authentic, grounded, realistic.
* **Shankar / Snyder** → Archetypal, symbolic, big message-driven.
* **Anurag Kashyap / RGV** → Improvised, performance-driven.
* **Hirani / Balachander** → Theme-driven (characters as voices of social commentary).

👉 So, in short, different directors ask **different “primary questions”** while building characters:

* Rajamouli: *“Who is this person in every aspect of life?”*
* Vanga: *“What flaw or obsession drives this person to extremes?”*
* Hirani: *“What social idea or theme does this person represent?”*
* Vetrimaaran: *“How do real people like this live, talk, survive?”*

**📝 Major Methods of Developing a Story**

**1. Linear / Traditional Narrative**

* **Definition:** Story unfolds in chronological order — beginning → middle → end.
* **Key Elements:** Setup, conflict, climax, resolution.
* **Best for:** Classic dramas, adventures, romances.
* **Example:** *Baahubali*, *Titanic*, *Forrest Gump*.

**Pros:** Easy to follow, natural progression.  
**Cons:** Can be predictable if not layered with subplots or character depth.

**2. Non-Linear / Fragmented Narrative**

* **Definition:** Story jumps around in time, often using flashbacks, flash-forwards, or parallel timelines.
* **Key Elements:** Multiple timelines, nested stories, character revelations at different times.
* **Best for:** Psychological dramas, mysteries, thrillers.
* **Example:** *Memento*, *Pulp Fiction*, *RRR* (partly non-linear).

**Pros:** Builds suspense, reveals character depth gradually.  
**Cons:** Can confuse the audience if not executed clearly.

**3. Character-Driven Story**

* **Definition:** Characters’ choices and development drive the story; plot emerges from their actions.
* **Key Elements:** Internal conflict, personal goals, transformation arcs.
* **Best for:** Drama, romance, coming-of-age stories.
* **Example:** *Arjun Reddy*, *3 Idiots*, *Alaipayuthey*.

**Pros:** Deeply emotional, audience connects with characters.  
**Cons:** Plot can feel meandering if characters’ choices aren’t focused.

**4. Plot-Driven Story**

* **Definition:** Events, actions, or external circumstances drive the story; characters react to plot.
* **Key Elements:** Conflict, twists, obstacles, goals imposed by the world.
* **Best for:** Action, thriller, heist, fantasy, sci-fi.
* **Example:** *Inception*, *Baahubali*, *Sicario*.

**Pros:** Keeps tension high, suspenseful.  
**Cons:** Characters can feel flat if their internal journey isn’t emphasized.

**5. Theme-First / Idea-Driven Story**

* **Definition:** Story is built to explore a central theme, concept, or social message.
* **Key Elements:** Characters and events symbolize aspects of the theme.
* **Best for:** Social dramas, message films, allegories.
* **Example:** *PK* (religion & faith), *3 Idiots* (education system), *Parasite* (class divide).

**Pros:** Powerful message, cohesive moral or philosophical undertone.  
**Cons:** Characters may feel like symbols rather than real people.

**6. Conflict-First Story**

* **Definition:** Identify the central conflict first (man vs man, man vs nature, man vs self) and build story around it.
* **Key Elements:** Clear antagonist or obstacle, rising tension, stakes.
* **Best for:** Action, adventure, thrillers, survival stories.
* **Example:** *The Dark Knight*, *Jurassic Park*, *RRR*.

**Pros:** Keeps narrative tense and engaging.  
**Cons:** May neglect character development if focus is only on conflict.

**7. Situational / “What-If” Story**

* **Definition:** Begins with an intriguing “what-if” scenario; plot emerges from exploring the consequences.
* **Key Elements:** Premise → exploration → resolution.
* **Best for:** Sci-fi, fantasy, speculative fiction, high-concept films.
* **Example:** *Inception* (what if dreams could be invaded?), *Eega* (what if a man became a fly?).

**Pros:** Original and imaginative.  
**Cons:** Needs careful world-building to make the scenario believable.

**8. Improvisational / Actor-Centric Story**

* **Definition:** The story develops organically on set with actors improvising dialogue and actions.
* **Key Elements:** Flexible script, scene-by-scene evolution.
* **Best for:** Realistic dramas, slice-of-life films, independent cinema.
* **Example:** *Gangs of Wasseypur*, *Before Sunrise* trilogy.

**Pros:** Naturalistic dialogue, authentic performances.  
**Cons:** Risk of losing structure or pacing if not guided carefully.

**9. Hybrid Approach**

* Most contemporary filmmakers mix methods:
  + Start with a **theme** → create **characters** → build **conflict** → decide **plot structure**.
* Example: *RRR* → Epic story + character depth + symbolic themes + conflict-driven plot.
* Example: *Arjun Reddy* → Character-driven + situational + conflict-focused.

💡 **Quick Tip:**  
A story’s method often dictates **how characters are built**:

* Character-first → story emerges from personality & choices.
* Story/plot-first → characters are designed to serve plot/structure.
* Theme-first → characters are crafted to express an idea.