**CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT** by *Kate Bligh*  
  
Character is defined chiefly through behaviour, through what is DONE. (This includes the manner in which people speak.) In order to create a credible fictitious character, the writer needs to think carefully about the nature and likely behaviour of that person. Every human being is infinitely complex, and there is literally no end to the amount of thought that can be devoted to this aspect of creative writing.   
  
The list below is a basic outline of some of the initial ways in which a writer may contemplate a character. Remember, thinking and making notes is only the beginning; a great deal of research can also be done in order to investigate certain experiences or character traits.

1. **Character’s Super Objective** for the drama/story/action. What does this person want most in the world? What is stopping them from having this? (The chief obstacles to this - internal and external ones).
2. **Characteristics**. What are the key qualities, expressed in single words (adjectives) that you would use to describe this person? Remember, people have ‘outers’ and 'inners’ – the qualities they like to project or show to the world, and then their true natures – how they really are.
3. **Animal**. If this character were an animal, what animal would they be? Why? Following on from this choice, think about the physicality of the character. Think about this person’s self image and relationship with their own body.
4. **Biography**. You should undertake enough thought/research to have a clear understanding of the character’s upbringing, background and the key or most formative events in the character’s life so far. This should be undertaken with as much reference as possible to information relating to likely or credible situations. It is rarely useful to take random decisions about a character - eg - ‘this character is a keen stamp collector/skate boarder’. They should always be related to qualities or events that you will include in your plot/writing.
5. **Status** – what’s this person’s job, position in life, in family, class, gender, race, nationality, influences, beliefs, likes and dislikes...
6. **Shadow moves**. What characteristic physical habits might this person have? (nail biting, hand gripping, leg jogging etc) Are there any specific ones necessary for the plot? Shadow moves are often related to a person’s occupation or preoccupations.
7. **Image**. A painting or photograph of how you imagine your characters to look can be very useful. Or base them on someone you know in real life.
8. **Descriptions**. Think about how this person would describe themself, and how other people might do this. Note the discrepancies.
9. **Doings**. List the types of activities that your character might undertake in their daily life, and how they might react in the situations you will place them in.
10. **Diction**. What language(s) does this person speak? Is this an educated, articulate person, or a quiet and monosyllabic type? Do they swear, or use perfect, formal speech? What dialect or accent in which languages does this person use? Does he or she have favourite words & phrases?
11. **Journey** / changes in the play/ arc. Where does this person begin, and where will they end up? Will they be happier, sadder, wiser, madder at the end than at the beginning?
12. **Greatest fear**. What would be the most terrifying event or experience ever for this particular person?
13. **What does your character lack**? What have they not received in life so far (education, stability, love, reassurance, satisfaction etc) that would help them to be a happier or more capable person (and the absence of which renders them a more interesting dramatic character…?
14. **Key insights**, ideas and responses which come to you whilst you are developing this character...