**Character Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Concept**

These are the fundamentals, the broadest strokes.

1. **What emotion best describes your character?** Find one primary emotion your character expresses. Try to use a colorful, specific word to describe it. For instance, instead of “angry” you might say “vengeful” or “raging,” or instead of happy you might say “cheerful” or “exalting.”

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1. **What emotion does your character evoke in others?** How do others react to you? Do you impress, scare, calm, excite, or perhaps annoy? Again try to find the most specific term you can. Is this reaction different between friends and enemies?

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1. **What does your character need most?** If your character had everything he or she needed, why go on an adventure? Most people’s needs are fairly universal, although they can change over time. Common needs are survival, security, companionship, esteem, romance, family, or wisdom. Consider what your character’s starting needs are, and where you want them to be by the end of the adventure or campaign. It helps to establish this need with the GM, to ensure it fits with the themes of the game.

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1. **What is your character’s goal in life?** This should be the principle, underlying motivation for everything your character thinks, says, and does. If your character were lying on the brink of death, what makes him or her cling to life? What could your character lose that he or she would consider worse than death? This goal is often broad, and sometimes unachievable. Whatever the nature of the goal, it should be something your character can strive for his or her entire life. The best goals are ones that can be threatened, as they will help create more compelling adventures. Ideas include justice, revenge, protecting loved ones, redeeming one’s self, or gaining some kind of power. When you think of something, ask yourself “why?” to make sure it isn’t because of some larger, more important goal.

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1. **How does your character believe this goal can be accomplished?** Because the goal can often be ideological, the method to achieving it is sometimes equally insubstantial. Your character’s methods should be strongly tied to beliefs (or lack of beliefs), and primarily be a decision of lifestyle. A character bent on revenge might consider perfecting a fighting discipline, while a character devoted to a cause might consider a religious or philosophical doctrine.

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**Background**

For any campaign, a character should have come from somewhere. Spend any length of time with someone and their history is bound to come up. These questions give your character history, and therefore dramatic and emotional weight.

1. **Where did your character come from?** Consider your character’s initial roots, before he or she was a teenager. These times are what shape your character the most. Who were your parents? Where did you live? What was your family’s economic and social status? How were you educated? What were the three most important lessons you learned?

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1. **When did you grow up?** Everyone begins taking responsibility for their own lives at different times and in different ways. Describe the events related to when your character started taking care of him- or herself.

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1. **What values does your character hold?** Name three things your character considers sacred, and three things he or she is ideologically opposed to. These things will usually stem from a combination of your goals and your personal history. Consider especially where the values came from. Was your character taught these values? Did they develop as a reaction to something your character considered noble or diabolical? Establish lines that your character will not cross in pursuit of his or her goal to add challenge to playing your character.

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1. **How does your character dress?** Start generally with an overall statement of the quality of your character’s appearance, such as projected social status, trade, common activities, or how groomed or slovenly your character is. Begin to hone in on telling details, especially those things that most people take for granted. How exactly does your character style his or her hair? What decorative articles does your character wear, such as jewelry, decorated buttons or buckles, a belt, gloves, etc.? *One especially telling detail is footwear.* Describe in detail what your character wears on his or her feet, including cut, tightness or looseness, heel height, sole hardness or softness, lacing/buckling/tying or lack thereof, toe shape (square, round, pointed…?), color, material, shininess, cleanliness, repair or disrepair, and any other details you can think of.

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1. **What are your character’s means?** Consider all the resources your character has. This should include material resources such as money and property, social resources such as friends and allies, and personal resources such as skill, courage, strength, wits, etc. It might help to make a list of all your character’s resources that he or she might use to overcome adversity. Consider challenges like fights, puzzles, traveling, persuading (and being persuaded), and any others.

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**Details**

Now we’re picking nits. These five are all about texture and color. These answers take your character beyond an adventure serial persona and into reality. Answers to these make your characters memorable for years.

1. **What are your character’s personal tastes?** Name at least three things your character enjoys for no reason other than personal preference. A good place to start is with each of the five senses. Consider a sound, smell, taste, feeling, or sight that is uniquely pleasing to your character. Also consider activities such as hobbies or habits. Name three things your character dislikes, as well.

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1. **What are your character’s opinions?** Decide upon at least three major aspects of local society and your character’s opinion on them. This could be generalizations such as rich or poor people, more specific areas like a particular political or religious group, or very specific things like a prominent individual or an aspect of the character’s job. Check with your GM for relevant things in the campaign to have opinions about.

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1. **What is your character’s comfort zone?** What environment, activity, or mindset puts your character at ease? This can add a lot of color to your character during stressful moments, as he or she will have a place to go or a thing to do at these times. It helps to have a comfort zone broken up into the above parts so at least some of it is portable.

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1. **Who has had the biggest impact on your character’s life?** Name and briefly describe at least one person who had a significant impact on how your character perceives the world today. You can name more than one, but they should each reflect different aspects of your character’s beliefs. Use this as a reference point when your character has to make difficult decisions (i.e., “What would so-and-so do?”).

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1. **What are some of your character’s unexpected quirks?** Name three things that are unexpected about the way your character behaves, such as things that go against his or her normal social status, age, or trade. How about three unexpected talents or abilities like being able to sing, or knowing some trivial knowledge, or being good at math? Three things your character can’t do that most other people can such as whistling, swimming, or reading well? How about three things your character fears, such as heights, dogs, or insects?

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**Player**

These five questions direct your play experience itself rather than your character. What do you want out of your game? If a group answers these together, they can expect dramatically rewarding game sessions, and the GM will know clearly what’s expected to give everyone a good time.

1. **What kind of story does your character belong in?** Who are the characters your character interacts with? What settings does he or she inhabit? What themes are important? What conflicts does your character face? These things are important to understand so your GM can create adventures that will engage your character, and so you will have a better chance at getting along with your fellow players’ characters.

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1. **What role does your character fill?** Roleplaying is all about the ensemble cast. Make sure you fill a unique role in the party, and you aren’t stepping on anyone else’s toes. Consider your role in the interpersonal relations of the party, your role in combat, what skills your character is best at, and what thematic note your character hits.

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1. **What should the other players know about your character?** These should be major thematic points, your character’s general emotion (if it isn’t secret), potential surprises or areas that might be difficult, and any other pertinent information. Also start sketching out potential interactions, such as another character you might go to for help (or who might go to you for help), or someone you’ll probably butt heads with. Getting these things out in the open is important to ensure there aren’t unpleasant surprises.

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1. **What is your play style?** Do you like heavy character immersion, or attention to detail in the rules, or perhaps you’re especially goal-oriented? Maybe you’re a bit competitive. Do you prefer lots of colorful descriptions, or a quicker framework understanding of situations? Do you speak in your character’s voice? You may not even be aware of your own play style. Keep this in mind as you play so you can better communicate with your fellow players about the direction of the party as a whole, and the course of the adventure. This also helps your GM understand your personal needs at the gaming table.

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1. **How do you want your character to die?** Your character won’t live forever, although you might not play him or her to the end. If you had your choice of deaths for your character, what would it be? Death of old age, having survived through all his or her trials? Perhaps a bloody, violent death? A noble sacrifice? Happenstance? It can also provide an unusual layer of texture to your roleplaying, as you have a better understanding of your character’s fate. It will also tell you if your character is a tragic or heroic one. Finally, it can help your GM in resolving conflicts in-game if he or she has an idea of your comfort zone with threats to your character’s life.

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