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## Character Development Questionnaire

Developing fictional characters for novels can be helped by devising a questionnaire in order to create fictional biographies. Detail such as the protagonist's past and even a name has vast implications upon the sort of person the character might be.

### Devising Characters' Past

A well-researched novel is likely to result in a story that feels authentic to the reader. It follows that the author needs to know more about their characters than what will be revealed in the novel. The questionnaire below and opposite might help the writer consider the direction in which to go.

### Character Profile Questions



Various questions are essential for the author in getting to know their characters more intimately after their [initial conception](#) and take them forward to the next step of [breathing life](#) into their characters. Things such as:

- Their past
- Where they are going
- Their present
- Their vision for the future

Detail such as their schooling, their beliefs and even what sort of car they drive will help the author think about how such detail impacts upon the character, such as the style of their [dialogue](#) and their appearance. Not every question needs an answer unless the author considers it to be significant. Time will often fill in the gaps as the author gets to know their characters better.

### Character Details

- Name
- Nickname
- Age
- Sex
- Nationality
- Disabilities (if any)
- Appearance
- Height
- Weight
- Build
- Skin tone
- Hair colour
- Quality of hair
- Colour of eyes
- Facial features
- Scars/birthmarks (if any)
- Health
- Dress
- Demeanour

### Childhood

- Place of birth
- Father's background
- Mother's background
- If no parents, why?
- Siblings (if any)
- Relationships with family
- Family issues

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### Biography

- Schooling
- Career
- Successes
- Failures
- Obstacles in life
- Special skills/training
- Gifts/talents
- Residencies abroad
- Personal Life
- Past relationships
- Marriages and divorces of any
- Sexual preference
- Reasons for relationships' demise
- Recurrent themes
- Convictions
- Pastimes
- Culinary preferences
- Attitude to life
- Religion (if any)

### Present Situation


- Marital status
- Background to marriage/partnership
- Issues and infidelities
- Dependents if any
- Dependents' names, ages and sex
- Relationship with dependents
- Profession
- Feelings about their profession
- Relationship with colleagues
- Issues at work
- Financial Circumstances
- Home life
- Daily routine
- Model of car/s driven if any

### Private Life

- secret hobbies
- The worst thing that could happen
- The best thing that could happen
- Compulsions and addictions if any
- Secret shame

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- Financial circumstances
- Best memory
- Traumas
- Lasting childhood memory

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- Personal issues
- Personal goals
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- personality flaws

## Developing a Character Profile

The author must try to avoid cardboard characters that exist merely to serve the plot. A good plot is likely to become a great one an enrichment of characters that appear to have a life of their own. Knowing all about their biographical detail, physical appearance and their present situation is a great place to start in character conception.

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