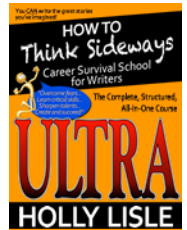




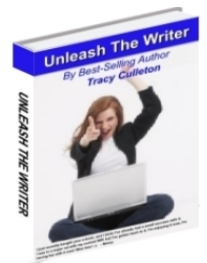
Site Search

If you're serious about your fiction writing, you definitely owe it to yourself to check out Holly Lisle's

[How to Think Sideways ULTRA: Career Survival School for Writers](#)



Beat Writers' Block Forever
(click image)



Put the odds on your side with these Resources:

- Critique Service
- How To Think Sideways
- Voice Recognition Software
- Novel Writing Software
- Novel Writing Made Easy
- Writing Workshops
- Online Writing Course
- Writing Coach
- The Wealthy Writer
- Writers Block
- Books For Writers
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Character Creation

Character creation is one of the biggest challenges facing fiction writers.

Well, let me rephrase that. Character creation is one of the biggest challenges facing *most* fiction writers!

The fiction writers who don't have to care so much about writing characters are those who are writing plot-driven novels. As I explain in the section on [plot](#) the characterization doesn't matter nearly as much in such stories.

Having said that: no agent or publisher ever turned down a novel because the character creation was **too** believable, too rounded, too well-written, and too compelling and interesting.

The solely-plot-driven novels get published *in spite* of the bad characterization, not because of it. They get published because the plot is so good it can carry the lack of characterization.

However, you'll appeal to a much wider range of readers if you have a fully-rounded story - with a compelling plot *and* compelling characters.

The pages on [plot](#) aim to help you with the former; this section is about assisting you with the latter.

How To Create Characters

So, how *do* you write memorable characters? What *is* the secret to **character creation**?

There are a few techniques which assist you in writing great characters.

The first thing is to make sure you are [creating believable characters](#). If you create fiction characters who aren't believable - if they're like cardboard cut-outs, or caricatures, then they won't engage your reader at all.

Also, readers get to know the character as they do anybody else - a bit at a time as the character is revealed to them. Above all, don't [info-dump](#).

How well should you as the writer know the character before you begin your story?

Opinion is divided on that. Some writers prefer to know everything about the character before they start; others like the character to surprise them and to reveal him/herself to the author as the story progresses.

As in so much to do with fiction writing - the right answer is - as long as it works for you as the writer, **and** it works for the story (hence the reader), it doesn't matter which you do.

Experiment with both options until you find the one which suits you.

Another author I know has some good advice about characters. For help creating your characters, check out this free [fiction writing character outline](#) (opens in new window).

Having said that, no matter which of these two possibilities suits you better, you'll still find relevant information on the other pages in this section on Character Creation.



You'll portray a lot about the character from the way she [speaks](#), how she looks/walks/dresses etc, and even the physical location in which she finds herself.

Another good trick in character creation is to learn to write [character sketches](#). These will give you practice and experience in how to create characters.

You can use the [List of Character Traits](#) as a sort of pick-n-mix of the attributes your character might have.

And then, I suggest you fill in the [Character Personality Chart](#) to find out interesting and relevant information about your characters.

It's important also to consider the [character arc](#) - how the character grows and develops through the course of the story.

You also need to realise how [character and plot](#) fit together - they are inextricably intertwined, and it's important to realise that.

An advanced characterization technique is to use both [direct and indirect characterization](#). This will help you create well-rounded and believable characters.

Don't forget your character's [back story](#).

	<p>If you're serious about getting your characters right, then you absolutely need Holly Lisle's Create A Character Clinic. Nearly 200 pages of specific, easy-to-follow tools and techniques on coming up with fully rounded and intriguing characters - all for only \$9.95. I also absolutely recommend her Create A Plot Clinic, also only \$9.95.</p> <p>Or buy them both, along with Create A Language Clinic and Create A Culture Clinic, as Holly Lisle's Writing Clinics Bundle for a discounted \$34.95.</p>
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Character names are very important too. Put a lot of effort into them. It's hard to think of a romantic hero called Cecil for example. But try to avoid clichéd names such as Dirk or Drake for your romantic heroes.

It's important that you make your characters' names all very different, i.e. starting with different initials, but also not sounding alike. So don't have John and Mark, for example - they're both 4-letter, one-syllable names and could be confused.

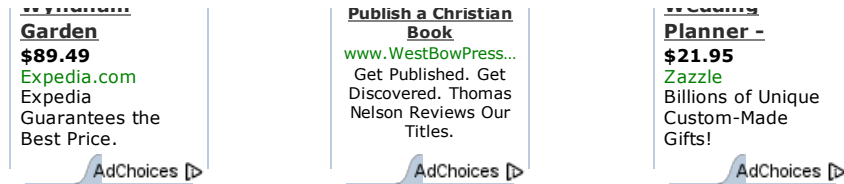
Either pick your names first, and let that help you discover the character. Or, alternatively, let your character develop, and then pick a name to suit.

I invite you also to check out [Mazlow's Hierarchy of Needs](#) to give you ideas about your character's motivation.

Other ways of defining your characters are by using things like the Five Factor Model of Personality (the latest scientific theory of human personality), and even things like astrology and the enneagram.

Now, I need to stress that you don't have to believe in any of these things for them to be useful to you in the character creation process.

Don't be slaves to them either. If one of these tools tells you that your character is, say, selfish, your reaction might be: No she isn't! That's good information too, and the tool has hence served its purpose.



(Be wary however, of automatically rejecting any negative traits for your character. We can get very fond of our main characters - almost infatuated with them - and be blind to their faults. But as you'll see in [Creating Believable Characters](#), a perfect person isn't believable.)

The links are below. Note that these all lead to external websites. These pages all open in new windows to allow you to stay on Fiction Writers' Mentor.

The Myers-Briggs method of personality categorisation is very well thought of. There are four pairs of traits, giving sixteen different permutations.

These four pairs are:

- Extrovert-Introvert
- Intuitive-Sensing
- Feeling-Thinking
- Judging-Perceiving

For more information, including quizzes you can fill out by answering for your characters, check out the following links:

- <http://typelogic.com/>
- <http://www.personalitypathways.com/>
- <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp>
- <http://www.myersbriggs.org/>
- <http://www.personalitypage.com/info.html>
- <http://www.personalitytype.com/>

Here's a fun look at how the different Myers-Briggs play out if they go to the dark side:

- <http://www.xeromag.com/fun/personality.html>

Myers-Briggs is a very well-respected model. The next model is the Enneagram. People who believe in it swear by it, but it's not accepted by mainstream psychologists. But that doesn't mean that we writers can't use it for our own purposes. (As a rule of thumb, the Myers-Briggs is about how the person relates to the world, whereas the Enneagram is more about their internal world.)

Check out some good Enneagram websites here:

- <http://similarminds.com/test.html>
- <http://www.enneagramcentral.com/>

And what about your character's astrological sign?

- <http://www.astrology-online.com/persn.htm>
- <http://www.cjwinters.com/astrochars.html>

Another thing you might like to look into is your character's Chinese Year of Birth, and how that impacts on her:

- <http://www.astrology.com/chinese-astrology>

Or her numerology:

- <http://affinitynumerology.com/ideas.html#G1265996833070>

And finally, another seriously considered factor to consider about characters, that of birth order:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birth_order

[Return from **Character Creation** to **Home**](#)

If you've got value out of this website, I'd so appreciate if you'd help me by spreading the word about it. Thanks! Tracy

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