

Journalism/Creative Writing Extended Project Fiction Track

Step Eight: In Depth Character Analysis (Secondary Characters)

Yesterday you spent a lot of detailed thinking about your major characters. Today you're going to do a similar exercise for the secondary (minor) characters. It's not as important to know *everything* about these characters like you did for your major characters simply because they won't get as much "screen time". Still, the same holds true that the more thinking you do about them now, the easier and more realistic your writing about them will be. Specifically, with secondary/minor characters, it's important to think them through so that they don't come off as flat, "clip art" characters. Like yesterday, the work you do today doesn't necessarily need to work its way in to your story; these are just exercises for you as the author so that you have all of the information necessary about your characters.

Complete the following questionnaire in your journal or on your laptop for each secondary character (if you really want to challenge yourself, fill it out in each character's "voice", as if they were answering the questions about themselves, not you answering for them):

Basic

- Full name (including first, middle, and last):
- Nicknames:
- Date of birth:
- Age:
- Place of birth:

Physical Appearance

- Height:
- Weight:
- Build/body type:
- Hair color:
- Hair texture:
- Eye color:
- Eye shape:
- Distinguishing facial features:
- Skin color:
- Race/ethnicity:
- Scars:
- Birthmarks:
- Physical handicaps:
- Type of clothes:

Personality

- Archetype:
- Favorite (or overused) phrases:

- Optimist or pessimist:
- Describe their sense of humor:
- How do they display affection?
- How do they see themselves?
- How are they seen by others? How do they want to be seen by others?
- What would they change about themselves and why?
- Strongest character trait:
- Weakest character trait:
- How do they treat others?

Friends and Family

- Who is their family?
- Describe their best friend.

Daily Life

- Describe their house.
- Are they a minimalist or is their house cluttered?
- What do they do on a Sunday afternoon?
- What do they do on a Friday night?

Past and Future

- What is their best childhood memory?
- What is their worst childhood memory?
- Did they grow up rich or poor?
- Did they grow up nurtured or neglected?
- What is their greatest achievement?
- What are their plans for the future?

Love

- Are they in a relationship?
- How do they behave in relationships?
- Do they have their own family? How old are their children?

Relationships with Others

- Who do they love the most?
- Who do they hate the most?
- Do they tend to take on leadership roles in group situations?
- Do they like being around large groups of people? Why or why not?

Conflict

- How do they respond to threat or dangerous situations?
- Are they most likely to fight with their fists or their words?

Work, Education and Hobbies

- Describe their current job:
- Educational background:
- Work experience/background:

Spirituality

- What are their religious views?
- Do they believe in an afterlife?