

Character Worksheet

Mythic Guide to Characters

Preliminary Info:

- Character's full name:
- Nickname or alias:
- Reason for nickname or alias:
- Race or ethnic group:
- Occupation:
- Education or training:
- Financial situation:
- What is the character's long-term goal for his or her life?
- What is the character's immediate goal, which is his or her primary objective in the story?

- How are the character's long-term and immediate goals connected?

LAYER I: THE CHARACTER WITHIN

The first and deepest layer is the character's unconscious mind, which forms the basis of his actions and motivations.

1.1 The Unconscious Mind

The unconscious mind holds memories, drives and instincts that are deep within the character. The unconscious mind will often drive a character's decisions, even if the character is unaware of this fact.

- What is the character's primal fear?

- What is the source of this fear?

- What is the character's most vivid childhood memory?

- What is the character's most painful memory?

- How do these memories influence the character's decisions?

1.2 The Enneagram

The enneagram classifies individuals into nine categories based on their unconscious drives and motivations. It offers a rudimentary template of who they are, and therefore how they will likely act.

No.	Name	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
1	Perfectionist	Seeks to do what's right	Strong principles and ideals	Can be judgmental
2	Giver	Seeks to help others	Supportive and loyal	Can be possessive
3	Achiever	Driven to succeed	Determination and productivity	May compromise morals
4	Romantic	Passionate & individualistic	Creativity and empathy	Can be too emotional
5	Observer	Analytic & logical	Perceptive and detail oriented	Can be shy and aloof
6	Questioner	Responsible & cautious	Can be the voice of reason	Can be too hesitant
7	Adventurer	Craves excitement	Energetic and likeable	Can be reckless
8	Protector	Seeks stability & order	Strong and authoritative	Can be controlling
9	Peacemaker	Seeks to prevent conflict	Reassuring and receptive	Can be complacent

Personality Type

- Which personality type best describes the character?
- How does the character fit the description of this personality type?

Strengths and Their Impact:

- What are the strengths of the character's personality type?
- In what ways does the character demonstrate these strengths?
- How have these strengths impacted the character's past?

Weaknesses and Their Impact:

- What are the weaknesses of the character's personality type?
- In what ways does the character demonstrate these weaknesses?
- How have these weaknesses impacted the character's past?
- What is the character's deepest secret?
- What does the character fear happening if the secret is revealed?
- Who knows the secret already?
- What is the character's biggest regret?
- What is the character's critical flaw?

- How is this flaw introduced to the readers?
- How does this flaw influence the course of the story?

Influences:

- How does the character's personality type influence his or her spirituality?

LAYER II: THE CHARACTER IN HIS OR HER WORLD

The second layer is how the character relates to his or her world. This includes how the character approaches the world, and the character's formative relationships.

2.1 Bartle Types

Bartle Types are about interaction. Bartle Types classify how characters interact with their environment, and how they interact with others.

Name	Interactions with the World	Interactions with Others
Killer	Wants to indulge	Aggressive and uncompromising
Achiever	Driven to overcome challenges	Desires recognition
Explorer	Seeks out new experiences	Tends to be sensitive and independent
Socializer	Avoids solitude	Easily connects with others

Bartle Type

- Which Bartle type best describes how your character approaches the world and others?

Interactions with the World

- How does the character approach the world?
- How does the character's Bartle type influence his or her hobbies?
- How does the character react to extreme stress?

Interactions with Others

- What is the character's general behavior towards other?
- How does the character show affection?
- Describe the character's sense of humor:
- Does the character get jealous easily?
- Does the character seek to please others?
- When interacting with others, is the character primarily honest or dishonest?

2.2 The Five Great Relationships

There are five main relationships in our lives that shape us as people. A character's relationships determines his responsibilities, as well as his social status. Relationships can limit what is possible, but can also open new possibilities, and are rich sources of conflict.

1. Ruler and Subject (Government)

- How does the character view authority figures?
- What does the character think about the role of government?
- In what nation and city was the character born?
- Describe the character's current relationship with the government of his or her birthplace:
- In what nation and city does the character currently live?
- Describe the character's relationship with the government of his or her current residence:

2. Parents and Child

- Names, ages, and occupations of the character's parents:
- Describe the character's relationship with his or her mother:
- Describe the character's relationship with his or her father:

- Does the character have any children?
- If so, list their names and ages:
- Describe the character's relationship with each child:

3. Husband and Wife (Romance)

- Name and describe the character's primary spouse or lover:
- What is the nature of the character's commitment to his or her spouse/lover?
- Is the character involved in any secondary, clandestine or adulterous relationships?
- If so, describe these relationships:
- Describe any significant past relationships:

4. Elder Sibling and Younger Sibling

- Does the character have any siblings?
- If so, list their names and ages:
- Describe the character's relationship with each sibling:

- What is the character's birth order?
- How did the character's birth order impact him or her?

5. Friend and Friend

- Name and describe the character's most significant friend(s):
- How did the character meet his or her closest friend(s)?
- Does the character prefer to have many or few friends?
- Other significant relationships:

LAYER III: THE CHARACTER IN YOUR STORY

The third and final layer is the character's role in your story. This layer can be developed using mythological archetypes, as well as a concept known as the Soul Triptych.

3.1 Archetypes

Archetypes are recognized roles that your characters can step into, and are rooted in the collective unconscious of all human beings. They are functions which are filled in the story, and any one character can play multiple roles.

Name	Function in Story
Hero	The central character. Reader is to empathize with the Hero's journey.
Shadow	Agent of danger or oppression. May represent darkness within the Hero.
Mentor	A wise character that assists the Hero on his path.
Herald	Brings news to the Hero. May call the Hero to undertake his journey.
Threshold Guardian	Presents a challenge that the Hero must overcome in order to progress.
Shapeshifter	Undergoes a change during the course of the story. Agent of plot twists.
Trickster	Seeks to upset the status quo. Brings change into the Hero's world.
Ally	Helps the Hero to achieve his goals.

Role

- Which archetype best describes the character's function in the story?
- What makes the character well-suited to perform this function?

3.2 Soul Triptych

The Soul Triptych is a literary mechanism that consists of three complimentary characters in a story, with one representing the body, another representing the mind, and a third representing the spirit.

Name	Description
Body	Usually physically strong, and is driven by desires or passions.
Mind	Demonstrates intellectual prowess, and strives to be driven by clear, rational thinking.
Spirit	Follows the heart when making decisions.

- Is the character part of a soul triptych?
- If so, which aspect does the character represent (Body, Mind, or Spirit)?
- In what ways does the character embody this aspect?
- Who are the other two characters in the triptych, and which aspects do they represent?

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Proactive vs. Reactive Protagonists

- Is this character a protagonist in your story?
- If so, offer an example of the character making a decision that alters the course of the story.

- How does this decision impact other characters, especially those closest to the protagonist?

Physical Characteristics

Don't worry about giving complete inventories of traits for your character. Rather, focus on the traits that help *define the character*, as opposed to what the character *looks* like.

1. Age and Health:

- Character's biological age:

- Does the character appear younger or older than his or her biological age?

- If so, what is the reason for this discrepancy?

- Health Concerns:

2. Build:

- Body type or build:

- Height:

- Weight:

- How does the character feel about his or her height and weight?

3. Gender:

- Is the character biologically male or female?
- Does the character self-identify as male or female?

4. Actions:

- How does the character walk?
- Describe the character's posture:
- Does the character move quickly or slowly?
- Is the character dexterous or clumsy?

5. Gestures and Expressions:

- What are some of the character's most used gestures?
- Does the character have any distinctive mannerisms or quirks?
- Does the character routinely perform any unconscious movements?
- What are the character's most used facial expressions?

6. Garments and Adornments:

- Cleanliness:
- Style of dress:
- Body art and jewelry:
- Does the character wish to stand out, or blend in?

7. Deformities:

- Does the character have any visible scars or injuries?
- If so, how did he or she obtain them?
- Was the character born with any deformities?

8. Other details:

- Complexion:
- Skin texture:
- Hair color:

- Hair length and style:
- Eye color:
- Most striking feature:
- Other distinguishing features:
- What would the character most like to change about his or her appearance?

Dialogue and Speech Patterns

Most of your characters will “sound alike,” as far as their speech goes; unless you’ve pulled most of them from a single marginalized group, they will represent the norm against which other variants are judged. Therefore, even one or two distinguishing features can go a long way toward fleshing out the impression a character makes on readers, as well as making her more readily identifiable when she speaks

1. Spoken Language

- Primary spoken language:
- Secondary spoken language(s):
- Describe the character's speaking voice:
- Is the character’s speech slow, fast, or moderate?

2. Vocabulary and Dialect

- Describe the character's vocabulary and use of language:

- Does the character speak with a regional dialect or accent?