

## The Only Character Questionnaire You Need

Complete this questionnaire for your character even if you never use the information in your book. It will help you to see them as three-dimensional, nuanced beings who leave marks on many people's lives.

If you are writing speculative fiction, adjust the questions for the worlds you create in science fiction, fantasy, or magic realism.

### Before life

Tell us about your character's parents.

Describe the parents physically: hair colour, eye colour, weight, height.

1. Where were they born?
2. Did they have happy childhoods?
3. Were they wealthy, poor, comfortable?
4. What was their social class?
5. Were they well educated?
6. What were the most important things that happened to them?
7. Did they have any history of illness – physical or mental?
8. Did any major world conflict or change in the world affect them?
9. Were your character's grandparents alive when he or she was born?  
Describe their relationship with the character's parents.

### After birth – baby

Describe the character physically: hair colour, eye colour, weight, height.

1. Was your character raised by one of these parents? One or both of them?
2. If not, who was the caregiver? What was the relationship between the two of them? How did it affect your character?
3. Into what circumstances is your character born?
4. How are they dressed?
5. Are the character's parents / caregivers happy with the sex of the child?
6. What expectation do the character's parents / caregivers have for this child?
7. Does society expect something from the character?

### Becoming – childhood

Describe the character physically: hair colour, eye colour, weight, height.

1. Where do they live?
2. Is your character considered plain, ugly, beautiful? Would the character agree with this assessment? How has this definition of their looks affected them?
3. How are they dressed?
4. Does your character lose a parent/caregiver?
5. Does something else happen that changes everything for him or her?
6. How old is your character when this happens?
7. How does this affect the character?
8. Does his or her social status change during childhood? If it does, why does this happen and how does it affect the character?
9. What is your character's relationship with his or her caregivers like?
10. Who does your character love most when he or she is a child?
11. Do they have brothers or sisters? What are their names? Are they older or younger? How do these relationships affect them?
12. Do they have relationships with any other family members?
13. List the five most important things that happen to your character as a child. Tell us when they happened and describe how they affected him or her. Did your character learn anything?
14. Is your character an introverted or extroverted child?
15. Is he or she popular?
16. What interests, hobbies, and sports does your character enjoy?
17. Is tradition / spirituality / religion an important part of your character's life?
18. Does your character do well at school?
19. How do his or her teachers see the character?
20. What is the character's greatest fear?

## **Growing – adolescence**

Describe the character physically: hair colour, eye colour, weight, height.

1. As your character becomes a teenager, where does he or she live?
2. How has the character's life changed?
3. Parents?
4. Siblings?
5. Friends?
6. Love Interests?
7. School?
8. Social status?
9. As your character's sexuality becomes more fixed, does he or she fit into the norms of society? If not, how does he or she feel different?
10. What words would you use to describe your character's style? Dress sense?
11. Who does he or she admire?

12. Is there a genre of music/books/games that he or she enjoys?
13. Is there anything that happens during these years that forces your character to mature more or less quickly?
14. What is the character's relationship with his or her caregivers like?
15. Is your character independent? Do the caregivers give him or her more or less freedom and responsibilities than the average teenager?
16. Is your character prepared to become an adult?
17. Who does your character love most during these years?
18. Does your character know what he or she wants to do as an adult?
19. List the five most important things that happen to your character as a teenager. Tell us when they happened and describe how they affected him or her. Did your character learn anything?
20. What is the character's greatest fear?

## **Settling – adulthood**

Describe the character physically: hair colour, eye colour, weight, height.

1. Did your character complete his or her education?
2. What does your character do for a living?
3. How has the character's life changed?
4. Life Partners?
5. Children?
6. Friends?
7. Siblings?
8. Parents?
9. Social status?
10. What goals does your character have?
11. How do they dress now?
12. Is your character in a relationship? How many times has he or she been 'in love'? How have these people influenced the character?
13. How do they see the world? Is it different to when they were children or teenagers?
14. List the five most important things that happen to your character as an adult. Tell us when they happened and describe how they affected him or her. Did your character learn anything?
15. Do they see patterns of behaviours that emerge through their lives?
16. Is your character independent?
17. Does he or she live alone or with somebody?
18. Does your character have children?
19. Write a bucket list for your character at 20, 30, 40, 50, 60. Does the list change? Has your character achieved any of the things on the list?
20. What is your character's favourite quotation?
21. Does he or she have a motto?

22. As your character reflects on everything happened, is there an interest from childhood that has endured and matured during his or her life?
23. What is the character's greatest fear?

## Slowing down – old age

Describe the character physically: hair colour, eye colour, weight, height.

1. Have they accomplished their goals? How do they feel about them?
2. How does the character's life change?
3. Life Partners?
4. Children?
5. Grandchildren?
6. Siblings?
7. Friends?
8. Social status?
9. How do they dress now?
10. Have they built strong relationships during adulthood? What is this family or support system like as they age?
11. Who do they love most at this stage of their life?
12. Are there patterns in their relationships with their children that were present in their relationships with their parents? Is there a 'sins of the fathers' theme that runs through their stories?
13. How does your character want people to remember them?
14. How do they react to the effects of ageing, illness, losing strength?
15. What does your character think happens when we die?
16. What is the character's greatest fear?

## After life

1. Who is left after your character dies?
2. How do these people remember your character?
3. Has your character left a mark on the world?

Add layers to this profile with the food they enjoy, the clothes they wear, and the places they choose to live. These will evolve out of the progression of their lives.

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