Eng. 9 Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How to Create Believable Characters in your Stories

1. ***The four main things that your reader will always need to know are:***

**Appearance.** This gives your reader a visual of the character

**Action.** Shows what kind of person your character is by showing their actions, rather than simply telling what kind of person he/she is.

**Speech.** Develop the character as a person, as an individual

**Thoughts.** Let your readers into your character's mind to show them the character's thoughts, fears, hopes, dreams, etc.

***2. To help you show your reader the four main things above, below is a list of details that you should know about each of your characters.*** These details are necessary for you to get to know your character but you don’t necessarily need to reveal all of these details to the reader.

-Name -Pets -Temperament -Things they have

-Age -Religion -Favourite colour -Secrets

-Job -Hobbies -Friends -Memories

-Ethnicity -Single or married -Favourite Foods -Illnesses

-Appearance -Children/siblings -Phobias -Nervous Gestures

-Residence -Sleep patterns -Faults

*Other things to consider when creating a character:*

***1. Make fictional characters’ voices real***

The voice of narration should reflect the mind and personality of your character. For example, a child would speak using simple vocabulary. If you are narrating from the third person, then their dialogue should reflect their personality

***2. Show character development***Even short stories should show character development. Characters should discover new things about themselves, other characters and their world in the course of a story.

***3. Give characters wants and needs (goals and motivations)***

Kurt Vonnegut famously said that [every character in a story should want something](http://www.nownovel.com/blog/best-advice-writers-vonnegut/), even if it’s only a glass of water. Characters who have goals and motivations are believable because they (like us) have desires. They don’t simply sleepwalk through your story.

Think of [the primary motivations that drive people](http://www.nownovel.com/blog/character-motivations/). They include desire for:

Love or intimate relationships

-Wealth, fame and/or status

-Redemption or restored dignity

-A better world or the happiness of others

These are just some character motivation examples. Characters are especially believable when you show *why*they hold these desires. For example, a character obsessed with gaining wealth and status might have endured struggle and disadvantage.

***4: Steer clear of cultural stereotyping***

The most widely criticized type of character in fiction is one who represents a stereotype of a nationality, ethnicity or cultural identity. Be careful of [representing ‘foreign’ accents using alternate spellings](http://www.nownovel.com/blog/how-to-write-accents-dialects/). Make sure that your novel’s ‘others’ (characters from different cultural backgrounds to your protagonist) are not mere props.

**Assignment:**

*Pick one of the pictures from the overhead and use a person in that picture to create a character for your story*

-Name -Pets -Temperament -Things they have

-Age -Religion -Favourite colour -Secrets

-Job -Hobbies -Friends -Memories

-Ethnicity -Single or married -Favourite Foods -Illnesses

-Appearance -Children/siblings -Phobias -Nervous Gestures

-Residence -Sleep patterns -Faults -Daily routines