

Creating Interesting Characters:

Who Are You and What Are You Doing Here?

Materials:

Random pieces of clothing (hats/boots)

Character questionnaire(s)

Scenic prompts (see below)

I. Hats and Boots:

- a. Time to raid a few closets! Your siblings', parents', grandparents'—whoever! Just do a 5-minute run around your house and gather up anything that looks weird/interesting/funny. Think construction boots, ballet slippers, and superman capes. Get as weird as you want.
- b. Put all of the items in a large container, like a suitcase or laundry basket.
- c. With your eyes closed (or not—up to you), take turns selecting a couple of items out of the bin.
- d. Your character is whoever would wear these costume pieces.

II. Character Questionnaire:

- a. Fill out the character questionnaire as your character. (If there's more than one person doing this activity, it can be really fun to read your answers to each other and "introduce" your characters.)

III. Writing prompt:

- a. Put your character in a scene. How would your character behave:
 - i. *In the dentist office after getting their wisdom teeth pulled?*
 - ii. *If they accidentally dropped their phone in the toilet in a public restroom?*
 - iii. *If their girlfriend/boyfriend broke up with them? Or they decide to break up with their girlfriend/boyfriend?*
 - iv. *In a power outage?*
 - v. *If they got lost in the woods during a storm?*
- b. Choose a prompt and use it to create a scene about your character.
- c. Things to think about:
 - i. How would the character (not you) react in the given scenario? Are they overly-dramatic, sad all the time, or super hyper?
 - ii. Who are the friends or family members that might appear in this scene?
 - iii. Where does your character live? What setting hints can you incorporate in the scene? (For example, if your character is a cowgirl, you might not take your reader on a tour of her ranch, but maybe her pants are a little dusty, or she has to get home before sundown to help bring in the herd.)
 - iv. A good scene typically starts right in the heart of the action, so skip the "hey, how are you's." If your scene takes place in a café, start when the waitress takes your order or the dinner conversation starts to get awkward.

IV. Read your scene to someone you love!

A Characterization Questionnaire:

1. What do you want to be when you grow up?
2. If you could do anything you wanted all day long, what would it be?
3. What are you wearing right now?
4. What is your favorite food?
5. Who is your best friend?
6. What makes you angry?
7. Favorite toy as a child?
8. Who do you currently live with?
9. Where do you currently live?
10. When was the last time you cried and why did you cry?
11. What is under your bed?
12. What's in your top dresser drawer?
13. What's the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning?
14. What's your favorite smell?
15. What are you afraid of?

16. What did you do on your last birthday?
17. How old are you?
18. Who is your hero?
19. If your house was on fire and all the people and pets were out, what three things would you save?
20. Who are you more like—your mother or father? Why?
21. Choose three nouns to describe yourself.
22. Choose three adjectives to describe yourself.
23. How do you handle stress?
24. How would you react in a fight?
25. When was the last time you did something for the first time?