



Creative Writing—Short Fiction Unit

CREATING A CHARACTER

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- ✘ Appearance
- ✘ Idiosyncrasies (Quirks)
- ✘ Personal History
- ✘ Interactions with Others
- ✘ Speech, thoughts, feelings, actions, and desires

APPEARANCE

- ✗ Gender
- ✗ Age
- ✗ Disabilities
- ✗ Distinguishing marks
- ✗ Hair/eye colour
- ✗ Height/Weight
- ✗ Clothing
- ✗ Do you, the narrator, give the description?
- ✗ Do you let other characters give the description?
- ✗ A combination of the two is better

IDIOSYNCRACIES (QUIRKS)

- ✘ Odd habits that help to define your character
- ✘ OCD (Monk)
- ✘ Stop smoking, start sucking on lollipops (Kojak)
- ✘ Can't seem to hold on to a job/keep money
- ✘ A sucker for a pretty face...and other parts

PERSONAL HISTORY

- ✘ Get a feel for why a character does something (Batman, Spider-Man)
- ✘ Learn about past character interactions
- ✘ Perfect for incorporating flashback

INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS

- ✗ Helps to define personality
- ✗ Timid or rash
- ✗ Courteous
- ✗ Male chauvinist
- ✗ Feminist
- ✗ Does your character work well with others? A loner?
- ✗ How do other characters perceive your character?

SPEECH, THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, ACTIONS AND DESIRES

× Speech

- + Educated vs. Street Smarts
- + Dialect?
- + Lots vs. Little talking

× Thoughts

- + Do we hear his thoughts?

× Feelings

- + Does she let feelings control self, or does she rely on reason?

× Actions

- + Choices make the character
- + Positive vs. negative actions

× Desires

- + What does your character want in life?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER—CREATE THE IMAGE

