

Character interview

Name:

Species:

Where do they live:

What was important to the people who raised them:

Siblings:

Economic/social status growing up:

Ethnic background:

Favourite subject in school:

Any special training/skills/superpowers:

Friends:

How do other people view this character:

Lives with:

Fights with:

Spends time with:

Wishes to spend time with:

Who depends on them and why:

What people do they most admire:

Who are their enemies and why:

Does this character like themselves:

What do they want most:

What do they fear most:

What do they care about most:

What, if anything, would they like to change about their life:

Are they lying to themselves about something:

Typical day:

Physical appearance:

What people notice first:

Clothing:

Health/disabilities:

Greatest strength:

Greatest weakness:

How can the flip side of their greatest strength be a weakness:

How can their greatest weakness also be a strength:

Talents:

What people like best about them:

Favourite Music:

Books:

Movies:

Sports/hobbies:

A great gift for this person:

Typical expressions (things they say all the time):

Ways to cheer up this person:

Ways to annoy this person:

What's the worst thing they've ever done to someone and why:

Greatest success:

Biggest trauma in their past:

How does this trauma still affect them:

What do they believe that isn't actually true:

What do they care about most in the world:

Do they have a secret:

If they could do one thing and succeed at it, what would it be:

What do you love most about this character:

Why will the reader sympathize with this person right away:

How is the character ordinary or extraordinary:

How is their situation ordinary or extraordinary:

Brainstorm 5 different possible plot outlines for your character using the following format:

_____ wants _____

because otherwise _____

But _____ is getting in the way because _____

_____ nearly fails (or does fail) to get what they want because _____

But in the end _____

For example:

Lightning McQueen wants to win a car race

Because otherwise he'll lose his sponsors and be a failure

But the cars of Radiator Springs are getting in the way because they make him do community service.

Lightning McQueen fails to get what he wants because he becomes a more caring car and when he has the chance to win the race he gives it up to help a friend

But in the end his selflessness is rewarded by his sponsors and he uses his fame to help his new friends

Frodo wants to destroy the Ring

Because otherwise the Shire will be destroyed

But Saruman and Golem are getting in the way because Saruman wants the Ring to fall into human hands and Golem wants the Ring for himself

Frodo nearly fails because when he has the chance to destroy the Ring he is too weak to give it up

But in the end Golem's weakness for the Ring ensures its destruction

Romeo and Juliet want to get married

Because otherwise they'll be separated, and Juliet will have to marry Paris

But their families are getting in the way because they have an ongoing feud

Romeo and Juliet fail to get what they want because Romeo kills Juliet's cousin, gets banished and there's a miscommunication in the plan to reunite them

And in the end they both die rather than live without each other

Katniss wants to win the Hunger Games and be the sole survivor

Because otherwise she will die

But Peeta is getting in the way because if Katniss wins he will die, and she kinda likes him

Katniss fails to get what she wants because when she has the opportunity to kill Peeta and win, she can't do it

But in the end she gets what she needs by outwitting the Game Makers and finding a way for them both to win

Harry wants to go to Hogwarts, be a wizard and find a 'family' of people who love and understand him

Because otherwise he'll have to live with the Dursleys, who don't love him at all

But Voldemort is getting in the way because he's trying to kill Harry and all his friends

Harry nearly fails to get what he wants because Voldemort is very powerful and kills a lot of his friends and Harry almost gives up when Dumbledore dies

But in the end Harry and his friends unite to defeat Voldemort and he ends up with a wizard family of his own

Tip: Use your interview questions to help fill in the blanks:

- For the thing they want, look at their answers to what they care most about/what they'd like to succeed at/what's important to them/their secrets.
- For the thing that gets in the way, think about their greatest fear/biggest trauma/secrets.
- To decide how they eventually succeed, think about their greatest strength or what they would have to do to overcome their greatest fear etc.

Sometimes the thing they want is a good thing and they'll achieve it in the end (like Harry Potter) but sometimes it's a bad thing and in the end they'll decide they don't really want it at all, they want something better (like Lightning McQueen). In that case, the ending will reveal to them that what they 'want' (to win the race) isn't really what they 'need' (to be a better person). So think about what your character 'needs' as well as what they want.