

# Character Analysis

Each of the following areas must be addressed to better understand your character in order to make important **acting** choices. Sometimes the playwright will directly provide the information; more often than not the actor will need to search the text for clues to these areas. Use your imagination (and the information you've already collected) to answer each of the areas.

## I. Character Dissection

Write it in the first person, and follow the outline format below for your responses.

### A. Physical

*Everything in this section should describe the outer side of the character, how they are seen and how they appear.*

1. Full Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender (*male or female*) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age (*exact, not approximate*) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Posture (*good, bad-describe*) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Center (*where does the character carry himself*) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Strength (*relative physical strength*) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Health (*the current state*) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Defects (*scars, etc.*) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Appearance (*overall*) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Shape \_\_\_\_\_
11. Point of Vanity (*what part of their body is the character most proud of*) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### B. Social

*Everything in this section should describe the life of the character in his/her community, how they have been prepared and how they function with others.*

1. Class (*lower, middle, upper*) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Occupation (*job/school*) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Education (*how many years in school, last grade completed*) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Home Life (*live alone, with others, married, quality of that existence*) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. I. Q. (*not always indicated by education*) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Race (*Caucasian, etc.*) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Nationality (*countries descended from*) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Religion (*either by birth or by choice*) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Place in Community (*status in society*) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Amusements (*what sort of hobbies, activities interest the character?*) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## C. Psychological

*Everything in this section should describe the inside of the character, how they see themselves and his/her life.*

1. Love Life (*describe generally the nature of it*) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Moral Standards (*not just high or low, but give a hint of what is important to your character*)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Philosophy (*about their life*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Ambitions (*personal goals and dreams*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Disappointments (*opportunities missed, wrong roads taken, relationships, etc.*)

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Complexes (*things which bother or concern your character*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Abilities (*ways in which your character excels in navigating life and its problems*)

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Qualities (*of a person's character*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Peculiarities (*oddities or unusual character traits*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. If you were an animal, what would it be and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Color (*Does your character have a favorite color and how does character impact your character?*)

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Secrets (*something nobody knows about you*) \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Character's Objectives

*These should not be arrived at until you've assembled the above information.*

**A. Super-objective (Answer the following questions based on your character's objective for the whole play.)**

1. Desire (*your character's super-objective for the play*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Will (*the relative strength or weakness in your character's ability to achieve their desire*)

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Objectives & Tactics (Answer for the following questions for each scene and write them in your script.)**

1. Objectives - The actor must find out what his or her character "wants." "I want," "I need," "I must have" statements help the actor to solidify the objective of the character. Typically it has to do with another character. You should write 1 objective for each scene.

2. **Tactic** - The strategy used to achieve your objective. A character will use a certain tactic to get their objective. They switch tactics when they feel it is not working anymore. Make sure when you pick tactics that you are using playable words (Avoid nouns, use ACTIVE VERBS.) You should have multiple tactics in each scene.

Good Examples: To scold, To taunt, To cheer up, To bribe, To bargain, To flirt, To corrupt

Bad Examples: To laugh, To sit, To stare, To leave, To feel, To run

The bad examples are DEAD END tactics. Dead end tactics don't work through the other characters on stage (your identifiable partner). There is a big difference between "I am angry at her." (What are you going to do about it?!) And "I want to destroy her."

### III. Character's Given Circumstances

*Answer each of these questions for each scene (and not the entire play)!*

**A. Where am I coming from?** \_\_\_\_\_

**B. What was I doing there?** \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Why did I leave?** \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Why have I come here?** \_\_\_\_\_

**E. What will I do here?** \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Describe the environment and how it affects you.** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**G. Whom do I know here?** \_\_\_\_\_

**H. What is my relationship to/feelings towards the people here?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### IV. Subtext

Write under each line of dialogue on the script, your character's subtext (the things they cannot say aloud). Make sure that you don't just paraphrase the dialogue but, using the insights gained from the **character analysis**, create a portrait of your character's internal life!

### V. Character Narrative

Write an autobiography for your character. It should be in the first person and tell the story of your character from birth to the day the play begins. Include as much or as little information as is necessary to deeply understand who your character is and how he or she found him or herself in this situation. Describe any relationships he or she has with other characters in the play.