



You Write!

Writing Your Story: Activity #1

What Makes a Character?



Chiti Lorenzo, case in point

I happen to know a little something about characters because I myself am a character. I know this is true because when I sit in the park with my cat, Chiti, reading her a story, I often overhear someone say, “Now there’s a real character.” Of course, they could be talking about Chiti. She looks quite striking in her red ball cap, don’t you think?

When I sit down to write, I need the help of my characters: Kitten and The Peep, Cletus and Tooth, Beatrice and Blossom, and others. Otherwise I wouldn’t be able to begin at all! A character must have likes and dislikes, quirks and quibbles – in short, a whole assortment of characteristics. These are what give them their *raison d’etre*, their reason for being. Give each of your characters some interesting characteristics of their own, and they’re sure to have a great time in your story.

Choose Your Characters

Here are some of the types of characters I’ve met in the books I’ve read. Read a little about each character, then create a few of your own. Most good stories have at least two characters in them. With only one character in a story, it’s hard to get anything to happen!

Hero

You, of course (or someone very like you.) But not just any old you. This is you with a secret identity and/or a cool *ability*.

Sidekick (or Henchperson)

Best friend or someone you trust. Must enjoy being along for the adventure. Likely to be quite a bit less brave than you are, but every bit as kind-hearted.

Arch-nemesis

Your enemy, aka your arch-enemy, the villain. Someone who's out to get you, 24/7. Usually has a secret weapon, often one of extreme power that could end the world, quite possibly before the end of the day.

Girl /Guy Next Door

Your love interest (optional). Living next door is also optional. Main job: to be extremely impressed with your heroism. Has a tendency to be kidnapped periodically by your arch-nemesis.

Secret Weapon (or Ability)

It's a secret weapon when your arch-nemesis has it. May or may not be an actual weapon. When you, the Hero, have it, it's a secret ability. Your secret ability may also be a car, starship, or other special gear.

The Folks

Your parents. Or your aunt and uncle. Or your hometown buddies. Whoever connects you to Home.

These folks know your true identity. They also have a tendency to be kidnapped by your arch-nemesis.

Write On!

Amanda Lorenzo