



Character Portraits

Activity: Character Portraits

Category: Make It!/Just for Fun!

Series: Great Tips on Writing (12 Great Tips on Writing Fiction)

Supplies

- *12 Great Tips on Writing Fiction*
- The book's 12StoryLibrary.com page: <http://www.12storylibrary.com/non-fiction/great-tips-on-writing/12-great-tips-on-writing-fiction/>
 - The “Character Questionnaire” web resource
- 11x17 sheets of paper
- Pencils, colored pencils, and markers

Prep

Read Chapter 4 (“Create Believable Characters”) of *12 Great Tips on Writing Fiction* with the students, or assign it to them to read beforehand. Print a copy of the Gotham Character Questionnaire for each student, or show the questions on an overhead projector.

Directions

After reading Chapter 4, ask the students to list some of their favorite characters from fiction stories. What do they like about these characters? What do these characters have in common?

Many people choose their favorite characters because the characters seem like real people. To seem like a real person, a character must be complex. Like a real person, the character should have interests, hobbies, desires, and fears. He or she should have a favorite food, a most embarrassing moment, and secrets he or she doesn't want people to find out. If a story's author has not thought enough about these details, the readers will be able to tell. The character will not be believable.

A great way to create details about characters is to pretend to interview them. By pretending to ask their characters questions and writing down the answers, authors can get to know their characters better.

Today, the students will practice creating their own believable characters. Give each student an 11x17 paper. On one half of the paper, the students should choose 10 questions from the Gotham Character Questionnaire to answer about their character. Remind the students to use specific details in their answers. They should describe sights, sounds, and smells. They should also show their character's thoughts and feelings.

On the other half of the paper, the students should draw a picture of their character. Hang the finished pictures and interviews up on the walls of your classroom.

Evaluation

Did the students answer 10 questions about their character, using specific details in their answers and showing their character's thoughts and feelings? RL 4.3, W 4.4

Purpose

To help students practice identifying the traits that make fictional characters believable and to give them tools to help them create believable characters in their own writing.