

Character Development Template

This template translates the ideas from Samuel Delany's notes about developing characters.*

Name:

- Name:
- Age:
- Occupation/Role:
- Key traits:
- Primary motivation(s):
- Internal conflicts:
- External conflicts:

Three Types of Actions

Delany notes: *there are three types of actions: purposeful, habitual, and gratuitous. If the writer can show a character involved in a number of all three types...the character will probably seem more real.* For each type of action, consider situation and the character's emotions involved.

Purposeful Actions: Deliberate actions that reveal what the character wants and how they pursue it.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Habitual Actions: Patterns of behavior that reveal personality and what the character does without thinking.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Gratuitous Actions: Seemingly random or impulsive actions that add unpredictability, what the character does just because.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Exposure Framework

Characters feel more real when they interact with a variety of elements in the world. Delany suggests a short list of things to which major characters in a novel should be exposed, *in order to make them appear particularly vivid*. He suggests that characters should be exposed to, and be allowed to have reactions to, food, sleep, money, and society. (prompt descriptions below are quoted from his notes in the book).

Food: *How does the character behave when eating with a group? If possible, how does she or he react when supplying food for others?*

Sleep: *What particularizes his/her going to sleep, his/her waking up?*

Money: *How does he or she get his/her shelter, food, and how does she or he feel about how she or he gets it?*

Society: *How does he or she react to somebody who makes substantially more money than he or she does, and how is this different from the way he or she acts to an economic peer (and believe me, it is different, however admirable)? And how does she or he react when she or he meets somebody who makes substantially less money than he or she does (and ditto)?*

Other: What specific **objects** do they frequently handle or find connection with in your story?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.