

CHARACTER BUILDING WORKBOOK

Create Characters Readers Obsess Over

A Boshers Publishing Author Resource

Welcome

Readers may come for your plot, but they stay for your characters.

Think about your favorite books. Chances are you remember the people long after you've forgotten the details of the story.

Why?

Because great characters feel real.

They have flaws, fears, desires, contradictions, wounds, and dreams.

This workbook will help you create characters that leap off the page and live in readers' minds long after the final chapter.

PART 1: THE FOUNDATION

Character Snapshot

Character Name: _____

Nickname(s): _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Occupation: _____

Physical Description:

The Elevator Pitch

Describe your character in one sentence.

Example:

A disgraced detective determined to solve one last case before losing everything.

Your Turn:

PART 2: WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER WANT?

External Goal

What does your character think they want?

Examples:

- Win the championship
- Save the family business
- Find a missing child
- Escape their hometown
- Solve a murder

My Character Wants:

Internal Need

What do they actually need?

Examples:

- Forgiveness
- Confidence
- Trust
- Acceptance
- Courage

My Character Needs:

Why This Matters

The best stories happen when what a character wants and what they need are completely different.

Example:

A businessman wants to become rich.

What he actually needs is to reconnect with his family.

PART 3: THE WOUND

Every memorable character carries a wound.

A wound is an emotional injury that shapes how they see the world.

Examples:

- Abandonment
- Betrayal
- Rejection
- Failure
- Abuse
- Loss

My Character's Wound

What happened?

How old were they?

How does it affect them today?

PART 4: FEARS

Fear drives behavior.

What does your character fear most?

- ☐ Rejection
- ☐ Failure
- ☐ Being alone
- ☐ Losing control
- ☐ Being exposed
- ☐ Losing a loved one
- ☐ Other:

How does that fear affect decisions?

PART 5: STRENGTHS AND FLAWS

Perfect characters are boring.

Interesting characters are complicated.

Greatest Strengths

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
-

Greatest Flaws

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
-

Exercise

Turn a strength into a flaw.

Example:

Loyal → Blindly loyal

Confident → Arrogant

Protective → Controlling

Your Examples:

PART 6: THE CHARACTER VOICE

Every character should sound different.

Finish These Sentences

When angry, my character says:

When scared, my character says:

When joking, my character says:

When excited, my character says:

Dialogue Test

Write a short conversation between your character and a stranger.

PART 7: RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships reveal character.

Best Friend

Who are they?

Why are they friends?

Enemy

Who are they?

Why do they clash?

Love Interest

Who are they?

Biggest challenge between them?

PART 8: THE CHARACTER'S SECRET

Secrets create tension.

What is something your character desperately doesn't want others to know?

PART 9: THE CHARACTER'S LIE

This is one of the most powerful tools in storytelling.

A lie is something the character believes about themselves or the world.

Examples:

- Nobody can be trusted.
- Love always ends in pain.
- I'm not worthy.
- Power is the only thing that matters.

What lie does your character believe?

Why do they believe it?

PART 10: THE CHARACTER ARC

Where does your character begin?

Where do they end?

What changes them?

PART 11: CHARACTER ENTRANCE

A character's first appearance matters.

Weak Entrance

John walked into the room.

Strong Entrance

John kicked open the conference room door and tossed a stack of unpaid bills across the table.

One reveals a person.

The other reveals a personality.

Design Your Character's Entrance

How do readers first meet your character?

PART 12: THE OBSESSION TEST

Answer these questions:

Would readers miss this character if removed?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Can readers describe them in one sentence?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do they have a flaw?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do they make mistakes?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do they actively pursue goals?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do they change during the story?

☐ Yes ☐ No

CHARACTER INTERVIEW

Answer in your character's voice.

What is your biggest regret?

What keeps you awake at night?

Who do you trust most?

What would you die for?

What would you never admit?

What do you want more than anything?

BONUS: 10 TRAITS OF ADDICTIVE CHARACTERS

Readers love characters who are:

1. Competent at something
2. Flawed
3. Determined
4. Vulnerable
5. Unique
6. Passionate
7. Funny or witty
8. Emotionally complex
9. Unpredictable
10. Transformative

You don't need all ten.

But the more layers you add, the more memorable your character becomes.

FINAL CHALLENGE

Write one paragraph introducing your character using:

- ☒ Goal
- ☒ Flaw
- ☒ Personality
- ☒ Voice
- ☒ Conflict

Paragraph:

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Your Characters Don't Need to Be Perfect.

They need to be unforgettable. 📖 ✨