

Characters need to be complicated, multi-faceted people in order for an audience to believe in them and care about them. Come up with a range of ideas for each of these areas to help you decide upon the most suitable and believable ideas for your own characters.

Names: Use a name generator website or perhaps even a baby naming website or book to get ideas for your character. Ensure that it is suitable for their age and the genre.

Ages: Consider this carefully-your character needs to be of a suitable age for the genre and your story, but it will also dictate what your character will be like. The older they are, the more world-weary they could be but also more knowledgeable. The younger they are they will generally be more energetic and vibrant but perhaps more naïve.

Jobs: They may not have a job or may have an idea for a career that they are working towards, but a job can give the audience plenty of ideas about the type of person they are. For example, someone who is a nurse will instantly tell the audience that this character is likely to be caring and selfless, whereas an assassin will be cold, calculating and quite secretive. If stuck for ideas, use the internet to research career options.

Barriers: What things can you put in place to stop your character achieving their goals or dreams? If your chosen genre is crime film and the goal of the character is to rob a bank, what can you do as a writer to stop the character? Maybe you're creating a horror film and the main character's main goal is to stop a serial killer; how can you put barriers in the way to make that difficult for the character and therefore, making the film more interesting to watch?

Aspirations: What goals, dreams or hopes does your character have? Do they have grand dreams that will never happen but that make your character a day dreamer and a fantasist, or is your character a driven workaholic who is so driven to achieving their goals that they sacrifice everything to achieve them?

Family: Deciding on family, such as number of siblings, their parents and how well they get on with them, are important elements of any character. It will give your audience an idea about what they are like as a person and why they might react in certain ways. For example, consider the difference between an older character putting the needs of their wife or husband before themselves compared to a young, orphaned teenager.