

The Busy Writer's Book of Checklists

Checklist 3 – Characters

Aspect of Characterization	Your Assessment		
	<i>Works Well</i>	<i>Needs Work</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Have you spent time thinking about the main character so you understand his/her goals and motivation? (Preparing a character file can help - even if you never look at it again!)			
Will your main character appeal to your readers? (If readers don't care about a character, they won't keep reading.)			
Will the reader be able to empathize with your main character's goals or problems?			
Is your main character believably motivated throughout the story?			
Have you started your story at a crisis or turning point for the main character?			
Have you introduced aspects of the various characters' appearance and personality gradually as the story unfolds, rather than 'dumping' too much information into the narrative early in the story?			
Have you ensured that all characters come across as individuals? (Different looks, motivation, speech patterns, reactions etc.)			
Have you made sure that all characters are neither all good nor all bad?			
Have you provided your main character with challenges that will show character growth at the end of the story?			
What is at stake for the main character? Is this strong enough? How can you raise the stakes?			
Have you created plenty of emotional depth by filtering the action through the viewpoint character's thoughts and feelings?			
Are your secondary characters clearly motivated? Is this motivation believable?			
Are your minor characters believable but not too intrusive? (Beware of letting a secondary or minor character take over the story.)			
Does each character speak and act according to his/her age, educational level, and socio-economic status? If not, does this say something important about the character? (e.g. if a child sounds far more mature than you'd expect for a child of that age, have you made this believable?)			
Does the character's reaction to each situation 'fit' with the personality you have given him/her? If he/she is acting out of character, is this understandable given the situation?			
Is the character's reaction to each situation logical, or are you manipulating the characters to suit your initial plot?			
Are you interested enough in your own characters to want to sit down at the keyboard regularly to tell their story?			
<i>(Add Your Personalized Checklist Points Here)</i>			