

# Who is this Character?

## *Context and Character Development*

Character Development Worksheet by Jean Oram and based on *Creating Unforgettable Characters* (1990) by Linda Seger. Use one worksheet set for each major character.

Context is “the space surrounding the character” and “the contexts that most influence character include the culture, historical period, location and occupation.” (Seger, page 5)

“...cultural aspects will have wide-ranging influence upon the makeup of the characters, determining the way they think and talk, their values, concerns, and emotional life.” (Seger, page 6)

“Culture determines speech rhythms, grammar and vocabulary.”  
(Seger, page 6)

**Character’s Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Character’s Ethnic Background** (German, Ethiopian, Chinese, Italian, Finnish):

\_\_\_\_\_

How will the character’s ethnic background affect their behaviour?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will the character’s ethnic background affect their attitudes?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will the character’s ethnic background affect their emotional expressiveness?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will the character's ethnic background affect their philosophies?

---

---

**Character's Social Background** (city, farm, upper-class, poor):

---

How will this affect the character's behaviour?

---

---

How will this affect the character's attitudes?

---

---

How will this affect the character's emotional expressiveness?

---

---

How will this affect the character's philosophies?

---

---

**Character's Religious Background** (Catholic, Mennonite, Orthodox Jew, New Age, Agnostic):

---

How will this affect the character's behaviour?

---

---

How will this affect the character's attitudes?

---

---

How will this affect the character's emotional expressiveness?

---

---

How will this affect the character's philosophies?

---

---

**Character's Educational Background:**

---

\* The number of years of schooling, specific field of study will change a character's make up.

How will this affect the character's behaviour?

---

---

How will this affect the character's attitudes?

---

---

How will this affect the character's emotional expressiveness?

---

---

How will this affect the character's philosophies?

---

---

**Character's Occupation:**

A character's occupation, like religious and educational backgrounds, etc, can create a context which surrounds a character. A character's occupation can be a large part of who they are and how they look at the world. According to Seger, an occupation can influence the character's daily pace and life-style. As well, their occupation will influence the type of skills, attitudes, values and concerns that they have. As well, the character's career can act upon scenes, how the character behaves, what stresses they endure (or don't) and even upon the type of characters that pop up in the character's everyday life.

Here are some starting off questions to get you thinking about occupation:

What is this character's occupation? What do they do in a typical day?

---

---

Why did they choose/fall into this occupation? Why does it suit them? Why doesn't it suit them?

---

---

How do they feel about this occupation? How does this occupation affect their values? How does it affect their free time? How does it change who they are? How does this affect they way they talk/interact?

---

---

