

# CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Movies are driven by characters, they must be believable and their actions must be driven by their personality. The core ingredient in personality is history. A character without a history is a character that has no personality. Therefore, it is important that the principal characters in a movie or TV production have a history that defines who they are. The history itself may not necessarily form part of the story, although it can - commonly through flashbacks. However, a history profile can help writers decide how a character will react in a particular situation.

Historic profiles also help in giving a character believable qualities, such as how they dress, how they talk and how they relate to other characters in the story. Clearly, a character who's had a privileged upbringing will look, talk and act differently to a character who may have had a tougher, working class background.

Characters generally fall into one of 4 categories of Archetypes - each of these main categories are broken down into 8 sub-categories. In general, archetypes function as a literary device with the intent of complex characterisation. They assign characters with specific qualities and traits that are identifiable and recognisable to readers of literary works and movie audiences.

The 4 main categories and their respective subcategories are as follows

<b>HERO</b>	Man in Charge	Rebel	Playboy	Companion	Outsider	Expert	Action figure	Standard Bearer
<b>Heroine</b>	Centre of Influence	Lady in Red	Teammate	Ray of Sunshine	Table for one	Valedictorian	Fighter	Caregiver
<b>Villain</b>	Tyrant	Saboteur	Player	Opportunist	Insider	Evil Genius	Brute	Misguided Visionary
<b>Villainess</b>	Evil Queen	Femme Fatale	Rotten Friend	Lost Cause	Conformist	Know-it-all	Tormentor	Distracted Mother

Within each of the archetypes there will often be 2 distinct styles. For example, a know-it-all villainess can have one of two styles - a "sorceress", or an "answer to everything" style - the former would be a more manipulative character, whilst the latter would be more antagonistic due to her knowledge and power.

So, it can be seen that character development can be quite a complex subject in itself, but by going through the process of assigning archetypes and history to each of your principal characters, you will have a much more rounded and interesting group of people around which to hang your story. Furthermore, you will be able to write interactions between your characters based upon their particular archetype and style.

Mancala Writers Resources offers invaluable assistance in this particular area. By completing simple character profile forms, Mancala will provide writers with all the information they will need to write excellent characters into their movie or TV production. We will not only describe the characteristics and qualities of each character, we will also tell you how they will most likely interact with each other. This can save writers hundreds of hours of research and give them a head start in writing their screenplay. This is a service that is offered to all clients who retain Mancala to raise finance for their movie production. To better understand the value of this resource, attached is a full archetype profile for a "know-it-all" villainess. It perfectly illustrates the detail which goes into our character development service.

## **KNOW-IT-ALL VILLAINESS**

### **Description**

A Know-it-All antagonises or opposes a character the audience empathises with in the way she demonstrates the value of her knowledge, experience, or understanding to the group. Because of the way she uses her expertise only serves an agenda that suits her own purposes, her efforts result in some sort of misfortune or suffering for figures who do not share her vision.

A Know-it-All has an uncanny amount of information or understanding in at least one area of specialty. She has either studied or taken the time to understand her area of expertise in a way that few are able to. She is often regarded -- or potentially even revered -- as an authority in various areas. Where her heroic counterpart (the Valedictorian) is able to share this knowledge with others, though, in a way that is useful, a Know-it-All does not. She has a wealth of knowledge, but somehow she is able to use it to turn a profit, or even donate it to charity. Where princes are turned into frogs, living scarecrows are afire, and needles are cursed to put princesses to sleep, more often than not, a Know-it-All is the one casting the curse.

To accompany selfishness, a Know-it-All is also frequently either temperamental or prone to strong emotion. She frequently does not have a firm handle on her emotions (for example, in various retellings of Sleeping Beauty the wicked fairy cursing Aurora as punishment for not being invited to the princess' christening) and tends to react rashly. Her resolve to withstand disappointment is perhaps the worst. She has little patience for others, especially figures who are not "in the know"

She does not accept competitors for or pretenders to her supremacy. In *The Wizard of Oz*, it seems clear that the Wicked Witch of the West fears Dorothy (and anybody with a house) as much as she despises her.

Because of her temperament and selfishness, a Know-it-All seeks other methods of validation within her realm of expertise. This often leads her to take elaborate measures and develop grand schemes to achieve seemingly simple goals subversively. In the fairytale *Snow White*, the Queen wants to be "the fairest one of all" in order to accomplish this, she consults with a magic mirror, follows Snow White to the hut where she lives with the dwarves, and provides Snow White with a magic apple that puts the titular heroine into a deep sleep.

### **Background**

What is her expertise and why is she selfish? Perhaps she had a friend, family member, or a romantic interest that was powerful specifically because of their expertise. Maybe in the absence of that relationship she feels the need to restore that sense of power with a sense of expertise. Maybe she was betrayed by somebody with a great deal of expertise. Maybe this caught her off-guard. Maybe she was not provided with some gratitude she feels she deserves, possibly as a result of her expertise, and she feels the need to exact revenge. She may be convinced or feels she has proven that her way of thinking or doing something is the right way, and that anybody with a different solution challenges what she feels is a right she earned to be revered for discipline and hard work.

## **STYLES**

### **Answer to everything**

An Answer to Everything antagonises other characters specifically with the knowledge she possesses and the value of that knowledge. She may possess a great deal of information, or she may possess information that is simply scarce; either way, the information she possesses provides her with value and access not commonly available to others.

The understandings an Answer to Everything possesses are valuable, but because they are not available to everybody, they are scarce. Because an Answer to Everything knows something that is not commonly available, she possesses knowledge and experience that potentially makes her more valuable to the group than individuals who do not possess it.

Also, knowledge and experience can provide access to resources and information that is not available to everybody. Maybe an Answer to Everything has a security clearance. Maybe she has gained access to computer systems not available to the general public. Maybe she knows of a shortcut to get from Point A to Point B. Maybe she knows how to repair a car. If she uses this knowledge -- or the access or privileges that the knowledge provides her -- to antagonise others, she is likely an Answer to Everything.

## **Sorceress**

A Sorceress antagonises others by applying the knowledge she has, in order to produce some sort of effect. The knowledge of a Sorceress is powerful in and of itself, and she is able to tap into this power to produce results that affect other characters or other elements of a story that the audience empathises with, directly. Maybe she turns a prince into a frog. Maybe she places a curse on a young princess. Maybe she can create illusions. Maybe she can brew potions and poisons that can cause her victims to age abnormally or fall in love against their will.

She doesn't need to be a witch, though: she could be a computer scientist. She could be a journalist or an artist. She could be a secretary or an accountant (anybody who handles paperwork) in a large office. She could be a teacher with methods or grading criteria that are difficult to understand.

Because the knowledge a Sorceress wields is readily apparent, a Sorceress does always need to worry about whether or not it is valuable enough to the group to grant her power. Generally, a Sorceress can either render what she needs for herself, or she can threaten another character to provide it to her. In this, she is different from an Answer to Everything: an Answer to Everything is powerful because the influence provided by what she knows; because of what a Sorceress knows, her power becomes her influence. Other characters tend to be frightened by a Sorceress, both of her terrible power and of any influence she already wields with it.

## **QUALITIES**

- Very attentive to detail. Tends to be valuable because she sees things other characters do not
- Very focused
- Excellent memory and recall skills
- Resourceful
- Quick thinker
- A good strategist

## **FLAWS**

- Uncertain, unaware, or even uninterested in how others receive her
- Particularly selfish
- Tends to be impractical
- Has difficulty relating to others
- Typically has a very mechanical view of people around her
- Fails to apprehend insights that are evident to others, whether it is other characters or the audience
- Temperamental; tends to react poorly to disappointment or adversity