

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

- What is this character's name?
- What is her age and birth date?
- What does she look like?
- What are her parents like?
- Does she have brothers and sisters?
- How important are her family relationships?
- Where does she live?
- Why did she choose to live there?
- Does she live by herself? With others?
- What are her important material possessions?
- What are her hobbies?
- What is her education?
- What is her job? How does she feel about her work?
- Is this a long-term career or just a job?
- What does she want to be doing in 20 years?
- If she has unexpected free time, what does she do?
- How does she feel about the opposite sex?
- What is her relationship status? Single? Divorced?
- Does she have children?
- Who is her best friend? Why?
- Who is her worst enemy? Why?
- How would a former date describe her?
- What one event has made her who she is today?
- How does that turning point in the character's life relate to the other main character in the story?
- What trait does she have that she wants to keep secret from the world?
- What does she like most about her life?
- What does she dislike most about her life?
- What would this character die to defend?
- What are her most likable and unlikable traits?
- As the story begins, what is her main problem?
- What does she do that makes this problem worse?
- Who is this person's love interest?
- What qualities in the other main character are most attractive to this person?
- What is her ideal happy ending?

- What reaction do you want readers to have to her?
- Why should the reader care about her?



The worst thing you write
IS BETTER
than the best thing you **DO NOT** write

100 Writing Prompts Challenge

- 1. Dance
- 2. Treat
- 3. sand
- 4. salt
- 5. Clip
- 6. Bread
- 7. Fish
- 8. Race
- 9. Poor
- 10. Rich
- 11. Name
- 12. Vault
- 13. Crime
- 14. Photograph
- 15. Quill
- 16. Punch
- 17. X-ray
- 18. Railroad
- 19. wreck
- 20. Coin
- 21. Ice
- 22. Truck
- 23. Antique
- 24. house
- 25. Flower
- 26. shatter
- 27. star
- 28. Goal
- 29. school
- 30. Crush
- 31. Religion
- 32. Knight
- 33. Light
- 34. Train
- 35. Contest
- 36. Money
- 37. Candy
- 38. Oil
- 39. Flight
- 40. Fake
- 41. Apple
- 42. Boot
- 43. pest
- 44. Burn
- 45. Lost
- 46. Grove
- 47. Autumn
- 48. Cold
- 49. Dice
- 50. splinter
- 51. Crickets
- 52. Turf
- 53. Bubble
- 54. surprise
- 55. Gift
- 56. Dull
- 57. heart
- 58. pattern
- 59. Gum
- 60. Print
- 61. Boat
- 62. Ripe
- 63. Kiss
- 64. Pipe
- 65. Pollution
- 66. secret
- 67. Lie
- 68. Camouflage
- 69. Rain
- 70. safari
- 71. Border
- 72. war
- 73. Nature
- 74. Disaster
- 75. Ancient
- 76. Rescue
- 77. Ink
- 78. sleep
- 79. Collide
- 80. joke
- 81. Card
- 82. Gamble
- 83. Risk
- 84. Disc
- 85. surgery
- 86. Bone
- 87. Death
- 88. Fire-flies
- 89. piano
- 90. Chest
- 91. Luck
- 92. warm
- 93. Tack
- 94. Trick
- 95. Zebra
- 96. Rapids
- 97. Danger
- 98. Electric
- 99. Guess
- 100. Challenge

PIXAR'S 22 RULES OF STORY TELLING

#1: You admire a character for trying more than for their successes.

#2: You gotta keep in mind what's interesting to you as an audience, not what's fun to do as a writer. They can be v. different.

#3: Trying for theme is important, but you won't see what the story is actually about til you're at the end of it. Now rewrite.

#4: Once upon a time there was _____. Every day, _____. One day _____. Because of that, _____. Because of that, _____. Until finally _____.

#5: Simplify. Focus. Combine characters. Hop over detours. You'll feel like you're losing valuable stuff but it sets you free.

#6: What is your character good at, comfortable with? Throw the polar opposite at them. Challenge them. How do they deal?

#7: Come up with your ending before you figure out your middle. Seriously. Endings are hard, get yours working up front.

#8: Finish your story, let go even if it's not perfect. In an ideal world you have both, but move on. Do better next time.

#9: When you're stuck, make a list of what WOULDN'T happen next. Lots of times the material to get you unstuck will show up.

#10: Pull apart the stories you like. What you like in them is a part of you; you've got to recognize it before you can use it.

#11: Putting it on paper lets you start fixing it. If it stays in your head, a perfect idea, you'll never share it with anyone.

#12: Discount the 1st thing that comes to mind. And the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th – get the obvious out of the way. Surprise yourself.

#13: Give your characters opinions. Passive/malleable might seem likable to you as you write, but it's poison to the audience.

#14: Why must you tell THIS story? What's the belief burning within you that your story feeds off of? That's the heart of it.

#15: If you were your character, in this situation, how would you feel? Honesty lends credibility to unbelievable situations.

#16: What are the stakes? Give us reason to root for the character. What happens if they don't succeed? Stack the odds against.

#17: No work is ever wasted. If it's not working, let go and move on – it'll come back around to be useful later.

#18: You have to know yourself: the difference between doing your best & fussing. Story is testing, not refining.

#19: Coincidences to get characters into trouble are great; coincidences to get them out of it are cheating.

#20: Exercise: take the building blocks of a movie you dislike. How d'you rearrange them into what you DO like?

#21: You gotta identify with your situation/characters, can't just write 'cool'. What would make YOU act that way?

#22: What's the essence of your story? Most economical telling of it? If you know that, you can build out from there.



