



## Write It Workshop Series: Mixed Bag Mayhem

### **Workshop Objective:**

The purpose of this workshop is to teach participants about the importance of characters and character development in storylines.

### **Outline:**

The instructor will unpack the concept of character by reviewing terms such as protagonist, secondary character, hero, villain, etc. Participants will become familiar with character types as well as their importance and roles in stories. Participants will leave the workshop with a greater understanding of characters, how to name and describe a character so that the character comes alive, and a written description of a character on which a short story can be based.

### **Workshops are approximately 60 minutes in length, with the following structure:**

- Ice Breaker activity (5 minutes)
- Minds-On Activity linked to the designated writing skill (15 minutes)
- Instructional component to educate participants about characters (10 minutes)
- Writing activity pertaining to the designated writing skill or technique (25 minutes)
- Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

### **Ice Breaker Activity: *We're all Characters!* (5 mins)**

The instructor will model the activity by completing the following statement, "If I was a character in a story, I would be described as (insert adjective) and (insert adjective)."

Participants take turns to introduce themselves by completing the above statement.

### **Minds-On Activity: *Inside/Outside* (10 - 15 mins)**

The workshop kit will include a reproducible page with images of characters, ranging from people to animals to objects. The reproducible will also be available to download at [www.ripplepublishing.ca/write-it-workshop-series](http://www.ripplepublishing.ca/write-it-workshop-series).

The instructor will use one of the character as an example to describe the character based on the outside (by appearance) and then on the inside (based on the inner nature or what is not immediately visible), such as how the character is feeling, behaves, moves, etc.

- Example: Black Magic had the softest and shiniest fur in dog history. Her dark eyes were hooded by heavy eyebrows. Her paws stepped ever so carefully wherever she went. Unfortunately, her constant sadness and loneliness kept her from making many friends.
- "How do you feel about Black Magic?" "Would you like Black Magic as a pet? Why or why not?" "How do you think this character's name helps you know something about her?"



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Then the instructor will show the rest of the images on the page to the group, and ask participants first to describe the character on the outside (by appearance) and then on the inside (based on what participants think the character might say, and how the character will behave, move, etc.)

### **Instructional Component: *All About Characters*** (15 mins.)

The following information will be used to provide participants with foundational knowledge about characters:

#### **What Are Characters?**

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- Characters are the people, animals, or objects who make the action happen in a story.
- A limited number are present in a short story.

#### **Character Types**

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**Protagonist** – MAIN CHARACTER of the story – Often the hero or character that the audience is supposed to feel most sympathetic towards or connect with most in some way.

- The protagonist typically has a goal to reach or a question, or problem to solve.
- This protagonist will go on a journey to reach this goal, answer the question, or solve the problem.
- Some examples of story protagonists are: Little Red Riding Hood, Harry Potter, Luke Skywalker.

**Antagonist** – MAIN ADVERSARY of the protagonist – Often the villain or enemy of the main character that the audience may feel empathetic towards.

- The antagonist typically prevents the hero from reaching a goal.
- The antagonist will try to intentionally or unintentionally prevent the hero from getting the answer to a question, or solving a problem.
- Some examples of story antagonists are: The Big Bad Wolf, Lord Voldemort, Darth Vader.

**Narrator** – The person or character who tells the story, gives background information, and fills in details between dialogue. The narrator may or may not participate directly in the story.

#### **Characterization**

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Characters are described by the author directly through the use of adjectives describing them physically or their personality traits or indirectly through the events of the story, the character's actions, the character's words, feelings, and thoughts.

A character profile can include:

- The character's physical appearance
- The character's words (how they speak and what they say to others, often through dialogue)
- The character's thoughts and feelings (about themselves, and others)
- The character's actions (what is said and what is not said)
- Special Features, such as movements and gestures
- What other characters say about him/her and how others react to him/her (\*including the narrator)



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**Writing Activity: *Character Creation*** (25 mins)

Each participant will create a character that could appear in a story by writing a character description. Participants may base the character on the image selected during the previous activity.

The following list may be posted to support this activity:

- Character's name; character's appearance; character's movements; character's interests; character's family, friends, enemies.
- If time permits, participants may begin writing a story in which the character appears.

**Wrap-Up** (5 mins)

- Participants are invited to share their character descriptions.
- Hand out Kids Write 4 Kids brochure.



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Minds-On Activity: Inside/Outside

