

50 Questions to Ask your Character

Below is a collection of questions to ask your characters. This can help you in the brainstorming process and is an excellent challenge to see how much you really know about them! It is also excellent for breaking writer's block and getting your creativity flowing.

Don't worry if you can't answer all of them – they won't all be applicable to the character you are writing about.

Your characters should be as close to you as your closest friends. And you probably know a bunch about them! Challenge yourself to get to know your characters just as deeply, and to truly care about them.

1. How does your character think of their parents? What do they hate and love about them? What influence – literal or imagined – did they have?
2. If they did not have a family, how has that affected them?
3. Brothers, sisters? Who do they like? Why? What do they despise about their siblings?
4. What type of discipline was your character subjected to at home? Strict? Lenient?
5. Were they overprotected as a child? Sheltered?
6. Did they feel rejection or affection as a child?
7. What was the economic status of their family?
8. How does your character feel about religion?
9. What about political beliefs?
10. Is your character street-smart, book-smart, intelligent, intellectual, slow-witted?
11. How do they see themselves: as smart, as intelligent, uneducated?
12. How does their education and intelligence – or lack thereof – reflect in their speech pattern, vocabulary, and pronunciations?
13. Did they like school? Teachers? Schoolmates?
28. Who is your character's mate? How do they relate to him or her? How did they make their choice?
29. What is your character's weaknesses? Hubris? Pride? Controlling?
30. Are they holding on to something in the past? Can he or she forgive?
31. Does your character have children? How do they feel about their parental role? About the children? How do the children relate?
32. How does your character react to stress situations? Defensively? Aggressively? Evasively?
33. Do they drink? Take drugs? What about their health?
34. Does your character feel self-righteous? Revengeful? Contemptuous?
35. Do they always rationalize errors? How do they cope with disasters and failures?
36. Do they like to suffer? Like to see other people suffering?
37. How is your character's imagination? Do they daydream a lot? Worry most of the time? Live through memories?
38. Are they negative about facing new things? Suspicious? Hostile? Scared? Enthusiastic?

14. Were they involved at school? Sports? Clubs? Debate? Were they unconnected?
15. Did they graduate? High-School? College? Do they have a PhD? A GED?
16. What does your character do for a living? How do they see their profession? What do they like about it? Dislike?
17. Do/Did they travel? Where? Why? When?
18. What did they find abroad, and what do they remember?
19. In what moments did your character felt most disillusioned or betrayed? In life? What are they now?
20. What were the most deeply impressive political or social, national or international, events that they experienced?
21. What are your character's manners like? What is their type of hero? Whom do they hate?
22. Who are their friends? Lovers? 'Type' or 'ideal' partner?
23. What do they want from a partner? What do they think and feel about sex?
24. What social groups and activities does your character attend? What role do they like to play? What role do they actually play, usually?
25. What are their hobbies and interests?
26. What does your character's home look like? Personal taste? Clothing? Hair? Appearance?
27. How do they relate to their appearance? How do they wear their clothing? Style? Quality?
39. What do they like to ridicule? What do they find stupid?
40. How is their sense of humor? Do they have one?
41. Is your character aware of who they are? Strengths? Weaknesses? Idiosyncrasies? Capable of self-irony?
42. What does your character want most? What do they need really badly, compulsively? What are they willing to do, to sacrifice, to obtain?
43. Does your character have any secrets? If so, are these secrets holding them back from themselves?
44. How badly do they want to obtain their life objectives? How do they pursue them?
45. Is your character pragmatic? Think first? Responsible? All action? A visionary? Passionate? Quixotic?
46. Is your character tall? Short? What about size? Weight? Posture? How do they feel about their physical body?
47. Do they want to project an image of a younger, older, more important person? Does they want to be visible or invisible?
48. How are your character's gestures? Vigorous? Weak? Controlled? Compulsive? Energetic? Sluggish?
49. What about voice? Pitch? Strength? Tempo and rhythm of speech? Pronunciation? Accent?
50. What are the prevailing facial expressions? Sour? Cheerful? Dominating?

And a few more...

- Most cherished memory?
- Whom would they ask for help? Would they ask for help in the first place?
- How would you describe your character in three words?
- Best thing that ever happened to them?
- Worst thing that ever happened to them?
- What's their guilty pleasure?