

# Character Builder Form

by Sasha Miller

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This Character Builder is from Essay Twelve of *Mother Miller's How to Write Good Book*, Revised Fourth Edition, by Sasha Miller, and available from FoxAcre Press. Use it well—and, if you find it useful, you might consider buying the book. There's lots of other good stuff in there.

## CHARACTER BUILDER

Story (circle one): Novel Short Story  
Date story starts:  
Name of Character:  
Nickname(s):  
Alias, if any:

This outline is to indicate the character's status at the start of the tale. The character's growth evolves from this point.

Please note that the reader doesn't have to have all this information, but the writer should know it.

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Age:  
Sex:  
Birthdate:  
Birthplace:  
Height:  
Weight:  
Color of hair:  
Color of eyes:  
Nationality:  
Race:

Habitual expression in repose or when no one is looking:

Habitual posture:

Style of dress:

Manner of speech:

Way of  
gesturing:  
moving:  
walking:

Does character have any physical scars, birthmarks, handicaps, or extraordinary features? Describe.

Does character have any health problems? Describe.

Briefly describe character's overall appearance.

## **HISTORY/BACKGROUND:**

Education

Amount:

Kind of schools:

Marks:

Favorite subjects:

Poorest subjects:

Aptitudes:

Work experience or skills

Occupation:

How long on current job:

Schedule:

Income:

Work conditions:

Union or non-union:

Character's suitability for work:

What incident of childhood affected character the most?

Friends

Best:

Male:

Female:

Enemies or minor antagonists, and why:

Family

Are parents living?

Mother:

Father:

History of parents

(occupations, married, divorced, etc.)

Siblings:

Brothers:

Sisters:

Half-brothers:

Half-sisters:

Step-brothers:

Step-sisters:

Character's marital status

To whom is/has character been married?

Why did character marry spouse?

If separated, why?

Does character have any children?

Sons:

Daughters:

Step-sons:

Step-daughters:

Describe character's home.

Does character share residence with anyone?

Who and why?

Does character have any pets?

How many?

What kind?

What are pets' names?

Hobbies:

Kinds of music, art, reading material, sports preferred:

Who has had greatest influence on character:

What does character most regret?

What opportunities did character miss?

What class is character in?

Lower

Middle

Upper

What is character's place in community? Leader? Non-leader?

What are character's political affiliations?

### **PERSONALITY/CHARACTER TRAITS:**

What is character's overwhelming passion?

Describe character's personal and general attitudes toward

Family:

Marriage:

Money:

Religion:

Sex:

Politics:

Ambitions, personal goals:

Favorite color(s):

Favorite pastime(s):

What does character hate most

Food:

Color:

Activity:

Traits in others:

List character's proudest achievements:

- 
- What has character done for which he/she is most ashamed?
- Is character basically introverted or extroverted?
- What kind of sense of humor does character have?
- Describe character's favorite fantasy.
- How do others see character?
- How do others react to character?
- Describe what character tries hardest to avoid
- In general:
  - Simple daily routines:
  - Chief taboos:
  - Chief fears:
- Is character self-centered, and if so, how?
- What kind of person would character like to be?
- Describe how far away character is from this ideal
- Subjectively:
  - In the opinion of others:
- How does character see future?
- What is character's philosophy of life?
- What makes life worthwhile for character?
- What is worth dying for?
- What are character's strong points?
- What are character's weak points?
- Does character promise to do things and then forget?
- When a person is telling an incident or story, does character always try to outdo with one of his/her own?
- Does character have clique of friends from which he/she excludes others?
- Does character tell friends what is wrong with them?
- Does character like to be center of attention all the time?
- Does character make loans to friends?
- Does character let everyone know about it?
  - Some people but not others?

No one?

Can character keep a secret?

Does character call on people to perform trivial tasks for him/her?

Would character drop everything if a friend needed help?

Is it easy for character to find good things about others?

Is character someone who drops in and then forgets to "pick him/herself up" again?

What abilities does character have?  
Foreign languages, talents, etc.

What is character's general intelligence level?

Describe character's attitudes and practices concerning chemical substances

Caffeine:  
Tobacco:  
Marijuana/recreational drugs:  
Alcohol:

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION:**

Describe character in one sentence.

If working on a novel, write a short biography if this is a main character.