



## Exercises to help you create compelling characters!

### **1: Vital Ingredients**

Using your favourite characters from theatre, TV or film; brainstorm what makes them engaging - what are the vital ingredients for creating engaging characters? Keep this list to hand when thinking about your own characters!

### **Exercise 2: Building a Character**

*This is an exercise in building characters taken from NOEL GREIG'S: PLAYWRITING, A PRACTICAL GUIDE*

<b>Name:</b>
<b>Ethnic origin:</b>
<b>Age:</b>
<b>Gender:</b>
<b>3 physical characteristics:</b>

<b>What sort of accommodation do they live in?</b>
<b>Where exactly do they live on a map?</b>
<b>Where exactly do they live on a map?</b>
<b>What do they do on a daily basis?</b>
<b>Where their money comes from:</b>
<b>Who are the 5 people closest to them?</b>

<b>Where are their family:</b>
<b>A secret they have:</b>
<b>Something they need right now:</b>
<b>Something they want right now:</b>

**Where they are at this very moment:**

**What they are thinking/ saying at this very moment:**

**What they are doing at this very moment:**

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**Three things learned from writing this list:**

**List of questions arising after writing this list:**

### **Exercise 3: Character Objectives**

**For each character, write down the following:**

**Want?**

- This is something external (*such as to find a boyfriend, to escape from jail, to make their first million!*)

**Need ?**

- This is something internal (*such as to take responsibility for their own life, to conquer their past - it usually involves overcoming a personal flaw*).

**Obstacles?**

- Physical (*such as a snowstorm when climbing a mountain,*

*lack of money) • Internal/ flaws (such as lack of self-belief, self-destruction, selfishness)*

- *\*\*The forces of antagonism should always equal the forces of the protagonist for the drama to be the most effective\*\*.*

### **Empathy?**

What makes us empathise with the character?

- This is often in direct relation to the wants/ needs and obstacles (*for example, we empathise because we can relate to lack of money standing in someone's way, or the need to protect our children*)

### **Journey?**

What journey does the character go on throughout the course of the play?

- Example: *from a man to a boy. From a criminal to an upstanding member of society?* ●

### **Function?**

What is the function of the character within your play?

- To highlight a political message you want to convey within the play?
- To show the opposite viewpoint?

## **Exercise 4: JOURNEY**

*EVERY character in your play needs to go on a journey (even if*

*it's a simple one) **Write the numbers 1-10 on some cards.***

**1 is the start of the play and 10 is the end.**

**Write down what happens to the character at each point in their journey.**

*Are there any gaps you need to fill in?*

*Does the journey escalate and get more dramatic as the play goes on?*

*Are there big sections of the play where nothing happens to the character?*