



A FREE RESOURCE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL VENTRILOQUIST SOCIETY



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What is a Character Profile?

And why do you need one as a ventriloquist?

Do you own puppets that you never use? Maybe they just don't work out. You like the puppet, but something just isn't right. It isn't funny. It seems flat, uninteresting and one-dimensional.

You search and search for the puppet that will just "click" with you. Hopefully it will make you the next Jeff Dunham, Terry Fator or Darci Lynne.

Sorry, that doesn't happen.

The ventriloquist must create the puppet's character. It is your skill that will bring it to life.

But how do you do it?

You need to start with a character profile.

To flesh out a character, you must try to get to know the character as if it was a real person. If you know the character inside and out, it will be a lot easier to bring it to life and write scripts for them.

A character profile is a list of your character's traits. These lists can get pretty specific.

So what do you list? Let's start with the:

BASICS:

What is your character's sex? Male ____ Female ____ Other ____ (Explain:)

What is your character's age? _____

Make this decision carefully. The character's age will dictate what it can and can not do. An older character will have more life experiences to talk about. A younger character would only be able to talk about things it has experienced.

Age also dictates personality. A person's personality grows and changes with the amount of experience he or she has encountered.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

Race: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Culture: _____

Ethnicity & culture are a big part of a character's personality. These will play a role in the character's life experiences and how it sees the world. It must have a lineage. Know where the character came from and a bit of his or her family history.

Height: _____

Weight: _____

Appearance and physical limitations or advantages are important. How have these characteristics affected them? For example, maybe a very tall character was teased about his height. Or an eating disorder created emotional havoc for an overweight character.

Also keep in mind that the physical appearance doesn't HAVE to dictate personality. Just because someone appears small doesn't mean they are weak or shy. They may be strong and ferocious.

LIFESTYLE:

Where does your character live?

Country: _____

Town: _____

State: _____

Street: _____

Type of residence: _____

Do they live with others? Yes _____ No _____

Who? _____

Why? _____

Are they relations? _____ Friends? _____ Squatters? _____

Real or imaginary? _____ Living or dead? _____

What is their lifestyle like?

Are they rich? ____ Are the poor? ____ Are they coasting through life? ____

Or are they struggling? ____

How did they get in the above situation? _____

Did they earn their money? _____ Or inherit it? _____

What might they be struggling with? _____

RELATIONSHIPS:

Who is in their family?

What is their relationship like with each family member?

Is their dad never home? Does mom have a drinking problem? Is their uncle kind of strange, never comes to visit anymore and live in a big gray building behind a fence and barbwire?

The number one thing that can screw a person up mentally is their family. So it pays to dig into this a bit. It is a great way to expose their insecurities and issues.

Who are their friends? _____

What are their friends like? Nice? ____ Jerks? ____

Bad element? ____ Or a good influence? ____

What is their relationship like with their friends?

What do they do together? _____

A person's friendships say a lot about them.

ATTRACTIONS:

What is your character attracted to?

What specifically attracts it?

Let's use people as an example. If your character is attracted to women, that doesn't mean it is attracted to all women. Is it something physical? Is it personality? Having things in common? Go into some detail here.

Attractions could be to danger, type of music, locations, etc. Know what your character wants.

ROMANCE:

Has your character ever been on a date? _____

Has he or she fallen in love? _____

Have they had their heart broken? _____

Know a bit about their romantic history as that colors their world.

SKILLS:

What is your character good at?

Why? How did they learn that?

If your character is good on computers and kind of a nerd, it makes no sense if later in your routine he becomes something totally different. Your character must remain consistent to be believed by the audience.

What can't they do?

Have they tried? _____ What happened?

EDUCATION:

Is your character in school? _____

Did they graduate? _____ Or did they drop out? _____

If so, from where? _____

Were they good in school? _____ Or did they barely escape? _____

What did they like?

What did they hate?

Favorite teacher?

Why?

OCCUPATION:

What does your character do for a living? _____

Why do they do this?

How did they get in this line of work?

Do they like it ___ or hate it ___?

If they hate it, what would they rather be doing?

HOBBIES:

What does your character do in their spare time?

What attracts them to that?

How did they become interested?

PERSONALITY & CHARACTER:

Is your character an introvert or extrovert? _____

Is it more reserved or outrageous? _____

Is your character more creative, analytical, or balanced between the two?

What are your character's strengths and weaknesses?

Is your character ambitious? _____

That could be a major strength. That could also be a major weakness if his ambition causes him to jump into horrible situations without thinking.

What makes them heroic, or a villain?

What makes them act?

What makes them hesitate?

What are your character's goals and dreams?

What are your character's fears and insecurities?

This makes a character vulnerable, and is a key for creating a believable personality.

What are your character's beliefs?

This tells you if your character has a sense of duty, purpose or right and wrong?

Do they believe in a higher power? _____

Do they believe in a code of ethics? _____

Do they believe in science? _____

Or possibly magic? _____

Or do they believe the gas companies are robbing people at the pump?

Are their beliefs based in fact? ____ Fake news? ____

Or just their own made up opinions? _____

What does your character truly care about?

This will determine their true heart and soul.

Consider this list a starting point. You can go much deeper into your character's personality if you wish.

Remember, just because you are listing these traits, doesn't mean they have to go into your script. The purpose of this list is to get to know your character and how he or she might act or react to any situation.

If you can picture your character as a "real" personality, you will create a much better illusion for your ventriloquism act.