Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Write a character sketch.

Your story should have a strong, interesting protagonist.

Everything in your story should be there for a reason.

1. Pick a character.
2. List his or her physical traits.
3. Describe the character’s personal traits.
   1. What is his or her view of life? (What does he or she think about?)
   2. What makes him or her happy?
   3. What makes him or her sad?
   4. What makes him or her angry?
4. Describe your character’s motivation.
   1. What does he or she want?
   2. What is he or she afraid of?
5. What is your character’s name? Choose a meaningful name that matches your characters’ personality or motivation.
6. Write a character sketch to introduce your character. Write about an incident that will reveal your character’s personality and motivation. Use actions, dialogue, and description to show, not tell. Every detail (like the setting of the incident) should help to reveal character.

If you want a pattern to follow, try this:

Introduce your character and the setting:

My grandmother drove a nineteen seventy-something dark green Oldsmobile with a faded black vinyl top and about half of a floor. The missing part of the floor was where your feet would normally rest, but if you kept one foot on the hump and the other foot up on the solid part by the door frame, you could avoid pushing through the carpet and scraping your feet on the pavement below.

Show us what is happening (the incident) in a way that that reveals the character:

On the way to the grocery store one day, she rolled slowly to a stop at an intersection and waited as the light cycled from green to yellow to red. She was squinting her eyes and leaning into the windshield. I could see the familiar expression of annoyance on her face. She sighed and frowned. “Steve, what color is that light?” she asked.

My grandma never really remembered how old I was, so I thought she was quizzing me on my knowledge of colors. I was in 6th grade. I told her it was red.

Thinking it was a test, and that she thought maybe I was just learning my colors in spite of being in 6th grade, I told her it was red.

“That’s what I thought,” she said. “Let me know when it turns green, okay?”

“Uh…Okay,” I said, nervously.

Continue telling us about the incident using actions, dialogue, and description to reveal the traits of your character:

The light turned green, and she moved ahead to the next intersection. She stopped again, this time at a green light, and asked what color it was.

“Can you see the lights, Grandma?” I asked.

“Well, yes. But I don’t why they moved them up so high, so they’re harder to see. They used to be closer,” she said. “I don’t know why they had to do that.”

“Yeah. I think they’re the same as before, Grandma. It’s green now.”

“I know,” she said, looking both ways as she pulled into the intersection.

“Are your eyes okay, Grandma?”

“I just went to the doctor and he said they’re fine,” she snapped.

Add a closing comment or detail:

Later, I told my dad about what happened. He said she hadn’t been to a doctor in at least five years. My grandma was always good at ignoring a problem.

A character sketch from Dave Barry:

It was time to go have my last words with my father. He was dying, in the bedroom he built. He built our whole house, even dug the foundation himself, with a diaper tied around his head to keep the sweat out of his eyes. He was always working on the house, more than 35 years, and he never did finish it. He was first to admit that he really didn’t know how to build a house.