

SETTING UP A CHARACTER

Flat or rounded, your character always starts with some basic details.

Often, the process of creating an interesting character will lead you to an interesting story.

OCCUPATION

How can you make jobs more exciting when inventing your characters? Don't choose the obvious. Play about with historical period, gender or the nature of their role.



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For example, let's take the job of CHEF:

Arthur is Head Chef at a London Hotel. He treats the other chefs badly.

There might be a story in that, but the situation is clichéd and you could struggle to develop the character into an interesting person. How about this instead?

In France, at the start of the nineteenth century, all the greatest chefs were expected to be male. Madeleine, who knew she was a greater chef than any man, wished only that her creations could pass the lips of the great and powerful. At sixteen she began dressing and acting as a man. By the time she was twenty-two, she had become chef to Napoleon Bonaparte, and nobody knew she was a woman.

The second idea may not be totally original, but it has a lot more story potential than the first one.

Try thinking imaginatively about the following list of jobs. Give each one an interesting twist.

Film-maker

Bureaucrat

Soldier

Teacher

Solicitor

Cleaner

Farmer

Carpenter

Beautician

Vicar

Secretary

Housewife

Relief worker

Servant