**Session Notes: Creating Dynamic Characters**

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**Terms:**

**Flat Character** Flat characters have few but easily recognizable traits and are often stock/stereotypical characters.

**Round Character** A round character is someone who has more facets to her/his personality than a flat character. The personality of such a character is not consistent, which makes the character more realistic than others in the piece of writing.

**Static Character** A static character’s personality does not change throughout the course of the writing.

**Dynamic Character** A dynamic character grows or changes through the course of writing.

**Stock character** A character that reflects common stereotypes based on gender, role, ethnicity, religion, etc. and acts out an expected role in the plot.

**Character or Plot Driven?**

* **Character-driven fiction** and creative non-fiction positions the struggles and insights of the main characters at the center of the piece. A common feature is the presence of an internal struggle and eventual resolution within the protagonist—also known as a  character arc. The protagonist changes as a result of the action/events of the plot.
* **Plot-driven fiction** and creative non-fiction positions the narrative as the central feature. The action and events are central, with the focus on what characters do rather than why they do it and how they feel. While the protagonist may overcome obstacles and become stronger as a result, their struggles are primarily external, and the character is essentially static.

Fleshing Out Your Character

* eye color
* hair color
* hair style
* physical mannerisms
* body type
* distinguishing features
* level of coordination
* physical strengths and weaknesses
* style of dress
* use of cosmetics
* gait
* common accessories (glasses, cane, jewelry, etc.)

**Incorporating Characterization in Writing**

* Through description of the character’s living space
* Through the things the character owns and uses
* Through things the character does unrelated to plot (i.e., books they read, what they watch on TV, apps they use, pets)
* Via internal monologue
* Via dialogue with others
* Via interactions with the world around them

**Character-building exercises**

* Imagine your character knows you will be telling their story. Get inside their head and have them write an introduction of themselves to you.
* Have your character take an online personality test.
* Imagine your character in an everyday situation—passing a homeless person, getting in a fender bender, trying to return something to a store, dealing with a flight delay. How do they react?