

NOTES FROM...

SCRIPT FEST



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EDUCATOR RESOURCES

[LSA]

Developing Characters

Session and materials presented by Theresa Boden

Example Character Profile

Geena Davis said in relation to *Thelma & Louise* (Ridley Scott, 1991) writer, Callie Khouri's knowledge of her characters:

"I could ring Callie and ask her what brand of toothpaste Thelma used and she would know!"

CHARACTER = PLOT

These are just some prompts for questions to help inform your character's behaviour & action and also generate story from character in a script – not all this info will be included or needed in the script! It's just so you really get to know your characters and to help you build character breakdowns of all your characters. Expand on each as much or as little as you want. Add your own questions.

Characteristics & Dominant Impression
Sex
Age
Name – is it incongruous to their personality or demeanour ?
Appearance – only in so far as where it is KEY to behaviour or how others treat them
Verbal expressions/slang
Physicality e.g. slow, relaxed
Voice (pitch/speed) e.g. soft, hesitant
Sexuality
Appearance e.g. neat & tidy, scruffy etc.
Education/Further education?
Work/career
Family background

Ethnicity
Sports
Present home
Intellect e.g. clever but never shows it
Emotional state e.g. anxious
Philosophy/Attitude – what's their POV? E.g. loyalty is paramount. This suggests everything a character does or is, from goals to actions, to habits, to how they argue with the postman to conflicts with other characters.
Greatest fear
Wound/fatal flaw e.g. bullied or loss of mother when young
What's their most traumatic experience?
View of world e.g idealistic/cynical
Politics
Money e.g.not important as long as they can eat
View of the opposite sex
Personality traits e.g. stubborn, perfectionist, kind
Dislikes e.g. dishonesty, dogs
Likes e.g. teasing people,
Cares about e.g. personal freedom, wildlife, themselves

Example Character Interrogation Questions

What do they want?
What do they fear ?
Expertise/skills e.g. forgery, cooking, communicating
Physical goals/wants e.g. to succeed
Emotional goals/wants e.g. to belong
What/who's stopping attainment of wants?
What/who's stopping attainment of needs? e.g. fear of commitment
Allies
What's at stake? E.g. happiness,
What's the worst thing that could happen to them?
What's the best thing that could happen to them?
Psychology – aspects of personality, what problems do they have, what issues ? This will help to suggest what drives them, what their goals are and suggest story elements.
Relationships – brief descriptions of how the key characters feel about the others
What does Character 1 think of Character 2 ?
What does Character 1 think of Character 3 ?
What does Character 1 think of Character 4 ?
What does Character 2 think of Character 1 ?

What does Character 2 think of Character 3 ?
And so on as applicable...
How does each character view themselves ? Notice how it may be different from how other characters view them. This will help with learning about...
Conflicts
Which characters do they conflict with and why ?

An EXAMPLE of how character development helps :

In *As Good As It Gets* (James L. Brooks, 1997) the three main characters, their storylines, and actions are all clearly defined by their pasts:

- **Melvin Udall** is a famous author who also happens to be obsessive-compulsive. His outlook on humanity is fairly sour, as the unusual requirements that his mental illness places on his interactions with others has taught him to expect the worst from people. He needs others to do certain things in a specific way for him to feel comfortable, and when they can't or won't, he feels frustrated.
- **Carol Connelly** is fairly patient and very loving, as she has dealt for years with her son's debilitating illness. She has put her life, career plans, and romantic relationships on hold because of her son, and is feeling life pass her by.
- **Simon Bishop** is a moderately successful painter. His parents (specifically his father) are cold and distant, because they cannot accept his homosexuality. His shallow, partying lifestyle has allowed him to avoid any serious self-examination for years.

CHARACTER = FUNCTION

In a screenplay every character has a narrative function. What purpose does each character in your script fulfil in the narrative, why do they exist in the story?

Example Character Biography

Ailsa Wallace (32) was born and raised in the rural village in Shielraig, Scotland with her father Alan (55) and mother Theresa (50) within a large secluded family home surrounded by farmland/forestry. Her parents were, for the majority of her upbringing, strict. They lived a comfortable life. She was homeschooled. Her father was the breadwinner. Her mother stayed at home. She was Ailsa's best friend. On the surface, they were a traditionally *perfect* family. Beneath this, however, was a cult rooted in satanism, led by Alan. The cult worships Belphegor: one of seven princes of hell. Ailsa was a curious, imaginative, and mischievous young girl, which did not match her father's ideals. She wondered why their home was often communal, with multiple people visiting at one time.

She would often feel restricted by such stringent measures. Ailsa was brought up under the watchful eye of the cult, which was largely unbeknownst to her.

At the mere age of 12, Ailsa's life was flipped upside down when her mother fell pregnant and, after a traumatising pregnancy, tragically and violently died whilst giving birth to her sister, Kayla (20). A few months before this, Theresa discovered that Alan had committed infidelity with another member of the cult, which led to endless nights of traumatising arguments. The aftermath of her mother's death caused Ailsa to grow resentful of her father across the coming years. Their relationship was always tricky; his stern nature and her curiosity were constantly at odds up until the moment she left.

Aged 18, Ailsa escaped the rurality of Shialdaig to a cosmopolitan lifestyle in Glasgow. She became estranged from her father. Little to her name. Over the coming years, she worked in multiple customer service settings, and developed a firm routine of work and sleep. Always punctual. Constantly well organised.

This routine remained solid for five years, until she (seemingly accidentally) met Raz after reluctantly agreeing to a post-work pub crawl. Under the circumstances, Ailsa was in an alcohol influenced, emotionally vulnerable, situation when first approached by Raz. Raz plays the role of romantic temptress in Ailsa's life. They fall in love. Quickly. They spend days, upon months, upon years, together. She provides Ailsa with three deeply desired aspects of her life: companionship, leniency, and love. Raz is her attraction to life.

Regarding morality, Ailsa approaches life with an attitude to be morally 'proper'. She plays by the book. Always does (or tries to do) the right thing. Unable to rebel out of fear of judgement. Her traits of punctuality and organisation discourage her from taking many risks and thus hold back her ambition of eventual career progression and wealth. She is seen as 'too moral' to reign in an extreme level of wealth. Often guilty of procrastination and idle dreaming, her morals are negatively tainted with Sloth. She is the only person standing in her way of being triumphant in life. The negative tropes of these traits are a result of cult conditioning and brainwashing, all unbeknownst to her. At 32 years old age (present-day), Ailsa maintains physical quirks from childhood; specifically a curious mark on the back of her neck. She is presented with average height, bright and expressive features, and strawberry blonde hair.

Character Journey

Ailsa is a delivery driver, consumed by the idea of working to a perfect standard in hopes of eventual promotion. After five years on the job, she remains unsuccessful. With her girlfriend of ten years, Raz, she lives in a derelict apartment on the outskirts of Central Glasgow. It has been twenty years since her mother died violently via

childbirth. She is haunted by suppressed memories of that night and resents her father at the thought.

One day, Ailsa receives an anonymously written invitation to her father's funeral on the grounds of her family home in Shieldaig, Scotland, where she grew up. Conflicted by the thought of going and the guilt of not, she is reluctant to celebrate a man's life who tore their family apart. Raz advocates that they go, if only for a few days, to put this chapter of Ailsa's life to rest once and for all. Ailsa agrees.

Upon her return, she is warmly embraced by family friends who have anticipated her presence. She reconnects with Kayla. Kayla is heavily pregnant. She says it was the result of a one night stand. Ailsa always wanted a baby. Before the funeral, they gather for a traditional roast dinner in memory of Alan. As early as this, Ailsa notices something odd.

Everybody has similarly obscure mannerisms. The ceremony holds similar obscurities and feels meticulously choreographed. They repeat rhymes and verses from an aged 'black book'. Ailsa remains confused. Publicly, she does not shed a tear, yet feels unfulfilled in her relationship with her father as she realises this is the final time she will see him.

After the wake, things progress. Ailsa, whilst wandering around the house, stumbles upon a significant conversation between Kayla and George (55), the acting leader of the cult. She witnesses Kayla, petrified of the pregnancy, trembling whilst being reminded that she is 'stronger than her mother'. Ailsa becomes enraged, yet keeps a low profile.

Everyone's behaviour becomes increasingly more peculiar. She discovers people partaking in small ritualistic ceremonies across the coming days. Although, it does not feel like an accident. She cannot shake the feeling that something is wrong and, fuelled by curiosity, sets out to find the 'black book' used at the ceremony. Raz thinks she is being ridiculous. Ailsa feels unsupported. The people seem so warm. That same night, Raz goes missing. Ailsa, in a panic, sets out to find her. Everyone she asks claims they don't know of her whereabouts. Ailsa feels deceived.

From this, Ailsa 'accidentally' finds the black book. She is almost caught when a small cohort of the cult, including acting leader George, conduct a meeting to discuss the 'final stages' of the ritual. She overhears discussions on how the night will play itself out. They must make three significant blood sacrifices as an offering to Belphegor: a male and two females. Raz is in the room. She discusses Ailsa's role: to be sacrificed. As a second revelation, they discuss Alan's role. He is not dead. He will damn Kayla's unborn baby, pre- ritual, thus summoning the demon. Ailsa is horrified. Once alone, she breaks down. She has been severely deceived by those she grew up with, and the one person she loved. They have lured her to this moment.

Ailsa is on high alert, she has one final intimate moment with Raz. Deceiving her as she was deceived. Raz attempts to capture Ailsa. Ailsa fights back. Raz reveals that Alan sexually assaulted Kayla nine months ago to begin the process of summoning Belphegor. She claims he did it for Ailsa. That this was her calling, not a stringent, dead-end, life in the city. Raz's knowledge of this is the final straw. Ailsa is tipped over the edge. She murders Raz in cold blood. For the first time, Ailsa acts in an intentionally immoral manner.

Outside, the ritual is coming to a climax as the cult gathers. Kayla is in pain. Alan stands over her. Ailsa, hellbent on revenge and disorientated, murders her father. Getting brief flashbacks of her mother's death, she panics and pleads for her sister not to die. She delivers the baby. Kayla dies in the process. Trembling and covered in blood, Belphegor enters Ailsa. The cult bow to her. All of a sudden, her suppressed grief has been unleashed. She has been reborn. For the first time in her life, she won.

Writing Music Videos

Session and materials presented by Isaac Tomizcek

Performance Video or Dance Performance Video

- This music video is probably the oldest and most commonly used music video. In performance music videos, you'll typically see the band, well, performing - meaning it's a recording of them playing on their instruments.
- A performance-based music video can include dancing, lip-syncing, and band members playing their various instruments. It can even be a recording of them playing live in some cases. However, that doesn't mean that you can't be creative with a performance music video. Typically the bands are located in various exciting locations that connect with the song and the feeling they're trying to create.
- Performance music videos are more uncomplicated to film than other music video genres, and it's great for when a band wants to create a video with a low budget.

Narrative Video

- A narrative-based music video is a music video where the artist(s) are trying to tell some sort of story.
- It is essentially a short film based on the song. Narrative music videos typically include a structure of a beginning, middle, and end.
- There are also usually no lip-syncing or musical performances in the video. The band creates a narrative around the lyrics relating to the song's themes.

- There are three different narrative techniques used in music videos: Illustration, Amplification, and Disjuncture.
- Illustration is a music video where the narrative is based purely on the song. The video will usually include a direct reference to the lyrics and scenes often direct representations of the meaning of the lyrics.
- Amplification is a more creative interpretation of the song's lyrics and meaning. It can have complementary scenes not necessarily in the verses but relate to the themes and amplify the song's meaning.
- Disjuncture is when the director chooses to create new meaning or themes through the video. It is essentially a narrative video that might not make much sense initially.

Concept Video

- Concept music videos are videos without a storyline and typically have no relevance to the lyrics themselves.
- The concept music video is usually based on the artist's vision. It can be seen as a way to expand their creative vision with the song.
- The concept music video typically includes a performance or a narrative, so the audience doesn't get all lost. But while there might be a smaller narrative in the video, there is typically no structure to the video.
- What makes these types of videos so attractive is their uniqueness which can sear into the audience's brain.
- Audiences will get fascinated by trying to understand the video, or just because it's so eccentric, they can't forget it.

Animated Video

- Animated music videos mean everything from a simple 2D animation to stop motion or CGI. Animation music videos typically follow the same structure as other music video types. In some ways, you can see the animated music video as a hybrid.
- If we look at famous animated music videos, we can look at Kanye West's Heartless. This video features an animated version of Ye performing while walking around at night in his City.
- The music video resembles a live-action video and took inspiration from the 1981 movie American Pop. The footage looks so real because they used a rotoscoping technique, where they shot all of the footage in real life and had a team of animators drawing on top of it.
- Gorillaz is an energetic band whose entire branding revolves around them being animated. Another favorite music video is Gorillaz's 19-2000, which features the band driving around in the desert.

Lyric Video

- Lyric music videos are just what it sounds like. Music videos with lyrics on the screen as the song goes along.
- These videos were extremely popular in the early days of YouTube, albeit they were usually uploaded by a third-party source who didn't have the rights.
- Lyric videos started out as windows movie maker videos, with a blue background and the lyrics listed on the screen. But slowly, the industry adopted it and started making official lyric videos with matching fonts and colours.
- They have transformed from a modern karaoke-type video to become more creative and innovative.
- The lyric music videos typically include a font that matches either the theme or the genre of the song and the background colour and font colour that goes along with it.
- In some cases, the words can be animated to give more meaning to the music.
- Lyric videos are typically used when the artist(s) are unavailable to shoot a video.

Roles on a Music Video Production

- **Director**: The director is essentially the person in charge, and they have the final say in most questions. This person guides the rest of the cast and crew throughout production.
- **Producer/Executive producer**: Even if you're planning a low-cost production, someone has to pay the bill. The producer oversees purchasing and the budget, making sure that everything is running smoothly.
- **Director of photography or DOP**: is in charge of everything visual on-screen, the framing, composition, lighting, and more. They often take responsibilities during pre-production, developing the concept, scouting for the right location, and creating storyboards.
- **Gaffer/Chief lighting technician**: This person takes charge of all lighting needs on set. Often accompanied by a runner or best boy, they make decisions, set up, and move around the light to achieve the director and DOP's vision.
- **Talent**: In most cases, a music video will feature some sort of performer who will sing, act, or dance in front of the camera.
- **Editor**: No video would be complete without the editor. The editor works closely with the director to take the raw footage and transform it into the final edit.

Other professionals on a more established set can include:

- **Art director**: who creates the video's visual identity through finding talent, overseeing the design, and often engaging in PR or fundraising.
- **Set director**: in charge of building the set and populating it with objects and décor.
- **Costume maker and designer**: who can bring the characters to life.
- **Production assistant**: making arrangements and ensuring that all parts of production are where they need to be on time.
- **Production sound mixer**: in charge of the sound recording, volume, and mixing.
- **Wardrobe, hair, and make-up professionals**: ensuring that the talent looks their part.
- **Prop master**: taking care of acquiring, arranging, and maintaining all props on set.
- **Choreographer**: arranging the dance and movement onscreen.

Visual Mood Reel

- A mood reel is usually no more than a few minutes in length
- Many reels are simply a director's edit of existing film clips
- They could reference lighting from one film with a character's costume and makeup from another film. They might reveal shooting style or the type of music the film will use
- Most importantly they should convey **tone**, **feeling** and **visual style**

Treatments

- After you have written a rough summary of your idea it's time to write a treatment for it.
- A treatment combines your written summary with visuals and description of any technical aspects you aim to achieve.
- It is a client facing document so it should be as well presented and thought out as possible.
- Your treatment should only include things you can achieve and deliver as it is often what the client and artist will refer to in the three stages of production.

Copyright Overview

Session and materials presented by Rebecca Knapp

- Copyright does not protect ideas and concepts but the expression of ideas
- Copyright gives creators of the original work the right to prevent others from copying them
- 'Original' does not mean that the work is new, fresh, or innovative, but simply that it originated from the author, and was not copied from someone else
- In the UK, you do not need to register an idea

Types of Copyright

Literary Works (anything expressed in a written form)

- Books
- Poems
- Computer programmes

Dramatic Works

- Plays
- Dance choreography
- Mime choreography
- Film scripts

Musical Works

- Musical composition

Artistic Works

- Graphics
- Art
- Photography
- Collages
- Sculpture
- Broadcasts
- Sound recordings
- Films

Typographical arrangements

- Books
- Newspapers

How long does copyright last?

How long does copyright last?

Type of work	How long copyright usually lasts
Written, dramatic, musical and artistic work	70 years after the author's death
Sound and music recording	70 years from when it's first published
Films	70 years after the death of the director, screenplay author and composer
Broadcasts	50 years from when it's first broadcast
Layout of published editions of written, dramatic or musical works	25 years from when it's first published

Performers have their own set of rights. Performers can include:

- Actors
- Opera singers
- Dance Artists
- Comedians
- Variety artists
- Circus clowns
- Orchestral members

Performers can prevent the following uses of their recorded performances without their consent:

- Copying
- Issuing to the public
- Rental
- Lending

Copyright for Film

For films, copyright lasts 70 years after the death of the last to survive of:

- The principal director
- The authors of the screenplay and dialogue
- The composer of any music specially created for the film

The first owners of copyright for a film are its principal director and producer. Usually, the first owner of the copyright for a film is the person or entity that made the arrangements for making the film or recording. This is usually the production company or the commissioning broadcaster.

The Script and Underlying Rights

- Option
- Writers agreement
- Collaboration agreement
- Crew agreements
- Onscreen performers
- Locations

Copyright clearance: Music

- Publishing (lyrics and composition)
- Music recording (mechanical copyright, performers, singer, and musicians)
- Dance choreography

Script Coverage

Session and materials presented by Ben Murrell

Script Report Template

Title		Date	
Writer		Setting	
Medium		Read / Length	
Sent to		Agent	
Reader		Action	

Short Logline

Condense the story into a couple of sentences. If this can't be done, you know there is a problem with the script.

Synopsis

Outline the entire film or episode. Make it as simple and as clear as you can but do keep it interesting to read.

Premise

What's this film really about? Explore the message or the themes of the piece.

Reader's Report

This is the space to go over the script's strengths and areas for development. What works? What isn't landing? Explore structure, character, pace, dialogue, themes, tone, format and so forth.

You don't have to explore everything, but do show that you have really engaged with the piece.

Writer / Director

This is where you would highlight the writer or director's career to date. What are they known for, what have they produced in the past. And include any links to past work.

Action

What are you going to do as a company?

E.g. Pass on it, get a general in place, bring onto the slate, ask for a second opinion?

Script Report

Title		Date	
Writer		Setting	
Medium	Feature Film Romantic Comedy	Read / Length	107/107
Sent to		Agent	
Reader		Action	Pass on project. Track talent

Short Logline

A career-driven businesswoman makes a deal for an old flame to get her pregnant, but that pregnancy becomes an issue when she falls for the man of her dreams shortly afterwards.

Synopsis

Laura, a confident but emotionally aloof career woman is introduced to Alex and it's love at first sight. What she can't tell him is that three months earlier she interviewed a number of her male friends to be the father of her baby and is pregnant. They quickly fall for one another, but she fears that he will leave her if she reveals the truth, partly due to unresolved issues with her father. Though the cat is let out of the bag, Alex comes round from the initial shock, only to be put out again by a smug attempt from Laura's ex-flame (and the baby's father!) Nick to work his way into her life.

When Laura pressures Alex into introducing her to his family, Alex reluctantly agrees without wanting to explain the situation to them. Laura ignores his desires and tells his whole family, prompting criticism from Alex's brother. Laura pushes Alex away once more, and with him out of the picture she examines her own behaviour and makes amends with her long-lost father. When the baby comes early, both Nick and Alex are there to support her and each other. Laura gets on with her life, and just maybe with a sliver of hope of Alex coming back to her.