**Characterization**

Whether your story focuses on an idea, an event, or a milieu, it will have characters: human, non-human, or animal. Without characters, there is no story. Your characters may take a back seat to the event or the idea, but their actions, thoughts, and words still move through the story and move the story along.

As Flannery O’Connor wrote:

*A story is a complete dramatic action – and in good stories, the characters are shown through the action and the action is controlled through the characters, and the result of this is meaning that derives from the whole presented experience… A story always involves, in a dramatic way, the mystery of personality.*

**Building your Characters: Try with a partner!**

To “build” intriguing characters, try outlining:

* A core need
* A psychological profile
* A physical description
* A family tree!
* What he/she eats for breakfast
* A situational reaction guide: answers from your character about what he/she would do in a given situation!
* A list of what you like/dislike about your character
* A job
* A hobby