

WRITING FUNDAMENTAL SERIES

2025

Building
Memorable
Characters:
A
Writer's
Workbook

by

HEENA RATHORE-PARDESHI

About the Author

Heena Rathore-Pardeshi is an award-winning novelist, developmental editor, and creative writing mentor with over a decade of experience helping writers shape powerful stories.

She has taught hundreds of writers through her courses, workshops, and editing programs, and has

worked with bestselling authors, debut novelists, and publishing houses across India and abroad. She has also worked with multiple American and British production houses for turning books into scripts.

Her own works, including the acclaimed psychological thriller *Deceived*, gothic Indian-folklore horror *The Manor* and her upcoming book *The Art of Storytelling*, are known for their depth, atmosphere, and intricate psychological layering.

A passionate reader (she reads over 100 books a year), Heena brings to her teaching a rare blend of literary insight, structural precision, and emotional intelligence. Through her YouTube channel and Verbatik Media, she continues to build spaces for writers to learn, create, and grow.



Introduction

“Characters are not born on the page; they are excavated from the writer’s mind.”

Welcome to Building Memorable Characters, a part of the Writing Fundamentals Series.

This workbook will help you create characters that readers connect with: emotionally, psychologically, and viscerally.

Through guided prompts and exercises, you’ll learn how to build layered, believable characters with real motivations, fears, and flaws.

HEENA

Table of Contents

Introduction

1. The Character Core

2. The Inner Life

3. The Outer Mask

4. Relationships & Dynamics

5. The Character Arc

6. Finding Character Voice

7. Reflection & Refinement

How to Use This Workbook

SECTION 1

THE CHARACTER CORE

Exercise 1: Character Basics

Fill in the fundamentals of your character:

Aspect	Prompt
Character Name	
Age	
Gender / Pronouns	
Role in Story	(Protagonist/Antagonist/Supporting/Other)
Occupation	
Setting	(Where do they live? What kind of environment shapes them?)
Short Physical Description	
Distinctive Features	

SECTION 2

THE INNER LIFE

Psychological Depth

Aspect	Guiding Questions	Your Answers
Core Values	What beliefs define them?	
Fears	What terrifies them emotionally or physically?	
Desires	What do they want more than anything?	
Flaws	What weakness or blind spot holds them back?	
Secrets	What are they hiding from others—or from themselves?	
Wounds	What past experience shapes who they are today?	

SECTION 3

THE OUTER MASK

Exercise: The Mask vs. The True Self

Answer the following questions:

1. How does your character want others to see them?

2. How do they really feel inside?

3. In what moments does their mask slip?

Activity: Write a short dialogue where your character tries to impress someone, and accidentally reveals their vulnerability.

SECTION 4

RELATIONSHIPS AND DYNAMICS

Why Relationships Matter

A character doesn't exist in isolation; their relationships reveal who they are. Every meaningful interaction becomes a mirror, reflecting either their strengths, flaws, or fears. The way your protagonist treats people shows their internal wounds more clearly than any amount of exposition ever could.

Think of:

- Frodo and Sam (The Lord of the Rings): loyalty tested through conflict.
- Elizabeth and Darcy (Pride and Prejudice): pride and prejudice reflecting each other's weaknesses.
- Harry and Dumbledore (Harry Potter): guidance complicated by secrecy and loss.

Exercise 4A: The Relationship Map

Fill this out for 3–5 important relationships in your story. (You can do one for family, one for friendship, one for romance, one for rivalry, etc.)

Exercise 4B: Relationship Arcs

Like characters, relationships evolve through stages. Use this framework to explore how a key bond in your story changes over time.

Fill this out for each of your characters.

Stage	Description	Example
Introduction	How do they meet? What assumptions do they make?	“They dislike each other instantly.”
Conflict	What breaks their harmony?	“A misunderstanding reveals hidden jealousy.”
Turning Point	What event forces truth or vulnerability?	“They’re trapped together during a storm.”
Shift	How does their perception change?	“They see the other’s pain for the first time.”
Resolution	How does the relationship end or evolve?	“They forgive each other, but distance remains.”

After filling the table for each character (please find the printable table on the next page) do the following activity for each character.

Write a short paragraph describing how this relationship’s evolution reflects your protagonist’s internal growth.

Table & Activity

For Character: _____

Stage	Description	Your Answer
Introduction	How do they meet? What assumptions do they make?	
Conflict	What breaks their harmony?	
Turning Point	What event forces truth or vulnerability?	
Shift	How does their perception change?	
Resolution	How does the relationship end or evolve?	

Activity: Write a short paragraph describing how this relationship's evolution reflects your protagonist's internal growth.

SECTION 5

THE CHARACTER ARC

How they begin is never how they end.

“A character’s arc is the story of who they become after facing who they are.”

Your character’s arc is the emotional journey that transforms them. It’s the invisible thread connecting their backstory, motivation, and choices. Strong arcs keep readers rooted in the story because we grow alongside the character.

Exercise 5A: The Arc at a Glance

1. At the beginning of the story, my character is:

2. Their greatest fear or flaw is:

3. The event that forces them to confront this fear/flaw:

4. At the midpoint, my character starts to realize that:

5. By the end, my character becomes:

Exercise 5B: The Inner Journey Chart

Stage	What Changes Inside the Character	Notes
Setup		
Rising Conflict		
Crisis		
Climax		
Resolution		

Exercise 5C:

What truth does your character discover by the end that they couldn't face at the beginning?



SECTION 6

FINDING CHARACTER VOICE

How they speak tells us who they are.

“A character’s voice isn’t just how they sound; it’s how they see the world.”

Your character’s voice is their personality translated into words. It’s shaped by background, mood, education, fears, and desires.

Exercise 6A: The Sound of the Character

1. Tone (formal, casual, sarcastic, poetic, blunt):

2. Speech rhythm (short bursts / long flowing sentences):

3. Common words or catchphrases:

4. How they speak when happy:

4. How they speak when angry or hurt:

Exercise 8B: Dialogue Practice

Write a small conversation (5-6 lines) between your character and someone they trust. Try to show their personality through rhythm, tone, or silence – not direct explanation.

Exercise 8C: Subtext

Rewrite the same scene, but this time, let them hide their true feelings. How does the tone or word choice change?



SECTION 7

REFLECTION AND REFINEMENT

Answer these three important questions:

1. What makes this character unforgettable?

2. What do you love most about them?

3. How do they embody your story's heart?

Exercise:

Write a small “letter” from you to your character. What would you tell them if you could?



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Using this workbook effectively:

- Print or fill digitally before drafting.
 - Revisit after every major rewrite.
 - Use it to spot structural gaps or emotional inconsistencies.
-

THANK YOU!