

Develop a Convincing Character in Animation

Eric Goldberg in his book *Character Animation Crash Course!* says that to do this you must do two things: *believe the character exists* and *know who he/she is*. This worksheet will help you to get inside your character and really come to know your character – this will result in your animation being believable and contributing to the storyline.

Read the questions, think about your character, and describe your ideas for each question in the blank provided. These notes will help you to complete your sketches and concept art!

What makes your character who he/she is?

What excites him?

What makes him mad?

What is his driving motivation?

How does he look at life?

What are his basic attitudes?

How can you expand these basic attitudes to acquire more depth?

What makes your character tick?

What makes him unique?

How do you show him thinking, changing mood?

How does he walk? Run? Rest? How can you show what he is thinking and feeling through his movements? Describe...

How does your character interact with the other characters in the show? How does he compare and contrast with them?

What properties of movement make your character unique to the others around him?

How old is your character?

What is his weight and mass, and how does that affect his movement?

How physically fit is your character? How weak?

What is the essence of your character that won't totally change even though he has changing emotions?
(Make sure their actions are consistent with their viewpoint on life.)

What are the psychological ground rules for your character that you should never, ever break? When should you break them? In other words, your character may remain consistent through most of the film, but break from his established character traits to express a different or deep aspect of his personality.

How does your character act in repose as well as in activity?

How does he react as a secondary character when another character is performing or talking?

Can you use posture to convey emotions?

How does the character's line of action/spine help to express what he's thinking and feeling? Get off the vertical when doing humans!

Does your character adopt an attitude throughout a scene or series of them? Is he cocky, authoritative, meek, oily, insincere, warm, indignant, recalcitrant, caring, mischievous? Describe...

Does he feign sincerity when talking to another character and reveal his true nature when that character's back is turned?

What is it about your character's attitudes that are unique to him? Can you think of ways to pose your character that shows they are unique instead of using animation clichés?

What value can be gained from walks and runs – speed, gait, posture – that can show the character's attitudes? In other words, it's not just enough to develop a walk. What does that walk say about how he's feeling at the moment?
