

Old Sacramento Living History Program

Character Development Worksheet

Developing a character requires developing a personal history for your character. Whether you research a real person from the past or develop a fictional/generic character, there are two types of information needed, Basic and Ancillary. The information you need to develop your character is the same information you know about yourself. This worksheet can be used as the basis for your research. When you have answered these questions (or completed the statements) you will have a good foundation for your character. Additional information can be added to your personal history as it is learned.

This form contains two sections: Basic and Ancillary. The Basic Section covers the information you will need to develop your character. The Ancillary Section (page 2) includes information that will help you develop skill in doing first or third person interpretation. The more you know about your character, the more comfortable you will be portraying that character.

Basic Section

Character name _____

Date and place of birth _____

Date of death _____

Age you will portray (this may vary depending on event) _____

Do you have a photograph or drawing of character? _____

Do you live in Sacramento or just traveling through? _____

Why did you come to Sacramento? _____

Date arrived in/traveled through Sacramento _____

If just traveling through, why? _____

Where are you traveling? _____

Where do you live? Sacramento? Other city! Address. _____

Why do you live where you do? _____

How long have you lived there? _____

Before arriving in Sacramento, where were you? (state, country, territory) _____

How did you travel to California (ship, wagon, train, etc.)? _____

What is your occupation? _____

Do you use special tools in your trade? If so, what? _____

Any outward physical limitations? _____

Are you poor, middle-class, wealthy? _____

With whom do you associate? _____

Do you have family? Spouse, siblings, parents, children. Describe them (name, age, occupation, etc.)

Do you have a special reputation? _____

What are your interests and hobbies? _____

Do you have unique or unusual talents? _____

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Ancillary Section

Describe a typical day in your life _____

What are your concerns (gripes) about your time period? (e.g., human rights, crime, medical care, etc.)

Following are some suggested topics for discussion. Pick a topic appropriate to your character and the time frame you want to portray. Learn something about one topic at a time. Develop an opinion, become thoroughly comfortable and conversant with the topic, then add more as you gain confidence. You will probably think of many more that you will want to learn about as time goes on.

politics
medical care
your boss (employees, servants, co-workers, etc.)
availability of foods
woman's suffrage
environment/weather (floods, fires, etc.)
development of Sacramento (buildings, etc.)
slavery
women's rights
methods of mining

railroad
crime
price of food
gambling
theatre/entertainment (for or against it, latest acts, etc.)
Civil War
human rights
price of land
cost of mining supplies

List five topics of conversation that you want to learn to discuss with visitors to Old Sacramento.

Additional notes: