**CSI Eng12**

**The Hero with a Thousand Faces PrOjEcT**

**Character Profile (Required)**

This is a group English grade. This profile sets the foundation for what you will be working to develop for the CSI ComicCON on Thursday, December 8th. Your profile must be typed, and must address ALL categories below. Your creativity within the guidelines is key. Stretch the guidelines to their limits. Move past the ordinary… into the extraordinary. Have fun. Your profile must be TYPED, must exhibit a group effort, and must be submitted to Mr. Feldkamp BEFORE Wednesday, November 16th.

**Part ONE: Choosing Your Superhero’s Traits**

1. **Choose your superhero’s powers.** Since super heroes are generally identified by their powers, it makes sense to think of the powers first and then shape the character to fit them. A huge number of superpowers have already been claimed by other characters, so try to come up with something unique.[1]

* You can also consider giving the hero multiple powers, like flight and super strength. Coming up with a mix of powers might help differentiate your new hero from other ones that already exist.

Some superheroes don’t have supernatural powers and instead rely on gadgets and training (ex. Batman and Black Widow). Others specialize in a single weapon or fighting style; these heroes’ dedication commands respect, but also makes them more susceptible to other attack styles, which in turn makes them more vulnerable—and possibly more interesting.

1. **Give your superhero a tragic flaw or weakness.** A tragic or “fatal” flaw is essentially a character trait or quality that your hero grapples with on a regular basis. An invulnerable hero can get old fast. By giving him or her a fatal weakness, you make battles more interesting and make fans more invested in the character.[2]

For example, Superman's weakness was kryptonite, while Batman’s tragic flaw was his obsession with seeking justice after seeing his parents murdered. Flaws or weaknesses can be emotional or psychological, or they can be physical.[3]

1. **Flesh out your character’s personalities.** Your super hero might have two separate identities: his everyday identity, and his hero identity. These two lives might entail separate personalities and traits. Work out what traits your hero possess in each form.[4]

Clark Kent, Superman’s daytime identity, is a quiet, careful, nerdy guy with glasses. But, as we know, he can morph into Superman and has super powers capable of fighting terrifying villains. Superman’s personality differs from the personality of Clark Kent. If you plan for your hero to have a secret identity, or to be an “average Joe” to the general public, negotiating between these two sides of the character can add dimension and make him more interesting for readers.[5]

1. **Avoid copying other existing characters.** It’s doubtful you’ll be able to find traits or powers that haven’t already been taken by someone somewhere, so just be sure to tweak it enough that you don’t directly rip off another character.

For example, if you want to give your hero Superman’s powers, give him a different name and a different backstory. That way, your hero is different and original.

1. **Try making your hero different from other superheroes.** If you’re creating your own superhero, you are probably pretty familiar with the standard traits and qualities of popular superheroes. Rather than making yours just like the ones that already exist, break the mold and try to be original. Give your hero a unique combination of powers or traits.

* You can be original in all aspects of creating your superhero. Maybe your hero’s power puts him at a disadvantage, rather than an advantage. Maybe your hero discovers he has these powers, but then ends up too scared or nervous to use them for good.

Use popular superhero characters as reference points. When you think of a traditional hero, what comes to mind? How can you make your hero different from these tropes?

**Part TWO: Building Your Superhero’s Background**

1. **Come up with a backstory for your hero.** In the superhero world, backstories are often called origin stories. They offer insight into the life your hero had before he really became a hero, and even how he became one. This story will give us a look into the more “human” side of your hero, and make him a more sympathetic and relatable character.[6]

* Many superheroes have tragedy in their pasts that led to an urge to enforce and serve justice. Bruce Wayne saw his parents murdered, and Peter Parker lost his uncle. These tragedies served as motivation for pursuing their powers (both supernatural and not).

Conflict and inner-turmoil can help shape the character and their story. When coming up with their backstory, think about conflicts or problems they may have faced that shaped them into the hero they are now.

1. **Think about how the superhero’s powers evolved.** Once you’ve determined your hero’s backstory, you know whether or not he was born with the powers he has, or if he came into them later in life. Deciding how he discovered or came into his powers is an important part of his story and who he is.

* Consider some questions: what was the character’s initial reaction to his/her abilities? How long did it take before the character had second thoughts? Have the powers become necessary for survival? Does your superhero try to use those powers as little as possible? Is (s)he proud or ashamed of these abilities?

Make the superpowers a journey in and of themselves. A character who has a static relationship to his or her own abilities won’t generate a lot of interest. Some trial and error, or even some internal conflict with how to use the powers are both good options.

1. **Determine the community’s relationship to the character.** Some superheroes are disliked or feared by the communities they exist within. Batman and Spider Man, for example, were both seen as menaces initially, before the community came to see them as helpful. Decide what kind of relationship you want your hero to have with his community.

* Anti-heroes like Deadpool and the Suicide Squad are loved by many comic book readers and movie-goers alike, even if they are disliked or feared by their communities. Taking this approach with your superhero could be a fun experiment in storytelling and character evolution.

1. **Create rivals or enemies for your hero.** Any good superhero needs a villain or two to fight against. Flesh out the enemies the same way you did the superhero. However, don’t answer too many questions about the villains right off the bat. Taking time to reveal their backstories, true natures, and motivations will make them more engaging and mysterious.

* The central villain’s backstory could possibly weave in with the superhero’s, even if the hero doesn’t know it. Your hero can ultimately find out about their connection as his story unfolds. This adds new layers to the story and the characters. For example, Luke Skywalker eventually found out the bad guy was his father—that complicated things a bit.
* People love a good villain. Whether it’s to place blame on the evil-doer, or to better understand their own innate fascination with the motivations behind people who do bad things, people are usually very interested in the villains of superhero stories. So, creating one can be a great step to take when coming up with your hero.[7]

When creating your villain, consider making him a foil, or the opposite of, your hero. For example, maybe his particular superpower directly conflicts with your hero's power(s). This will immediately give the two a reason to be at odds.

**Part THREE: Designing Your Superhero’s Image**

1. **Choose a gender and body type for your superhero.** Superheroes come in all shapes, sizes, and genders. Some are not even human at all. Decide on the physical traits of your superhero. The superpowers you have chosen might even help you determine the character’s physicality.

Consider some questions: is your character a tank? Would a lithe and lanky build be more appropriate? Is the power gender-specific?

1. **Design a costume for your superhero.** Make sure the colors, style, and accessories are all appropriate to both the character’s powers and personality. Consider the central weapons your hero might rely on, and if your hero might have a signature weapon they created and use.

Consider color when designing a costume for your hero. Think about what certain colors often imply. For example, white can sometimes imply an innocence, or godliness, while black might be more associated with darkness or bad guys.[8]

1. **Give your superhero a trademark.** A symbol or logo, for example, makes superheroes more memorable and helps make their costumes complete. Think of the big “S” on Superman’s chest, and the skull painted on the Punisher’s shirt. A catchphrase might also be useful, but remember to make it catchy, not long or cheesy.

If it’s appropriate for the character’s power, you might also want to give him or her a trademark pose. Of course, the most important trademarks of all are weapons, vehicles, and other useful tools. Be sure to name these items and give them a special place in the story arc.

1. **Name your superhero.** The name of your superhero will essentially be the “hook” for getting people interested. Of course, it’s the stories and character traits that make people love the superheroes, but it’s their names that are memorable and make the reader interested in the first place.

* Consider trying a few different naming techniques. There’s the noun + noun technique, in which you use two nouns and make a compound word for a name, like Spider Man. Or, you can try the adjective + noun technique, like in Superman and Black Widow.[9]

A name can have something to do with the hero’s powers, or even something to do with their personality and who they are. Since you’ve already thought out their origin story and what powers they have, these things should help you come up with a good name.

1. **Decide if you want to give your hero a sidekick.** Also, you might consider making your hero part of a team. Think of well-known teams and pairings like the X-Men, Justice League, and Avengers. They often come together as a team, but also have separate stories of their own.

Develop the sidekick/team the same way that you’ve developed the superhero thus far, then create a backstory as to how they met or came together. Consider these questions: is the sidekick/team useful or do they make lots of mistakes? Were they once enemies? Were they scarred by the same event? Is (s)he a sibling or friend? Did the superhero meet the sidekick/team by resurrecting them (or vice versa)?

**Sources and Citations**

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2. <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/FatalFlaw>
3. <http://www.superheromultiverse.com/superhero-vulnerabilities>
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All of this comes from:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Super-Hero>

It can be found, in its original form, by following a link on the “nature” site. [www.MrFeldkamp.com](http://www.MrFeldkamp.com)