



Exercise Four – Positive Change Arc

The Characteristic Moment

The actual structure of the character arc begins with the characteristic moment. The characteristic moment aligns with the structural Hook, which shows in the moment your protagonist does – presumably this is in your first chapter.

The characteristic moment is your protagonist's big debut. She steps onto the stage; the spotlight hits her and she shines. In this one moment, she shows readers what she's all about – the good, the bad, and the potential for amazing things to come. The characteristic moment shows readers exactly why this protagonist is going to be worth reading about.

Before you can perfect your characteristic moment, you must first know more about your character (I know you did this earlier, however, it will be interesting if this has now changed!)

What is this character's role in the story?

- Protagonist
- Antagonist
- Mentor
- Sidekick
- Love Interest
- Other: _____

What is your character's name? _____

How old is your character? _____





What nationality is your character? _____

What is your character's occupation or primary identity? (e.g. Mum, rebellious soldier)

Does the character have any physical conditions? (e.g. a limp)

List some characteristics of your character's personality? (e.g. kind, angry)

What one important personality trait, virtue, or skill best sums up your character?

How can you dramatise this aspect of your character to its fullest extent?

How can you dramatise this aspect in a way that also introduces the plot?





What do you want readers to find most sympathetic and/or interesting about this character?

How can you dramatise this aspect of your character in an opening scene?

What is your character's overall story goal (the thing that he wants most)?

How can you set up this goal or show the coming need for it in an opening scene?

What is your character's scene goal in the opening chapter?

How will you dramatise this scene goal right from the start of your opening scene?

How will the character's pursuit of this goal meet with an obvious obstacle (like a conflict)?





How will this goal move the plot, either by immediately causing consequences or setting them up for later?

How can any of the above help you demonstrate, or at least hint at, your character's lie?

How can you craft the above elements to make your protagonist immediately appealing to readers (e.g. what's keeping them from looking away)?

Which of your character's strengths can you show readers right away?

Which of your character's pertinent weaknesses can you show the readers right away?





Which of the following does your proposed Characteristic Moment accomplish?

- Introduce character**
- Reveal character's name**
- Indicate character's gender**
- Indicate character's age group**
- Indicate character's nationality**
- Indicate character's occupation/main identity**
- Indicate any important physical characteristics**
- Indicate role in the story (eg protagonist)**
- Demonstrate prevailing aspect of personality**
- Hook readers' sympathy and/or interest**
- Demonstrate scene goal**
- Indicate story goal**
- Demonstrate (or at least hint at) lie**
- Move plot directly or through foreshadowing**

