

Character Names

This page is going to help you create a name for the main characters in your story – the goodies and the baddies.

Characters' names in stories are often very important and can hint at their personality or job. I always think that certain names suit certain kinds of people.

Charles Dickens, David Walliams and Roald Dahl regularly use the names as a clue to what the character is like or what they do. For example:

- Mr and Mrs Twit in Roald Dahl's book: 'The Twits' are... twits! Mr Willy Wonker is a silly name for a silly man!
- Miss Root, in the book 'The Demon Dentist' by David Walliams, is a dentist (and not a very nice one!)
- Miss Honey and Miss Trunchball, in Roald Dahl's 'Matilda', are two very different types of teacher – can you guess which one is nice and which isn't?
- In 'Harry Potter' we learn that Tom Marvolo Riddle is in fact Lord Voldermort (an anagram of his original name!)
- Why do you think Charles Dickens called the main character in 'A Christmas Carol' Scrooge?

In our story, 'Mission Possible', we have the following characters:

- **Polly Powers and Pete Powers (secret agent)**
- **Cyril Secret (Head of the Secret Services)**
- **Dodgy Rodger and Raucous Reggie (thief)**

Do you think their names suggest something about them? Do you like their names? What do you notice about their names?

What are your favourite names of characters in stories that you have read?

Three thought bubbles are arranged in a cluster. Each bubble contains two lines of text: 'Character name:' followed by a blank space, and 'Book or film they were in:' followed by a blank space. The bubbles are connected at their bottom edges.

Let's invent some character names for your story

Here are 3 ideas for coming up with a name for a character

1. Find the origin of a name (*where the name comes from*)

For example, the name Peter comes from the Greek meaning 'rock'. When you find the origin, you can think whether it suits your character. (You will need the internet for this so surf safely and with an adult present.)

2. List names

Find some story books and write two lists – one of the author's first names and another list with all of the second names. Put the lists side by side and match the first names and surnames with ones that you think work well, for example, *Roald Donaldson*.

Or you could list all your friends name, or all the names of people you know, and then rearrange them to come up with names that fit the characters you want to invent.

3. Use jobs or special features

In real life, some surnames originally suggested the owner's job or special feature. Could you invent a surname to fit your character e.g. name + special feature:

- an evil surgeon could be called Doctor Slice
- a tall teacher: Mr Longlegs
- a boy who can run fast: Samuel Speed
- a girl who is good at scoring goals: Gail Goodshot.