

Stereotypes

Stereotypical characters are ones so often used in books, movies, plays, etc, that we recognize them straight away.

For example, in your story you might have:

- A school bully
- A skinny geek with glasses
- A mean teacher
- A nice teacher

If you don't make these characters unique and individual, they run the risk of being boring and making your story 'flat'.

For example, your bully is a big, mean boy who steals the geek's lunch money, trips him, humiliates him, or torments him. We've seen bullies in lots of books and films, for example:

- Nelson in The Simpsons
- Biff in Back to the Future
- Draco, Crabbe and Goyle in the Harry Potter series
- Sid in Toy Story

It's very easy to put a bully into your story and make him just a mean guy with no real personality of his own. But if you do that, your story will suffer. Readers just won't be interested in the character.



Avoiding Stereotypes

You can make all your characters interesting, as long as you think about each of them and give them a personality of their own.

Create a Back Story for your Characters

Your bully might be mean to your hero because he's angry about something that happened on the first day at school. Maybe your bully farted in class, and your hero laughed the loudest? Or maybe your bully is failing all his classes and doesn't know what to do about it, so he pretends he doesn't care and takes it out on the smart kids.

You should create a back story for all your characters, even if the stuff you create isn't actually in the story. If you know why your characters are the way they are, that will come out when you write them and they'll seem real.

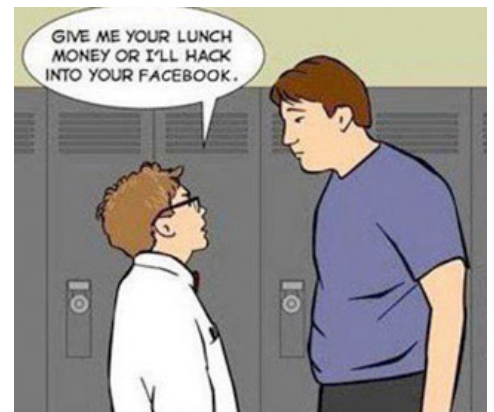
Write Unexpected Characters.

Your bully doesn't have to be big, mean and tough.

What if your bully is an old lady who always hides behind her fence, then jumps out at your hero while he's on his way to school and steals his lunch money?

What if your hero's younger sister has been learning karate and picks on him?

Or maybe your hero is being bullied online and doesn't know who's doing it?



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Give Your Characters Quirks or Unusual Traits

You can still have a big, mean bully in your story who picks on your hero just because he can. If you give that bully a quirk or unusual trait, he will not be a stereotype. For example, he could have a stutter. Or he is mean to people but really likes animals and keeps his pet mouse in his schoolbag? Or does he pretend to be a character in his favorite movie while he's beating up your hero?

Have fun with stereotypes, and they'll end up as fun, interesting characters that people will enjoy reading about.

Marks are awarded as follows:

1. Identification of character traits – **4 marks.**
2. Topic: relevant, interesting, original; insightful interpretation – **4 marks.**
3. Sequencing/Organization – **4 marks.**
4. Word choice: vivid, draw pictures in the reader's mind – **4 marks.**
5. Mechanics and Grammar – **4 marks.**

	4	3	2	1
Identification of Character Traits	Three character traits are well supported with accurate information	Two character traits are well supported with accurate	Only one character trait is adequately supported	No character traits are adequately supported
Support for topic / Content	Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key issue is unsupported.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues are unsupported.	Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic.
Sequencing / Organization	Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	Details are placed in a logical order, but the way in which they are presented makes the writing less interesting.	Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.	Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.
Word Choice	Vivid words and phrases are used that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind. Placement of words seems accurate, natural and not forced.	Vivid words and phrases are used that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind but occasionally the words miss used or seem overdone.	Words that communicate clearly are used but the writing lacks variety, punch or flair.	The vocabulary does not communicate strongly or capture the reader's interest. Jargon or clichés may be present.
Mechanics and Grammar	Paragraph has no errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	Paragraph has one or two punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	Paragraph has three to five punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	Paragraph has six or more punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.