

Become a Dragon Master of Character Development!

Welcome, Aria! Today, we're diving into the exciting world of Berk and beyond, not just to admire the dragons, but to learn how the amazing characters in 'How to Train Your Dragon' come to life. By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to create your very own character ready for epic adventures!

Materials Needed:

- Your imagination!
- Notebook or writing paper
- Pens or pencils
- Optional: Access to the internet for dragon inspiration (with permission)
- Optional: 'How to Train Your Dragon' movie clips (if easily accessible and desired for reference)

Part 1: What Makes Hiccup and Toothless So Awesome? (Approx. 30-45 minutes)

Think about Hiccup at the beginning of 'How to Train Your Dragon'. Now think about him at the end. Quite a change, right? That's character development!

Activity 1: Character Deep Dive

Let's analyze our heroes:

1. **Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III:**
 - **Before a Dragon Friend:** Jot down 3-5 words describing Hiccup at the start. What were his main problems or desires? What were his strengths (even if hidden) and weaknesses?
 - **After Befriending Toothless:** How did Hiccup change? List 3-5 ways he grew. What did he learn? What new strengths did he develop?
2. **Toothless:**
 - **First Encounter:** How would you describe Toothless when Hiccup first finds him? What were his apparent motivations or fears?
 - **Becoming a Friend:** How does Toothless change? What does he learn from Hiccup? How does their bond change him?

Discussion Point: What is a Character Arc?

A character arc is the journey of transformation a character undergoes throughout a story. It's about how they change in response to events and challenges. Can you describe Hiccup's character arc in one or two sentences? How about Toothless's?

Part 2: Forge Your Own Legend - Create Your Character! (Approx. 45-60 minutes)

Now it's your turn to be the storyteller! Let's create an original character. This character could be a Viking, a dragon rider, or even a unique type of dragon! Feel free to draw them if you like.

Activity 2: Character Blueprint

Answer these questions in your notebook to build your character:

- **Name:** (Make it memorable!)
- **Species/Role:** (e.g., Viking teen, a new type of dragon, a wandering scholar of dragons)
- **Appearance:** (Key features, clothing, any unique marks?)
- **Personality - The Good:** List at least 3 positive traits (e.g., brave, kind, witty, curious).
- **Personality - The Quirks/Flaws:** List at least 2-3 flaws or weaknesses (e.g., clumsy, stubborn, shy, a bit too sarcastic, afraid of heights). Flaws make characters relatable!
- **Backstory Snippet:** Where do they come from? What's one important event from their past that shaped them?
- **Biggest Goal/Desire:** What do they want more than anything? (e.g., to discover a new island, to prove themselves, to protect someone, to find a lost treasure).
- **Biggest Fear:** What are they most afraid of? (This often creates conflict with their goal!)
- **Their Special Dragon (if applicable):** If they have a dragon, briefly describe it and their bond. If your character IS a dragon, what makes them special?

Thinking about their Arc: Based on their goals, fears, and personality, how do you imagine your character might change if they were the star of their own story? What challenges would help them grow?

Part 3: Take Flight - A Glimpse into Their World (Approx. 30-45 minutes)

Let's bring your character to life on the page!

Activity 3: A Day in the Life (or a Moment of Truth!)

Write a short scene (about 1-2 paragraphs, or around 200-300 words) featuring your new character. Choose one of these ideas, or come up with your own:

- Your character's first meeting with their dragon (or another important character).
- Your character facing a small challenge that reveals their personality (e.g., they have to solve a puzzle, deal with a bully, or try something they're scared of).
- A quiet moment where your character is thinking about their biggest goal or fear.
- Your character trying to use one of their skills (successfully or not!).

Focus on: Showing, not telling! Instead of saying 'She was brave,' show her doing something brave. Use their actions and dialogue to reveal who they are.

Part 4: Dragon Master's Reflection (Approx. 10-15 minutes)

Let's think about what we've learned:

- What was the most interesting part about creating your character?
- Why do you think characters who change and grow (like Hiccup) are often more interesting than characters who stay the same?
- How can understanding character development help you enjoy stories more, or even understand people in real life a bit better?

Great job, Aria! You've not only explored the heart of 'How to Train Your Dragon' but also taken your first steps into creating truly memorable characters. Keep practicing, and who knows what amazing stories you'll tell!