

# Best Practices for Naming Your Characters

*This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:*

[How to Choose Character Names](#)

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## Be Realistic

- Choose a name that blends in with the character's age, location, and culture.
- Consider what name a parent would likely choose.
- Honor ethnic differences in name choice. Larry may be out of place in Japan, Juan may be out of place in Kenya.

## Mind the Genre

- Choose a name that fits within your genre.
- If your novel is set in the future, choose names that sound foreign while still being easy to pronounce.

## Be Consistent

- Refer to your character by one name only, or you run the risk of confusing your audience.
- Either use formal names or nicknames, but don't switch between the two.

## Be Dissimilar

- Give each character in your story a name that starts with a different letter. You have 26 categories to choose from. Alfred, Benjamin, Carolyn... Xersalyn, Yolanda, Zack.
- Avoid names that sound alike, for example Rob and Bob.
- Go dissimilar even when naming twins.
- Avoid choosing similar shaped names, such as Derek and Sarek.

## Avoid Name Associations

- Don't use names that are famous or infamous—it taints the character.

## Choose Easy to Pronounce Names

- Keep your names easy to pronounce.
- Choose one to three syllable names—the shorter, the better.

## Reinforce the Character's Qualities

- Use the name's meaning to highlight a quality in the character.
- Don't beat the reader over the head with the name's meaning—keep it subtle.

## Re-Evaluate the Character's Name

- Don't feel tied to any name. Change it as many times as you'd like.