

Robert Newton Peck's Character Outline

1. What's his name?
2. Where was he born and raised?
3. What is his religion and ethnicity?
4. Briefly (in order not to bog yourself down with cosmetics) what does he look like? Fat, thin, tall, short, muscular, flabby, gray, bald?
5. What does he believe in?
6. Where has he failed or triumphed?
7. Is he married, single, gay, divorced, or shy?
8. Most important of all, what kind of *work* does he do? And then, is he happy or discontented with it?
9. What are his hobbies? Sports? TV?
10. Is he neat or is he a slob? To establish this on paper, describe his dress, his closet, a drawer of his desk and the trunk of his car.
11. Can your mind picture him making something? Using a simple tool, perhaps, to shape the hull of a model clipper ship?
12. How do his *hands* behave? Relate them to tangible things that surround him.
13. Is he musical? Is there one special instrument that he plays well or badly? Does he play it alone, for himself, or can he jam it up for an audience of friends or strangers?
14. What is his school and schooling like? Who was the teacher he respected and *why*?
15. What are the events, items, pets, pals . . . that he remembers for years?
16. Other than memories, what are the tangible trinkets he saves and treasures from his past?
17. Is he witty? If so, you cannot *tell* your reader that he is. Instead, you must let your dialogue *show* a reader exactly the witty remarks he makes.
18. How does he drive his car, tie his tie, gargle? Does he pick his nose, cough often, snore?
19. Read the editorial page of your newspaper and chose which opinions he agrees with or disputes. Does he argue bitterly, silently, or to anyone who has to listen?
20. What is his goal? Whom does he dream about, yearn for, hate?