

**From:** Rebecca Sharrow [mailto:r.sharrow@sau33.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 04, 2018 10:35 AM  
**To:** Tracy Paradis  
**Subject:** Re: ?

No problem. I just thought you wanted an overview of the assignment. Here are the questions:

### How Do You Turn Yourself Into a Character? (Lopate's Tips)

You may not be able to answer all questions. That is okay. Everyone has different conflicts in their lives. Some people don't have any conflict in their life. Just answer the questions you can and skip over the questions you can't answer.

1. Acquire some distance from yourself so you are able to "see" yourself in social situations. When are you charming, pushy, moody, ridiculous, etc. Take inventory of yourself so that you can present that self to the reader as a specific, readable character. How do you act in social situations?
2. What sets you apart from the majority of your peers? What are your quirks? What makes things harder for you than for most other people? (peculiar habits, unconventional or strange behavior, antisocial mannerisms, etc.) What sets you apart from your peers?
3. You need a conflict. Work out some problem, one not easily resolved. Select a conflict that will generate enough spark without being too complicated. (If you start writing without a conflict in mind, you may quickly run out of steam. If you take on a problem that is too large, you may choke on the details and give up.) What are the conflicts you have dealt with in your life?
4. Focus on those moments in the day, in your loves and friendships, in your family dynamics, that are genuinely perplexing, vexing (worrisome, troublesome) luminous (shining, bright), or unresolved. Recognize that life remains a mystery - even your so-called boring life. What relationships in your life are confusing, troublesome, enlightening, or positive?
5. We are distinguished from one another as much by our pasts, and the set of circumstances we are born into, as by the challenges we have encountered along the way, and how we choose to resolve them. Ethnicity, age, gender, religion, class, geography, and politics are all strong determinants in the development of character. Do you have challenges brought about by your life circumstances such as your age, gender, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, where you live, or your political beliefs?
6. Become deft (skillful) at inserting your background information swiftly and casually, "I was born in Brooklyn, New York, of working-class parents." Get to the basic orienting facts (the who, what, where, when, and why) as close to the top of the story as possible. Where are you from? Where do you live? How old are you? What do your parents do for a living? How many siblings do you have? What is your family dynamic? What do you do for fun?
7. Consider expressing your opinions, prejudices, ideas, etc., provided you are willing to explore and analyze the flaws. These ideas can contribute greatly to the development of your character. What are your flaws? What are your

crazy ideas? What are your prejudices?

(Are you intolerant or judgmental toward certain groups of people?)

8. Actions speak louder than words. (Use showing instead of telling writing!)