

# Character Observation Assignment

Write answers on a separate sheet of lined paper or typed. At LEAST 4 sentences per #. Due 9-17-12.

1. **Garment.** What is distinctive about what this person wears? Make sure you notice jewelry, handbags, hats, and other accessories. Does this person have any sacred objects?
2. **Word choice.** Are there particular words or phrases this person uses often? Does he or she use common language or more elevated language?
3. **Habitual gestures.** What gestures does this person perform habitually? It's fun to guess why a particular gesture to a part of the body may have developed.
4. **Spine.** Is it straight, curved forward or backward, curved at the top or bottom, or lean to the side? Look for junctures between the spine and head, and the lower back and pelvis. Adjusting an actor's spine can radically change how he or she reads to the audience.
5. **Body center.** Most people lead from a particular place in the body—head, neck, chest, stomach, pelvis, or base of spine.
6. **Rhythm.** Everybody has his or her own dominant rhythm—fast, slow, or somewhere in between. We also can have inner rhythms that differ from our outer rhythms. Look for the nervous tapping of fingers or darting eyes.
7. **Sense of weight.** Light, medium, or heavy. This is not actual weight. Some very large people move with a lightness about them, and some people who weigh less can be very grounded. Watch for how people stand up from a sitting position or whether they go up on their toes a lot, as opposed to being back on their heels.
8. **Energy flow.** Is it bound or unbound? Again, look for the dominant flow. Does the person let his or her energy flow out freely or do they keep it all bound up inside? I always tell students to look at hands and faces. Does the person walk around with closed fists? Does a person have a wide-open smile or a tight-lipped smile? When the person gestures, does he extend the arm all the way out from the body, or does he stop it abruptly a few inches out from his torso?
9. **Vocal patterns.** Start to identify pitch, rhythm, or specific breathing patterns. Does the person have a sing-songy voice? Does she have a breathy voice?