

The Writer's Digest Character Naming Sourcebook

by Sherrilyn Kenyon

Audio (MP3) version: https://books.kim/mp3/book/www.books.kim_1087_summary-The_Writer_s_Digest_.mp3

Summary:

The Writer's Digest Character Naming Sourcebook by Sherrilyn Kenyon is a comprehensive guide to creating memorable and unique character names. It provides readers with an extensive list of over 10,000 first and last names from around the world, as well as advice on how to create believable characters through their names. The book also includes tips on avoiding common pitfalls when naming characters, such as using too many similar-sounding or overly long names. Additionally, it offers guidance on researching historical figures for inspiration and exploring cultural influences in order to create more authentic characters.

The sourcebook begins with an introduction that explains why character naming is important and how it can affect the reader's experience of a story. It then moves into sections devoted to different types of name sources: geographical locations (including countries, cities, regions), ethnicities (such as African American or Native American), religions (Christianity, Judaism etc.), occupations (doctors, lawyers etc.) and other categories like mythology or literature. Each section contains lists of appropriate first and last names along with brief descriptions about their origins.

In addition to providing lists of potential character names from various sources around the world, this book also offers helpful advice for writers who are struggling with coming up with original ideas for their stories. This includes suggestions for combining two existing words together in order to form new ones; brainstorming techniques; ways to use nicknames; methods for finding out what people were called during certain time periods; plus much more.

Overall The Writer's Digest Character Naming Sourcebook is an invaluable resource for any writer looking to create realistic yet unique characters within their work. With its vast selection of international name options plus useful tips on constructing believable identities through language choices – this book will help authors craft unforgettable protagonists that readers won't soon forget!

Main ideas:

#1. *Brainstorming: Brainstorming is an effective way to come up with creative and unique names for characters. It involves coming up with a list of words and phrases that are related to the character's personality, background, and other traits. This can help to create a name that is both meaningful and memorable.*

Brainstorming is an effective way to come up with creative and unique names for characters. It involves taking the time to think of words and phrases that are related to the character's personality, background, and other traits. This can help create a name that is both meaningful and memorable. Brainstorming allows you to explore different possibilities without feeling limited by any one idea or concept. You can also use brainstorming as a tool for developing ideas about how your character should look, act, or speak.

When brainstorming names for your characters, it's important to consider all aspects of their identity—including physical characteristics like hair color or eye shape; cultural influences such as religion or nationality; personal interests like hobbies or favorite foods; even quirks like mannerisms or catchphrases. All these elements can be used together in order to create a name that reflects who they are as individuals.

It's also helpful when brainstorming names for characters to keep in mind what kind of story you're writing—whether it's fantasy, science fiction, historical fiction etc.—as this will influence which types of names might work best within the

context of your narrative world. Additionally, if you have multiple characters with similar backgrounds (such as siblings), then coming up with distinct yet complementary names can help differentiate them from each other.

Finally, don't forget that there are plenty of online resources available where you can find inspiration for naming your characters! From baby-naming websites and books on mythology to databases full of surnames from around the world—there are countless sources out there just waiting for you to explore them.

#2. Cultural Influences: Cultural influences can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the language, customs, and history of a particular culture can help to create a name that is both authentic and meaningful.

Cultural influences can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the language, customs, and history of a particular culture can help to create a name that is both authentic and meaningful. For example, if you are writing about an Irish character, you could look into traditional Gaelic names or explore the meanings behind popular Irish surnames. You may also want to consider how certain words sound in different languages; this could lead to interesting combinations for your character's name.

In addition to researching specific cultures, you should also think about how cultural norms might influence your character's name. In some societies, there may be certain expectations around what type of names people give their children—for instance, many Chinese families will choose characters with positive connotations such as "happiness" or "prosperity". Similarly, some cultures have traditions around giving family members similar-sounding names (e.g., all siblings having names beginning with the same letter). Taking these factors into account can help make your characters name more believable.

Finally, don't forget that cultural influences extend beyond just language and tradition; they can also include elements like art and music. If you're looking for something unique but still culturally relevant for your characters name, try exploring works by local artists or listening to traditional songs from the region where your story takes place.

#3. Historical Names: Historical names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of famous people from the past can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful.

Historical names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of famous people from the past can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful. By looking into different cultures, eras, and countries, you can find interesting combinations of sounds and meanings that will make your character stand out.

When researching historical names, consider their origin as well as any connotations they may have in modern times. For example, some ancient Greek or Roman names may sound exotic but could also carry negative associations due to their association with certain gods or goddesses. Similarly, some medieval English surnames might evoke images of knights in shining armor while others could bring up ideas about poverty or servitude.

In addition to considering the meaning behind each name you research, pay attention to how it sounds when spoken aloud. A good character name should roll off the tongue easily so that readers don't stumble over it every time they come across it in your story.

Finally, remember that there are no hard-and-fast rules for choosing a historical name for your character; use whatever combination works best for them! With enough research and creativity you'll be able to find just the right one.

#4. Nature: Nature can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of plants, animals, and other natural elements can help to create a name that is both creative and

meaningful.

Nature can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. By researching the names of plants, animals, and other natural elements, you can come up with creative and meaningful character names that will help bring your story to life. For example, if you are writing a fantasy novel set in an enchanted forest, consider using the Latin name for some of the trees or flowers found there as part of your characters name. Or if you're writing about a brave knight who is on a quest to save his kingdom from evil forces, look into mythological creatures such as dragons or griffins for ideas.

You could also use geographical features like rivers or mountains as part of your characters name. This could give them an air of mystery and power that would make them stand out from other characters in your story. Additionally, looking at words associated with different cultures can provide interesting options for unique names that reflect the culture they belong to.

By taking advantage of nature's vast array of possibilities when it comes to naming characters, you can create memorable and meaningful monikers that will add depth and richness to any story. So don't be afraid to get creative – explore all the possibilities nature has to offer!

#5. *Mythology: Mythology can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of gods, goddesses, and other mythical figures can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful.*

Mythology can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of gods, goddesses, and other mythical figures can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful. By exploring different mythologies from around the world, you can find names with interesting origins and connotations that will add depth to your characters identity. For example, in Greek mythology there are many powerful gods such as Zeus or Poseidon whose names could be used for strong male characters; while in Norse mythology there are goddesses like Freya or Frigg who could provide fitting monikers for female protagonists.

In addition to researching traditional mythologies, you may also want to look into more modern sources such as comic books or fantasy novels which often draw on ancient myths for their own creations. This way you can find creative new takes on classic stories and use them as inspiration for your own work. No matter what type of mythology you choose to explore, make sure that the name fits with the character's personality and story arc so that it feels natural within the context of your narrative.

#6. *Literary Names: Literary names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of characters from literature can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful.*

Literary names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of characters from literature can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful. By looking at the works of classic authors such as Shakespeare, Dickens, Austen, and Bronte, you can find unique and interesting names for your own characters. You may also want to look into more modern works by contemporary authors like JK Rowling or Stephen King.

When researching literary names, consider not only the character's first name but also their last name. A surname often has its own meaning or connotations which could add an extra layer of depth to your character's identity. Additionally, think about how different combinations of first and last names might sound together – this will help you decide if they are suitable for your story.

Finally, don't forget that there are many other sources outside of literature which could provide inspiration for character names too! Consider looking at historical figures or even baby-name books in order to come up with something truly

unique.

#7. Place Names: Place names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of cities, countries, and other geographical locations can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful.

Place names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. By researching the names of cities, countries, and other geographical locations, you can come up with a name that is both unique and meaningful. For example, if your character is from an exotic location like India or Thailand, you could use the name of one of those places as part of their name. Or if your character has traveled extensively throughout Europe, you could draw on place names from different countries for inspiration.

You don't have to limit yourself to just using place names either; consider combining them with other elements such as words in foreign languages or even mythological references. This will help create a more interesting and memorable name for your character that stands out from the crowd. Additionally, by looking at maps or reading about different cultures around the world you may find some truly unique ideas for creating original character names.

#8. Nicknames: Nicknames can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the nicknames of famous people can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful.

Nicknames can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the nicknames of famous people can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful. For example, if you are writing about an athlete, look up their nickname and see what kind of ideas come to mind. You may find something unique or clever that could work perfectly for your character.

You don't have to limit yourself to just athletes either; there are plenty of other sources for nicknames as well. Look at historical figures, celebrities, politicians, authors – anyone who has made an impact on society in some way likely has a nickname associated with them. Even fictional characters from books or movies might have interesting nicknames that could spark your imagination.

When researching potential names from these sources, make sure you understand the origin and meaning behind each one before using it in your story. This will ensure that the name fits with the character's personality and backstory without being too obvious or clichéd.

#9. Compound Names: Compound names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Combining two or more words to create a unique name can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful.

Compound names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Combining two or more words to create a unique name can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful. For example, combining the words "fire" and "light" could result in the name "Firlight" – an evocative and memorable moniker for any character.

When creating compound names, it is important to consider how each word contributes to the overall meaning of the name. The combination should make sense together, as if they were meant to go together all along. Additionally, think about how different combinations of letters might affect pronunciation; some letter combinations may sound better than others.

Finally, don't forget that you can also combine existing names with other words or phrases. This technique allows you to take advantage of already established meanings while still creating something new and unique. For instance, adding the suffix -son onto an existing first name could give your character a surname like Jackson or Harrison.

#10. *Wordplay: Wordplay can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Creating a name by playing with words can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful.*

Wordplay can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. By playing with words, you can create names that are both unique and meaningful. For example, if your character is a brave knight, you could combine the words "brave" and "knight" to create the name "Braight." Or if your character is an adventurous explorer, you could combine the words "adventure" and "explorer" to create the name "Advexplore." You can also use wordplay to give your characters more interesting or humorous names; for instance, combining two seemingly unrelated words like cat and sailor might result in something like Cator.

The possibilities are endless when it comes to using wordplay for character naming! With some creativity and imagination, you can come up with truly unique names that will help bring your characters to life on the page. So don't be afraid to get creative – have fun with it!

#11. *Alliteration: Alliteration can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Using words that begin with the same letter can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful.*

Alliteration can be a powerful tool when it comes to creating memorable character names. By using words that begin with the same letter, you can create a name that is both creative and meaningful. For example, if your story features a brave knight, you could use alliterative words like "brave" and "bold" to come up with the perfect moniker for him. Or if your protagonist is an adventurous explorer, you might opt for something like "curious" or "courageous."

The possibilities are endless when it comes to alliterative naming! You can also draw inspiration from other sources such as books, movies, television shows or even historical figures. With some creativity and imagination, you can craft unique character names that will help bring your stories to life.

#12. *Rhyming: Rhyming can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Using words that rhyme can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful.*

Rhyming can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. By using words that rhyme, you can create a name that is both unique and meaningful. Rhyming names are often memorable and catchy, making them perfect for characters in stories or books.

When creating rhyming names, consider the characters personality traits or physical characteristics as well as their role in the story. For example, if your character is brave and courageous, you could use words like "brave" and "courageous" to come up with a fitting name such as Dave or Louvrage. If your character has an exotic look about them, try combining words like "mystic" and "enchanted" to create Mystichant.

You can also combine two unrelated words together to form a unique sounding name such as Glitterfrost or Starbloom. This type of creative wordplay allows you to craft interesting names that will stand out from the crowd.

Using rhymes when coming up with character names is an effective way to make sure they have meaning behind them while still being original and eye-catching at the same time.

#13. *Acronyms: Acronyms can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Creating a name by combining the first letters of words can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful.*

Acronyms can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. By combining the first letters of words, you can create a name that is both creative and meaningful. For example, if your character is an ambitious entrepreneur, you could combine the words "ambitious" and "entrepreneur" to form the acronym AEN. This could then become the characters name: Aen.

You can also use acronyms to represent certain traits or characteristics associated with your character. For instance, if your protagonist is brave and courageous, you might combine those two words into BC for Brave Courageous “ which would make for an interesting name choice!

Using acronyms as part of your character-naming process allows you to come up with unique names that are tailored specifically to each individual character in your story. It also helps ensure that no two characters have similar names “ something that can be difficult when using traditional methods.

#14. Foreign Languages: Foreign languages can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of words from other languages can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful.

Foreign languages can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. By researching the names of words from other languages, you can create a name that is both unique and meaningful. For example, if your character is from an Italian background, you could look up Italian words for strength or courage and use those as part of their name. Or if your character has Spanish roots, you could search for Spanish terms related to beauty or intelligence.

You don't have to limit yourself to just one language either; by combining elements from different languages together, you can create even more interesting names. For instance, if your character is half French and half German, why not combine two words - one in each language - into a single name? This will give them an exotic flair that reflects their heritage.

Using foreign language sources for naming characters also allows you to explore cultures outside of your own. You may discover new meanings behind certain words that would otherwise go unnoticed “ giving your characters depth and complexity beyond what they might have had with just English-based names.

#15. Numerology: Numerology can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Using numbers to create a name can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful.

Numerology is an ancient practice that uses numbers to gain insight into the character of a person or thing. It can be used as a tool for creating meaningful and creative names for characters in books, movies, television shows, and other forms of media. By assigning numerical values to letters in the alphabet, numerologists are able to create unique combinations that represent certain qualities or characteristics.

When it comes to naming characters, numerology can provide writers with ideas they may not have thought of before. For example, if you want your protagonist's name to reflect strength and courage then you could assign each letter in their name a number associated with those traits. This will help give your character's name more depth and meaning than simply picking something out at random.

Using numerology when naming characters can also add an element of mystery or intrigue. A combination of numbers that has no obvious meaning might make readers curious about what lies beneath the surface “ adding another layer to your story.

The Writers Digest Character Naming Sourcebook by Sherrilyn Kenyon provides detailed information on how to use numerology when coming up with names for characters. With its helpful tips and advice on choosing the right combination of numbers for each character's name, this book is sure to inspire any writer looking for creative ways to bring their stories alive.

#16. Color Names: Color names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of colors can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful.

Color names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of colors can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful. For example, if you are looking for a strong female character name, consider using shades like Scarlet or Crimson. If you need an exotic sounding male character name, try Indigo or Cobalt. You could also use color names as part of longer monikers such as Azure Skye or Amber Dawn.

When researching color names, look beyond the traditional reds and blues and explore more unusual hues like Chartreuse or Mauve. Consider how different combinations of colors might work together in creating interesting new names such as Olive Jade or Peachy Rose. Colorful words can also be used to create fun nicknames for your characters – think Sunshine for someone with an upbeat personality or Midnight for someone mysterious.

Using color-inspired names is just one way to make sure your characters stand out from the crowd!

#17. *Animal Names: Animal names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of animals can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful.*

Animal names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of animals can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful. For example, if you are writing about a brave character, consider using the name "Lion" or "Tiger". If your story features an intelligent character, then perhaps "Owl" or "Fox" would be appropriate. Animal names also provide an opportunity for puns and wordplay; for instance, if your protagonist is always getting into trouble, why not call him "Mischievous Mouse"?

When researching animal names for characters in your stories, take some time to learn more about the creatures themselves. What traits do they possess? How do they interact with their environment? Knowing these things will help you choose an animal-inspired name that truly reflects the personality of your character.

Finally, don't forget to look beyond traditional pet animals when searching for ideas; there are plenty of exotic species out there with unique and interesting monikers! From armadillos to zebras – let your imagination run wild as you explore all the possibilities available through animal naming.

#18. *Plant Names: Plant names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of plants can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful.*

Plant names can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of plants can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful. For example, if you are looking for an exotic sounding name, consider researching tropical plants such as orchids or hibiscus. If you want something more traditional, look into common garden flowers like daisies or roses. You could also explore trees and shrubs such as oaks and maples for a strong-sounding name.

When researching plant names, take note of any interesting meanings associated with them. Many plants have symbolic associations that may fit your character's personality traits or story arc perfectly. For instance, the rose symbolizes love while ivy stands for fidelity – perfect choices for romantic leads! Additionally, some plants have mythological connections which could add depth to your character's backstory.

Using plant names in your writing can give your characters an extra layer of meaning and make them stand out from the crowd. With just a little bit of research into botanical nomenclature, you will be able to find the perfect moniker for each one of your creations!

#19. *Music: Music can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of songs, albums, and other musical elements can help to create a name that is both creative and meaningful.*

Music can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. By researching the names of songs,

albums, and other musical elements, you can come up with creative and meaningful character names. For example, if you're writing a story about a young girl who loves music, consider using the title of her favorite song as her name. Or perhaps use an album title that reflects something important in your character's life or journey. You could also look at lyrics from different songs for ideas on how to craft unique and interesting names.

Another way to draw inspiration from music is by looking at the titles of famous musicians or composers. These titles often have deep meanings behind them that can help inform your character's backstory or personality traits. Additionally, many musical terms such as *crescendo* or *allegro* are evocative words that could make for interesting first or last names.

Using music as a source for naming characters is not only fun but also provides an opportunity to explore deeper themes within your story. With some research and creativity, you'll be able to find just the right name for each one of your characters!

#20. *Pop Culture: Pop culture can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. Researching the names of celebrities, movies, and other elements of popular culture can help to create a name that is both unique and meaningful.*

Pop culture can be a great source of inspiration when it comes to naming characters. By researching the names of celebrities, movies, and other elements of popular culture, writers can create unique and meaningful character names that will help bring their stories to life. For example, if you're writing a story set in the 1980s, you could look up some of the most iconic films from that era for ideas – think *E.T.*, *The Breakfast Club* or *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* – and use those titles as part of your character's name.

You could also research famous people from the time period who have interesting or unusual names; perhaps an athlete like Bo Jackson or a musician like Prince would provide just what you need for your protagonist! Additionally, looking into slang terms used during this decade might give you some fun options too – words like "rad" or "gnarly" could make for memorable monikers.

By taking advantage of pop culture references when creating character names, writers can add depth and authenticity to their work while still making sure each name is unique. So don't be afraid to do some digging around in popular culture when coming up with new characters' identities – it may just lead to something special!