

Fuzzy Improv

Creating an Improv Character



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What is an Improv Character?

In improv, **character** is the persona an improviser adopts during a scene—a unique identity created spontaneously to serve the story, emotion, or comedic moment. Unlike scripted theater, improv characters are invented on the spot and shaped by choices in voice, movement, attitude, and relationships.

Character is the combination of traits, behaviors, emotions, and choices that define who the improviser is pretending to be—whether that’s a grumpy librarian, a space alien with a love for jazz, or a nervous teenager trying to ask someone to prom.



Core Elements of Improv Character

Point of View: Every character has a perspective—what they care about, what they fear, what they want. This drives their decisions and reactions.

- **Connection:** Who are the characters to each other, how are they connected? They could be siblings, co-workers, teammates, rivals etc. Their connection helps explain how they interact with each other. Are they a jealous siblings, leader and loyal sidekick, or suspicious neighbors?

Dynamics: How do the characters interact with the others in the scene—friend, rival, boss, lover? How they interact adds depth and stakes to the scene. See more on the last pages.

•**Physicality:** How does the character move, stand, gesture, and use space? Posture, gestures, and facial expressions help convey who the character is. A hunched posture or exaggerated walk can instantly signal personality.

•**Voice and Speech:** Accent, tone, pacing, and vocabulary help distinguish the character and reveal their emotional state or background. A character might speak in poetic metaphors or bark orders like a drill sergeant.

•**Emotional Life:** Characters in improv thrive when they feel strongly—whether it's joy, fear, jealousy, or confusion. Emotion fuels the scene. Say the big thing!



Why Character Matters

- It gives the improviser a **lens** through which to make choices.
- It helps scenes feel **grounded**, even in absurd situations.
- It allows for **conflict, growth, and comedy** to emerge organically.

Great improv characters don't need elaborate backstories—they just need clear intentions, strong emotions, and a commitment to the moment. In short, character is the soul of improv storytelling. It's what makes scenes feel alive, unpredictable, and emotionally resonant—even when everything is made up on the fly.

Deep Dive into-

Dynamics: refer to the evolving relationship, energy, and emotional interplay that shape how characters interact in a scene. It's the *chemistry, tension, and rhythm* that emerge when two or more characters respond to each other's choices, personalities, and objectives.



Key Components of Character Dynamics

Status: Who holds power or influence? Improv often plays with high-status vs. low-status roles (e.g., boss vs. intern, confident vs. insecure). Shifts in status create tension and comedy.

Emotional Tone: Are the characters affectionate, hostile, awkward, competitive, or supportive? The emotional flavor sets the mood and drives the scene's momentum.

Objective Conflict: What does each character want? When goals clash—like one character seeking peace and the other stirring chaos—dynamics intensify.

History and Relationship: Are they strangers, siblings, exes, rivals, or co-conspirators? Even implied backstory adds depth and informs behavior.

Listening and Reactivity: Strong dynamics come from characters truly responding to each other. A subtle shift in tone, a surprising revelation, or a physical gesture can change everything.

Change Over Time: Great scenes often show dynamics evolving—alliances form, power shifts, emotions flare, or misunderstandings resolve.



Why Dynamics Matter

They make scenes **alive and unpredictable**.

They help improvisers **stay connected and grounded**.

They allow for **rich storytelling**, whether comedic or dramatic.

Improv thrives when characters aren't just talking—they're affecting each other

Fuzzy Improv

Character Traits Universe

