

THEATER-MAKING AT HOME

# GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



# CHARACTER POSTCARDS

**NAME :**

**SCHOOL / ORGANIZATION :**



**BE FEATURED!**

Are you interested in sharing your Character Postcards with the Geffen community—and beyond?

If so, submit your postcards, which may be recorded on video by Geffen artists, or a recording of you reading them.

If selected, your postcards will be featured on the Geffen Playhouse website.

Contact

**Brian Allman**

Manager of Theater Education

**BrianA@geffenplayhouse.org**

for a consent form and more information.

All submissions must be accompanied by a completed consent form.

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# CHARACTER POSTCARDS



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH.

Since our beginnings as a nomadic people, moving from one place to another has been ingrained in human beings. Today, reasons for travel are varied. We travel to work, to visit family and friends, to vacation, to explore new places, and to make new starts in life. We go by foot, bicycle, scooter, automobile, bus, train, and plane. If we cannot travel physically, we can still take trips by viewing images or video tours of far-off places or by imagining fantastical expeditions.

Where we go has a lot to do with who we are and what is important to us: some take jobs that require traveling to different sites; some take trips to bond with family; some seek adventure and physical challenges or peace and solitude in nature. Those who are passionate about the arts and learning about various cultures visit cities known for their museums, street life, and food. Whatever our destination, by changing our location, we often change our perspective, gaining a greater appreciation of other cultures and customs, and ultimately, a deeper understanding of ourselves.

When people travel, postcards are a direct and succinct way for them to communicate about their experiences. Typically, a postcard is a two-sided card with a photograph or image on one side and space on the other side in which to write comments and to address the card to send to its recipient through the postal service. Postcards from our travels usually provide a visual representation of a specific place or a collage of places and objects that are unique to the locale.

The following pages will guide you to develop a character, envision a trip they take, and create a series of postcards written from their point of view while traveling. As often happens to main characters in plays, your character will be affected by their journey. Along with information about the places they visit, their postcards will convey how their perspectives about life, themselves, or others may have changed.

Remember, creating takes time and revision. Give yourself time and space to come up with ideas, look them over, adjust, and keep going.

Though these steps have been designed to guide you, there is no wrong or right way to come up with images and text. As you continue to create in the future, feel free to explore other techniques. What's most important is using your voice and telling your story! **HAVE FUN!**



We encourage you to use any of our theater warm-up videos with this packet! You can find them along with other projects here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/theaterwarmups>

# CREATING A CHARACTER



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH.

When envisioning your character, draw on possibilities from real life. Consider the striking personalities of friends and family, of people you have encountered in the town or city in which you live, or of fellow travelers you have met on your own journeys.

What kind of person would you like to send on a trip and hear from while they travel?

When creating a character, it helps to take a deep dive into all the different aspects that make them unique. Just like you, characters have backstories, likes and dislikes, and values, which inspire the choices they make and what they do and say, or stand for.

One of the most vital elements of a story is a character's voice, the thought patterns and speech that help the reader understand a character's motivations, desires, and fears. Make sure that what your character says in their postcards reflects their distinct voice.

## **The Character Alphabet**

Using the Character Alphabet on the next page, answer the prompts associated with each letter of the alphabet to come up with the different qualities, attributes, or traits of your character.

You can respond to each prompt with a word, phrase, or sentence(s) to give your character personality, a point of view, depth, and even a backstory.

After developing your character, give them a name.

ACTIVITY

# CHARACTER ALPHABET

Create a character by responding to each prompt from the character's point of view.

**A** - AGE & APPEARANCE: \_\_\_\_\_

**B** - BLISS: (WHAT BRINGS THEM THE MOST JOY) \_\_\_\_\_

**C** - CORE VALUES: \_\_\_\_\_

**D** - DREAMS: \_\_\_\_\_

**E** - ENERGY LEVEL: (LOW/HIGH) \_\_\_\_\_

**F** - FEARS: \_\_\_\_\_

**G** - GENDER IDENTITY: \_\_\_\_\_

**H** - HEALTH: (PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL) \_\_\_\_\_

**I** - INTELLIGENCE & EDUCATION: (STREET SMARTS/BOOK SMARTS) \_\_\_\_\_

**J** - JEALOUS OF: \_\_\_\_\_

**K** - KIN/FAMILY: \_\_\_\_\_

**L** - LOVES/LOVERS: \_\_\_\_\_

**M** - MARITAL STATUS: \_\_\_\_\_

**N** - NEGATIVE HABITS: \_\_\_\_\_

**O** - OBSTACLE(S) TO HAPPINESS: \_\_\_\_\_

**P** - PET(S): \_\_\_\_\_

**Q** - QUESTION (KEEP ASKING SELF): \_\_\_\_\_

**R** - RELIGION: \_\_\_\_\_

**S** - SOCIAL STATUS: \_\_\_\_\_

**T** - TALENTS & HOBBIES: \_\_\_\_\_

**U** - UNIQUE QUALITY/ABILITY: \_\_\_\_\_

**V** - VOCATION OR LIFE'S CALLING: \_\_\_\_\_

**W** - WEALTH: \_\_\_\_\_

**X** - X-FACTOR THAT MAKES THEM DIFFERENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**Y** - YOUR BIGGEST SECRET: \_\_\_\_\_

**Z** - ZEITGEIST—TIME PERIOD, SETTING & CUSTOMS/SPIRIT OF THE TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY

# DESIGNING YOUR CHARACTER

After identifying some of the traits and attributes of your character, use the space below to sketch or draw a representation of them, providing details about their personality, their daily life, and interests.



ACTIVITY

# LAYING THE FOUNDATION— BEFORE THE TRIP

Now that you have created, named, and sketched your character, you will focus on important details about their upcoming journey, which will help you to design and write their postcards.

Where does your character currently live? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your character traveling alone or with another person or a group? \_\_\_\_\_

If traveling with other people, who are they, and what is their relationship to your character?

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Why is your character traveling? Choose and elaborate on one or more of the reasons below. Or choose your own reasons for travel.

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For work or business	Spring Break
For leisure or hobby	Secret spy mission
For adventure and excitement	Became an astronaut
For education or research	Won trip on game show
For competitive sports	Suddenly able to fly
To visit family or friends	Bucket List

Choose 6 different locations from places you have always wanted to visit or would love to return to, from a series of random spots on a map or globe, or from imaginary destinations.

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Of the 6 places you listed above, choose 3 locations that your character will visit.

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What 3 essential items will your character bring with them on their trip?

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ACTIVITY

# LAYING THE FOUNDATION— DURING THE TRIP

Now that you have created, named, and sketched your character, you will focus on important details about their upcoming journey, which will help you to design and write their postcards.

How will your character be traveling: (circle all that apply)

Automobile    Bicycle    Bus    Camper    Scooter    Airplane    Train    Boat    By foot  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Where will your character be staying: (circle all that apply)

Resort    w/ Family    Motel    AirBnB    Camping    Camper/RV    Mobile Home    Cruise ship  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

In what 3 activities will your character participate while traveling?

\_\_\_\_\_

What 3 attractions will your character visit while traveling?

\_\_\_\_\_

What are 3 different foods your character will sample while traveling?

\_\_\_\_\_

What are 3 souvenirs your character might obtain during their trip?

\_\_\_\_\_

Favorite part of visiting location #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite part of visiting location #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite part of visiting location #3 \_\_\_\_\_

What are 3 possible reasons your character might encounter difficulty or setbacks during their travels?

\_\_\_\_\_

How might these obstacles lead to unexpected (mis)adventures?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# BRAINSTORMING YOUR POSTCARDS

**When designing the back of the postcards consider:**

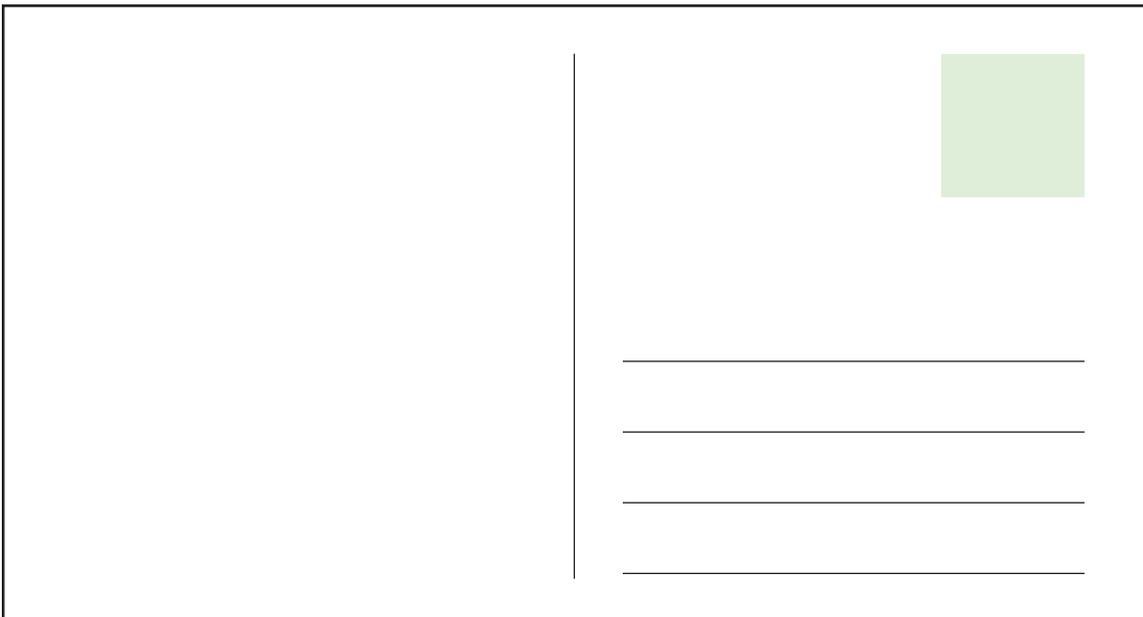
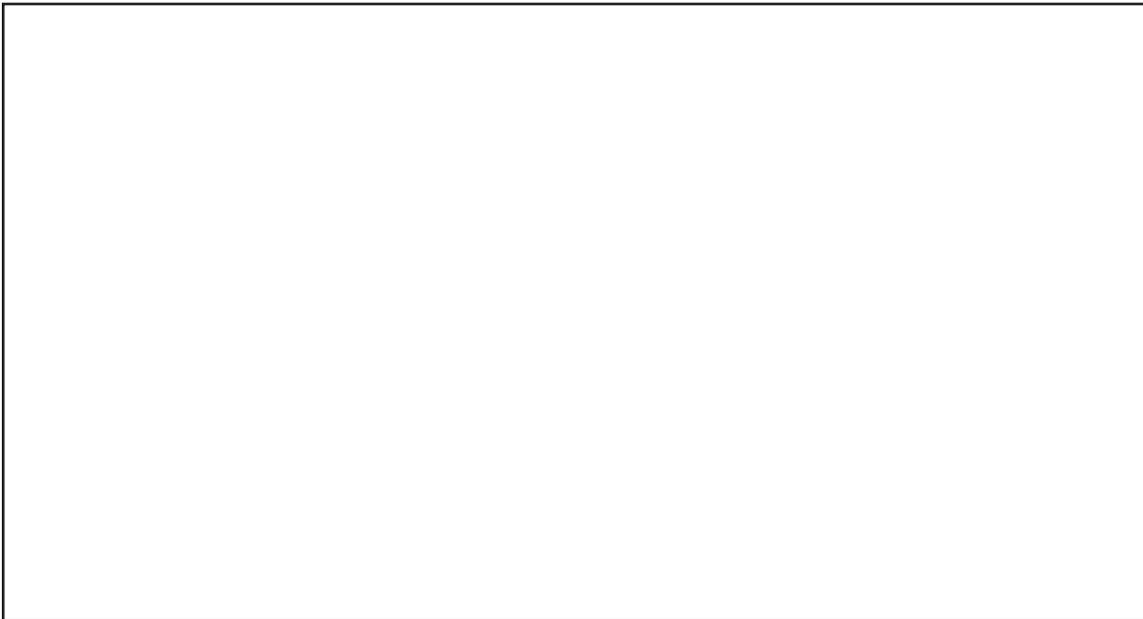
- To whom is your character writing each postcard—the same person, or different people?
- What is/are the name(s) and address(es) of the person(s) they are writing to?
- What is the relationship between your character and the recipient(s) of the postcards?
- Why is your character writing to them?
- What high and/or low points of the trip does your character want to feature?
- How is your character's voice reflected in the message, through its tone, vocabulary, and style?
- How will your character sign their postcard?
- What type of stamp will you design and include in the upper right-hand corner of the postcard?

## ACTIVITY

# CREATING YOUR CHARACTER'S POSTCARDS

Use the templates below to design and create your character's postcards, which are being sent from three different points in your character's journey. Remember: both the front and the back of the postcard have limited space. Select the key ideas you wish to express through the design and message for each postcard.

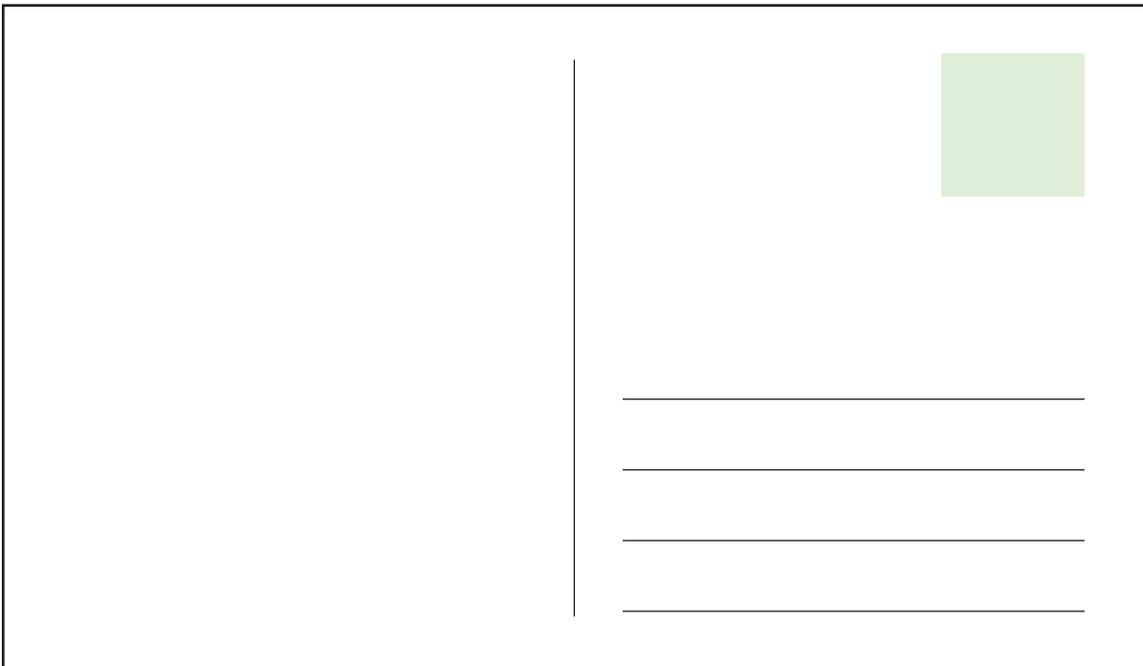
**POSTCARD #1:** Front of postcard includes visual representation of your character's surroundings and/or their point of view about location. Back of postcard includes character's message and name; recipient's name and address, stamp design.



ACTIVITY

# CREATING YOUR CHARACTER'S POSTCARDS

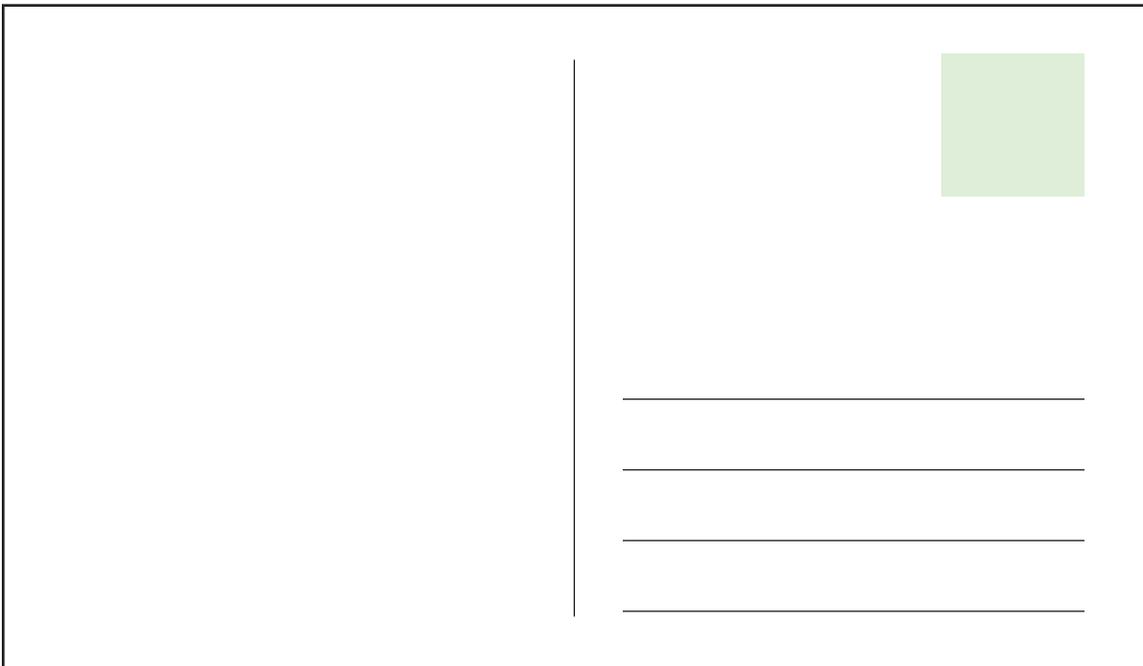
**POSTCARD #2:** Front of postcard includes visual representation of your character's surroundings and/or their point of view about location. Back of postcard includes character's message and name; recipient's name and address, stamp design.



ACTIVITY

# CREATING YOUR CHARACTER'S POSTCARDS

**POSTCARD #3:** Front of postcard includes visual representation of your character's surroundings and/or their point of view about location. Back of postcard includes character's message and name; recipient's name and address, stamp design.



## ACTIVITY

# BRINGING YOUR POSTCARDS TO LIFE



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH.

You have now created a character with a background and a story by sending them on a series of (mis)adventures and writing postcards in their voice. Below are ways to bring your postcards to life and apply what you have created to other writing activities.

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**Combine** all of your postcards together to create a monologue, highlighting your character's journey. Practice and record your Character Postcards Monologue to share with others, and the Geffen Playhouse. (See page 2 for directions.)

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**Create** two distinct characters who are pen pals or long-distance friends, communicating with each other through postcards, which you design and write. These two characters can live on opposite sides of the country, in different parts of the world, or in separate historical eras.

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**Choose** a time in the past or in the future and write and design a series of postcards as if you were traveling during that time. Where will you go? What will be of special interest to you? How will you express your point of view and voice in what you design and write? Who will you send these postcards to? Why?

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**Envision** a well-known historical figure or favorite movie or television character and write and design a series of postcards from their perspective. Where will they travel? Who will they send their postcards to? What will they write about? How will their voice be conveyed in their messages?

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**Design** or find postcards and write in your authentic voice to a loved one from whom you are currently separated. How will your images and text express where you are—geographically and emotionally—and your feelings for them? (Remember, you will need to use real postcard stamps—available at your local post office—to send your postcards!)

# REFLECTION

Take a moment to reflect on your creative process and how it felt to develop your character and tell their story through designing and writing their postcards.

**WHAT ASPECT OF THE ACTIVITY DID YOU FIND MOST INTERESTING? MOST CHALLENGING? WHY?**

**WHAT DID YOU FIND MORE ENJOYABLE, DESIGNING AND CREATING THE FRONT SIDE OF THE POSTCARD OR DRAFTING AND WRITING THE MESSAGE ON THE BACK? WHY?**

**IN WHAT WAYS DID YOUR CHARACTER GROW OR CHANGE BETWEEN THE FIRST POSTCARD THEY SENT AND THE LAST POSTCARD THEY SENT?**

**IN WHAT WAYS IS THE CHARACTER YOU CREATED SIMILAR TO YOU? IN WHAT WAYS IS THE CHARACTER YOU CREATED DIFFERENT FROM YOU?**

**WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO CHOOSE THE LOCATIONS YOUR CHARACTER TRAVELED TO?**

**WHAT DID YOU DISCOVER ABOUT YOURSELF AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THIS ACTIVITY?**

**WHICH *BRINGING YOUR POSTCARDS TO LIFE* ACTIVITY DID YOU CHOOSE? WHY?**

# RESOURCES

## **POSTCARD PEOPLE**

<https://www.nytimes.com/201>

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## **WHO WE ARE—POSTAL HISTORY**

<https://tinyurl.com/y7vl3yje>

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## **DELTIOLOGY**

<https://tinyurl.com/y92bso7f>

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## **HOW TO ADDRESS A POSTCARD**

<https://tinyurl.com/y7wh8uke>

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## **HOSPITAL POSTCARDS AS A REFLECTION OF HEALTH CARE IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.**

<https://tinyurl.com/ycd25p6y>

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## **HOW EARLY PICTURE POSTCARDS WERE THE EDWARDIAN EQUIVALENT OF INSTAGRAM**

<https://tinyurl.com/ybgql6hv>

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## **UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE**

<https://www.usps.com/>

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## **DIGITAL COLLECTIONS OF POSTCARDS**

<https://tinyurl.com/ycfqbuu4>

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## **FUN FACT! NATIONAL POSTCARD WEEK**

Started in 1984 to promote postcards and celebrate deltiology (the study and collection of postcards), National Postcard Week is always held the first full week of May.

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