



FAMILY PRODUCTION CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Here are descriptions of the characters that make regular appearances in the Sketches of the Family Production.

Also included are some costuming suggestions. They are merely ideas for you and your team to discuss and adapt. There are no hard and fast rules for adapting the concepts to your individual clubhouse and your particular community. The more unique you make the costumes, the more they'll belong only to your environment.

Costumes serve as a kind of shorthand for the stage. Every costume defined below should be easily read by the audience. The moment a character enters, before any words are spoken, everyone should know a few things about the character. They should know some details about what she likes and what she may not be comfortable doing. Everyone should immediately have a good idea of how this character will speak and what her home would be like.

Although many of these descriptions could be interpreted as everyday dress, it will better serve your environment if they are highly exaggerated. Making the characters definite "types" instead of attempting to fit them into everyday society will help them serve as tools able to discuss important issues without having to spend time developing a complete biographical picture. If an actor ever left the stage and walked down the street in costume, everyone he meets should easily recognize that he is not dressed normally.

Gordo *The ultimate gizmo-gadget guy.* He is always on the cutting edge of technology and is a lifetime subscriber to Popular Science. He has multiple computers and loves both new technology and his tried and true pocket protector.

His love of the simple logic of zeros and ones often frustrates him when it comes to irrational people. He can get annoyed easily, which contributes to his already socially awkward nature. His fix-it knowledge is vast when it comes to electrical circuits and computer chips, but he will never be mechanical or greasy in any way.

He loves a clear plan, but can't bring himself to be spontaneous.

He assumes he is the smartest person in the room.

Gordo's costume shows the audience at once that this guy values intellect over appearance. Although his clothes are not always traditional "geek," they are a reflection of his constant logical, scientific approach to life. He may cut a pocket protector hole in a normally "cool" shirt. He should always be iPod®, cell phone, and tech ready. His pockets can be full of sticky notes, pens, and various cables, adapters, and technical gear.





Tyler **A hyperactive budding filmmaker.** He is never seen without his camera and is constantly concerned with how an event will fit into a documentary or new film idea. He's a huge movie fan and student. He knows lines and trivia about movies he loves and movies he wishes he could have made.

His artistic style is not limited to the medium of film. He brings an out-of-the-box style to everything he touches. He can be a journalist, an inventor, and a good counselor at times.

His unique gifts alternately mask and reveal an ongoing insecurity. He doubts himself often and covers his feelings with a very, very, very corny sense of humor (often inappropriate to the situation).

Tyler's costume goes together only in Tyler's head. He can appreciate his director's hat, his bohemian style pants, and his shoes that could have easily been worn by his grandfather. His camera should be regarded as a part of his costume. He constantly adapts his own costume by attaching press passes, movie tickets, and meaningful reminders to it.

Vinny **Adventurous, daredevil, extreme-sports guy.** He's mechanically inclined enough to keep his toys running in top condition. He's ready to try anything. Although he has great difficulty with schoolwork, his teachers all find it impossible not to like him. He's driven and popular. His adrenaline junkie habits fascinate his friends without alienating them. In fact, he is more often the motivator to call others to action.

Skateboarding, base-jumping, rock climbing, rugby, hockey, eco-challenge, rappelling, motocross ... are all activities he would participate in.

Vinny's costume can change with his current activity. His "base" costume should reflect the ability to act immediately and with great style. He is aware of the latest and greatest brands of sportswear. His colors are loud. He knows the "in" brands of all his gear, but function will always trump form in his world. He sees his clothing as "gear" for his next adventure.





Marshall (Winston Sheffield III)



The quintessential renaissance kid. When he's passionate about something, it involves his entire body and soul. His entrances are a kid version of Kramer*. You never know what he's going to be carrying, wearing, or dragging.

His expertise is extremely wide ranging. He is a dedicated re-enactor. The exact nature and time of the event being re-enacted doesn't seem to matter to him. It could be the Batman® retrospective, a Renaissance festival, or a Star Trek® convention. The event gets his complete passion and focus for the moment.

He met Gordo at the chess club and an instant competition was sparked.

Marshall says he goes to school, but nobody ever sees him in class. He has a lot of credits from classes he's already tested out of. He goes on many self-study field trips. He has a special fascination with Grandpa Henry. Their relationship is a lot like the old cartoon characters Dennis the Menace and Mr. Wilson.

Marshall's is the closest **costume** to a clean slate. His costume actually builds on a blank base look. Jeans and a solid T-shirt are all he needs as a blank look. The rest of Marshall's look is dictated by his current interest. He may be a native American one week, a Trekkie the next, and a renaissance re-enactor the following week. Marshall is the reason to make friends with a local costume rental shop. However, his costumes can also be adapted to a homemade kid vision of the particular costume. Marshall almost always has an entrance that is defined by a dramatic costume.

*from the TV comedy Seinfeld

Cammie

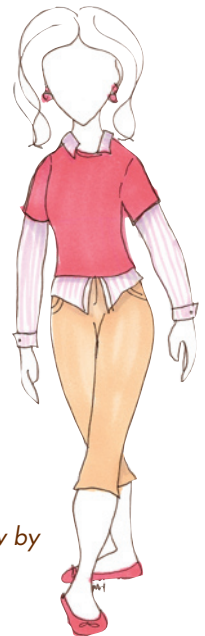
Class president who is always aware of the latest, coolest fashion. She's dramatic, but extremely likable. She's athletic and involved in a wide range of activities. She knows a lot of people, but has few very close friends. If you need to get it done, she's the one you look for. She can be spoiled at times. She's a little insecure, and feels compelled to be the "good" girl, so she looks for attention by striving to be perfect. An overachiever, she will never settle for "good enough."

From the outside it's easy to call her perfect.

At times the temptation to break out of her image is great, but she just can't do it. Vinny tends to pull her toward a more relaxed view of life. These small steps feel very radical to her.

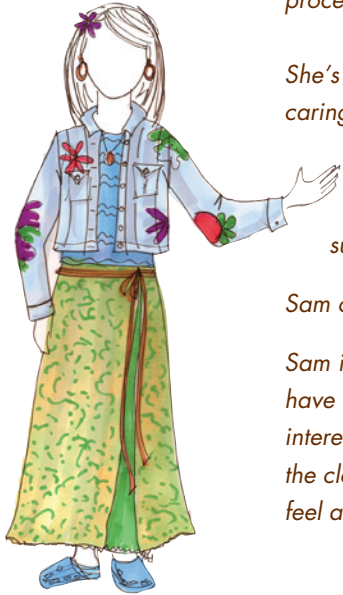
Her absentee father travels a lot.

Cammie's look is based on the most popular girl at your local school. Her 4.0 average can almost be predicted by her stylish, clean, crisp look. Everything from her hair to her nails is in its proper place. You should know by looking at her careful choice of clothing that social skills are easy for her.





SAM (SAMANTHA)



The nonconformist. She defines her own style. No one is quite sure what the rules for this style are. She is definitely on her own path. Some may even call her “strange.” Her thought process is always out-of-the-box.

She’s considered an outsider at school. She tends to be absent-minded. She’s all heart and all-caring about the next cause that captures her attention. Her short attention span keeps her from remembering her moments of social awkwardness.

Her mother is a businesswoman. Her father is a stay-at-home 60’s throwback. He supports his daughter’s causes.

Sam can quote Cat Stephens, Bob Dylan, and Frank Zappa to deal with nearly any situation.

*Sam is an eclectic throwback to an ideal 60’s look. This doesn’t mean **her clothing** could have been from the 60’s, but that you would expect her to be involved with some offbeat interests. Natural fiber—no animal products—and attention to recycling are all hallmarks of the clothes in her closet. A jeans jacket look with flowing skirts are what makes this character feel at home.*

Grandpa Henry

Adult character. Gordo’s grandfather. Mrs. Finkenhoeffer’s father.

He has led an oddly adventurous life. His ability to fix things around the clubhouse and neighborhood is almost legendary. He is the source of grandfatherly wisdom, but isn’t flawless. When he makes mistakes, he admits them.

Costuming for Grandpa? *He is at home in overalls. He knows the joys of plaid shirts and fishing hats. His navy background (laundry officer) leads him to (almost) always appear clean and crisp even in the midst of messy handyman projects or fishing expeditions.*

Mrs. Finkenhoeffer

Adult character. Gordo’s mother. Grandpa Henry’s daughter.

She has become the neighborhood mom. She understands the kids’ world in a way that keeps her up to date on the latest fads and trends. When a kid needs a sympathetic ear, it’s often Mrs. F that is sought out.

*The mother figure of the clubhouse, Mrs. F can represent all facets of motherhood. Sometimes counselor, chef, janitor, politician, travel agent, teacher, traffic manager, concierge ... well, she can be what she needs to be at any time. **Mrs. F’s costume** is almost always one that signifies her position of respect and expertise. She is the coolest mom on the block.*

