

## Persona Development Worksheet

The following questions are provided as suggestions for persona development and study. It is not necessary for you to have elaborate answers, or even rudimentary answers, for any or all of these to have a Viking persona. Knowing this information will provide you with background for conversations and persona play to help make your persona have depth and interest.

- (1) **Where does your persona originate?** Country, district, town, name of farm.
- (2) **What year was your persona born?** Figure this to start with using current date-keeping terminology. The advanced version is figuring out how your persona would reckon the date. Note that the Viking Age dates from 793AD to 1066AD – also you may wish to research what dates a given location were first settled. Another consideration is to figure out the exact date when Christianity was introduced, pagan personas will want to be before that date, Christians after or just slightly before.
- (3) **What is your persona's name?** To get a good name takes more than just going to the sagas and plucking one out of the Glossary of Proper names. We have pretty good evidence for a bunch of names as to where they were most common and when they were current – not all Viking names were in vogue throughout Scandinavia. West Scandinavia (Norway, Iceland and points west) tended to have a slightly different dialect and name choices, while East Scandinavia (Denmark and Sweden) in turn had their own practices. You may wish to consult with the Academy of St. Gabriel (<http://www.s-gabriel.org/>) to find an accurate name for your place/time.
- (4) **What are the names of your parents?** In part you will probably already know some of this in answering #3, since the most common name usage in the Viking Age was a personal name plus a patronymic. To learn more about how names were selected and how one's name may reflect the names of one's parents and grandparents, see: <http://www.vikinganswerlady.org/ONNames.htm>
- (5) **What are the names of your grandparents and other near relatives?** Again, as in #4, the most usual naming pattern in the Viking Age was to name children after a recently deceased relative, often grandparents or great-grandparents, though aunts and uncles and great-aunts and great-uncles on either side of the family were also possible name sources.
- (6) **What is your occupation?** Do you have a trade? What are your every day duties? What tools would you use in your daily work? Where would these tools come from? What raw materials does your trade require, and where do they come from? Do you sell what you produce, and if so to whom and for what value? How did you learn to do this work – who taught you, what was the learning process like, what problems did you have in learning it?
- (7) **What is your daily life like as an adult?** What time do you awaken? What do you eat and when? What do you do throughout the typical day? Do these activities vary seasonally, and if so, why?
- (8) **What was your daily life like as a child?** What tasks were you set to do? What were you expected to learn, and how did you learn it?
- (9) **Are you married?** What is the name of your spouse and your spouse's near relatives? Is this your first spouse? If not, did the spouse die, or are you divorced, and what were the circumstances? For a lot of general information about weddings, courtships, and divorces, see <http://www.vikinganswerlady.org/wedding.htm>
- (10) **What is your religion?** Viking Age peoples might follow the pagan Norse gods, they might have a special relationship with one god, they might be Christian, or they might choose to follow no gods at all, relying only on their own strength. What are your persona's religious beliefs and why does your persona believe that way?
- (11) **What would your persona have worn for clothing?** Although the SCA has lots of "generic Vikings" there are actually fairly well-defined styles that vary by location and by time. This may influence or be influenced by #1 and #2 above.
- (12) **What superstitions and beliefs about the occult or otherworld would your persona have had?** It's interesting but true that many times a person's superstitions and irrational beliefs define them as much as any other factor. What frightened your persona and why?
- (13) **Has your persona ever traveled and if so, where?** While a lot of people in the Viking Age and early Middle Ages never saw more than the few miles surrounding their home village or farm, some were amazingly well-traveled even by modern standards. Where did you travel? Why did you go there? What did you see? What stories would you tell about your travels when you got back home, and how would the folks back home receive these stories?
- (14) **What foods would your persona have eaten?** Which did your persona like/dislike and why? Were there special foods at various times of year? Why were they special, and why were they served at that time? For some basics on this topic, see: <http://www.vikinganswerlady.org/food.htm>
- (15) **What celebrations and festivals were observed?** When did these occur, and what did they celebrate? Where did they occur, and did you have to travel to attend or were they held nearby?

*These are just suggestions, and there are many, many more details you can research.*