

## CREATING A WIZARD

Creating a wizard character demands a backstory dominated by at least one extraordinary event. How did your character first come into contact with magic? How did you discover you had an aptitude for it? Do you have a natural talent, or did you simply study hard and practice incessantly? Did you encounter a magical creature or an ancient tome that taught you the basics of magic?

What drew you forth from your life of study? Did your first taste of magical knowledge leave you hungry for more? Have you received word of a secret repository of knowledge not yet plundered by any other wizard? Perhaps you're simply eager to put your newfound magical skills to the test in the face of danger.

### QUICK BUILD

You can make a wizard quickly by following these suggestions. First, Intelligence should be your highest ability score, followed by Constitution or Dexterity. Second, choose the sage background. Third, choose the *light*, *mage hand*, and *ray of frost* cantrips, along with the following 1st-level spells for your spellbook: *burning hands*, *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, and *sleep*.

## CLASS FEATURES

As a wizard, you gain the following class features.

### HIT POINTS

**Hit Dice:** 1d6 per wizard level

**Hit Points at 1st Level:** 6 + your Constitution modifier

**Hit Points at Higher Levels:** 1d6 (or 4) + your

Constitution modifier per wizard level after 1st

### PROFICIENCIES

**Armor:** None

**Weapons:** Daggers, darts, slings, quarterstaffs, light crossbows

**Tools:** None

**Saving Throws:** Intelligence, Wisdom

**Skills:** Choose two from Arcana, History, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, and Religion

### EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- (a) a quarterstaff or (b) a dagger
- (a) a component pouch or (b) an arcane focus
- (a) a scholar's pack or (b) an explorer's pack
- A spellbook

## SPELLCASTING

As a student of arcane magic, you have a spellbook containing spells that show the first glimmerings of your true power. See chapter 10 for the general rules of spellcasting and chapter 11 for the wizard spell list.

### CANTRIPS

At 1st level, you know three cantrips of your choice from the wizard spell list. You learn additional wizard cantrips of your choice at higher levels, as shown in the Cantrips Known column of the Wizard table.

### SPELLBOOK

At 1st level, you have a spellbook containing six 1st-level wizard spells of your choice. Your spellbook is the repository of the wizard spells you know, except your cantrips, which are fixed in your mind.

### PREPARING AND CASTING SPELLS

The Wizard table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your wizard spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a long rest.

You prepare the list of wizard spells that are available for you to cast. To do so, choose a number of wizard spells from your spellbook equal to your Intelligence modifier + your wizard level (minimum of one spell). The spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

For example, if you're a 3rd-level wizard, you have four 1st-level and two 2nd-level spell slots. With an Intelligence of 16, your list of prepared spells can include six spells of 1st or 2nd level, in any combination, chosen from your spellbook. If you prepare the 1st-level spell *magic missile*, you can cast it using a 1st-level or a 2nd-level slot. Casting the spell doesn't remove it from your list of prepared spells.

You can change your list of prepared spells when you finish a long rest. Preparing a new list of wizard spells requires time spent studying your spellbook and memorizing the incantations and gestures you must make to cast the spell: at least 1 minute per spell level for each spell on your list.

### SPELLCASTING ABILITY

Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for your wizard spells, since you learn your spells through dedicated study and memorization. You use your Intelligence whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Intelligence modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a wizard spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

**Spell save DC** = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

**Spell attack modifier** = your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

### RITUAL CASTING

You can cast a wizard spell as a ritual if that spell has the ritual tag and you have the spell in your spellbook. You don't need to have the spell prepared.

### SPELLCASTING FOCUS

You can use an arcane focus (found in chapter 5) as a spellcasting focus for your wizard spells.

## LEARNING SPELLS OF 1ST LEVEL AND HIGHER

Each time you gain a wizard level, you can add two wizard spells of your choice to your spellbook for free. Each of these spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots, as shown on the Wizard table. On your adventures, you might find other spells that you can add to your spellbook (see the “Your Spellbook” sidebar).

## ARCANE RECOVERY

You have learned to regain some of your magical energy by studying your spellbook. Once per day when you finish a short rest, you can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than half your wizard level (rounded up), and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher.

For example, if you're a 4th-level wizard, you can recover up to two levels worth of spell slots. You can recover either a 2nd-level spell slot or two 1st-level spell slots.

### YOUR SPELLBOOK

The spells that you add to your spellbook as you gain levels reflect the arcane research you conduct on your own, as well as intellectual breakthroughs you have had about the nature of the multiverse. You might find other spells during your adventures. You could discover a spell recorded on a scroll in an evil wizard's chest, for example, or in a dusty tome in an ancient library.

**Copying a Spell into the Book.** When you find a wizard spell of 1st level or higher, you can add it to your spellbook if it is of a spell level you can prepare and if you can spare the time to decipher and copy it.

Copying a spell into your spellbook involves reproducing the basic form of the spell, then deciphering the unique system of notation used by the wizard who wrote it. You must practice the spell until you understand the sounds or gestures required, then transcribe it into your spellbook using your own notation.

For each level of the spell, the process takes 2 hours and costs 50 gp. The cost represents material components you expend as you experiment with the spell to master it, as well as the fine inks you need to record it. Once you have spent this time and money, you can prepare the spell just like your other spells.

**Replacing the Book.** You can copy a spell from your own spellbook into another book—for example, if you want to make a backup copy of your spellbook. This is just like copying a new spell into your spellbook, but faster and easier, since you understand your own notation and already know how to cast the spell. You need spend only 1 hour and 10 gp for each level of the copied spell.

If you lose your spellbook, you can use the same procedure to transcribe the spells that you have prepared into a new spellbook. Filling out the remainder of your spellbook requires you to find new spells to do so, as normal. For this reason, many wizards keep backup spellbooks in a safe place.

**The Book's Appearance.** Your spellbook is a unique compilation of spells, with its own decorative flourishes and margin notes. It might be a plain, functional leather volume that you received as a gift from your master, a finely bound gilt-edged tome you found in an ancient library, or even a loose collection of notes scrounged together after you lost your previous spellbook in a mishap.

## ARCANE TRADITION

When you reach 2nd level, you choose an arcane tradition, shaping your practice of magic through one of eight schools: Abjuration, Conjunction, Divination, Enchantment, Evocation, Illusion, Necromancy, or Transmutation. The school of Evocation is detailed at the end of the class description; see the *Player's Handbook* for information on the other schools.

Your choice grants you features at 2nd level and again at 6th, 10th, and 14th level.

## ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

## SPELL MASTERY

At 18th level, you have achieved such mastery over certain spells that you can cast them at will. Choose a 1st-level wizard spell and a 2nd-level wizard spell that are in your spellbook. You can cast those spells at their lowest level without expending a spell slot when you have them prepared. If you want to cast either spell at a higher level, you must expend a spell slot as normal.

By spending 8 hours in study, you can exchange one or both of the spells you chose for different spells of the same levels.

## SIGNATURE SPELLS

When you reach 20th level, you gain mastery over two powerful spells and can cast them with little effort. Choose two 3rd-level wizard spells in your spellbook as your signature spells. You always have these spells prepared, they don't count against the number of spells you have prepared, and you can cast each of them once at 3rd level without expending a spell slot. When you do so, you can't do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

If you want to cast either spell at a higher level, you must expend a spell slot as normal.

## ARCANE TRADITIONS

The study of wizardry is ancient, stretching back to the earliest mortal discoveries of magic. It is firmly established in the worlds of D&D, with various traditions dedicated to its complex study.

The most common arcane traditions in the multiverse revolve around the schools of magic. Wizards through the ages have cataloged thousands of spells, grouping them into eight categories called schools, as described in chapter 10. In some places, these traditions are literally schools. Elsewhere, they are more like academic departments, with rival faculties competing for students and funding. Even wizards who train apprentices in the solitude of their own towers use the division of magic into schools as a learning device, since the spells of each school require mastery of different techniques.

## SCHOOL OF EVOCATION

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You focus your study on magic that creates powerful elemental effects such as bitter cold, searing flame, rolling thunder, crackling lightning, and burning acid. Some evokers find employment in military forces, serving as artillery to blast enemy armies from afar. Others use their spectacular power to protect the weak, while some seek their own gain as bandits, adventurers, or aspiring tyrants.

### EVOCATION SAVANT

Beginning when you select this school at 2nd level, the gold and time you must spend to copy an evocation spell into your spellbook is halved.

### SCULPT SPELLS

Beginning at 2nd level, you can create pockets of relative safety within the effects of your evocation spells. When you cast an evocation spell that affects other creatures that you can see, you can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. The chosen creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell, and they take no damage if they would normally take half damage on a successful save.

### POTENT CANTRIP

Starting at 6th level, your damaging cantrips affect even creatures that avoid the brunt of the effect. When a creature succeeds on a saving throw against your cantrip, the creature takes half the cantrip's damage (if any) but suffers no additional effect from the cantrip.

### EMPOWERED EVOCATION

Beginning at 10th level, you can add your Intelligence modifier to one damage roll of any wizard evocation spell you cast.

## OVERCHANNEL

Starting at 14th level, you can increase the power of your simpler spells. When you cast a wizard spell of 1st through 5th level that deals damage, you can deal maximum damage with that spell.

The first time you do so, you suffer no adverse effect. If you use this feature again before you finish a long rest, you take 2d12 necrotic damage for each level of the spell, immediately after you cast it. Each time you use this feature again before finishing a long rest, the necrotic damage per spell level increases by 1d12. This damage ignores resistance and immunity.

# CHAPTER 4: PERSONALITY AND BACKGROUND

CHARACTERS ARE DEFINED BY MUCH MORE THAN THEIR race and class. They're individuals with their own stories, interests, connections, and capabilities beyond those that class and race define. This chapter expounds on the details that distinguish characters from one another, including the basics of name and physical description, the rules of backgrounds and languages, and the finer points of personality and alignment.

## CHARACTER DETAILS

Your character's name and physical description might be the first things that the other players at the table learn about you. It's worth thinking about how these characteristics reflect the character you have in mind.

### NAME

Your character's race description includes sample names for members of that race. Put some thought into your name even if you're just picking one from a list.

### SEX

You can play a male or female character without gaining any special benefits or hindrances. Think about how your character does or does not conform to the broader culture's expectations of sex, gender, and sexual behavior. For example, a male drow cleric defies the traditional gender divisions of drow society, which could be a reason for your character to leave that society and come to the surface.

#### TIKA AND ARTEMIS: CONTRASTING CHARACTERS

The details in this chapter make a big difference in setting your character apart from every other character. Consider the following two human fighters.

Hailing from the Dragonlance setting, Tika Waylan was a brash teenager who had a rough childhood. The daughter of a thief, she ran away from home and practiced her father's trade on the streets of Solace. When she tried to rob the proprietor of the Inn of the Last Home, he caught her and took her under his wing, giving her a job as a barmaid. But when the dragonarmies laid waste to the town of Solace and destroyed the inn, necessity forced Tika into adventure alongside the friends she'd known from her childhood. Her skill as a fighter (a frying pan remains one of her favorite weapons) combined with her history on the streets gave her skills invaluable in her adventuring career.

Artemis Entreri grew up on the streets of Calimport in the Forgotten Realms. He used his wits, strength, and agility to carve out his own territory in one of the city's hundreds of poor shanty towns. After several years, he attracted the notice of one of the most powerful thieves' guilds in the city, and he ascended the ranks of the guild quickly despite his youth. Artemis became the favored assassin of one of the city's pashas, who sent him to far-off Icewind Dale to recover some stolen gems. He's a professional killer, constantly challenging himself to improve his skills.

Tika and Artemis are both human and both fighters (with some experience as rogues), possessing similarly high Strength and Dexterity scores, but there the similarity ends.

You don't need to be confined to binary notions of sex and gender. The elf god Corellon Larethian is often seen as androgynous, for example, and some elves in the multiverse are made in Corellon's image. You could also play a female character who presents herself as a man, a man who feels trapped in a female body, or a bearded female dwarf who hates being mistaken for a male. Likewise, your character's sexual orientation is for you to decide.

## HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

You can decide your character's height and weight, using the information provided in your race description or on the Random Height and Weight table. Think about what your character's ability scores might say about his or her height and weight. A weak but agile character might be thin. A strong and tough character might be tall or just heavy.

If you want to, you can roll randomly for your character's height and weight using the Random Height and Weight table. The dice roll given in the Height Modifier column determines the character's extra height (in inches) beyond the base height. That same number multiplied by the dice roll or quantity given in the Weight Modifier column determines the character's extra weight (in pounds) beyond the base weight.

### RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Human	4'8"	+2d10	110 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Dwarf, hill	3'8"	+2d4	115 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Dwarf, mountain	4'	+2d4	130 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Elf, high	4'6"	+2d10	90 lb.	× (1d4) lb.
Elf, wood	4'6"	+2d10	100 lb.	× (1d4) lb.
Halfling	2'7"	+2d4	35 lb.	× 1 lb.

For example, as a human, Tika has a height of 4 feet 8 inches plus 2d10 inches. Her player rolls 2d10 and gets a total of 12, so Tika stands 5 feet 8 inches tall. Then the player uses that same roll of 12 and multiplies it by 2d4 pounds. Her 2d4 roll is 3, so Tika weighs an extra 36 pounds (12 × 3) on top of her base 110 pounds, for a total of 146 pounds.

## OTHER PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

You choose your character's age and the color of his or her hair, eyes, and skin. To add a touch of distinctiveness, you might want to give your character an unusual or memorable physical characteristic, such as a scar, a limp, or a tattoo.

## ALIGNMENT

A typical creature in the worlds of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS has an alignment, which broadly describes its moral and personal attitudes. Alignment is a combination of two factors: one identifies morality (good, evil, or neutral), and the other describes attitudes toward society and

order (lawful, chaotic, or neutral). Thus, nine distinct alignments define the possible combinations.

These brief summaries of the nine alignments describe the typical behavior of a creature with that alignment. Individuals might vary significantly from that typical behavior, and few people are perfectly and consistently faithful to the precepts of their alignment.

**Lawful good (LG)** creatures can be counted on to do the right thing as expected by society. Gold dragons, paladins, and most dwarves are lawful good.

**Neutral good (NG)** folk do the best they can to help others according to their needs. Many celestials, some cloud giants, and most gnomes are neutral good.

**Chaotic good (CG)** creatures act as their conscience directs, with little regard for what others expect. Copper dragons, many elves, and unicorns are chaotic good.

**Lawful neutral (LN)** individuals act in accordance with law, tradition, or personal codes. Many monks and some wizards are lawful neutral.

**Neutral (N)** is the alignment of those who prefer to steer clear of moral questions and don't take sides, doing what seems best at the time. Lizardfolk, most druids, and many humans are neutral.

**Chaotic neutral (CN)** creatures follow their whims, holding their personal freedom above all else. Many barbarians and rogues, and some bards, are chaotic neutral.

**Lawful evil (LE)** creatures methodically take what they want, within the limits of a code of tradition, loyalty, or order. Devils, blue dragons, and hobgoblins are lawful evil.

**Neutral evil (NE)** is the alignment of those who do whatever they can get away with, without compassion or qualms. Many drow, some cloud giants, and yugoloths are neutral evil.

**Chaotic evil (CE)** creatures act with arbitrary violence, spurred by their greed, hatred, or bloodlust. Demons, red dragons, and orcs are chaotic evil.

## ALIGNMENT IN THE MULTIVERSE

For many thinking creatures, alignment is a moral choice. Humans, dwarves, elves, and other humanoid races can choose whether to follow the paths of good or evil, law or chaos. According to myth, the good-aligned gods who created these races gave them free will to choose their moral paths, knowing that good without free will is slavery.

The evil deities who created other races, though, made those races to serve them. Those races have strong inborn tendencies that match the nature of their gods. Most orcs share the violent, savage nature of the orc god, Gruumsh, and are thus inclined toward evil. Even if an orc chooses a good alignment, it struggles against its innate tendencies for its entire life. (Even half-orcs feel the lingering pull of the orc god's influence.)

Alignment is an essential part of the nature of celestials and fiends. A devil does not choose to be lawful evil, and it doesn't tend toward lawful evil, but rather it is lawful evil in its essence. If it somehow ceased to be lawful evil, it would cease to be a devil.

Most creatures that lack the capacity for rational thought do not have alignments—they are **unaligned**.

## TIKA AND ARTEMIS: ALIGNMENT

Tika Waylan is neutral good, fundamentally good-hearted and striving to help others where she can. Artemis is lawful evil, unconcerned with the value of sentient life but at least professional in his approach to murder.

As an evil character, Artemis is not an ideal adventurer. He began his career as a villain, and only cooperates with heroes when he must—and when it's in his own best interests. In most games, evil adventurers cause problems in groups alongside others who don't share their interests and objectives. Generally, evil alignments are for villains and monsters.

Such a creature is incapable of making a moral or ethical choice and acts according to its bestial nature. Sharks are savage predators, for example, but they are not evil; they have no alignment.

## LANGUAGES

Your race indicates the languages your character can speak by default, and your background might give you access to one or more additional languages of your choice. Note these languages on your character sheet.

Choose your languages from the Standard Languages table, or choose one that is common in your campaign. With your DM's permission, you can instead choose a language from the Exotic Languages table or a secret language, such as thieves' cant or the tongue of druids.

Some of these languages are actually families of languages with many dialects. For example, the Primordial language includes the Auran, Aquan, Ignan, and Terran dialects, one for each of the four elemental planes. Creatures that speak different dialects of the same language can communicate with one another.

### STANDARD LANGUAGES

Language	Typical Speakers	Script
Common	Humans	Common
Dwarvish	Dwarves	Dwarvish
Elvish	Elves	Elvish
Giant	Ogres, giants	Dwarvish
Gnomish	Gnomes	Dwarvish
Goblin	Goblinoids	Dwarvish
Halfling	Halflings	Common
Orc	Orcs	Dwarvish

### EXOTIC LANGUAGES

Language	Typical Speakers	Script
Abyssal	Demons	Infernal
Celestial	Celestials	Celestial
Deep Speech	Mind flayers, beholders	—
Draconic	Dragons, dragonborn	Draconic
Infernal	Devils	Infernal
Primordial	Elementals	Dwarvish
Sylvan	Fey creatures	Elvish
Undercommon	Underdark traders	Elvish



## PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Fleshing out your character's personality—the array of traits, mannerisms, habits, beliefs, and flaws that give a person a unique identity—will help you bring him or her to life as you play the game. Four categories of characteristics are presented here: personality traits, ideals, bonds, and flaws. Beyond those categories, think about your character's favorite words or phrases, tics and habitual gestures, vices and pet peeves, and whatever else you can imagine.

Each background presented later in this chapter includes suggested characteristics that you can use to spark your imagination. You're not bound to those options, but they're a good starting point.

### PERSONALITY TRAITS

Give your character two personality traits. Personality traits are small, simple ways to help you set your character apart from every other character. Your personality traits should tell you something interesting and fun about your character. They should be self-descriptions that are specific about what makes your character stand out. "I'm smart" is not a good trait, because it describes a lot of characters. "I've read every book in Candlekeep" tells you something specific about your character's interests and disposition.

Personality traits might describe the things your character likes, his or her past accomplishments, things your character dislikes or fears, your character's self-attitude or mannerisms, or the influence of his or her ability scores.

A useful place to start thinking about personality traits is to look at your highest and lowest ability scores and define one trait related to each. Either one could be positive or negative: you might work hard to overcome a low score, for example, or be cocky about your high score.

### IDEALS

Describe one ideal that drives your character. Your ideals are the things that you believe in most strongly, the fundamental moral and ethical principles that compel you to act as you do. Ideals encompass everything from your life goals to your core belief system.

Ideals might answer any of these questions: What are the principles that you will never betray? What would prompt you to make sacrifices? What drives you to act and guides your goals and ambitions? What is the single most important thing you strive for?

You can choose any ideals you like, but your character's alignment is a good place to start defining them. Each background in this chapter includes six suggested ideals. Five of them are linked to aspects of alignment: law, chaos, good, evil, and neutrality. The last one has more to do with the particular background than with moral or ethical perspectives.

### BONDS

Create one bond for your character. Bonds represent a character's connections to people, places, and events in the world. They tie you to things from your background. They might inspire you to heights of heroism, or lead you to act against your own best interests if they are

threatened. They can work very much like ideals, driving a character's motivations and goals.

Bonds might answer any of these questions: Whom do you care most about? To what place do you feel a special connection? What is your most treasured possession?

Your bonds might be tied to your class, your background, your race, or some other aspect of your character's history or personality. You might also gain new bonds over the course of your adventures.

### FLAWS

Finally, choose a flaw for your character. Your character's flaw represents some vice, compulsion, fear, or weakness—in particular, anything that someone else could exploit to bring you to ruin or cause you to act against your best interests. More significant than negative personality traits, a flaw might answer any of these questions: What enrages you? What's the one person, concept, or event that you are terrified of? What are your vices?

## INSPIRATION

Inspiration is a rule the Dungeon Master can use to reward you for playing your character in a way that's true to his or her personality traits, ideal, bond, and flaw. By using inspiration, you can draw on your personality trait of compassion for the downtrodden to give you an edge in negotiating with the Beggar Prince. Or inspiration can let you call on your bond to the defense of your home village to push past the effect of a spell that has been laid on you.

### GAINING INSPIRATION

Your DM can choose to give you inspiration for a variety of reasons. Typically, DMs award it when you play out your personality traits, give in to the drawbacks presented by a flaw or bond, and otherwise portray your character in a compelling way. Your DM will tell you how you can earn inspiration in the game.

You either have inspiration or you don't—you can't stockpile multiple "inspirations" for later use.

### USING INSPIRATION

If you have inspiration, you can expend it when you make an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check. Spending your inspiration gives you advantage on that roll.

#### TIKA AND ARTEMIS: CHARACTER DETAILS

Consider how the names Tika Waylan and Artemis Entreri set these characters apart from each other and reflect their personalities. Tika is a young woman determined to prove that she's not just a kid any more, and her name makes her sound young and ordinary. Artemis Entreri comes from an exotic land and carries a more mysterious name.

Tika is nineteen years old at the start of her adventuring career and has auburn hair, green eyes, fair skin with freckles, and a mole on her right hip. Artemis is a small man, compact and all wiry muscle. He has angular features and high cheekbones, and he always seems in need of a shave. His raven-black hair is thick and full, but his eyes are gray and lifeless—betraying the emptiness of his life and soul.

### TIKA AND ARTEMIS: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Tika and Artemis have distinct personality traits. Tika Waylan dislikes boastfulness and has a fear of heights resulting from a bad fall during her career as a thief. Artemis Entreri is always prepared for the worst and moves with a quick, precise confidence.

Consider their ideals. Tika Waylan is innocent, almost childlike, believing in the value of life and the importance of appreciating everyone. Neutral good in alignment, she cleaves to ideals of life and respect. Artemis Entreri never allows his emotions to master him, and he constantly challenges himself to improve his skills. His lawful evil alignment gives him ideals of impartiality and a lust for power.

Tika Waylan's bond is to the Inn of the Last Home. The inn's proprietor gave her a new chance at life, and her friendship with her adventuring companions was forged during her time working there. Its destruction by the marauding dragonarmies gives Tika a very personal reason to hate them with a fiery passion. Her bond might be phrased as "I will do whatever it takes to punish the dragonarmies for the destruction of the Inn of the Last Home."

Artemis Entreri's bond is a strange, almost paradoxical relationship with Drizzt Do'Urden, his equal in swordplay and grim determination. In his first battle with Drizzt, Artemis recognized something of himself in his opponent, some indication that if his life had gone differently, he might have led a life more like the heroic drow's. From that moment, Artemis is more than a criminal assassin—he is an antihero, driven by his rivalry with Drizzt. His bond might be phrased as "I will not rest until I have proved myself better than Drizzt Do'Urden."

Each of these characters also has an important flaw. Tika Waylan is naive and emotionally vulnerable, younger than her companions and annoyed that they still think of her as the kid they knew years ago. She might even be tempted to act against her principles if she's convinced that a particular achievement would demonstrate her maturity. Artemis Entreri is completely walled off from any personal relationship and just wants to be left alone.

Additionally, if you have inspiration, you can reward another player for good roleplaying, clever thinking, or simply doing something exciting in the game. When another player character does something that really contributes to the story in a fun and interesting way, you can give up your inspiration to give that character inspiration.

## BACKGROUNDS

Every story has a beginning. Your character's background reveals where you came from, how you became an adventurer, and your place in the world. Your fighter might have been a courageous knight or a grizzled soldier. Your wizard could have been a sage or an artisan. Your rogue might have gotten by as a guild thief or commanded audiences as a jester.

Choosing a background provides you with important story cues about your character's identity. The most important question to ask about your background is what changed? Why did you stop doing whatever your background describes and start adventuring? Where did you get the money to purchase your starting gear, or, if you come from a wealthy background, why don't you have

more money? How did you learn the skills of your class? What sets you apart from ordinary people who share your background?

The sample backgrounds in this chapter provide both concrete benefits (features, proficiencies, and languages) and roleplaying suggestions.

### PROFICIENCIES

Each background gives a character proficiency in two skills. Skills are described in chapter 7.

In addition, most backgrounds give a character proficiency with one or more tools. Tools and tool proficiencies are detailed in chapter 5.

If a character would gain the same proficiency from two different sources, he or she can choose a different proficiency of the same kind (skill or tool) instead.

### LANGUAGES

Some backgrounds also allow characters to learn additional languages beyond those given by race. See "Languages" earlier in this chapter.

### EQUIPMENT

Each background provides a package of starting equipment. If you use the optional rule from chapter 5 to spend coin on gear, you do not receive the starting equipment from your background.

### SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

A background contains suggested personal characteristics based on your background. You can pick characteristics, roll dice to determine them randomly, or use the suggestions as inspiration for characteristics of your own creation.

### CUSTOMIZING A BACKGROUND

You might want to tweak some of the features of a background so it better fits your character or the campaign setting. To customize a background, you can replace one feature with any other one, choose any two skills, and choose a total of two tool proficiencies or languages from the sample backgrounds. You can either use the equipment package from your background or spend coin on gear as described in chapter 5. (If you spend coin, you can't also take the equipment package suggested for your class.) Finally, choose two personality traits, one ideal, one bond, and one flaw. If you can't find a feature that matches your desired background, work with your DM to create one.

### TIKA AND ARTEMIS: BACKGROUNDS

Tika Waylan and Artemis Entreri both lived their earliest years as street urchins. Tika's later career as a barmaid didn't really change her, so she might choose the urchin background, gaining proficiency in the Sleight of Hand and Stealth skills, and learning the tools of the thieving trade. Artemis is more defined by his criminal background, giving him skills in Deception and Stealth, as well as proficiency with the tools of thievery and poison.

## ACOLYTE

You have spent your life in the service of a temple to a specific god or pantheon of gods. You act as an intermediary between the realm of the holy and the mortal world, performing sacred rites and offering sacrifices in order to conduct worshipers into the presence of the divine. You are not necessarily a cleric—performing sacred rites is not the same thing as channeling divine power.

Choose a god, a pantheon of gods, or some other quasi-divine being, and work with your DM to detail the nature of your religious service. Appendix B contains a sample pantheon, from the Forgotten Realms setting. Were you a lesser functionary in a temple, raised from childhood to assist the priests in the sacred rites? Or were you a high priest who suddenly experienced a call to serve your god in a different way? Perhaps you were the leader of a small cult outside of any established temple structure, or even an occult group that served a fiendish master that you now deny.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Insight, Religion

**Languages:** Two of your choice

**Equipment:** A holy symbol (a gift to you when you entered the priesthood), a prayer book or prayer wheel, 5 sticks of incense, vestments, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 15 gp

### FEATURE: SHELTER OF THE FAITHFUL

As an acolyte, you command the respect of those who share your faith, and you can perform the religious ceremonies of your deity. You and your adventuring companions can expect to receive free healing and care at a temple, shrine, or other established presence of your faith, though you must provide any material components needed for spells. Those who share your religion will support you (but only you) at a modest lifestyle.

You might also have ties to a specific temple dedicated to your chosen deity or pantheon, and you have a residence there. This could be the temple where you used to serve, if you remain on good terms with it, or a temple where you have found a new home. While near your temple, you can call upon the priests for assistance, provided the assistance you ask for is not hazardous and you remain in good standing with your temple.

### SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Acolytes are shaped by their experience in temples or other religious communities. Their study of the history and tenets of their faith and their relationships to temples, shrines, or hierarchies affect their mannerisms and ideals. Their flaws might be some hidden hypocrisy or heretical idea, or an ideal or bond taken to an extreme.

### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I idolize a particular hero of my faith, and constantly refer to that person's deeds and example.
- 2 I can find common ground between the fiercest enemies, empathizing with them and always working toward peace.
- 3 I see omens in every event and action. The gods try to speak to us, we just need to listen.
- 4 Nothing can shake my optimistic attitude.
- 5 I quote (or misquote) sacred texts and proverbs in almost every situation.
- 6 I am tolerant (or intolerant) of other faiths and respect (or condemn) the worship of other gods.
- 7 I've enjoyed fine food, drink, and high society among my temple's elite. Rough living grates on me.
- 8 I've spent so long in the temple that I have little practical experience dealing with people in the outside world.

### d6 Ideal

- 1 **Tradition.** The ancient traditions of worship and sacrifice must be preserved and upheld. (Lawful)
- 2 **Charity.** I always try to help those in need, no matter what the personal cost. (Good)
- 3 **Change.** We must help bring about the changes the gods are constantly working in the world. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Power.** I hope to one day rise to the top of my faith's religious hierarchy. (Lawful)
- 5 **Faith.** I trust that my deity will guide my actions. I have faith that if I work hard, things will go well. (Lawful)
- 6 **Aspiration.** I seek to prove myself worthy of my god's favor by matching my actions against his or her teachings. (Any)

### d6 Bond

- 1 I would die to recover an ancient relic of my faith that was lost long ago.
- 2 I will someday get revenge on the corrupt temple hierarchy who branded me a heretic.
- 3 I owe my life to the priest who took me in when my parents died.
- 4 Everything I do is for the common people.
- 5 I will do anything to protect the temple where I served.
- 6 I seek to preserve a sacred text that my enemies consider heretical and seek to destroy.

### d6 Flaw

- 1 I judge others harshly, and myself even more severely.
- 2 I put too much trust in those who wield power within my temple's hierarchy.
- 3 My piety sometimes leads me to blindly trust those that profess faith in my god.
- 4 I am inflexible in my thinking.
- 5 I am suspicious of strangers and expect the worst of them.
- 6 Once I pick a goal, I become obsessed with it to the detriment of everything else in my life.



## CRIMINAL

You are an experienced criminal with a history of breaking the law. You have spent a lot of time among other criminals and still have contacts within the criminal underworld. You're far closer than most people to the world of murder, theft, and violence that pervades the underbelly of civilization, and you have survived up to this point by flouting the rules and regulations of society.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Deception, Stealth

**Tool Proficiencies:** One type of gaming set, thieves' tools

**Equipment:** A crowbar, a set of dark common clothes including a hood, and a pouch containing 15 gp

### CRIMINAL SPECIALTY

There are many kinds of criminals, and within a thieves' guild or similar criminal organization, individual members have particular specialties. Even criminals who operate outside of such organizations have strong preferences for certain kinds of crimes over others. Choose the role you played in your criminal life, or roll on the table below.

d8	Specialty	d8	Specialty
1	Blackmailer	5	Highway robber
2	Burglar	6	Hired killer
3	Enforcer	7	Pickpocket
4	Fence	8	Smuggler

### FEATURE: CRIMINAL CONTACT

You have a reliable and trustworthy contact who acts as your liaison to a network of other criminals. You know how to get messages to and from your contact, even over great distances; specifically, you know the local messengers, corrupt caravan masters, and seedy sailors who can deliver messages for you.

### SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Criminals might seem like villains on the surface, and many of them are villainous to the core. But some have an abundance of endearing, if not redeeming, characteristics. There might be honor among thieves, but criminals rarely show any respect for law or authority.

### VARIANT CRIMINAL: SPY

Although your capabilities are not much different from those of a burglar or smuggler, you learned and practiced them in a very different context: as an espionage agent. You might have been an officially sanctioned agent of the crown, or perhaps you sold the secrets you uncovered to the highest bidder.

### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I always have a plan for what to do when things go wrong.
- 2 I am always calm, no matter what the situation. I never raise my voice or let my emotions control me.
- 3 The first thing I do in a new place is note the locations of everything valuable—or where such things could be hidden.
- 4 I would rather make a new friend than a new enemy.
- 5 I am incredibly slow to trust. Those who seem the fairest often have the most to hide.
- 6 I don't pay attention to the risks in a situation. Never tell me the odds.
- 7 The best way to get me to do something is to tell me I can't do it.
- 8 I blow up at the slightest insult.

### d6 Ideal

- 1 **Honor.** I don't steal from others in the trade. (Lawful)
- 2 **Freedom.** Chains are meant to be broken, as are those who would forge them. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Charity.** I steal from the wealthy so that I can help people in need. (Good)
- 4 **Greed.** I will do whatever it takes to become wealthy. (Evil)
- 5 **People.** I'm loyal to my friends, not to any ideals, and everyone else can take a trip down the Styx for all I care. (Neutral)
- 6 **Redemption.** There's a spark of good in everyone. (Good)

### d6 Bond

- 1 I'm trying to pay off an old debt I owe to a generous benefactor.
- 2 My ill-gotten gains go to support my family.
- 3 Something important was taken from me, and I aim to steal it back.
- 4 I will become the greatest thief that ever lived.
- 5 I'm guilty of a terrible crime. I hope I can redeem myself for it.
- 6 Someone I loved died because of I mistake I made. That will never happen again.

### d6 Flaw

- 1 When I see something valuable, I can't think about anything but how to steal it.
- 2 When faced with a choice between money and my friends, I usually choose the money.
- 3 If there's a plan, I'll forget it. If I don't forget it, I'll ignore it.
- 4 I have a "tell" that reveals when I'm lying.
- 5 I turn tail and run when things look bad.
- 6 An innocent person is in prison for a crime that I committed. I'm okay with that.

## FOLK HERO

You come from a humble social rank, but you are destined for so much more. Already the people of your home village regard you as their champion, and your destiny calls you to stand against the tyrants and monsters that threaten the common folk everywhere.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Animal Handling, Survival

**Tool Proficiencies:** One type of artisan's tools, vehicles (land)

**Equipment:** A set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), a shovel, an iron pot, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

### DEFINING EVENT

You previously pursued a simple profession among the peasantry, perhaps as a farmer, miner, servant, shepherd, woodcutter, or gravedigger. But something happened that set you on a different path and marked you for greater things. Choose or randomly determine a defining event that marked you as a hero of the people.

#### d10 Defining Event

- 1 I stood up to a tyrant's agents.
- 2 I saved people during a natural disaster.
- 3 I stood alone against a terrible monster.
- 4 I stole from a corrupt merchant to help the poor.
- 5 I led a militia to fight off an invading army.
- 6 I broke into a tyrant's castle and stole weapons to arm the people.
- 7 I trained the peasantry to use farm implements as weapons against a tyrant's soldiers.
- 8 A lord rescinded an unpopular decree after I led a symbolic act of protest against it.
- 9 A celestial, fey, or similar creature gave me a blessing or revealed my secret origin.
- 10 Recruited into a lord's army, I rose to leadership and was commended for my heroism.

### FEATURE: RUSTIC HOSPITALITY

Since you come from the ranks of the common folk, you fit in among them with ease. You can find a place to hide, rest, or recuperate among other commoners, unless you have shown yourself to be a danger to them. They will shield you from the law or anyone else searching for you, though they will not risk their lives for you.

### SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

A folk hero is one of the common people, for better or for worse. Most folk heroes look on their humble origins as a virtue, not a shortcoming, and their home communities remain very important to them.

#### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I judge people by their actions, not their words.
- 2 If someone is in trouble, I'm always ready to lend help.
- 3 When I set my mind to something, I follow through no matter what gets in my way.
- 4 I have a strong sense of fair play and always try to find the most equitable solution to arguments.
- 5 I'm confident in my own abilities and do what I can to instill confidence in others.
- 6 Thinking is for other people. I prefer action.
- 7 I misuse long words in an attempt to sound smarter.
- 8 I get bored easily. When am I going to get on with my destiny?

#### d6 Ideal

- 1 **Respect.** People deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. (Good)
- 2 **Fairness.** No one should get preferential treatment before the law, and no one is above the law. (Lawful)
- 3 **Freedom.** Tyrants must not be allowed to oppress the people. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Might.** If I become strong, I can take what I want—what I deserve. (Evil)
- 5 **Sincerity.** There's no good in pretending to be something I'm not. (Neutral)
- 6 **Destiny.** Nothing and no one can steer me away from my higher calling. (Any)

#### d6 Bond

- 1 I have a family, but I have no idea where they are. One day, I hope to see them again.
- 2 I worked the land, I love the land, and I will protect the land.
- 3 A proud noble once gave me a horrible beating, and I will take my revenge on any bully I encounter.
- 4 My tools are symbols of my past life, and I carry them so that I will never forget my roots.
- 5 I protect those who cannot protect themselves.
- 6 I wish my childhood sweetheart had come with me to pursue my destiny.

#### d6 Flaw

- 1 The tyrant who rules my land will stop at nothing to see me killed.
- 2 I'm convinced of the significance of my destiny, and blind to my shortcomings and the risk of failure.
- 3 The people who knew me when I was young know my shameful secret, so I can never go home again.
- 4 I have a weakness for the vices of the city, especially hard drink.
- 5 Secretly, I believe that things would be better if I were a tyrant lording over the land.
- 6 I have trouble trusting in my allies.