



RPG BACKSTORY TEMPLATE

THE EASY WAY FOR RPG PLAYERS TO MAKE BACKSTORIES FAST

 THE DM LAIR

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GAME MASTER RESOURCES

[Lair Magazine](#) – I publish a monthly RPG magazine chocked full of GM resources such as 5e adventures, magic items, monsters, encounters, adventure ideas, and traps.

[The DM Lair Store](#) – Previously published issues of Lair Magazine and other GM resources are available here.

[The DM Lair YouTube Channel](#) – I create weekly videos with practical information game masters can use at their game tables.

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FOREWORD

A reoccurring gripe I hear from game masters is that they can't get their players to make backstories for their characters. And then, of course, there are players who *want* to make backstories—if for no other reason than to get their game masters to stop bothering them—but they don't know where to start.

This backstory template aims to end these issues.

Herein you will not find an extensive treatise on how to write perfect, work-of-art backstories. Nor will game masters discover the ultimate bribe (or threat) to get their players to make backstories.

However, I think that I might be able to give you a silver bullet—that is, a quick and easy way for players to make backstories. And a suggestion for game masters to make sure it happens.

WHY BACKSTORIES?

You may already know this, but there are two main reasons for RPG players to create backstories for their characters:

For players, backstories help them role-play their characters better.

For game masters, backstories help them personalize their campaigns for their players while generating interesting plot hooks based on their backstories that will appeal to them.

HOW TO USE THIS TEMPLATE

This is quite easy, really. This template consists of a short series of questions about a player's character. Players sit their happy butts down and answer the questions. It takes maybe fifteen minutes (half hour tops) and doesn't involve actual story writing.

And, uh, game masters, here's a pro tip for you: *Don't give it to your players as homework.* (It'll never get done.) Instead, when they sit down at the table for the next game session, pass out copies of these questions to all the players and have them fill them out. Right then and there. The same goes for online games, too.

Now, this activity is best done at a session zero, but if that airship has already flown, there's no time like the very next game session.

Okay, I'm done yammering on now. Enjoy!

CHARACTER NAME

Where was the character born? Where did they grow up?

Who are the character's parents and what are their occupations? Are the parents still alive? If so, where are they and what are they doing?

What was the character doing before they became an adventurer?

Why did the character leave their previous life and become an adventurer?

What did the character leave behind? What do they miss? What do they *not* miss?

CHARACTER NAME

How did the character learn the skills and abilities of their adventuring class?

What does the character want? What is the character willing to do to achieve these goals? What is the character *not* willing to do?

What is the character's greatest strength and greatest weakness?

What is the one temptation that would cause the character to "fall from grace"?