

The Book of Worlds

First Edition





THE BOOK OF WORLDS



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1st Edition, September 2018

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For Alison

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Introduction

Welcome to *The Book of Worlds*.

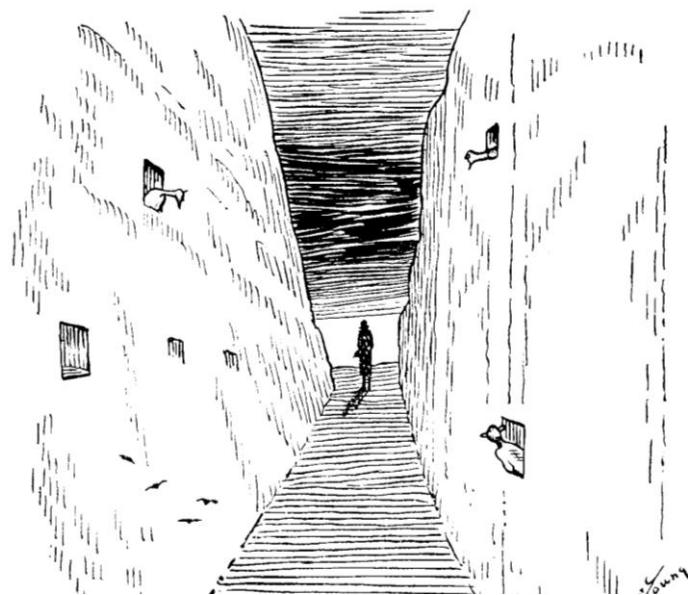
This book is meant to stimulate your imagination and help you create vibrant and dynamic fantasy worlds. It is written for gamers, writers, designers, and bored students stuck in class all day long.

If you read it cover-to-cover, you will start with nothing and end with a world well-stocked with adventure, lore, plots, characters, magic, and more.

The systems used in this book are not complex. There is a lot of rolling dice and referring to charts. To operate the engine, you'll need pencils, paper, a handful of D6, and a D20 or two. This volume is focused on classic fantasy in the vein of Middle Earth, Planetos, Earthsea, etc., but the generation system is highly adaptable.

Of course, many of you already have a seed in mind—an image, a theme, a hero, a quest—that you want to build around and develop. That's great, too. For you, this book can inspire layers, textures, and tensions to help your seed grow.

Whether you want to fill in gaps or create worlds out of whole cloth, combining these systems with your own imagination is essential. While this engine will spin out compelling fantasy, it relies on your ability to throw it out the window as soon as it's met your needs.



How to Use this Book

How you use this book depends on where you are or would like to be in the worldbuilding process.

If you are starting from scratch, building an entire world and its entire history and so on, try following the chapters in order. Each chapter will have notes on how to proceed from one step to the next.

If you are looking for a “one-shot” adventure, try starting with the *How to Build a Region* chapter.

This section will show you how to quickly map a region and will explain how to add plots, characters, and other textures beneficial to such an approach.

If you are planning the first adventure in a larger world and campaign, you could start by mapping your world and then move on to various chapters covering whichever themes you’d like to explore. Let’s say you want to depict a clash of kingdoms, for example. You might map the world, pick two civilizations you’d like to set against each other, build out their governments, cultures, histories, etc., and then find seeds for adventure within the constellation of motives and threats that you have generated around the contending kingdoms.

If you are looking to fill in gaps in a story you’ve already extensively developed, simply jump in wherever you’d like. Pick the book apart table-by-table to add the details you seek.



If you want to create a different kind of world altogether, try swapping in your own sets of results from the generation tables. Think of stories you love and distill them into disparate parts to come up with your own evocative sets.

Once you are satisfied with your world, if you want to jump right into it, try the game, *Longbow*, towards the end of the book.



How to Build a World

This chapter will guide you through the creation of continents, civilizations, and large-scale geography. By the end, you will have a world map ready to be filled in with character and detail.

If at any point in the making of your world you see an opportunity to make things cooler, more intertwined, and/or more plausible, do so, regardless of dice rolls.

Creation

Gather up a couple of blank pieces of paper, a pencil, and at least 2D6.

Determine how many dice you want to use. Each die will represent one continent. For your first creation, three will give you a good sense of the system.

Drop your dice on top of one of your pieces of paper. If any fall off, drop them again.

The number on each die determines the approximate size of the landmass it represents, a six being roughly six times larger than a one. If you are using an 8.5x11 piece of paper, one half inch of radius per pip on the die is appropriate.

Note the orientation of the face of the die. The square it makes represents the extreme four tips of your continent. Mark these on the map according to the scale of the continent.

If dice end up too close together, make your own choice or flip a coin to determine whether or not they combine into one larger continent or narrowly avoid each other.

Use four rolls of a D3 on the following table to determine the coastal connections between the tips.

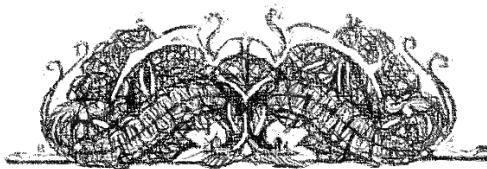
Result	Geography
1	Jagged coastline; at least three jags
2	At least one big bay with islets and peninsulas
3	The coast makes at least two significant expansions outwards into the sea

Sketch continents around each die.

The die number also determines the number of major geographic features on the continent. Using 2D6, make that many rolls on the following chart and add the features as directed. Note that many of these results will “cascade,” prompting you to place other features as well.

Result	Feature	Explanation
2	Divine Site	<i>Place it blind, making a mark without looking at the paper</i>
3	Canyon	<i>Place it blind, making two marks and connecting them</i>
4	Two Lakes	<i>Place one blind, place one along a River. If no River exists, place a River</i>
5	Two Rocks and a Swamp	<i>One blind, one near a Mountain Range. Place a Mountain Range as if you had rolled one if none exists. Place the swamp along a River</i>
6	Two Hills	<i>One blind, one next to a Mountain Range</i>
7	River	<i>From a source of your choosing. Also place a Mountain Range at the source of the River and a Forest and Progenitor dot somewhere along the River</i>
8	Three Forests	<i>All blind</i>
9	Mountain Range	<i>Make 2 marks on the continent without looking at the paper: draw a Mountain Range between the two marks. also place two Rivers running from the Mountain Range to the sea. If you are placing the Mountains as a result of an original River roll, only place one additional River</i>
10	Historic Site	<i>Blind</i>
11	Desert	<i>Away from rivers</i>
12	Divine Site	<i>Blind</i>

On each odd die result, and on Divine Sites, also place a small dot on the feature. This will represent a Progenitor, a seed of civilization.



Civilization

Determine the fate of your Progenitors. For each Progenitor, roll 1D6 on this chart until you roll a 1, 2, or 3. When instructed to "spread," place a new population dot no more than an inch (or similar relative scale) away from any other dot that has previously been placed on the map.

The results should be assessed from the placement of each new population dot. If the dot is along a river, use the "upriver/downriver" instructions when rolled. If the dot is not along a river, use the "towards nearest feature" instructions when rolled.

Result	Expansion
1	Stop rolling
2	Stop rolling
3	Spread in direction of your choice
4	Spread downriver/towards nearest feature
5	Spread upriver/towards nearest feature
6	Spread towards nearest feature

When you are done, fill in all the dots to make them twice as large. These will be your "Cities."

Determine the nature of your Divine and Historic Sites. These represent world-changing divine interventions and historic events. Later chapters will include further details on developing these physical locations and the social effects they create. Roll 2D3 on this chart.

Result	Nature
1	The site memorializes an act of love
2	The site memorializes an act of violence
3	The site memorializes an act of wonder



Roll 1D6 on this chart for each city you have placed on the continent.

Result	Expansion
1	The city has collapsed into ruins.
2	The city adds 1 nearby village. Place a new, smaller, dot anywhere within an inch of the city. The city also “connects” with 1 nearby city. Draw a line between the two.
3	The city adds 2 nearby villages. The city connects with 1 nearby city. If two cities are already connected, there is no need to connect them again.
4	The city adds 2 nearby villages, fortifies itself, and adds 1 additional village 1-2 inches away from the city. The city connects with one nearby city.
5	The city adds 2 nearby villages, fortifies, and adds 2 additional villages 1-2 inches away from the main city. The city connects with one nearby city. If the city or its villages are on the ocean, intercontinental trade is established. Draw a connection between the seaside population and a new seaside population dot on the nearest continent.
6	The city fortifies itself, but does not make connections or add villages.

Webs of connections will form the backbone of your civilizations. “Fortification” is a fictive descriptor that will be further developed in the *How to Build a Settlement* chapter.



The Wilds

Determine the content of the wilds around your civilizations. Mark your wilds into large but rough zones at your discretion based on the borders of civilization and natural features. Roll 1D6 for each zone.

Result	Threat
1	Desolate; animals and monsters
2	Wild by divine nature; the landscape assumes the characteristics represented by the nearest divine site. If none is nearby, generate a new one in this zone
3	Dangerous terrain, hidden faction
4	Dangerous terrain; animals and monsters
5	Big game; dominated by a few real bad monsters
6	Actually quite pleasant

For Divine Sites generated by this table, do not add new Progenitor dots.



Populations

Each set of dots originating with one Progenitor will represent a civilization with a predominant population. Use the table below to determine that population.

Result	Population
1	Dragonkin
2	Orcs and Goblins
3	Undead
4	Elves
5	Dwarves
6	Humans

This is a moment in which you are especially encouraged to break away from the book and determine what kinds of races you want to populate your world.

Diplomacy

Although each Progenitor creates its own faction, there will still be inter- and intra-faction diplomacy.

Roll on this table for each connection between cities. Also roll for the relationship between each faction in play on the world map.

Result	Relationship
1	At war
2	Allied by common enemy
3	Allied by blood/shared beliefs
4	Recently at peace
5	Allied by trade
6	Suspicious

Notes

This process will leave you with a mapped and populated world. The next best step would be to identify a region of the world where you want your story to begin. Then, develop that region

in accordance with the next chapters. You can fill in the rest of the world as you go, allowing it to evolve more in line with your vision.

Divine and Historic sites are detailed in later chapters. Determining the mythos your site represents will help determine its effect on nearby geography.



How to Build a Region

This chapter will help you add regional details to your world. This process is based on the same principles as the world map generation.

Map Generation

Use the “drop map” technique with 7 dice. If you have 7 D20, more power to you. If not, drop anything but roll a D20 for each location according to this table:

Result	Feature
1	Ruins (roll again, and add that as a ruin)
2	Waterway
3	Forest
4	Hills
5	Lake
6	Settlement
7	Jungle/Wilderness
8	Mine
9	Burial Mound
10	Farm
11	Church
12	Keep
13	Dungeon
14	Battleground
15	Military Camp
16	Swamp
17	Plantation
18	Pasture
19	Rocky terrain
20	Graveyard

Notes

Be sure that any world map terrain that could be found in your region is also represented on your regional map.

If you want a busier/sparser region, adjust the number of dice you drop as you see fit.

Note that settlements in this case should be considered smaller than the Cities and Villages on the world map. If you are jumping right into a region without having charted a world map, roll a D3 to determine the size of the settlement, a 1 being a small settlement, a 2 being a Village-sized settlement, and a 3 being a City. The significance of those sizes will be shown in *How to Build a Settlement*.

Similarly, waterways in this case should be considered smaller than rivers.

If you'd like, you can add some history to some or all of your generated features. To do so, roll a D3 for the desired feature. This represents the age of the feature, 1 being the newest and 3 being the oldest. Referring to the *How to Build History* chapter, roll once on the event table for each era represented by the previous roll. The result will be an event that shaped the story of that feature.

From here, you have diverging paths. If you want to keep building your world, it's best if you pick a settlement in which you can begin generating history, culture, government, etc. If you want to jump right into some action, refer to *How to Build a Plot* to see how to quickly add adventurous possibilities to the regional map.



How to Build a Settlement

This chapter will show you how to create, map, and populate settlements in your world.

This process focuses on the geography and basic structures of the settlement. The next chapters will show you how to develop culture, history, governance, and more details to enliven the settlement's society.

Defining Traits

This process will build the settlement from the “top-down,” so to speak. The tables are arranged so that you will be able to get a general idea of the settlement before mapping it. Depending on where you are in the world-building process, mapping unexplored settlements could be unnecessary.

The size of the settlement can be pre-determined by its status on the world map. Anything designated a “city” in that phase is a city, “villages” are villages, and settlements that only appear at the regional phase are still smaller.

Roll 1D6 on this table to determine the settlement’s wealth and focus.

Result	Wealth/focus
1	Poor agricultural
2	Modest agricultural
3	Rich agricultural
4	Poor industrial
5	Modest industrial
6	Rich industrial



Roll 2D20 on this table to determine the settlement's traits.

Result	Trait
1	Haunted or cursed
2	Violent
3	Chaotic
4	Corrupt
5	Sinister
6	Aloof
7	Irreverent
8	Independent
9	Calm
10	Beautiful
11	Disciplined
12	Festive
13	Welcoming
14	Pious
15	Educated
16	Touched with magic
17	Afflicted
18	Decadent
19	Ugly
20	Blessed



Fortifications

Roll once on this table to determine the level of fortification around your settlement.

Result	Fortification
1	None
2	None
3	Guard patrols
4	Rudimentary walls
5	Sturdy fortifications
6	Fortress

If building a settlement from the world map that was classified as “fortified,” add 2 to this roll.

The Settlement Map

You may use the same “drop map” system with some D20s to map a settlement’s features.

For cities, drop 6–9 dice.

For villages, drop 3–5 dice.

For smaller settlements, drop 2 dice.

Refer to the agricultural or industrial table based on the settlement’s focus.



Agricultural

Result	Feature
1	Shanties
2	Tavern
3	Guardhouse
4	Manor
5	Windmill
6	Pasture
7	Church/shrine
8	Market
9	Woods/orchard
10	Work camp
11	Blacksmith
12	Guild hall
13	School
14	Court house
15	Dangerous terrain
16	Keep
17	Graveyard
18	Wizard's tower
19	Tourney grounds
20	Farm



Industrial

Result	Feature
1	Slums
2	Tavern
3	Guardhouse
4	Mansion
5	Warehouse
6	Factory
7	Church/shrine
8	Market
9	Mine
10	Work camp
11	Forge
12	Guild hall
13	School
14	Court house
15	Dangerous terrain
16	Keep
17	Graveyard
18	Wizard's tower
19	Arena
20	Bank



Notes

Use the wealth of your settlement to guide the details of your features. A tavern in a poor agricultural settlement is not the same as a tavern in a rich industrial city.

The map depicts the main or recognizable features of the settlement, but should not be taken to preclude the presence of other features as well.

Building out each district is not immediately necessary. You are encouraged to bounce around the charts and roll until you feel like you have enough to convey the essence of the settlement.

There is some overlap between the traits table in this chapter and certain elements of *How to Build a Culture*. Instead of reconciling or cancelling out contradictory results, try to assign these results to different segments of the population being depicted and use the contradictions to create tension and seeds for adventure.

You may use a fill in the blank system like “representatives of [feature] want to act to fulfill [trait], but representatives of [feature] oppose them in the name of [other trait].”



How to Build Community and Culture

This chapter will add more detail to your settlements and civilizations, giving them life and texture to suit your desires.

This is a 5-step process. You may use it to outline the culture of a single settlement district or a mighty civilization.

Virtues

Roll 2 times on the following table to determine the virtues of your culture.

Result	Virtue
1	Courage
2	Calm
3	Liberality
4	Pride
5	Magnificence
6	Honor
7	Friendliness
8	Wit
9	Justice
10	Honesty

Vices

Roll 2 times on the following table to determine the vices of your culture.

Result	Vice
1	Gluttony
2	Pride
3	Sloth
4	Decadence
5	Inequality
6	Substance abuse
7	Greed
8	Wrath
9	Corruption
10	Idolatry

Traditions

Roll 2 times on this table to determine the traditions of your culture.

Result	Tradition
1	Martial
2	Just
3	Cruel
4	Tragic
5	Democratic
6	Despotic
7	Cunning
8	Xenophobic
9	Welcoming
10	Revolutionary

Goals

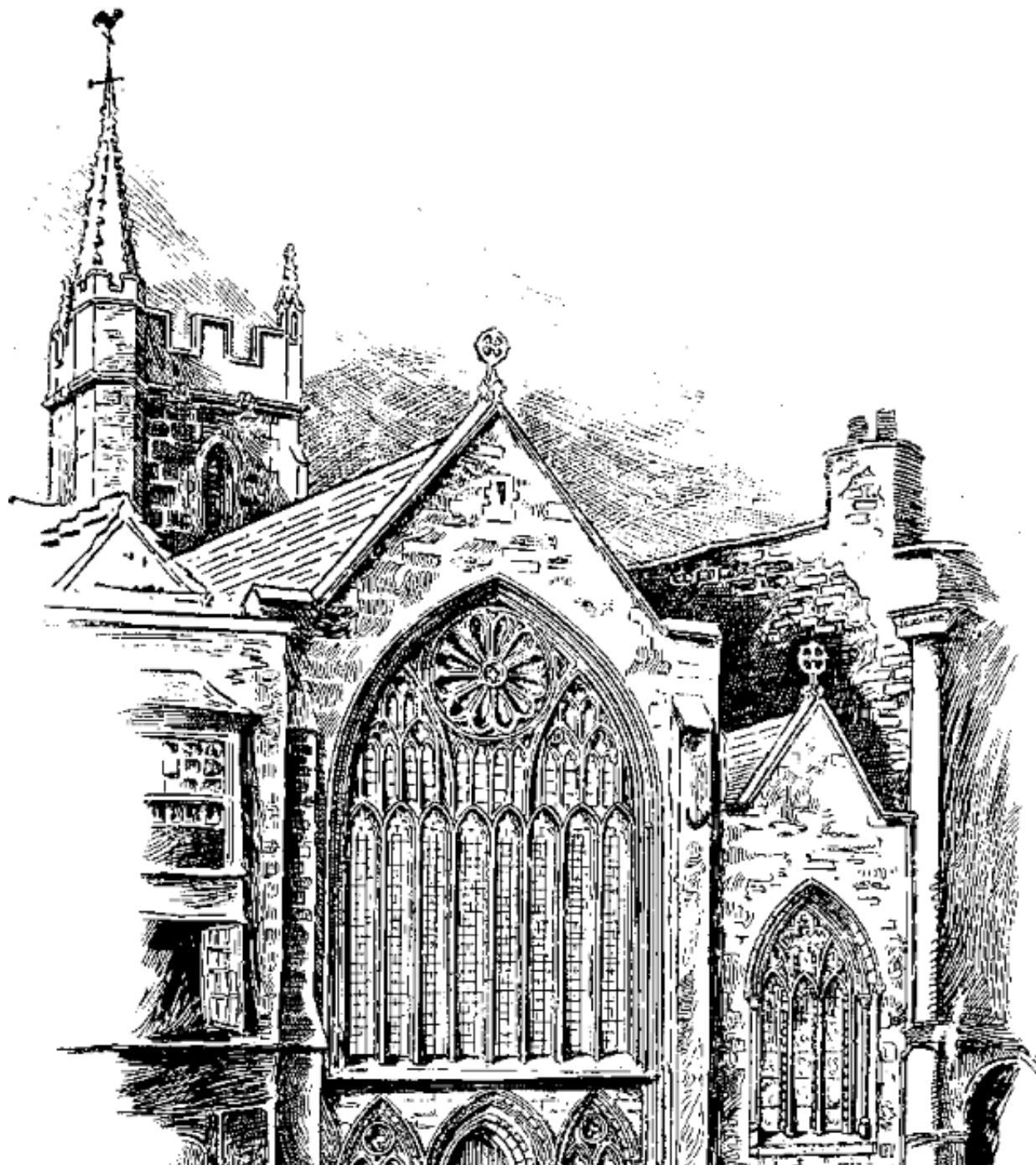
Roll 2 times on the following table to determine the goals of your culture.

Result	Goal
1	Expansion
2	Wealth
3	Piety
4	Revenge
5	Peace/utopia
6	Subjugation
7	Purity
8	Security
9	Liberty
10	Power

Notes

When drilling down on a culture, i.e. determining the culture of a settlement within a larger civilization, you should keep the larger culture but add one result from each of these tables to enrich and differentiate the local culture.

To build adventures out of a cultural description, ask your characters to assist or hinder one of the culture's goals. You may also set virtues, vices, and traditions against each other for intra-cultural conflicts.



How to Build Plots

This chapter will show you how to create “plots,” ongoing stories for your world. You will learn how to use plots to create dynamic interactions and adventures.

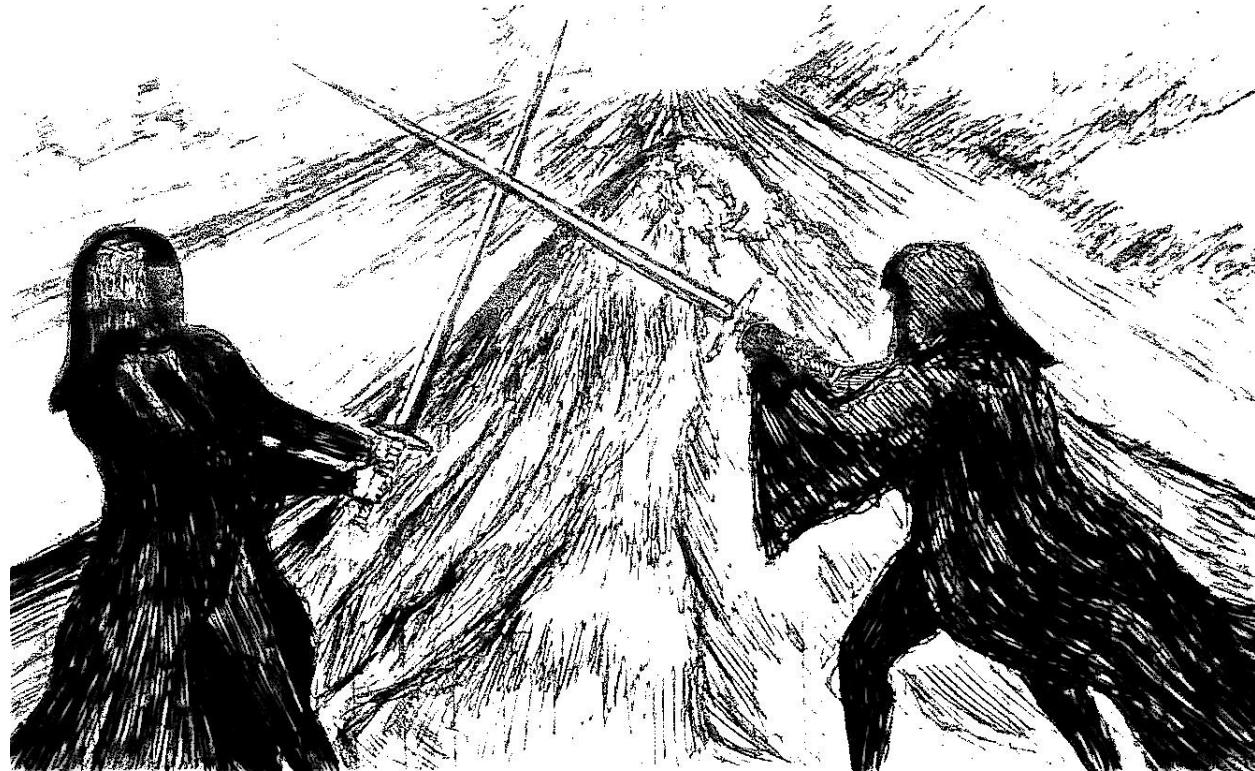
This will be a 5-step process.

You should begin by identifying a terrain feature that will serve as the “base” for the plot. This terrain feature will be the hook upon which the plot hangs.

Faction Generation

First, you will determine the nature of the plotting party by rolling a D6 on the following table:

Result	Faction
1	Dragonkin
2	Orcs and Goblins
3	Elves
4	Dwarves
5	Undead
6	Humans



You may also roll a couple of times on this table to assign some fictional features to the faction:

Result	Trait
1	Shadowy
2	Extravagant
3	Bloodthirsty
4	Bumbling
5	Secretly backed
6	Ancient
7	Conflicted
8	Pious
9	Foreign
10	Cunning
11	Brave
12	Witty
13	Cruel
14	Just
15	Addicted
16	Corrupt
17	Irreverent
18	Rich
19	Proud
20	Vengeful

Motivation Generation

The following table will generate the faction's overarching goal or motivation. This will guide their actions in your world.

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SS)

Result	Motivation
1	To conquer
2	To do misguided good
3	To sabotage
4	To exact vengeance
5	To protect the status quo
6	To gain magical power
7	To attain wealth
8	To purify
9	To watch the world burn
10	To uphold tradition

Plot Generation

To address their motivation, each faction will have a step-by-step plot of actions that will affect your world. Use the following table to determine the first four steps in your faction's plot.

Result	Step
1	Attack players
2	Attack other faction
3	Gather strength
4	Offer power
5	Establish doctrine
6	Fortify
7	Attack player allies
8	Make/strengthen alliances
9	Reveal secret about the world
10	Infight

Note that “attack” on these tables could be any kind of attack—an actual physical assault, a robbery, a kidnapping, a sabotage, etc.

Coup Generation

The fifth and final step of a faction's plot is the "coup." This is a more impactful step meant to provide more texture and aggression to the final move.

Result	Coup
1	Attack players with champions
2	Attack players with hordes
3	Crush other faction
4	Establish and enforce wide-reaching doctrine
5	Change landscape
6	Summon more dangerous faction
7	Alter civilization
8	Attain magical power
9	Bring back the past
10	Take something the players hold dear

Doom Generation

The plot's "doom" is the result of its steps and coup being unchallenged and/or un prevented. It is the result of its motivation coming to fruition.

Roll once on this table to determine the doom.



Result	Doom
t	
1	Full scale war
2	Magical monster
3	Lay waste to cities
4	Unleash ancient evil
5	Change landscape
6	Plague and pestilence
7	Widespread social upheaval
8	Magical/natural disaster
9	Attain godhood
10	Subjugate populations

Running a Plot

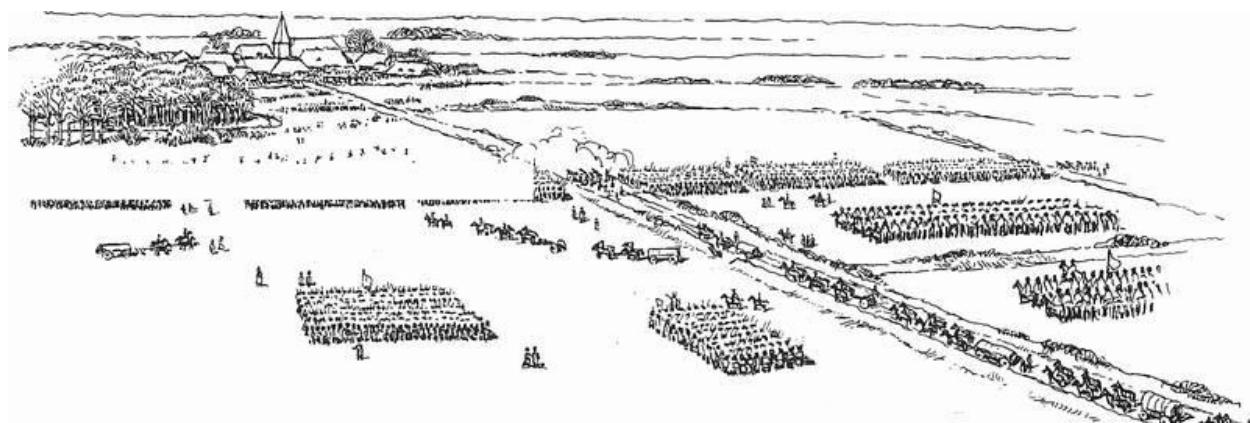
When your story opens, you should have several factions with developed plots ready to move.

Advance these plots step-by-step at your discretion. It is good to open a story with a faction taking the first step in its plot.

With each step, give players the opportunity to intercede and influence events.

Aftershocks

It may happen that the players perform well and stop a plot in its tracks. If so, consider the aftershocks that would erupt and scatter into the world. Roll a couple of times on this table to determine new hooks.



Result	Aftershock
1	Local devastation
2	A new or old faction rises
3	Adventurers gain fame
4	Adventures gain infamy
5	An NPC rises in prominence
6	Magic or treasure goes missing or wrong
7	Someone or something escapes
8	A powerful actor takes notice
9	The public misinterprets events
10	The plotting faction violently collapses

Notes

This chapter has a similar focus as *How to Create Adventures*. To mix the two, you could use the hooks, backstory connections, encounters, and rewards tables from that chapter to add detail to the factions and plot steps systems found in this chapter.

The "bloodthirsty" "dwarves" want "to purify." They will "attack the players," "gather strength," "make alliances," and "attack other factions." If they succeed they will "unleash a magical monster."



How to Build Characters

This chapter will show you how to create memorable and motivated characters to populate your world.

Age and Sex

Roll 1D6 on this table to determine age and sex.

Result	Age/Sex
1	Young male
2	Middle aged male
3	Aged male
4	Young female
5	Middle aged female
6	Aged female

Social Status

Roll 1D3 on this table to determine social status.

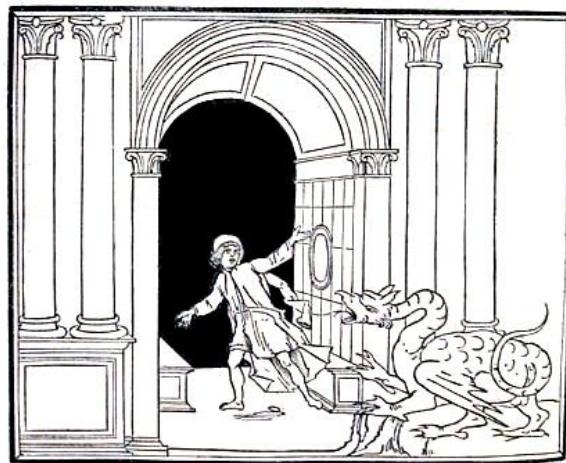
Result	Social Status
1	Lower class
2	Middle class
3	Upper class



Traits

Roll twice on this table to determine character traits.

Result	Trait
1	Active
2	Compassionate
3	Generous
4	Peaceful
5	Brave
6	Humble
7	Pious
8	Trusting
9	Skilled
10	Lazy
11	Dispassionate
12	Miserly
13	Violent
14	Cowardly
15	Arrogant
16	Blasphemous
17	Wary
18	Bumbling
19	Honest
20	Lying



Impulse

Roll twice on this table to determine a character's main impulses.

Result	Impulse
1	To commune with the supernatural
2	To be creative
3	To learn new things
4	To see great sights
5	To make merry
6	To seek redemption
7	To uphold tradition
8	To excel at a craft or skill
9	To romance
10	To conquer
11	To exact revenge
12	To just get by
13	To care for friends and family
14	To get rich
15	To cause chaos
16	To unite
17	To divide
18	To find love
19	To feed an addiction
20	To seek death



Offerings

Roll once on this table to determine what the character might provide if properly handled.

Result	Offering
1	An underworld connection
2	A political connection
3	A good deal on something the players want
4	Information about an ongoing plot
5	Information about world history
6	Information about world geography
7	A foreign connection
8	Training in a skill
9	An easy way to make a little coin
10	A hard truth
11	Bad assistance in an upcoming feat
12	Helpful assistance in an upcoming feat
13	Information about a player's personal quest
14	Information about a magic item
15	A potion
16	Inspiration
17	Love
18	Repairs
19	An easy mark
20	A blessing or charm



Backstory

Roll once on this backstory table for each step of aging. A young character would roll once, an aged character would roll three times.

Result	Backstory
1	Laborer
2	Outdoorsman
3	Soldier
4	Nobility
5	Drifter
6	Clergy
7	Explorer
8	Sailor
9	Rake
10	Addict
11	Adventurer
12	Merchant
13	Magically inclined
14	Thief
15	Healer
16	Entertainer
17	Thug
18	Politician
19	Student
20	Sickly

Notes

Combine impulses and offerings to create adventure seeds.

Consider introducing a new character, friend or foe, for each step of a developing plot.

If a character goes through a life-changing event, their impulses should change and they should gain or lose traits.

When playing characters, emphasize their traits, backstories, and impulses if unsure how to act.

How to Build Adventures

This chapter will show you how to create settings, motives, and encounters for adventures in your world.

This material will interact with the *How to Create Plots* chapter. This chapter will add texture to the events that your plots incipit.

Hooks

These “hooks” can be combined with plot steps and other seeds to create compelling reasons for player action.

Result	Hook	Explanation
1	Revenge	Somebody seeks revenge
2	Loss of loved one	Somebody is motivated by loss
3	Remorse	Somebody is motivated by guilt
4	Conflict with divinity	Somebody is in conflict with the gods
5	Ambition/desire	Somebody wants more than they have
6	Dishonored friend	Somebody must restore a friend’s honor
7	Rivalry	Somebody is motivated by rivalry
8	Sacrifice	A sacrifice must be made
9	Involuntary sin	A sin was committed involuntarily
10	Madness	Somebody has been driven mad
11	Kinship	Somebody is helping their kinsman
12	Search and obtain	Find it and bring it back
13	Exterminate	Them all
14	Enigma	A puzzle puzzles
15	Abduction	Somebody is kidnapped
16	Feat of daring	Can it be done?
17	Upheaval	Chaos rules the land
18	Disaster	Recent or imminent
19	Supplication	An offering must be provided
20	Pursuit	Chase!

Encounter Tactics

These are suggested tactics and situations to give more depth and texture to encounters that arise on adventures.

Roll 1D10 per desired encounter. Generally speaking, a brief errand should be 1 encounter, a small adventure should be around 3, and a long dungeon-delve around 6.

Note how encounters are scaled in this framework—a few dungeon rooms might constitute one encounter with its own tactics and even hooks.

Result	Encounter Tactics
1	Seize
2	Escape
3	Defend
4	Infiltrate
5	Save
6	Grind
7	Race against time
8	Battle environment
9	Outwit
10	Escort

Rewards

These are possible rewards for successful adventures.

Result	Reward
1	Treasure
2	Diplomatic gain
3	Magical power
4	Character growth
5	Escape certain death
6	Find new ally

You should aim to offer a reward once every three encounters or so.

Twists

These are possible twists that may arise over the course of an adventure. Rolling once or twice on this table per plot should be plenty.

Result	Twist
1	Ally betrays
2	Enemy becomes ally
3	Rewards flawed
4	Change of location
5	Divine intervention
6	Sudden escalation of stakes
7	Enemy falters
8	Common enemy emerges
9	Man behind the curtain
10	Surprise attack

Roll once on this table to determine backstory connections between characters and the plot.

Result	Connection
1	Character used to work with party member
2	Character wronged party member
3	Character grew up with party member
4	Party member owes character a debt
5	Character is an old enemy of party member's population
6	Party used to admire character
7	Plot is a callback to a well-known historical saga
8	Plot is a threat to player's mythos or morality
9	Character recurs from earlier adventure
10	Rewards are especially valuable

Notes

Use discretion with this chapter. Don't feel like you have to get bogged down in detail if you don't feel like it. The tables here are more like menus for you to refer to than they are necessary additions to every situation.

How to Build Magical Systems

Most worlds need a little magic. Some worlds need a lot of magic. In this chapter you will find guidelines for building and balancing magic in your world.

Source of Magic

Roll once on this table to determine from where the magic in question emanates.

Result	Source
1	Gods
2	Omnipresent energy, auras and force
3	Extra-dimensional energy

Magic Users

Roll once on this table to determine the nature of the users of this magic.

Result	Users
1	Chosen ones
2	Magical beings
3	Bloodline
4	Students
5	Item possessors
6	Mutants

Use of Magic

Roll twice on this table to determine how the magic is channeled and used.

Result	Use
1	Prayer
2	Force of will
3	Gestures, symbols, or words
4	Sacrifice
5	Magic-infused items
6	Ritual

Effect of Magic

Roll once on this table to determine the general effect of your magic.

Result	Effect
1	Destruction
2	Necromancy
3	Mindbending
4	Creation
5	Alteration
6	Communication
7	Illusion
8	Weatherbending
9	Summoning
10	Ancestral power

Notes

It is up to you how much magic you want to put in your world. A world could have no magic, or perhaps only one or two systems, or a vast array of them.



How to Build Wonderful Creatures

Your world is probably made up of all kinds of otherworldly races and beasts. This chapter will show you how to create memorable denizens for your world.

Size

Roll once on this table to determine the creature's size.

Result	Size
1	Insect
2	Small
3	Medium
4	Man-sized
5	Large
6	Massive

Shape

Roll once on this table to determine the creature's shape.

Result	Shape
1	Anthropomorphic
2	Blob
3	Serpentine
4	Bug
5	Bird-like
6	Horse-like



Attack Style

Roll once on this table to determine the creature's primary attack style. Roll twice if the creature is large or massive.

Result	Attack
1	Blades, claws, fangs
2	Crush and smash
3	Sensory assault
4	Venom/acid
5	Magic
6	Entrap

Defense Style

Roll once on this table to determine the creature's primary defense style. Roll twice if the creature is large or massive or particularly special.

Result	Defense
1	Thick skin
2	Dodge/evade
3	Trickery
4	Spiky skin/damaging fluids
5	Magic
6	Sensory defense

Intelligence

Roll once on this table to determine the creature's intelligence.

Result	Intelligence
1	Non-sentient
2	Low sentience
3	Animal sentience
4	Low human sentience
5	High human sentience
6	Extra high sentience

Social Structure

Roll once on this table to determine the creature's social style.

Result	Social
1	Loner
2	Small groups
3	Packs
4	Hordes
5	Communities
6	Civilizations

Disposition

Roll once on this table to determine the creature's disposition.

Result	Disposition
1	Hostile, aggressive
2	Hostile, defensive
3	Neutral, aggressive
4	Neutral, defensive
5	Friendly, aggressive
6	Friendly, defensive



Notes

This is another chapter to be used judiciously. You likely already know what you want the creature's disposition to be, for example.

It might be helpful to define a creature per standard role in your world:

- ❖ Pack animal
- ❖ Steed
- ❖ Bug
- ❖ Beast
- ❖ Monster
- ❖ Marvel
- ❖ Aquatic
- ❖ Flier
- ❖ Food source



How to Make History

This chapter will show you how to develop historical touchstones for your world and implement them in the present.

It is good to separate your history into three periods: Ancient history, Middle history, and Recent history.

Roll 2 times on this table for each period.

Result	Event
1	Natural disaster
2	Geographical discovery
3	Magical discovery
4	Technological discovery
5	Magical disaster
6	Migration
7	Empire rises
8	Empire falls
9	Divine conflict
10	Golden age
11	Large war
12	Legendary figure
13	Large rebellion
14	Religious awakening
15	Dark ages
16	Racial emergence
17	Plague
18	Religious collapse
19	Social restructuring
20	Age of exploration

Notes

These are major events that most of your world's population will be able to reference. Use them to build a cohesive world conversation. Add historical connections to your adventures and geographical features when possible.

How to Build a Religion

This chapter will show you how to make a tapestry of heroes and gods that shaped your world and the people who inhabit it.

This is a 7-step process that will outline the main features of a religion/mythos.

Timeline

Roll 3 times on this table to generate an overarching timeline for your religion and its followers.

Result	Event
1	Exodus
2	Prophet
3	War
4	Slavery
5	Construction
6	Divine intervention
7	Golden age
8	Disaster
9	Oppression
10	Expansion

Sacred

Roll 2 times on this table to determine what is sacred to your religion.

Result	Sacred
1	Conversion
2	Submission/Supplication
3	Compassion
4	Communication with the divine
5	Discovery
6	Equality
7	Generosity
8	Violence
9	Pleasure
10	Life or death

Profane

Roll 2 times on this table to determine what is profane to your religion.

Result	Profane
1	Idolatry
2	Dishonesty
3	Malevolence
4	Violence
5	Blasphemy
6	Wealth
7	Pleasure
8	Human desires
9	Laziness
10	Education

Ritual

Roll 2 times on this table to determine the main rituals of your religion.

Result	Ritual
1	Prayer
2	Meditation
3	Congregation
4	Sacrifice
5	Acts
6	Faith

Texts

Roll 2 times on this table to determine the sacred texts and divine manifestations that keep your religion present in your world.

Result	Text
1	Doctrinal writing
2	Divine artifacts
3	Altered landscape
4	Divine presence
5	Cosmology
6	Divine Construction

Emotional Effects

Roll 1 time on this table to determine the effects of religious devotion on its followers.

Result	Emotional Effects
1	Nirvana
2	Focused skill
3	Mania
4	Divine power
5	Psychedelia
6	Trance

Secrets

Roll 1 time on this table to determine the dark secret hidden by your religion.

Result	Secret
1	Hidden deity
2	Corruption
3	Misinterpretation
4	Evil leader
5	Volatile power
6	It's all lies



Motives

Roll once on this table to determine the religion's motives.

Result	Motive
1	Expansion
2	Wealth
3	Divine reincarnation
4	Immortality
5	Heaven on earth
6	Revenge
7	Recognition
8	Purity
9	Vast ritual
10	Personal fame of leader

Notes

Attach each religion to a geographic feature. Go ahead and place an interesting wonder at each main site for the players to explore using *How to Build Wonders*.

Create adventure by setting religions against external actors, against divisive agents within themselves, or by threatening their secrets.



How to Build a Government

This chapter will show you how to build governments for your communities and civilizations. Some of them are even functional!

Structure

Roll twice on this table to get some defining structural traits of your government. These are not meant to perfect descriptors of the government, but rather the feelings it evokes.

Result	Structure
1	Totalitarian
2	Theocratic
3	Monarchic
4	Republic
5	Oligarchic
6	Techno/magicratic

Power Source

Roll once on this table to determine the power source undergirding your government.

Result	Power Source
1	Revolutionary
2	Democratic
3	Divine
4	Hereditary
5	Overwhelming Force
6	Magic



Virtues

Roll twice on this table to determine the main virtues of your government.

Result	Virtues
1	Justice
2	Mercy
3	Efficiency
4	Military prowess
5	Generosity
6	Daring
7	Equality
8	Honor
9	Unity
10	Past glory

Flaws

Roll twice on this table to determine the main flaws of your government.

Result	Flaws
1	Cruelty
2	Incompetence
3	Corruption
4	Scandal
5	Illegitimacy
6	Division
7	Inequality
8	Oppression
9	Inexperience
10	Infiltration

Motives

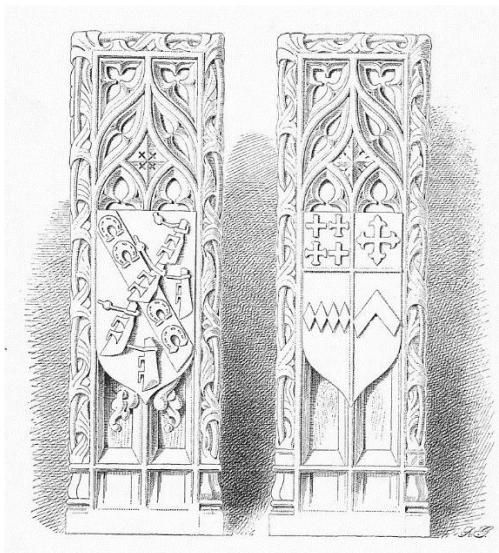
Roll twice on this table to determine the primary motives of your government.

Result	Motives
1	Efficiency
2	Expansion
3	Equality
4	Liberty
5	Security
6	Piety
7	Wealth
8	Purity
9	Upholding tradition
10	Justice/Revenge

Notes

To scale governments, i.e. to figure out the disposition of a single settlement's government within a larger civilization's government, simply add a few results from these tables to get a local flavor. One result each from the virtues, flaws, and motives should work.

Create adventures from these results by setting the results against each other. “In the name of [trait], the government wants [motive] but [flaw],” for example.



How to Keep Things Running

This chapter will detail how to keep your world running in a dynamic fashion after its creation.

It is best to roll once or twice on this table for each civilization in your world whenever you feel your story needs an extra spark or when returning after an absence.

Result	Event
1	Border skirmishing
2	Religion acts to fulfill a motive
3	Government acts to fulfill a motive
4	Economic strife
5	Plague
6	Rise of hero
7	Rise of villain
8	War
9	Technological/magical discovery
10	New creature appears
11	Divine intervention
12	Natural/magical disaster
13	Culture acts to fulfill a motive
14	Prosperity
15	Political scandal
16	Revolt
17	Tournament
18	Great artwork
19	Important character acts to fulfill a motive
20	Magic system acts to fulfill a motive

Notes

Create adventure by making these events impact the players. Consider turning them into active plots.

How to Build Armies

Armies have their own structures, histories, tactics, weapon systems, and more. This chapter will show you how to create distinctive fighting forces to battle for your world.

Structure

Roll once on this table to determine the army's structure.

Result	Structure
1	Focused on single authority
2	Religious
3	Scattered
4	Techno/magicratic
5	Aristocratic
6	Plutocratic
7	Militia
8	Mercenary
9	Professional
10	Guerrilla

Armament

Roll twice on this table to determine the army's main armaments.

Result	Armament
1	Siege weapons
2	Focused on range
3	Focused on melee
4	Focused on gadgets
5	Focused on magic
6	Mounted
7	Mighty beasts
8	War machines
9	Advanced technology
10	Excellent armor

Strengths

Roll twice on this table to determine the army's main strengths.

Result	Strengths
1	Bravery
2	Honor
3	Planning
4	Skill
5	Grit
6	Boldness
7	Technology
8	Magic
9	Allies
10	Wealth

Weaknesses

Roll once on this table to determine the army's main weaknesses.

Result	Vices
1	Incompetence
2	Infighting
3	Cruelty
4	Corruption
5	Bad mission
6	Timidity
7	Cowardice
8	Poor leadership
9	Apathy
10	Stuck in the past

Tactics

Roll once on this table to determine the army's preferred tactics.

Result	Tactics
1	Crafty offense
2	Crafty defense
3	All out offense
4	All out defense
5	Intelligence gathering
6	Local defense

Notes

This system can be applied to any fighting force. Use it to jog your creativity if a particular civilization or faction could use some extra detail in its military style.



How to Build Wonders of Your World

Every world needs its wonders—places for travelers to seek, to gaze upon, to learn from. This chapter will help you create spectacular sites for your own world.

Fundamental Nature

Roll once on this table to determine the fundamental nature of your wonder.

Result	Fundamental Nature
1	Divine construction
2	Divine terrain alteration
3	Mortal construction
4	Mortal terrain alteration
5	Natural wonder
6	Historic feature

History

Roll twice on this table to determine the historical events that have shaped the wonder and the lore around it.

Result	History
1	Battle site
2	Cult center
3	Legendary figure
4	Place of great riches
5	Terrifying tales
6	Joyous tales



Blessings

Roll once on this table to determine the benefits characters receive from properly engaging with the wonder.

Result	Blessings
1	Peace
2	Focus
3	Healing
4	Visions of the future
5	Treasure
6	Supernatural communication
7	Magic
8	Skill
9	Allies
10	World knowledge

Curses

Roll once on this table to determine the ills that may afflict characters who displease or dishonor the wonder.

Result	Curses
1	Entrancement
2	Battlelust
3	Mania
4	Sickness
5	Fear
6	Divine wrath
7	Pain/disease
8	Amnesia
9	Death
10	Allies suffer

Guardians

Roll once on this table to determine what guards the wonder.

Result	Guardians
1	Monks
2	Cultists
3	Divine beasts
4	Natural beasts
5	Dangerous terrain
6	Legendary figure
7	Mercenaries
8	Rival parties
9	Undead
10	Traps

Spectacles

Roll twice on this table to determine the spectacles that characterize your wonder.

Result	Spectacles
1	Amazing sights
2	Ancient mysteries
3	Ancient relics
4	Divine markings
5	Amazing construction
6	Legendary figure
7	Historic connections
8	Masses of pilgrims
9	Amazing artworks
10	Extraordinary visions

How to Build Dungeons

Dungeons are a classic feature of classical fantasy. This chapter will show you how to build dungeons for your world. The same concepts can be applied to a variety of settings.

Map Generation

Use a drop map to create your dungeon map. Draw a circle under each die. These will be your rooms.

As general rule, each room will connect to any room that the points of its die point towards. You may draw a straight 45 degree line from each of the die's four points to determine these connections.

However, roll a D6 for each connection to determine any special exceptions.

Result	Exception
1	No connection
2	No connection
3	Normal connection
4	Normal connection
5	Hidden connection
6	Hidden connection

Threat Generation

After creating your map, roll 2 different colored D6 for each circle. One color will represent the type of test, and the other color will represent the intensity and threat of the test, 1 being lowest and 6 being highest.

Result	Threat Type
1	Test of strength
2	Test of constitution
3	Test of dexterity
4	Test of intellect
5	Test of wisdom
6	Test of charisma

Then, roll the dice again for each dot. This will represent the secondary challenge of the room.

Here are some suggested threats for each type.

- ❖ *Strength*: strong monsters, fortifications, rubble/debris
- ❖ *Constitution*: harsh environment, poison, pain
- ❖ *Dexterity*: tricky environment, quick enemies, traps and locks
- ❖ *Intellect*: complex or magical enemies, riddles and tricks, lore challenges
- ❖ *Wisdom*: loreful enemies, traps, hidden places
- ❖ *Charisma*: persuadable enemies, role-playing opportunities, magic

Dungeon Plots

A dungeon is a dangerous and volatile environment. Almost every time characters enter a new area, an event should occur.

Result	Event
1	Environment changes
2	Enemies fortify/gather strength
3	Traps
4	Boss makes an appearance
5	Enemy reinforcements arrive
6	Race against time
7	Ally threatened
8	Defeated foe reemerges
9	A monster gets loose
10	Sudden counterattack
11	Enemies falter
12	Old wrong returns to character
13	Old blessing returns to character
14	Ally loses control
15	Friendly reinforcements
16	Divine intervention
17	Enemy heroism
18	Ally heroism
19	Sacrifice required
20	Magic item appears/activates

Notes

This system will generate a rather abstract dungeon map at first. After building it for yourself, you may want to translate the sketches and scribbles into a more palatable version for other eyes.

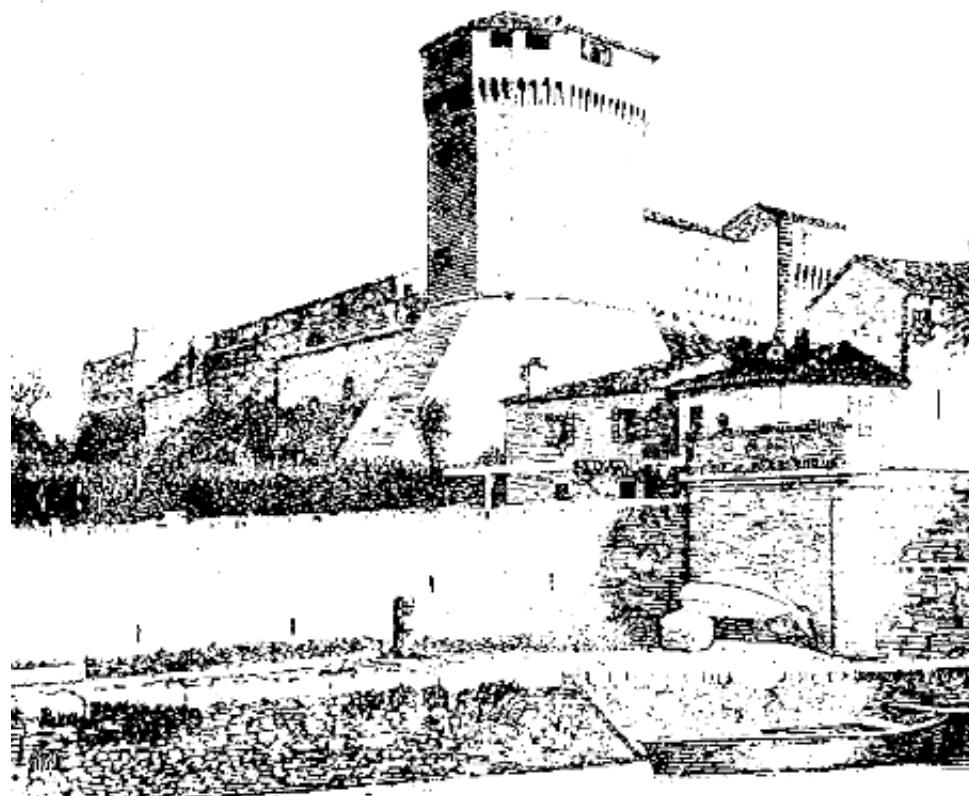


Notes on Storytelling

What follows are general maxims for telling compelling and complete stories in the context of these systems.

- ❖ When in doubt, play to express a feature of your world.
- ❖ Stories should have a beginning, in which the status quo is interrupted by an antagonist, a middle, in which the protagonists struggle to overcome the antagonist, and an end, in which the protagonists have a final confrontation with the antagonist.
- ❖ Some say there are seven basic stories: man vs. man, man vs. self, man vs. society, man vs. nature, man vs. machine, man vs. fate/supernatural. If man doesn't win, he should lose for a reason.
- ❖ Simplify your stories. Keep things moving towards the finish line.
- ❖ The beginning and ending are the most important parts of your story. Make sure they satisfy.
- ❖ Use parts of other stories in your own.
- ❖ All characters should have skin in the game.
- ❖ Make the stakes clear as soon as possible.
- ❖ There should usually be at least one character or story element to root for.
- ❖ Put your characters through hard times. See what they're made of.
- ❖ Take inspiration for everything from your life and experiences.
- ❖ If you hit writer's block on a piece of plot, bypass it and fill in the surrounding areas. You'll find inspiration to bring back to the troublesome piece.
- ❖ The greatest subject is the self seeking to transcend itself.
- ❖ Write to punch your characters.
- ❖ Find your themes. When in doubt, play the world to express a theme.
- ❖ Don't ramble. Leave out what your audience would want to skip.
- ❖ Whenever possible, the advancement of a plot should directly impact the players.
- ❖ If you find yourself wondering how the players fit in the world, consider their previous actions. How would the world react to them, and how have their actions had ripple effects on those around them?
- ❖ Make it personal. Create danger by threatening what the players love.

- ❖ Find out what your players want, give them some of it, and suggest how they might get the rest.
- ❖ Consider the world beyond your players. What are your NPCs trying to do for themselves?
- ❖ Make sure your characters evolve.
- ❖ Don't get competitive.
- ❖ It's not a big deal if you mess up.
- ❖ Focus on creating problems without predicting solutions. Let players come up with the solutions.
- ❖ Talk to your players. Figure out what they want to do.
- ❖ Be flexible.



Longbow

This is an easy-to-use system for adventuring in fantasy worlds. There is no compulsion to use this system with the worlds you create with this book.

Character Creation

Choose two styles for your character:

- ❖ Warrior
- ❖ Wizard
- ❖ Rogue
- ❖ Bard
- ❖ Ranger
- ❖ Trader
- ❖ Scholar
- ❖ Paladin

Choose your numbers. Allocate the numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 among the following attributes:

- ❖ Combat
- ❖ Wits
- ❖ Magic
- ❖ Health Points



Pick an impulse:

- ❖ To commune with the supernatural
 - ❖ To be creative
 - ❖ To learn new things
 - ❖ To see great sights
 - ❖ To make merry
 - ❖ To seek redemption
 - ❖ To uphold tradition
- ❖ To excel at a craft or skill
 - ❖ To romance
 - ❖ To conquer
 - ❖ To exact revenge
 - ❖ To just get by
- ❖ To care for friends and family
 - ❖ To get rich
 - ❖ To cause chaos
 - ❖ To unite
 - ❖ To divide
 - ❖ To find love
 - ❖ To feed an addiction
 - ❖ To seek death

Name your character.

You start the game equipped with items of your choosing that suit your styles. If you'd like, roll a D3 for your starting wealth to guide your choices, 1 being poor and 3 being rich.

Playing the Game

When you do something risky, state what you are trying to do and how you are trying to do it, then roll 1D6 to find out how it goes. Add +1D if you're prepared, +1D if you are very well equipped, +1D if your attempted action suits your style, +1D if it suits your impulse, and +xD in which x is the number of "levels" the character may have gained in a relevant attribute. This will be explained in more detail in the *Character Progression* section.

The Game Master is fully empowered to subtract dice from your total to account for especially risky actions.

The Game Master will tell you if you are using Combat, Wits, or Magic. In each case, you will be looking to roll UNDER your chosen number to succeed.

Combat Rolls

If none of your dice succeed, your attack goes awry. The Game Master will almost certainly deal up to three damage to your health points.

If one of your dice succeeds, you don't entirely succeed. You could kill a crippled target but only wound a fit one. The Game Master will probably deal up to two damage to your health points.

If two of your dice succeed, you succeed entirely. You're neutralizing a man-sized target and dealing significant damage to large beasts. The Spirit probably will not deal damage to your health points.

If three or more of your dice succeed, you score a critical success. In addition to doing massive damage, you can immediately perform another action.

If you roll your number exactly on any of your dice, you impress, dismay, or frighten your foes.

Wits Rolls

If none of your dice succeed, your attempt is laughable. You do more harm than good.

If one of your dice succeeds, your attempt is largely ineffective. You gain something small and not very useful.

If two of your dice succeed, your attempt is effective. You get most of what you want.

If three or more of your dice succeed, your attempt is undeniable. You get exactly what you want and you can immediately perform another action.

If you roll your number exactly on any of your dice, you may ask the Game Master two yes or no questions about the situation at hand.

Magic Rolls

If none of your dice succeed, your magic is weak. Your attempt is powerfully rejected. The Game Master will almost certainly deal up to two damage to your health points.

If one of your dice succeeds, your magic is feeble. Your attempt fails.

If two of your dice succeed, your magic is sound. Your attempt is successful, but maybe not in a way you expected.

If three of your dice succeed, your magic is strong. Your attempt succeeds without reservation and you may immediately perform another action.

If you roll your number exactly on any of your dice, the Game Master will tell you something new and interesting about the situation.

Character Progression

At the Game Master discretion, characters can improve themselves with experience. If the Spirit deems it appropriate for a character to “level up,” the player should put a small “+” mark by one of their attributes. This indicates that the character is allowed to roll one extra die when making challenge rolls that involve that attribute.

A Note on Magic

If a player chooses a “wizard” style, they should consult with the Game Master to determine a rough outline of the kind of magic the character will practice.

It will likely be helpful to also consult the *How to Build Magical Systems* chapter in order to further detail the character’s chosen pursuit.

A character with a “1” magic score is not magically attuned at all. A “2” score indicates the most basic, likely untapped ability. A “3” indicates some rudimentary ability. A “4” indicates competency. A “5” indicates mastery.

Useful Reference Sheets

What follows is a few reference sheets that you can copy to help you organize your world-building.

Here are the sheets:

- ❖ Community and Culture
- ❖ Plot
- ❖ Character
- ❖ Adventure
- ❖ Magic System
- ❖ Creature
- ❖ History
- ❖ Mythos
- ❖ Government
- ❖ Army
- ❖ Wonder



Community and Culture

Virtues

Vices

Traditions

Goals

Plot

Faction

Traits

Motivation

Plot Steps/Coup

Doom

Aftershocks

Character

Age/Sex/Location

Social Status

Traits

Impulse

Offering

Backstory

Adventure

Hook

Encounter Tactics

Rewards

Twists

Backstory Connection

Magic System

Magic Source

Magic Users

Magic Use

Effect of Magic

Creature

Size/Shape	Attacks
Defenses	Intelligence
Social Structure	Disposition

History

Ancient History

Middle History

Recent History

Mythos

History

Sacred

Profane

Ritual

Texts

Emotional Effects

Secrets

Motives

Government

Structure

Power Source

Virtues

Flaws

Motives

Army

Structure

Armament

Strengths

Weaknesses

Tactics

Wonder

Fundamental Nature

History

Blessings

Curses

Guardians

Spectacles

Random Tables

- ❖ Features of taverns
- ❖ Loot
- ❖ Traps
- ❖ Bargains with death
- ❖ Threats to characters and friends
- ❖ Cataclysm generator



Tavern Features

Roll twice on this table to characterize a tavern.

Result	Features
1	Boisterous
2	Slow service
3	Good music
4	Bad music
5	Criminal front
6	Good beds
7	Poorly lit
8	Gambling den
9	Ramshackle
10	Welcoming patrons
11	Spooky
12	In debt
13	Good food and drink
14	Bad food and drink
15	Patronized by rivals or foes
16	Patronized by friends
17	Cute but dangerous beasts beg for scraps
18	The tavern is sheltering refugees
19	The tavern is about to get robbed or otherwise attacked
20	A ritual is going on in the basement



Traps

Roll once on this table to determine the threat of the trap.

Result	Trap
1	Spikes
2	Darts
3	Rocks
4	Poison
5	Collapsing structure
6	Blades
7	Magic
8	Hidden monsters/foes
9	Fire
10	Alarm



Loot

Roll a D6 on each table to generate loot. Subtract 3 from the roll if the looted thing is barren, scaling up to adding 3 if the looted thing is particularly bountiful.

Result	Gold
1	Nothing
2	Nothing
3	A little bit of gold
4	A little bit of gold
5	A good amount of gold
6	A lot of gold

Result	Goods
1	Nothing
2	Nothing
3	A few trade goods
4	A few trade goods
5	A good amount of trade goods
6	A lot of trade goods

Result	Items
1	Nothing
2	Nothing
3	A useful thing
4	A few useful things
5	A lot of useful things
6	Magic item

Bargains with Death

Roll a D6 on this table if you want to give a character a chance to cheat death.

Result	Gold
1	You must bargain with death
2	You must appease your gods
3	Your friends must save you from the underworld
4	You must change your character's priorities
5	You must seek the services of a wizard
6	True love must save you



Threats

Roll a D10 on this table whenever you need to motivate your characters with a plot or adventure.

Result	Threat
1	Threat to life
2	Threat to money
3	Threat to religion or culture
4	Threat to friends
5	Threat to hated enemy
6	Threat to cute animals
7	Threat to completion of quest
8	Threat to reputation
9	Threat to geographic feature
10	Threat to power



Cataclysm Generator

Result	Cause
1	Magic
2	Gods
3	Politics
4	Nature
5	Random chance
6	Player-induced

Result	Cataclysm
1	Flood
2	Fire
3	Asteroid
4	Monsters awaken
5	Tornadoes or hurricanes
6	Earthquakes
7	Storms
8	Drought
9	Volcanic eruption
10	Divine or magical intervention

Result	End result
1	Altered geography
2	Plague
3	Starvation
4	Mass destruction
5	Social upheaval
6	Altered systems of magic/divinity

The Book of Worlds is a comprehensive guide and random generator for fantasy worldbuilding.

This is a handbook for making worlds full of lore and life: continents, regions, dungeons, cities, characters, civilizations, religions, magical systems, dynamic plots, adventures, and more.

Suitable for all ages and fantasy game systems.

