

# Cultural Template

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# Part I. The context and setting

## *Subtitle of First Part*

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# Chapter 1. Physical Setting

## *Subtitle of Chapter*

## Backdrop

Subtitle of Section 1

## Locale

What does it look like?  
What is the geography?  
How accessible is this area?  
What natural features mark the borders?  
What are the most striking features of landscape, climate, animals, etc. in this area?  
How will these features affect travel time, communication, etc.?

## Climate

What is the climate?  
What kinds of clothes and shelter are needed?  
Will the climate only allow survival activities or will there be time for leisure developments such as art, philosophy, etc.?

## Flora

What sorts of food can be grown, hunted, caught?  
What are the people's main crops?  
What flora are especially helpful? Like hemp and flax.  
What are known delicacies.  
What fruits vegetables can be turned into a liquor and/or drugs or medicines.  
Are there predatory plants?  
What are the sources of poisons?  
How much of the country is farmland? Forest? Desert? Mountains? Plains?  
What are the primary crops (e.g., potatoes, cotton, tobacco, coffee, rice, peanuts, wheat, sugarcane, etc.)?  
Are any grown mainly for export?  
What crops can not be grown here because of the soil, climate, or for other reasons?

## Fauna

What animals are especially helpful to your world?  
What is a creature that preys on other nuisance creatures?  
What are the domesticated animals?  
What are the food animals?  
Whether the food taboos?  
Which animals are used in medicine.  
What animals are used for poisons.  
What wild animals, actual or imaginary, live in this area?  
Are any of them potentially useful — e.g., for fur, whale oil, hides, magical ingredients, hat feathers?  
Which animals, actual or imaginary, are commonly domesticated in this area?

Which aren't here, but are elsewhere? (Example: water buffalo in India vs. oxen in Europe vs. camels in desert areas.)

If there are imaginary animals (dragons, unicorns, etc.), how do they fit into the ecology?

What do they eat? How much habitat do they require?

Can they live anywhere, or do they prefer or need specific kinds of climate or terrain?

Are they intelligent and/or capable of working spells, talking, etc.?

## Natural Resources

Which areas are the most fertile farmland?

Where are mineral resources located?

Which animals, birds, fish, and other wildlife are commonly found in which areas?

If there are imaginary animals such as dragons, where do they live?

Which natural resources, if any, have been depleted in which areas over time?

Which resources (e.g., coal, oil, iron ore, gold, diamonds, limestone, etc.) are particularly abundant, and in which areas?

Which are scarce?

Are there places where there are rich deposits that haven't been discovered yet, or where they haven't been fully exploited?

How much conflict has been or might be caused by these imbalances in resources?

How much active, peaceful trade?

What water resources available, and for what uses ?

What are the contested resources?

## Magical Resources



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# Chapter 2. Past

## *Subtitle of Chapter*

Where did civilization begin?  
What directions did it spread?  
How was its development affected by the presence of magic?  
The presence of non-human races, if any?  
The actions or direct interventions of the gods?  
Which peoples/countries/races have traditionally fought, allied, traded, or been rivals?  
Where are there still hard feelings about old events?  
Which peoples/countries/races have been in conflict in the recent past?  
Why?  
When and why was the most recent war?  
Who won?

## Prehistory

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

## History

What happened before there was writing

Text

Succession of rulers and/or changes in the form of government  
Invasions, movements of peoples, or dramatic mass migrations  
Disaster related to plague, fire, disease, famine, pestilence, etc.  
Victory in war, establishment or expansion of colonies, major changes in borders, etc.  
Take note of dates when a natural event reduced or increase the amount of natural resources (food, water, timber etc.)  
Take note of dates when a unnatural event change the resources as well  
Keep in mind recovering from war takes about a generation without any major wars.  
Track specific dates one power shifted in civilizations (through who, death of a monarch that something) and one of the powershift was smooth.  
How far back are there records or tales of historical events?  
How widely known are these stories?  
Do average people believe old tales, or do they dismiss some that have a basis in fact (e.g., Troy)?  
Who are the neighboring countries/peoples and what are they like?  
Why did people settle in this country in the first place — strategic location, trade route, water transport, minerals, good farming, etc.? \

Have things changed much since, or do they still depend on whatever brought them in the first place?  
Who are the rivals or enemies of this country? How close are they physically? How powerful?  
Who are the heroes and villains of each country's history (e.g., Washington and Lincoln in the U.S.; Henry V in England, etc.)?  
Why are they heroes/villains and what do this say about the country and the people who admire them?  
Which peoples/countries/races have been in conflict in the recent past? Why? When and why was the most recent war? Who won?  
Which peoples/countries/races fought, allied, traded, or were traditional rivals? Where are there still hard feelings about old events?  
How do the weapons of this country compare with those of surrounding cities and countries?  
Have there been recent innovations that may upset the balance of power, or is everyone more or less equal?  
How many people are there in this country?

How does this compare with world population?

What is considered a small town/large town/city in terms of number of people?

How diverse is the population of this country — how many different races (human or non-human), creeds, etc. normally live in various cities and towns in this country?

In what percentages?

How do the weapons of this country compare with those of surrounding cities and countries?

Have there been recent innovations that may upset the balance of power, or is everyone more or less equal?

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# Chapter 3. Present

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Cities

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

## Architecture

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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## **Part II. What are they like**

***Subtitle of First Part***

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# Chapter 4. Description

## *Subtitle of Chapter*

### Physical

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

### Clothing

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

### Language

Subtitle of Section 1

How many languages are there?

Which ones are related (e.g., the Romance languages) and why?

Which languages borrow words or phrases from other languages?

Which is likely to be most widely spoken?

Is there a “trade language” that facilitates commerce between countries that don’t speak the same tongue?

Is there a “universal language” spoken by educated or noble persons, as Latin was in the Middle Ages?

What languages are spoken?,

How is the language recorded?,

How are messages and information passed along?,

How is history recorded?,

is the society literate or illiterate?,

Who provides education?,

Who receives education?,

What is the “technology” involved in long distance communication?

Is there a “trade language” that facilitates commerce between countries that don’t speak the same tongue?

Is there a “universal language” spoken by educated or noble persons, as Latin was in the Middle Ages?

Are some or all people bilingual?

Is there a common second language many people know?

Are there “secret” languages or codes known only by priests, soldiers, wizards, guild members, etc.?

Why were they developed?

What are the variations in speech patterns, syntax, and slang from one social class to another?

One occupation to another?

One region to another?

One race to another?

What areas do local slang phrases come out of?

(Example: in a fishing town, referring to good luck as “a good catch,” while people in a farming town refer to it as “an unexpected harvest”.) What kinds of colorful turns of phrase do people use?

What things in this culture would their language have many specific words for (e.g., Inuit languages that have 14+ words for different kinds of snow)?

What do the people in this culture consider important enough to name?

What does this say about the way they look at the world?

What things would the people of this culture not have a name for, or have one word that covers numerous variations?

What do they consider too unimportant to name?

How does this affect the way they see the world?

Are there words that must never be spoken except at particular times, in ceremonies, or under particular circumstances?  
Are there words that must not be spoken in polite company?  
Do these words differ from culture to culture or race to race?  
What will people swear a binding oath by?  
What do people use as curse words?  
How many languages are there?  
Which ones are related (e.g., the Romance languages) and why?  
Which languages borrow words or phrases from other languages?  
Which is likely to be most widely spoken?

## Beliefs

Subtitle of Section 1

## Myth

Who are this culture's historic heroes and villains (e.g., Washington and Lincoln in the U.S.; Henry V in England, etc.)?  
Why are they admired as heroes/villains and what does this say about the people who admire them?

## Ritual

## Religion

What are the beliefs of the society concerning life and death?  
What is considered good and what is considered evil?  
Who do they worship?  
Where do they worship?  
Are there any sacrifices?  
What role does religion play in their social lives?  
How do various religions, if any, view magic?  
Do any forbid it?  
Why or why not?  
Do any require priests/priestesses to be magicians?  
Do any forbid it?  
Are there actual gods/godlike beings?  
If so, do they take an active role in a) the temples, churches, and religions that worship them, or b) the lives of everyday people?  
Why or why not?  
How many gods are there, and is there a hierarchy among them?  
Which ones are good or evil, or is this meaningless when speaking of gods?  
How do various religions view non-believers?  
Foreigners?  
Non-humans?  
Which support the state/ruler/government, and which are interested mainly in ordinary people?  
Is there tension, rivalry, or outright hostility between any of the actual gods?  
How does this affect church politics?  
People's everyday lives?  
Where does religion fit into this society?  
Is there a state church?  
Is freedom of religion the norm?  
Do people generally think of the temples/churches as parasites or as a useful part of society?  
Which ethical/moral decisions are considered the province of religion, and which are not?  
Do the gods care how people behave?

Why or why not?  
If there are actual, demonstrable gods, what part does faith play in their worship?  
What are their various rites like, and why?  
What offerings are considered good, better, best?  
Are people supposed to pick one or more gods to worship and ignore the others, or does everybody officially worship everyone?  
How do people decide whom to worship?  
How do they decide which temple to be affiliated with?  
How much of a part do various religions and philosophies play in public and private life?  
Are philosophers and theologians considered ivory-tower academics, or do they debate in the marketplace, like Socrates?  
How much influence do their theories have on the way people actually behave?  
Are priests and philosophers full-time workers, or do they need day jobs?  
If they are full-time, who supports them — the congregation, a wealthy patron, the temple's investment fund, the god they serve?  
Why are the gods interested in people?  
Are they like the Greek pantheon (quarrelsome, larger-than-life humans), or are they transcendent and incomprehensible?  
Do the gods have limits to what they can do?  
To what they will do?  
Can the gods make mistakes?  
How do the various temples and philosophies explain the classic "problem of evil"?  
Do they think bad things are always a just punishment for some transgression, a character-building exercise, the result of an evil antagonist (Satan, Loki) or just something the gods can't prevent?

## **Cosmology**

## **Deities**

## **Clergy**

## **Rites and Rituals**

## **Religious Norms**

## **Ethics, morals, and mores**

Subtitle of Section 1

What will people swear a binding oath by?  
What do people use as curse words?  
What is the most desired/most valuable stuff in this society — gold, jewels, drugs, money, furs, reindeer, etc.?  
Why is it desired/valued?  
Do different races value different things?  
Is there a race/culture for whom non-material things (information, time) are the most valuable things?  
How did they get that way?  
What things are considered normal and acceptable in this society that would not be considered normal or acceptable in yours?  
What things are considered shocking in this society that are not considered shocking in yours — e.g., eating left-handed, reading in public?  
What would be the reaction of an ordinary person who sees someone doing one of these things — to turn away, call the cops, challenge the offender to a duel,



What are the acceptable limits to honor and/or honesty in this society?  
Are “white lies” acceptable socially, or is lying in any form considered beyond the pall?  
Is thievery an accepted, if disreputable, occupation, or is it a crime?  
Is a binding oath unbreakable no matter what, or can you get out of it if the other party turns out to be evil scum or if you weren’t fully informed?  
What is considered the right thing to do if two oaths come into conflict — do you have to decide as best you can, hold to the oath to the most/least powerful person, commit suicide?  
What are attitudes toward ownership?  
What constitutes “theft” and what can be stolen — gems, gold, someone’s good name or reputation?  
Are thieves independent criminals, members of an illegal guild, business people licensed by law, or what?  
What are the controversial subjects in this culture?  
What things can you start a friendly argument about in any bar?  
What things will automatically start an unfriendly argument?  
What are the social taboos — what things are “not done,” like wearing a bathing suit to the office?  
What things are not talked about?  
What would happen if someone did?  
How do these taboos vary among the different races?  
What are the biggest social faux pas — burping loudly, drawing steel in the presence of a queen/noble, asking a dwarf whether it’s male or female?  
What subjects or actions cause embarrassment or discomfort?  
Who are the arbiters of ethics (as opposed to law)?  
How did they get to be arbiters?  
Who are the social arbiters?  
Ditto, ditto.  
Which ethical/moral decisions are considered the province of religion, and which are not?  
What are the society’s mores regarding courtship, marriage and family?  
Is marriage primarily a civil or a religious institution?  
Who are the persons or groups to which one automatically has a duty simply by being born — one’s family, one’s town/city, one’s country, one’s ruler/president, the gods?  
What is the hierarchy of duty among them — is it considered more noble to follow your mother’s teaching or to follow your emperor’s orders?  
What are the standards of beauty for people?  
Paintings and sculpture?  
Clothes and furniture?  
How do they differ from the standards in your culture (example: a country which considers fatness a highly desirable beauty trait)?  
How do standard of beauty reflect the physical traits of the various races (examples: dwarves might consider excessive height unattractive; werewolves might be attracted by long teeth or a particular scent)?  
What is the ideal life that people aspire to?  
Do people mostly want to retire to a little house in the country, buy the most “toys,” serve in the army/navy?  
What kinds of people are the rebels and outcasts of this society?  
How does society deal with them?  
What actions or ideas will get you made an official outcast/exile?  
What happens to people who don’t fit the accepted social order — do they have their own sections of town, or are they invisible (“in the closet”), or do they get kicked out of the country altogether?

## Customs and traditions

Subtitle of Section 1

Does the weather or climate contribute any habits or customs, such as the mid-afternoon siesta in hot countries?

## Greeting and Meeting

When meeting someone, how are they greeted — wave, handshake, bow, some other gesture?  
How did the greeting gesture originate (example: shaking hands to prove one's weapon hand was empty)?  
Is there a special I-am-not-armed gesture for wizards?  
Is there a difference between the greeting offered to an equal and that offered to a superior or inferior?  
Is there a difference between the greeting offered a man or a woman?  
Human/non-human?  
Is there a way of changing a greeting gesture to make it insulting?  
How are two people who have never met normally introduced to each other?  
What is the order of precedence when there are several people of differing sex or social status present, all of whom need to be introduced to each other?  
Are there classes of people/beings who are never introduced to other classes of people/beings?  
Are "true names" significant, and if so, under what circumstances would someone be given another person/being's true name?  
Are there customs involving the way in which someone is named when being introduced  
Is there any difference in the way you greet someone you already know, compared to greeting a stranger (or does everybody just always hug or shake hands)?  
How does someone acknowledge seeing an acquaintance at a distance (passing on the other side of the street) — by a nod, tipping the hat, wave, smile, or not at all?

## **Gesture**

When meeting someone, how are they greeted — wave, handshake, bow, some other gesture?  
How did the greeting gesture originate (example: shaking hands to prove one's weapon hand was empty)?  
Are gestures and body language in this society generally subtle or not?  
Do people talk with their hands, or is that considered vulgar?  
Is there a way of changing a greeting gesture to make it insulting?  
What is a comfortable and polite speaking distance for people in this culture?  
Other cultures/countries/races?  
How aware are people of these differences?  
What gestures are insulting?  
What do they mean?  
Do some gestures differ in meaning depending on the culture, race, or time (example: the American "V"-for-victory sign, which became the peace sign, and which is/was highly insulting in Europe)?  
How do gestures and body language differ between countries?  
Between species?  
Are there things that don't matter in one area that are mortal insults in another (eating with the left hand, etc.)?  
What are the ways of showing respect (bowing, saluting, etc.)?  
To whom is one expected to show such respect — one's elders, superiors in rank, teachers, priests, etc.?

## **Visits**

Are there questions that must be asked or avoided (how's the family, how's the business, never talk politics or religion, etc.)?  
Are there topics that can only be raised by the host?  
The guest?  
How seriously does the culture take the responsibilities of host and guest?  
What rules define when someone becomes a host or guest (e.g., in mid-eastern countries, giving bread and salt to someone makes the person your guest; giving a 5-course meal without bread or salt doesn't)?  
What things are considered courteous to offer a guest: food, reading material, personal guards or attendants, music/entertainment, a person of the opposite sex to sleep with?  
What is considered a courteous response to a host's offer?  
Are there things it is considered rude to accept?  
Rude to turn down?

Rude to ask for?  
Rude not to ask for?  
When a guest arrives, is food or drink offered immediately, after an interval, or only on request?  
Is there a particular food or drink that is customary to offer a newly arrived guest?  
How do different eating customs of the various cultures and races interact and conflict?  
Example: a person from a culture that considers it impolite to refuse an offer of food being the guest of someone whose culture considers it impolite to stop offering food until the guest says “when.”

## Eating

Do men and women, parents and children, servants and master, eat separately, or does everyone eat together?  
How is status displayed at the table (seating above or below the salt, near or far from the head, etc.)?  
What dishes are considered holiday food?  
What foods/drinks are associated with particular holidays, events (e.g., funerals, weddings) or times of the year?  
What distinguishes a formal, high-court dinner from an ordinary meal, besides quantity and variety of food?  
How do high-court manners differ from everyday ones?  
What eating utensils are used, if any?  
Forks, eating knife, spoons, chopsticks?  
What is the order of a typical upper-class meal — do they start with wine, then a sweet, then a stew, then a salad, or do they bring everything in at once?  
Are special arrangements necessary for entertaining guests of different races/species — taller chairs for dwarves, raw meat for werewolves, perches for harpies, etc.?  
How do the eating customs of different races reflect their cultures and biology?  
How difficult does this make social interaction among the races?  
Is sanitation good enough for untreated water to be safe to drink?  
If not, what do people drink instead?  
What shapes are tables/eating areas (round, oblong, square, rectangular, etc.)?  
Where is the “place of honor” for a guest?  
Where do the important members of the household sit/recline/whatever?  
What things, while edible, are never eaten (what’s not kosher)?  
Why?  
Are some common human foods poisonous to dwarves or elves (or vice versa)?  
What types of food or seasoning are characteristic of different races?  
Different cultures?  
Different countries?

## Wedding

## Bedding

## Birthing

What customs surround a birth and the introduction of a new child to the family?  
Is the mother sequestered for some period?  
Is the child?  
Is there a formal presentation of the new child to parents, grandparents, overlord, priest?  
Is a feast and celebration declared, or does everyone keep a low profile to keep from attracting demons or bad luck?  
Who is normally present for births?  
Is it strictly a matter for women, or are men involved, or is the only woman present the expectant mother?

## Battle

## Burying

What customs surround death and burial?

Is there a special class of people (doctors, priests, funeral directors, untouchables) who deal with dead bodies?

What things must be done and why (burn hair to free spirit, burn body to prevent necromancy, coins on eyes for ferryman, etc.)?

Are the dead feared, revered, or ignored?

## Other

## Mannerisms, Gestures

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

## Language

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

## Leisure and Recreation

In what sports does people participate?,

What games are played?,

What institutions or organizations provides recreation?

What type of sports are considered spectator sports?

What toys does children use?,

What other types of participatory recreation exist?

What other types of spectator recreation exist?

What do people at various levels of society do for fun?

What sports or pastimes are common (hawking, hunting, skiing, baseball)?

Which ones take skill, money, and/or leisure time?

What games are commonly known — chess, dice, poker?

Which are common among everyone, and which are limited to the peasantry or nobility?

Are certain countries/cities known for a passion/expertise for particular games or pastimes?

Do non-human races have their own games and leisure pastimes?

How do they differ from human games?

How do they reflect the physiology and/or particular magical talents of the various non-human races?

## Art, and Symbolism

What are the standards of beauty for people?

Paintings and sculpture?

Clothes and furniture?

How do they differ from the standards in your culture (example: a country which considers fatness a highly desirable beauty trait)?

How do standard of beauty reflect the physical traits of the various races (examples: dwarves might consider excessive height unattractive; werewolves might be attracted by long teeth or a particular scent)?

What is the status of the arts (dance, music, theater, etc.) in this society?

Are artists revered or mistrusted?

Are they considered noble or immoral?

Who supports the arts?

Which arts are most highly valued and why?

Are there permanent theaters or concert halls for the performing arts?

If so, who owns and runs them?

Are they profitable?

Are there also traveling troupes of players/musicians/dancers?

How do their performances differ?

Can magic be used in the arts, and if so, how — paint that glows, pictures that move, flutes that play themselves, etc.?

How do “normal” artists feel about this?

Is there a separate branch of purely magical art, such as illusion?

Have paper-making and the printing press been invented, or are books and scrolls rare, expensive, handwritten items?

What things are considered appropriate subjects for representational arts such as painting and sculpture?

Which are not?

(Examples: some cultures/religions forbid the painting or sculpture of the human figure, and have abstract art; some have limited painters to doing only “uplifting” religious works, etc.)

Are there non-human races who tend to be naturally talented painters, dancers, etc.?

How does this affect human practitioners of these arts?

Are certain races/cultures considered better at some arts than other races/cultures?

Where do the best dancers, painters, musicians, actors, etc. come from?

What are the standards of beauty for people?

Paintings and sculpture?

Clothes and furniture?

How do they differ from the standards in your culture (example: a country which considers fatness a highly desirable beauty trait)?

How do standard of beauty reflect the physical traits of the various races (examples: dwarves might consider excessive height unattractive; werewolves might be attracted by long teeth or a particular scent)?

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Which are not?

(Examples: some cultures/religions forbid the painting or sculpture of the human figure, and have abstract art; some have limited painters to doing only “uplifting” religious works, etc.)

Are there non-human races who tend to be naturally talented painters, dancers, etc.?

How does this affect human practitioners of these arts?

Are certain races/cultures considered better at some arts than other races/cultures?

Where do the best dancers, painters, musicians, actors, etc. come from?

What are the standards of beauty for people?

Paintings and sculpture?

Clothes and furniture?

How do they differ from the standards in your culture (example: a country which considers fatness a highly desirable beauty trait)?

How do standard of beauty reflect the physical traits of the various races (examples: dwarves might consider excessive height unattractive; werewolves might be attracted by long teeth or a particular scent)?

## Art

What are the mediums of the graphic arts?  
What dances do the people do?  
What types of music are there?  
What themes are present in art, music, dance?  
What is the source of these themes?

## **Architecture**

## **Music**

## **Dance**

## **Literature**

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# Part III. Communities

*Subtitle of First Part*

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# Chapter 5. Racial

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

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Text

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# Chapter 6. Magical

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 7. Classed Based

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 8. Social

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 9. Political

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 10. Economic

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 11. Military

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 12. Family

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

What is considered a normal family unit?

How extended is an extended family?

How important are family connections and responsibilities?



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# Part IV. Structures

*Subtitle of First Part*

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# Chapter 13.

What are the rules?  
Who made the rules?  
How does society get its rules?  
What is the source of power?  
How is justice dispensed?  
How are criminals apprehended?  
What punishments are used?  
Who are the rulers?  
How are the rulers chosen?  
How is power passed on to the next leaders?  
What groups have the most political power?  
How has the presence of magic and magicians affected law and government?  
Are wizards barred from certain kinds of government jobs or offices?  
Do some government jobs require that their holder be a wizard?  
What is the basic style of government: feudal, aristocratic, oligarchy, absolute ruler, democracy, what?  
What forms are used in neighboring countries, and why are they the same or different?  
What services does the government or head of state provide: schools, wells, courts, an army to protect people from the Vikings?  
What services are provided locally or privately?  
Who has the right to levy taxes?  
For what?  
On what or whom?  
Can taxes be paid in kind, or do certain things require money?  
Who provides support services for the head of state?  
What are they called: King's Counselors, Cabinet Ministers, Secretary of State, Good Ol' Girls?  
Are they hereditary offices, civil servants, appointees, military, elected?  
Is the relative power of a country or ruler usually measured by the size of its army, the number and ability of its wizards, or the amount of money/trade flowing through it?  
Who is considered a citizen, with the rights and privileges thereof?  
What are those rights and privileges (voting, protection from thieves, the right to a hearing in Rome) and what responsibilities go along with them (jury duty, providing funds or knights for the lord's army)?  
Are there certain classes of people (wizards, foreigners, children, peasants, women) who have fewer legal rights or less recourse than full citizens?  
Why?  
Are they considered mentally or morally deficient, a danger to the state, or is there some other rationale?  
What are the easiest/most common ways to advance in status — amass more money, marry well, get the ruler's eye, etc.?  
How much resistance is there to someone advancing in social status?  
Who will take over running the government if the current head of state is incapacitated?  
How is this determined?  
Is there an heir apparent (either actual or political)?  
What happens if the heir is a minor?  
Who gives orders?  
How are they picked?  
Who is responsible for protecting the head of state?  
His personal guard, the Secret Service, an elite group affiliated with the regular military?  
What safeguards have they got against assassins, poisoning, direct assault, magical attack?  
Who can give orders (to military, to tax collectors, to servants, to ordinary folks on the street)?  
How are such people chosen?  
Who is responsible for coinage: the ruler, local barons, someone else (merchant guilds)?  
Are there generally acceptable standards?  
How easy/common is counterfeiting?  
Is there an organized system of education?  
If so, who provides it: government, churches, private persons?  
How is it supported?

---

Who can call up men for an army, and how?  
 Does the ruler ask the nobility for men, who in turn draft their peasants, or can the ruler go straight to the bottom?  
 How much formal spying and intelligence gathering is normally done by governments?  
 The military?  
 Merchant guilds and wealthy tradesmen?  
 Are there actual organizations, or is spying done by diplomats and/or freelance agents?  
 How effective is it currently?  
 Do relations between countries depend mainly on the relations between the heads of state, or can two rulers hate each other's guts without being able to just declare war and drag their countries into it?  
 Are there times when people are expected to fast, or feast (e.g., before solstice, after the birth of a child, during Lent or Ramadan, after the death of a ruler, etc.)?  
 Are there occasions when the ruler is expected to provide a celebration or spectacle for the people to enjoy, (e.g., the Roman gladiatorial games)?  
 How much influence do "special interest groups" such as merchants, wizards, or various religions, have on court politics?  
 How do they exercise their influence — indirectly (by talking nobility or council members into taking their sides) or directly (by bribery, coercion, having their own representatives on the council)?  
 Are there any shaky political alliances between disparate groups?  
 Why were they formed?  
 How long is it likely to be before they fall apart?  
 When they do, what will the effects be?  
 What ancient rivalries and hatreds still affect current attitudes and political positions (examples: Scottish and Welsh separatist groups; Catholics vs. Protestants vs. Muslims; dwarves vs. elves; Hatfields vs. McCoys)?

In terms of political systems themselves - there is a vast spectrum of possibilities -Anarchic, Aristocratic, Autarchic, Authoritarian, Autocratic, Bureaucratic, Capitalist, Collectivist, Colonialist, Commercialism, Communist, Confederates, Constitutional, Constitutional monarchy, Democracy, Despotism, Direct Democratic, Dynastic, Ecclesiastical, Ethnocentric, Expansionist, Fascist, Federalist, Fundamentalist, Gerontocratic, Imperialist, Internationalist, Interventionist, Isolationist, Matriarchy, Meritocracy, Monarchy, Orthodox, Parochialism, Paternalist, Patriarchy, Pluralist, Plutocracy, Police State, Protectionist, Regionalist, Republican, Separatist, Socialist, Theocratic, Totalitarian, Utilitarian, Utopian. Each system experiences different forms of intrigue. Feudalism and other aristocratic forms of governance tend to be subsumed by court intrigues revolving around legacies, dynasties, succession, etc. Republics, on the other hand, obsess over questions of law, rights and public resources. Finally, just as in the real world, a nation might call itself one thing, yet behave quite the opposite. Humans might be treated quite well, but minorities of other races (or the same race), might be subject to entirely different laws, slavery, forced exile, etc.

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# Chapter 14. Racial

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 15. Class Based

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 16. Social

## *Subtitle of Chapter*

### Section 1 Title

#### Subtitle of Section 1

What classes exist?,  
How is the hierarchy of classes organized?  
Upon what is the stratification of the classes based?  
What are the roles of the men, women, children?  
What is the family structure?  
What social problems exist?  
Who cares for and provides education to the children?  
Is there prejudice, persecution, etc.?  
If so, what groups are involved?  
How are the children socialized?  
Who provides care for the infirmed?  
Who cares for the elderly?  
Are there non-human/foreign residents of the culture  
Do foreign tend to take up different trades from humans?  
Are they legally limited to certain trades?  
Who is considered a citizen, with the rights and privileges thereof?  
What are those rights and privileges (voting, protection from thieves, the right to a hearing in Rome) and what responsibilities go along with them (jury duty, providing funds or knights for the lord's army)?  
Are there certain classes of people (wizards, foreigners, children, peasants, women) who have fewer legal rights or less recourse than full citizens?  
Why?  
Are they considered mentally or morally deficient, a danger to the state, or is there some other rationale?  
Is there a group of people who do not have full rights in this culture?  
Why not?  
Are they considered mentally or morally deficient, a danger to the state, or is there some other rationale?  
What are the various ranks and titles and proper forms of address for the aristocracy/nobility?  
Is everybody "my lord" and "my lady," or are there more distinctions (your grace, your highness, your majesty, your holiness)?  
What occupations are respected?  
Looked down on?  
Why?  
How many levels are there in this society: peasant, bourgeoisie, warrior, noble?  
How difficult is it to rise or fall from one social level to another?  
How firm are the divisions between social classes — is it disgraceful for a noble to engage in trade or for a warrior to help with the harvest?  
How difficult is it to rise or fall from one social level to another?  
How much social mobility is there?  
How much do people think there is?

### Rites of Passage

What are the rites of passage in this culture?  
Are they formalized rituals, such as being dubbed a knight, or are they informal?  
Are they different for men and women?  
For nobility and peasants?

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# Chapter 17. Political

## *Subtitle of Chapter*

What are the major political factions at present?  
How long have they been around?  
Which factions are allies, which enemies?  
Are there any potential new forces on the political scene (e.g., a rising middle class, a university gaining unexpected power because of certain magical discoveries, etc.)  
Are magicians a force in politics, or are they above it?  
Are there national politics that revolve around magic/wizards (i.e., trying to outlaw, protect, or promote certain kinds of magic, trying to draft wizards into a ruler's army, licensing of magicians, etc.)?  
Do wizards have a lobby?  
Do they need one?  
Is magic a profession, an art, or just a job?  
What is the status accorded to magicians in this society?  
Are they forbidden overt political action, or are wizards and the wizard's guild knee-deep in court intrigue?  
Are magicians a force in politics, or are they above it?  
Are there national politics that revolve around magic/wizards (i.e., trying to outlaw, protect, or promote certain kinds of magic, trying to draft wizards into a ruler's army, licensing of magicians, etc.)?  
Do wizards have a lobby?  
Do they need one?  
Is there tension, rivalry, or outright hostility between any of the actual gods?  
How does this affect church politics?  
People's everyday lives?  
Does the level of technological advancement match the level of social and political advancement?  
What kinds of people are likely to face prejudice: dwarves, werewolves, merchants, women, undertakers?  
Is this institutionalized (i.e., a matter of law) or is it mostly a matter of public attitude?  
Is the ruler powerful enough to defy this prejudice and appoint a dwarf as Chief Councilor or Secretary of Defense and make it work?  
Who will take over running the government if the current head of state is incapacitated?  
How is this determined?  
Is there an heir apparent (either actual or political)?  
What happens if the heir is a minor?  
Are there people who have great influence on government/politics, but who do not hold any official position?  
Who are they?  
Why do they have influence?  
Is this considered a normal thing, or a bad thing?

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text



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# Chapter 18. Economic

## *Subtitle of Chapter*

## Economics

Sweeping adventure means nothing if you cant buy a bite to eat.

How important is trade to the economy?

How is currency exchange handled, and by whom?

What is the system of coinage, and who mints it?

Resources

Transportation

Scarcity

Production

Distribution

Type of economy

decision-making

technology

division of labor

needs

Trading partners

What does this country import?

Export?

Which peoples/countries/races fought, allied, traded, or were traditional rivals?

Where are there still hard feelings about old events?

Is there a “trade language” that facilitates commerce between countries that don’t speak the same tongue?

Is there a “universal language” spoken by educated or noble persons, as Latin was in the Middle Ages?

What does this country import?

Export?

How important is trade to the economy?

How is currency exchange handled, and by whom?

How much do official attitudes toward other countries affect commerce and trade?

Do merchants pretty much ignore tensions between government as long as they can make a profit, or will this get them into trouble?

Are there Customs inspectors or their equivalents at border crossings?

Is the export/import of some technologies/magics/commodities regulated by the government, or by non-governmental cartels?

How does this affect political relationships between countries?

How is business organized?

Are there trade unions?

Guild structures?

Multi-state corporations?

International cartels?

Are people able to cross-craft, I.e., learn or perform different trades?

Does cross-crafting require guild permission, a write from an overlord, or is it automatically guaranteed by law?

How strict are craft restrictions — are carpenters the only people allowed to build houses?

What types of trades would be represented in a small town?

A middle-sized town?

A large city?

Is currency and coinage standardized, or is there a system of exchange?

What are typical denominations?

What types of currency is a traveler or merchant likely to carry on a trip?

What are different coins called, and what are they worth?

Are industrial processes (e.g., swordmaking, weaving, etc.) considered “trade secrets,” or are they common knowledge?

What is the process a young person goes through to enter a craft or trade?

An apprenticeship?

Four years of college?

Are the craft requirements for various skill ranks (such as apprentice, journeyman, master, or med student, intern, doctor, specialist) standardized, or does rank depend more on the good favor of a master craftsman than it does on skill?

Do different regions/cities specialize in specific crafts, processes, or products (examples: Damascus steel, Bordeaux wines, Chinese silk, Wisconsin cheese)?

Do different races specialize?

What regulations, if any, has the government/ruler placed on business practices?

Are there antimonopoly laws?

Anti-pollution?

Are there standardized systems of weights and measures, or does a merchant have to specify “a London bushel” of grain rather than “a York bushel”?

How do differing systems affect shipping and trade?

Are any new industries developing?

Which old ones do they compete with or make obsolete?

How are records kept — tally sticks, parchment, clay tablets, beads?

Is there a merchant class?

Where do they fit in society?

Are there trading guilds?

If so, how are they organized?

How much power do they have to control trade?

How much infighting is there among them?

Are there trading organizations that transcend countries (like the Hanseatic League)?

How large a presence do they have locally?

Is this a money-based economy, or mostly barter?

What goods are commonly available in small town markets?

In large towns?

In cities?

How do goods get to market?

What industries — mining, fishing, shipbuilding, lumber, farming, manufacturing, etc. — are important, and in which areas?

Which depend on materials from other areas (as shipbuilding on wood, or weaving on wool)?

What happens if supplies are disrupted?

Who is responsible for coinage: the ruler, local barons, someone else (merchant guilds)?

Are there generally acceptable standards?

How easy/common is counterfeiting?

How much smuggling is there?

Of what, from or to where?

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# Chapter 19. Legal

## *Subtitle of Chapter*

## Legal System

How has the presence of magic and magicians affected law and government?  
Are wizards barred from certain kinds of government jobs or offices (judge, jury, police)?  
Do some government jobs require that their holder be a wizard?  
What are considered normal and legal ways of gathering evidence and determining guilt?  
Is torture allowed?  
Are arbitrary judgments by the lord or landowner allowed, or is there an independent standard of justice?  
What personal weapons are available to anyone who can afford them?  
Are some considered “for nobles only” either by custom or by law?  
Are there laws forbidding certain classes from being armed at all?  
Are there laws requiring certain classes to learn particular weapon skills, as England for some centuries required yeomen to be proficient with the longbow?  
Is forensic magic possible?  
Commonly used?  
Used only for certain types of crimes (and if so, what)?  
Are the results of forensic spells admissible in court as evidence?  
Is it something any wizard can do, or do you have to specialize?  
Are certain spells (as opposed to magic generally) illegal?  
Why — because of the effect of the spell, or because of the ingredients or procedures needed to cast it, or what?  
If so, how would a criminal magician be detected? Apprehended? Punished?  
Is catching and punishing illegal magicians the responsibility of the magician’s guild, or do the ordinary courts have to handle it?  
Are there separate civil and criminal courts?  
Human and non-human courts?  
Is there a separate court or procedure for magical crimes?  
What is different about each type of court?  
Are judges or other court officials required/forbidden to know magic?  
Is evidence obtained by magic acceptable in court?  
Is evidence obtained by magic considered more reliable or less reliable than physical evidence or eyewitness accounts?  
What things are considered truly serious crimes and why?  
What are the normal punishments for serious vs. minor crimes?  
Are there prisons, or are people punished and released?  
Are there degrees of punishment — branding vs. cutting off ears vs. cutting off a hand vs. decapitation — or do they just hang everybody?  
Who is responsible for catching criminals?  
Who pays the crook-catchers — the ruler, the city government, a consortium of merchants, somebody else?  
How are they organized — into independent police precincts, or into overlapping districts, or just according to whoever wants to hire them?  
Are they full-time, part-time, or volunteers?  
Private or public?  
What sort of facilities do they have?  
What arms are they allowed to carry?  
Are there lawyers or advocates?  
Who can afford them?  
Who trains/certifies them?  
Are people guilty until proven innocent, innocent until proven guilty, or does it depend on the mood the lord is in when they bring the case before him?

Are there judges other than the ruler, lord, or landowner?  
If so, how are they chosen, how are they paid, and who pays them?  
Are appeals possible, and if so, to whom?  
How often are outlying areas likely to see a judge?  
Is “mob justice” common or uncommon?  
Approved of or disapproved of?  
Are there sumptuary laws regulating what different classes/races may wear?  
Do judges and lawyers wear special clothes (robes, wigs) to indicate their calling?  
Are wizards above or below the law i.e., do they have full rights as citizens, no rights, or can they do as they like without regard to anyone else’s rights  
Are highwaymen, muggers, and pirates common or rare? What sorts of crimes is the average citizen likely to run across during his/her lifetime?  
Who can make or repeal laws — a group (an elected Senate, an appointed Council, or an hereditary House of Lords), or only the ruler or head of state?  
How much can the nobility, middle class tradesmen, etc. influence the laws that are made?  
How are alleged criminals treated before and after their convictions?  
Do the police/military/city guard make a practice of roughing up suspects, or is this frowned upon?  
Are there separate civil and criminal courts?  
Human and non-human courts?  
Is there a separate court or procedure for magical crimes?  
What is different about each type of court?  
Are judges or other court officials required/forbidden to know magic?  
Is evidence obtained by magic acceptable in court?  
Is evidence obtained by magic considered more reliable or less reliable than physical evidence or eyewitness accounts?  
What personal weapons are available to anyone who can afford them?  
Are some considered “for nobles only” either by custom or by law?  
Are there laws forbidding certain classes from being armed at all?

## **Judicial Structure**

### **Making the Laws**

### **Enforcing the Laws**

## **Legal Code**

### **Making the Laws**

### **Enforcing the Laws**

## **Ownership of Goods**

## **Land**

## **Male and Female Roles**

## **Church and State**

**Death by Suicide**

**Death by Anothers Hand**

**Death in Self Defense**

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# Chapter 20. Military

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 21. Family

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Who raises the children?

At what age do they begin to be educated or trained?

By whom?

Are they considered mini-adults?

Do they dress differently from adults?

If so, when do they change to adult dress?

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# Part V. Interactions

*Subtitle of First Part*



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# Chapter 22. Racial

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 23. Classed Based

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 24. Social

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 25. Political

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 26. Economic

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Chapter 27. Military

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text

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# Part VI. First Part

*Subtitle of First Part*



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# Chapter 28. Chapter Title

*Subtitle of Chapter*

## Section1 Title

Subtitle of Section 1

Text