World Builder

Created By Ajala Bandele

World Builder
Building Compelling Worlds

World Builder is a comprehensive writing tool to help you create full, unique, and exciting worlds that house your stories. By exploring all the major components of your world, you will be able to understand what is contained inside the setting of your story. World Builder allows you to find the most complete, intriguing, and dynamic world possible, to help make your story feel real.

The one thing every single story has is a world surrounding it. You cannot have a story without one. Whether your world is completely modern, or completely imagined, the more you know about it the better you can shape the characters and plot. A great story has a great backdrop. Like a strong painting, worlds are the canvass to your masterpiece. World Builder creates the canvass.

It is hard to have a strong story with a weak world. Using World Builder can help you imagine more detail and more subtly in a story. The world influences everything and thus should be given time and consideration. The world is what sets apart a great story from a classic. By the end of using World builder, you will have a stronger, complete, and endless world that begs for you to explore it, and that for me, is everything.

Keep Thinking

Ajala Bandele

Using World Builder

Not all worlds are apparent to you when you begin writing. You may find that you know a single element, or location, or idea about the world, but you know nothing else. When you write from partial knowledge you never know what the end result will be, which means more revising in the end. It is important to know everything about the universe you are choosing to explore, so that you may hide it from the audience and reveal it at your leisure. Because the audience can always tell when the writer doesn't know their own world, it does you a disservice to not think it all the way through. A complete world, is a great place to be.

As A World Generator

The world is a fascinating place, filled with different intriguing cities, landscapes, histories etc… Sometimes you may be hit with an idea that doesn't have a story, or characters, only a world. Whether it's inspired but something you read or watched or witnessed or even created completely from your own originality, World Builder can help you pull out all the details of this new world. Using World Builder as a world generator allows you to grow new worlds for use in stories not yet thought of.

As A Reference Tool

When you are writing a story you may start to lose track of the rules of the world. Rather than reading through the whole story to find the one clue you are looking for you can use World builder as a reference tool. Having a completed world builder allows you to quickly find the information you need about your world. And as you discover new aspects of your world through the writing process, you can update world builder, allowing you to easily find any new or old info you may need for your story.

As A Story Generator

As you build new and exciting worlds you may find that new and exciting stories begin to emerge. You may also find that the history of your world is very interesting and you may want to explore it later in a separate story. Using World Builder as a story generator can help you spark new a unique narrative ideas.

As A Tool To Review Other Worlds

When you are reviewing someone's work its good to know what you're talking about. So often someone will comment on another person's world and they will get so many details so mixed, confused or lost that the listener begins to wonder how much this person was actually were paying attention. The world is a big place, it can be easy to get lost. You can use World Builder as a checklist of sorts to help you focus your critiques on the most important parts of a world you are reviewing.

Writing process
From beginning to end

There are four steps to a writing process. Prewriting>Drafting>Revising>Editing.

1. **Prewriting**: Prewriting consists of <u>Concept Creation, Research, and Outlines.</u>
    A.   The point of prewriting is to gain a thorough understanding of the story.
2. **Drafting**: Drafting is creating a first draft of your story focusing on if the structure
    and ideas are clear.
    A.   The point of drafting is just to write the story. Get it all out of your head and
         onto the page. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it is easier to edit a flawed
         script than a hypothetical one.
3. **Revising**: Revising is adjusting the writing of your first draft, focusing on clearing
    up any structural mistakes, plot holes, weak character arcs, and weak dialogue.
    A.   The point of revising is to refine and perfect the story so that it achieves the
         writers intention. Revising produces 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc…drafts of a script. This is
         also your time to really dig in and make sure your story is accomplishing what
         you want it to accomplish in a structurally sound manner.
4. **Editing**: Editing is checking for grammar, formatting, spelling, and punctuation
    after the story and all it's elements are complete.
    A.   The point of editing is to polish off your story to look and feel professional,
         resulting in a final draft.

<u>World Builder is a part of the Prewriting and Revision Phases.</u>

As you are developing your concept and or outline, you can use World Builder to flesh out the details in a fully comprehensive profile. This may help you decide what other locations you need to build, and even where the story should go.

After completing your first draft you may discover some minor locations that are more important than you first realized. You can use World Builder to further develop those locations, making the revising process easier.

Building Your World
A whole new world

Building a world is nothing like building a story, but it is similar to building a character. Like a character, you need basic things like a name, what makes this place special, what does this world believe in, what is its backstory etc… But instead of qualities like body type and birth place, you have climate and capitol city. The main categories of a world that get developed over time are the Setting, the Culture, and the Society.

There is a beginning to a world, but there is no end. Like a character, a world can "die" but even in "death" the world exists in lore, memory, etc… The true relationship between a character and a world is that a character lives inside a world and a world inspires that character.

Finding your world in stories

One way to find a world is to look for worlds in other stories. Taking ideas from existing stories and expanding on certain aspects of them is a great way to conceptualize a new universe.

Finding your world in our world

All around you are ample samples of different worlds. Often, taking a singular aspect of the world around you and imagining that that one aspect has grown into the most important thing in the known universe, can lead you to an interesting place. "What if the world was run by cooks?" "What if it never stopped raining?" "What if ghosts were real and ran businesses?" Anything and everything around you can become a basis for a new and exciting world. You simply choose something to be important and think of reasons as to why it is or has come to be so.

You can also find that a world already exists that hasn't been explored. If there is a real life world that is new to you, then researching that world and plugging the

information in to World Builder can help you develop and discover an already existing world.

Finding your world in media

All across the planet different things are happening. Imagining what possible scenarios are out there and imagining what would happen if a best or worst case scenario happened is a great way to create a new world. Even becoming aware of location specific events can trigger inspiration for a fictional or non fictional place.

Finding your world in a character

Some times you may think of an interesting character and you don't know where this person could exist. They could be a person who wields magic, or invents new technology, or practices a new religion. Once you have found yourself invested in a character, a logical next step is to determine what kind of environment forged this person and what kind of environment would continue to build, change and challenge them. Allowing a world to grow from this kernel could lead you to create worlds you'd never before have dreamed of.

Setting
We're not in Kansas anymore

The setting is the larger, more broad scope of the world. It is the world as seen from long range scanners on an alien ship. These attributes are the descriptions you would use when creating a world map. It also includes the level of technological sophistication as that would also dictate the entire landscape and history. Having magic, depending on what it does, can also change the layout of the land, so knowing if you have it or not is just as important.

Name

This is the name of the entire world, or universe. What ever the name is will have some sort of meaning behind it, even if it's just location based. The name may also be in the language of the people who lived or currently live there.

Country

This is the name of the country or land where the majority or major events occur. This could also be where your main character is from. If the character is nomadic then this is the area they tend to travel through the most.

State/Province

This is the state or more local area of the major location, or a location of a major event.

Capital/Major City

The major city or seat of government. Even if very little to no time is spent here it is good to know it.

Resources

This is the resources of the major location. This will be what this location has to offer or is known for.

Major Locations

These are other important locations in the world.

Major Location Resources

This is the resources of the other major location. This will be what this location has to offer or is known for.

Climate

This is the weather patterns of a location. Even if it is not a major element to a story it will effect life. The most common are Tropical, Arid, Mediterranean, Temperate, Continental, Polar, Artificial, Nuclear Winter, Uninhabitable, Various, and None.

Tropical: Hot and Humid.

Arid: Hot and Dry.

Mediterranean: Hot dry summers with cooler wetter winters.

Temperate: Mild sumers and winters.

Continental: Long cold winters with short hot summers.

Polar: Extreme cold.

Artificial: Man made weather.

Nuclear Winter: A period of abnormal cold and darkness with smoke and dust.

Uninhabitable: Unsuitable for living.

Terrain

This is the major topography of a location. This will affect travel in your world.

Plateau - an area of relatively level high ground.

Mountain - a large natural elevation of the earth's surface rising abruptly from the surrounding level.

Plain - a large area of flat land with few trees.

Valley - a low area of land between hills or mountains.

Tundra - a vast, flat, treeless Arctic region.

Oasis - a fertile spot in a desert, where water is found.

Grassland - a large open area of country covered in grass

Desert - a dry, barren area of land, that is characteristically desolate, waterless, and without vegetation.

Swamp/marsh/bog - an area of low-lying, uncultivated ground where water collects

Forest - a large area covered chiefly with trees and undergrowth.

Hilly - a naturally raised area of land, not as high or craggy as a mountain.

Artificial - land that is man made

Wildlife

This is the major animal life of a location. These are the different types of creatures that will be present in the world as pets, predators, livestock, and general fauna of the world.

Flora

This is the major plant life of a location. These are the different types of vegetation that will be present in the world.

Magic

This is simply if magic is Rare, Common, or non existent in your world. This can also be a description of what the magic is and how it works.

Technology

This is the type of technological advancement the location has in your world. The most common choices are Hyper Advanced, Advanced, Modern, Era Specific, Industrial, Medieval, Ancient, Primitive, Various, and None. This can also be a description of what the technology is and how it works.

Society
People will be people, always

The society is the type of civilization your world has already created. It's how the major population runs themselves and what they are comprised of. These would be the major topics of discussion amongst alien historians.

Government

The type of governing body or authority that the location is ruled by.

Unitary State- Power is held by a central government.
Federation - Power is held by self-governing states under a central federal government.
Confederation - Power is held by a union of sovereign states for a common action.
Anarchy - Power is held by no governing body.
Democracy - Power is held by elected officials.
Oligarchy - Power is held by a small privileged group of people.
Autocracy - Power is held by one person.
Empire - Power is held over multiple nations by a central ruler/government.
Theocracy - Power is held by a person or group serving a higher power.
Chiefdom - Power is held by legitimate senior members of a people.

Social System

The type of social structure a society employs. This takes into account the types of social policy's and common practices including hierarchal structure and distribution of resources.

Monarchy - Sovereign power under a monarch.
Republic - Power through public election.
Tribalism - Power under a chief for small complex societies.
Feudalism - Power through land ownership.
Colonialism - Power through subjugation of a native group by an external political group.

Capitalism - A system in which private owners own the means of production for profit.

Socialism - A system in which workers own the means of production.

Communism - A socialist system in which society owns the means of production for use, rather than profit.

Totalitarianism - A system in which all land and resources are controlled by a government.

Social Class

This is the distribution of economic or power based social hierarchy.

Religion/Beliefs

This is the primary religious, faith based, or spiritual systems that a population or major character believes in.

Military

The type of military or fighting force. This can also be just the strength of a military.

Races

The demographics of racial nationalities.

Languages

The common languages.

Food Supply

The access to food a population has.

Culture
It's who we are

Culture is the way people have developed intellectually and artistically. The more stable the society the more of an expressive culture is allowed to develop. The more unstable the society is the more repressed a culture is. Culture is what characters are going to be saturated in and it will help define who they are.

Art

This is the type of art a society has created. This speaks to what the society holds as important and reflects the ideals of a nation. This can be very limited in more oppressed cultures or very expansive in non oppressed cultures. Often it correlates to the belief systems of a society.

Architecture

This is where you put in the types of buildings and homes you will see. This is how the society has developed structurally. The types of buildings and dwellings will be dependent on the terrain, weather, and the cultures artistic belief on expression.

Cultural Beliefs

Cultural beliefs are the collective ideologies of a culture in regards to how life functions and how it should function. This can be expressed as broad mottos, "Survival of the fittest" or more complex belief systems, "Aliens are coming to get us and we must prepare for the incoming invasion." This dictates more subconscious behaviors amongst the society and within the culture. It also can be a 'code' or set of rules independent of the governmental or religious rules already established.

Education

This is the level of education a society has. This can also include how the culture practices their educational system and the beliefs behind it.

Liesure

This is the type of entertainment that is most popular in a culture.

Clothing

This is the state of fashion within a culture.

History

This is the history of a location from the first important event to the most current important event. This can be as simple as "War has gripped the world for centuries" or as in-depth as *The Silmarillion*, which is the entire mythology of the Lord of the Rings.

World Building
You ain't seen nothin' yet

Building a world is a deep and involved process. It starts with an idea, which can come from anywhere, and blooms. There are no hard and fast rules on how to build a world, only advice. The one thing that is always true, stories and characters included, is that no matter what your idea is, it needs to have a reason for why it is the way it is.

World Building Advice

- A world is a big thing, so take your time.
- Even if your character never leaves home, knowing the world around them makes the story seem bigger than just the one place.
- Even one small change can have a big affect on the whole world.
- Think through each aspect of your world, it makes a difference.

On Magic

- Magic is mysterious for an audience, but it shouldn't be for you.
- Magic informs a character, and that character informs the magic.
- Don't let a cliched magic system trap you. Change something about it.
- Magical creatures are also magic.
- Magic, powers, high art, mutations…all unique names for the same thing. You can use a name that is well known if you need to quickly insert a specific image or idea into the mind of your audience, BUT if you have the time and space, create your own. This will help you mentally set your brand of magic a part from all former versions, and give you the opportunity to create something unique without bias from your audience.

On Technology

- Don't worry if it's been done before. As with the technology in our own world, the smallest tweaks to an already existing technological advance, is itself a technological advancement. Just ask any patent holder.
- No one will believe the Tech if it contradicts itself.
- Think about how the tech affects the world around it.
- Combining tech and magic is always fun.
- Don't let the tech take over the story. Let it influence the story.

On Religion/Beliefs

- Not all beliefs need to make sense to us, only those who believe it.
- Stories about the beginning of a belief system are always fun.
- Think of a theme and base your belief off of that.
- The Rules of a belief define the belief.

Terms

Climate
Tropical - Hot and Humid.

Arid - Hot and Dry.

Mediterranean - Hot dry summers with cooler wetter winters.

Temperate - Mild summers and winters.

Continental - Long cold winters with short hot summers.

Polar - Extreme cold.

Artificial - Man made weather.

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Uninhabitable - Unsuitable for living.

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Plateau - an area of relatively level high ground

Mountain - a large natural elevation of the earth's surface rising abruptly from the surrounding level

Plain - a large area of flat land with few trees.

Valley - a low area of land between hills or mountains.

Open - an area with no buildings, trees, or any rising features.

Tundra - a vast, flat, treeless Arctic region in which the subsoil is permanently frozen.

Oasis - a fertile spot in a desert where water is found.

Steppe - a large area of flat deforested grassland

Desert - a dry, barren area of land, especially one covered with sand, that is characteristically desolate, waterless, and without vegetation.

Swamp - an area of low-lying, uncultivated ground where water collects; a bog or marsh

Forest - a large area covered chiefly with trees and undergrowth.

River - a large natural stream of water flowing in a channel to the sea, a lake, or another such stream.

Hill - a naturally raised area of land, not as high or craggy as a mountain.

Government

Unitary State - Power is held by a central government.

Federation - Power is held by self-governing states under a central federal government.

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