

# PROJECT black Flag



## PLAYTEST PACKET #1.1

This document contains the Character Creation rules for the first [Core Fantasy Roleplaying] playtest packet.

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## HOW TO USE THIS PACKET

Thank you for your interest in playtesting the material contained within Playtest Packet 1 of the [Core Fantasy Roleplaying]! Before you read through the packet, here are some helpful guidelines for playtesting this material.

The [Core Fantasy Roleplaying] is backward-compatible with 5th edition and can be used in conjunction with any existing 5E material. Since this document does not include class options—which will start rolling out in Playtest Packet #2—creating a complete character from scratch using the rules found in this packet will require the use of an existing 5E base class.

Alternatively, you can easily swap the options presented in this packet for any existing 5E options. Here are guidelines to keep in mind when doing so:

- Player characters created using the [Core Fantasy Roleplaying] are slightly more powerful than characters created using 5th edition, but they are close enough that a 5E fighter and a [Core Fantasy Roleplaying] fighter could still play together at the same table. This is intentional.
- If you would like to make a 5E character of equivalent power to a [Core Fantasy Roleplaying] character, simply give the 5E character a feat that character would meet the prerequisites for at 1st level. The optional 5E feat rules can be found in the *System Reference Document 5.1*. Alternatively, you can give that character access to one of the Talents described in this packet.
- In terms of mechanical power, any of fifth edition's “race” and “subrace” combinations can be substituted for any of the *Core Fantasy Roleplaying's* lineage and heritage combinations.

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Labyrinth, a fantastical universe of infinite worlds linked by twisting corridors of magic. Here, you will find realms like Midgard, Hades, the Dreadful Domains, and homebrew creations tied together by the mysterious will of the maze. These countless worlds rarely resemble one another on the surface, but all have one unifying truth—heroes shape them.

## WHAT IS [CORE FANTASY ROLEPLAYING]?

[Core Fantasy Roleplaying] is an action-oriented roleplaying game that pits a group of heroic adventurers against the myriad of dangers found in fantasy worlds. Through collaborative storytelling, one player—called the Game Master (or GM)—and a group of other players—called Player Characters (or PCs)—will explore unique locations and embark upon adventurous quests within them.

## WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A **roleplaying game** (or **RPG**) is a form of collaborative storytelling, that usually takes place at a table and requires paper and dice to play. Most RPGs have one player who serves as the **Game Master** (or **GM**) and the other players at the table take on the role of **player characters** (or **PCs**).

## ROLE OF THE GAME MASTER

The GM's role is to create the game's framework and keep the story moving. It is up to the GM to describe to the players what the world looks like, introduce obstacles for the PCs to overcome, and portray all the characters who are not PCs.

## ROLE OF A PLAYER CHARACTER

A player's role is to portray their character as fully as possible. Imagine perceiving the world through the character's senses and reacting as they would to the situations presented by the GM. When interacting with characters portrayed by the GM or other PCs, a player's voice serves as the character's.

## THE DICE

Most of *[Core Fantasy Roleplaying]* gameplay happens through conversation and shared imagination. However, dice come into play whenever conflict presents itself or the PCs attempt to do remarkable things outside the scope of normalcy. The mechanics of this system require the use of several different types of polyhedral dice: **four**-sided (d4), **six**-sided (d6), **eight**-sided (d8), **ten**-sided (d10), **twelve**-sided (d12), and **twenty**-sided dice (d20). It is recommended that each player has a set of dice that includes at least one of each type.

Dice represent the element of chance. A die roll is almost always combined with a creature's abilities to give a more accurate result of what happens—after all, adventuring is all about a combination of luck and skill. The specific rules concerning dice rolls are described in detail in Chapter 2.

For now, all you need to know is when you see something like **2d4 + 2**, you should roll **2** four-sided (**d4**) dice, add the results, then add **2** to get your final total.

Occasionally, you will also need to roll “percentile dice.” To do so, grab two d10s, designate one to represent the **tens** digit and the other to represent the **ones** digit. So, if you roll a **5** on the tens-digit die and a **2** on the ones-digit die, your result is **52**. If you roll **0** on both dice, your result is **100**.

## OTHER TOOLS YOU NEED TO PLAY

In addition to this book and a polyhedral dice set, each PC will need a printed or digital character sheet. The GM will need *[Core Fantasy Roleplaying] Monster Vault*. The *[Core Fantasy Roleplaying] Game Master Guide* is also helpful. That is all that is strictly necessary for play, but additional resources like physical or virtual grids for creating maps, character tokens, and pencils and paper or digital note-taking platforms are all helpful tools.

## WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

This book contains all the basic information you need to play *[Core Fantasy Roleplaying]*. It provides instructions for creating the adventurers portrayed as PCs, details a dice-rolling system to resolve challenges, and contains many other useful tools for playing in fantasy worlds.

**Chapter 1: Character Creation** describes how to create a PC and the various options available when building your heroes.

**Chapter 2: Playing the Game** details how the game works, breaking down the mechanical rules and elements necessary for play.

**Chapter 3: Equipment & Magic Items** lists the equipment available to PCs and explains any additional rules for using said equipment. It also contains various magic items the PCs might be lucky enough to find during their adventures.

**Chapter 4: Spellcasting** breaks down how creatures can use magic and describes a selection of spells available to PCs.

## CORE FANTASY IN A NUTSHELL

*[Core Fantasy Roleplaying]* is intended to be flexible, so it doesn't assume a standard setting. These rules are compatible with any published setting or unique worlds designed for your table. However, these rules assume the setting you adopt is rooted in the fantasy genre.

### ELEMENTS OF CORE FANTASY

Fantasy stories share several important core assumptions to remember when playing *[Core Fantasy Roleplaying]*.

#### 1. FANTASY WORLDS HAVE MAGIC

The presence of magic is the core principle of the fantasy genre. Your setting might have a unique spin on how magic works, but it should be present somehow, and the PCs should be able to access it.

#### 2. HEROIC ADVENTURES

Fantasy stories are about heroes. The heroes—in this case, the PCs—need to be the focus of the stories you create with *[Core Fantasy Roleplaying]*. They need plenty of opportunities to defeat foes, make important decisions, and solve various other problems with their actions.

#### 3. UNIQUE LOCATIONS TO EXPLORE

Fantasy worlds are full of unique locales, cultures, and creatures. *[Core Fantasy Roleplaying]* games should include all manner of interesting corners to explore and wonders to uncover.

#### 4. POWER STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

Whether through villainous empires or friendly guild factions, fantasy stories always include larger organizations that can challenge or push the heroes to grow their abilities. These power structures often form the cornerstone of large campaigns (games with many subsequent sessions) and the most compelling *[Core Fantasy Roleplaying]* adventures.

#### 5. CONFLICT

At its heart, the fantasy genre is about standing up against impossible odds and—despite everything—emerging victorious. This game keeps that principle at its core and is about staging challenges for the PCs to overcome through cunning, might, and magic.

# CHAPTER 1: CHARACTER CREATION

Before you begin gameplay, you must create your Player Character (PC). Character creation involves making several choices that dictate what your heroic character can do, as well as making creative choices about your character's history and personality. The exact steps and options required to create your character are listed in this chapter. If you are creating a character for the first time, it can be helpful to work with your Game Master (GM) to choose options that best support your vision.

## STEP-BY-STEP CHARACTER CREATION

This section outlines the steps needed to create your character before you begin gameplay. Before you take these steps, make sure to have a blank character sheet ready to mark your decisions as you make them.

### 1. CREATE A CHARACTER CONCEPT

Before you choose any game options, spend some time thinking about what kind of heroic character you want to play. Do you want to be able to cast magic spells? Do you want to be good at swinging a sword? Do you want to play a human or portray a member of a more fantastical lineage? Having an idea of what you might enjoy playing can help guide many of the decisions you will make in the following steps.

During this brainstorming phase, talk to the other players about your concept and ideas. Hearing what other players have in mind for their characters can help narrow down your options or inspire you to create a concept that works well with other adventurers in your party. For example, if all the other PCs are creating rough-and-tumble warriors, it might be a perfect move for you to make a cleric so you can patch them up with healing magic!

#### DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?

If you are brand new to the game and have no idea where to start creating a heroic character concept, that's okay! Many of the options available to you are common archetypes found in all manner of fantasy media. Modeling your adventurer after a character from a fantasy film, book, or other source you enjoy is a fantastic first step.

And of course, don't be afraid to rely on the other players at your table for help. Your GM or more experienced players likely have suggestions on what character options are easier for beginning players to master and options that best align with the kind of experience you want to have.

### 2. CHOOSE A CLASS

Once you have decided on a character concept, you will likely have a good idea of the types of things you want your character to do during gameplay. Choosing your character's class is the most important factor in bringing those ideas to life. Every adventurer has a character class that dictates the majority of the mechanical abilities you have access to. It can be helpful to think of a character's class like their job, with each type covering a different set of skills and responsibilities.

Your character class gives you **class features** at 1st level as described in each class features table (see "Character Classes" later in this chapter) and lists other features you gain access to as your character gains adventuring experience and levels up. Your choice of character class also dictates your **proficiencies**, which is a game term describing what kinds of equipment you are trained to use (like armor, weapons, or tools) and what kind of challenges you are best equipped to handle (namely skills and saves).

Choosing your character class can also help you make other decisions in the following steps. For example, each class has a "Build Suggestions" section, that recommends what ability scores (described in Step 3) work best with your class abilities.

#### LEVEL

Characters start at 1st level and can advance up to 20th level by gaining experience (XP) during their adventures. By default, PCs start with 0 XP.

#### HIT POINTS AND HIT DICE

Your class determines the size of your Hit Dice, which is in turn used to calculate your hit points. Your hit-point total represents your character's life force. Classes with bigger Hit Dice—like a d10—are more likely to survive a few hits in combat than a class with smaller Hit Dice—like a d6.

At 1st level your character starts with a hit-point total equal to the highest number on their Hit Dice, plus their CON modifier. So, a 1st-level fighter (d10 Hit Die) with a CON +3 would start with a hit-point total of 13.

#### ABOUT THOSE DICE

The [Core Fantasy Roleplaying] system uses polyhedral dice to resolve actions. These dice are abbreviated in game text, so a four-sided die is a d4, a six-sided die is a d6, and so on for d8, d10, d12, and d10. Percentile dice rolls are rolled with two dice and abbreviated d%.

#### PROFICIENCY BONUS

As your character advances in levels, they become generally better at what they are trained to do—a concept which is represented by the Proficiency Bonus (PB). While the PB advances at the same rate for every class, it is included in each class progression table to make it easier for you to track.

Whenever you make a d20 check that involves a skill, tool, or save you have Proficiency in, you get to add your PB to that roll. Occasionally, features might allow you to double your PB on particular kinds of rolls, but a PB can only ever be applied once to a particular roll.

### 3. DETERMINE ABILITY SCORES

Character features are tied to six different numbers called ability scores. These scores represent your various physical and mental capabilities. The six scores are:

- **Strength (STR)**, representing your physical might
- **Dexterity (DEX)**, representing your agility and reaction time
- **Constitution (CON)**, representing your endurance and physical fortitude
- **Intelligence (INT)**, representing your ability to acquire and apply knowledge
- **Wisdom (WIS)**, representing your intuition and mental fortitude
- **Charisma (CHA)**, representing your self-confidence and your ability to influence others

To determine your starting ability scores, roll four d6s, add up the highest 3 (discarding the low die) to get your total, then write it down. Do this five more times until you have six totals between 3 and 18. Assign those six numbers to the ability scores you choose. Add 2 to one score of your choice that is 16 or below and add 1 to one score of your choice that is 17 or below, and you're done!

Higher numbers mean better odds for your character with that ability. As you level up, you will have opportunities to increase these scores, but a PC can never have an ability score higher than 20. An average person has 10 in every ability score—so these numbers emphasize how uniquely powerful adventurers are!

Once your scores are assigned, use the following charts to figure out your ability score modifiers. Your **ability modifiers** are the most important part of your ability scores and will be used almost exclusively to calculate your character abilities (as opposed to your full ability score).

**Player Advice:** Whenever you see a particular ability score referenced in the rules, assume it means ability score modifier. For example, a feature that reads “. . . roll and add your STR,” means add your Strength ability modifier, not your full Strength ability score.

#### ABILITY MODIFIERS

Ability Score	Modifier
1	-5
2-3	-4
4-5	-3
6-7	-2
8-9	-1
10-11	+0
12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16-17	+3
18-19	+4
20	+5

### ALTERNATE STARTING SCORES

If you don't want to use the starting scores listed above, there are a couple of alternative methods you can use to determine your scores.

#### POINT-BUY

You can assign your starting scores with the point-buy method. Here are the rules to use if you choose to do so:

- You start with 32 points to spend on your ability scores.
- The point-cost of each potential score is shown on the Point-Buy Cost table (As an example, a score of 12 costs 4 points).
- 18 is the highest ability score you can start with, and you can't have a score lower than 8.

#### POINT-BUY SCORE COST

Score	Cost
8	0
9	1
10	2
11	3
12	4
13	5
14	7
15	9
16	11
17	13
18	16

#### STANDARD ARRAY

You can assign your starting scores with the standard-array method. Here are the rules to use if you choose to do so:

- Assign one of the following numbers to each ability score: 16, 15, 13, 12, 10, and 8.

**Player Advice:** Remember, each character class includes suggestions of the most useful way to assign your ability scores if you want to maximize the effectiveness of your class features.

### 4. CHOOSE A LINEAGE & HERITAGE

Once your class is decided, choose your character's lineage and heritage from the options in the “Lineage & Heritage” section presented later in this chapter.

Adventurers can choose to be human or can be one of the lineages common to the fantasy genre, like dwarf or elf. A heroic character's lineage informs certain hereditary traits like average lifespan, size, speed, and any special adaptations like the ability to see in the dark.

You will also choose your character's heritage, which informs traits your character has because of their connection to a particular group or society.

## 5. CHOOSE A BACKGROUND

Choose a background from the options presented in the “Backgrounds” section presented later in this chapter. Your choice of background helps define your character’s personal history (also called backstory) prior to taking up the mantle of an adventurer. Backgrounds give you access to skill proficiencies, talents, and other benefits like additional languages.

## 6. FILL IN THE BLANKS

At this point, all the game rule decisions for your character should be locked in. Take some time to review and fill in any of the blank sections on your character sheet (see “Final Checklist” below).

If you haven’t already, make sure to give your character a name and decide what they look like. It’s also a good idea to think about your character’s history and personality—but it’s perfectly fine to decide these details after a game session or two as you grow more comfortable playing your character.

### FINAL CHECKLIST

Double check that you have all of the following information on your character sheet.

1. Your class and your class features, including:
  - a. Note your Hit-Die size
  - b. If you have spellcasting, mark your available spell slots and spells known (if applicable)
  - c. Any skills you are proficient in
  - d. Any equipment and tools you are proficient with
  - e. Saves you are proficient with
  - f. Your Proficiency Bonus
  - g. Your starting equipment
2. Your ability scores are assigned, and you have used them to calculate the following:
  - a. Your hit-point total
  - b. Your spell save DC and your spellcasting attack modifier (if applicable)
3. Your lineage and heritage, including:
  - a. Your size
  - b. Your senses
  - c. Your base movement speed (or speeds, if applicable)
  - d. Any additional proficiencies
4. Your background, including:
  - a. Any skill or tool proficiencies
  - b. Your languages
  - c. Your talent
  - d. Any additional starting equipment
  - e. Your adventuring motivation
5. Your Luck points are set to 0
6. Your name and basic descriptive information like height, hair color, and eye color
7. You’re now ready to play!

## GAINING LEVELS

Characters start at 1st level and can advance up to 20th level by gaining experience (XP) during their adventures. By default, PCs start with 0 XP. It is up to the GM to reward XP at the end of each game session or—if using the milestone system—to alert the players when their characters have accrued enough experience to gain a new level. Each method is described in more detail in the following sections.

### GAINING HIT POINTS

When a PC gains a new level, they gain access to the benefits listed in their Class Advancement table and they also gain 1 Hit Die and more hit points. To calculate these new hit points, roll the new Hit Die, add your CON modifier to the roll, and add the total to your total hit points. If you don't want to roll, you can choose to just use the average Hit Die value (listed in each class description), plus your CON modifier.

**Player Advice:** If you get to increase your CON score as part of leveling up—like choosing to increase CON as an Improvement option—make sure to increase your CON score before you calculate your new hit points.

### LEVELING METHODS

There are two methods of tracking when PCs level up. The GM decides which method they want to use.

### TRACKING XP

The first method for leveling characters is tracking Experience Points (XP). The Level Advancement table details the amount of XP you need to advance to new levels.

#### LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

Level	XP
1	0
2	300
3	2,700
4	2,700
5	6,500
6	14,000
7	23,000
8	34,000
9	48,000
10	64,000
11	85,000
12	100,000
13	120,000
14	140,000
15	165,000
16	195,000
17	225,000
18	265,000
19	305,000
20	355,000

### TRACKING MILESTONES

The second method for leveling characters is tracking milestones. When using milestones, players do not receive individual XP amounts. Instead, they level up upon achieving certain narrative goals established by the GM. The milestone method is ideal for faster paced games or player groups that are focused on storytelling (as opposed to tactical combat or dungeon delving).

As a general rule, 1st-level PCs should hit level-up milestones after a single game session, 2nd level PCs should hit level-up milestones after two game sessions, 3rd level PCs should hit level-up milestones after three game sessions, and approximately every three sessions thereafter. A GM may speed up or slow down milestone advancement at their discretion, as suits their game.

## LINEAGE & HERITAGE

While humans are common to most settings, the fantasy genre is full of other fantastical kinds of people. When you create your character, you can choose whether your hereditary traits are human or one of these other fantasy lineages. You will also use this section to determine if you have heritage traits tied to your lineage or to an entirely different kind of society.

### ELEMENTS OF A LINEAGE

Your lineage dictates certain fantastical lineage traits your character has because of their ancestry. The following sections are included among the traits of each lineage option.

#### AGE

The age entry notes the age when a member of the lineage grows into adulthood, as well as expected lifespan. You can choose any starting age for your adventurer, but if you want to play a very young or very old character, make sure to run it by your GM.

#### SIZE

Characters of most lineages are Medium, a size category including creatures that are roughly 4 to 8 feet tall. Members of a few lineages are Small (between 2 and 4 feet tall) or can choose to be Small, which means that certain rules of the game affect them differently. The most important of these rules is that Small characters have trouble wielding heavy weapons, as explained in “Equipment.”

#### SPEED

Your speed determines how far you can move when traveling (“Adventuring”) and fighting (“Combat”).

### ELEMENTS OF A HERITAGE

Your heritage dictates certain abilities you have because of your connection to a particular group or society. Heritage includes all manner of tangible and intangible cultural elements such as architecture, works of art, folklore, traditions, language, and natural environment.

While it is impossible to represent all the different types of heritage present in the fantasy genre, each lineage includes example heritages common to the fantasy lineages presented here. Choose one of the heritages detailed in your character's lineage or choose one of the heritages detailed in a different lineage if that better fits the narrative of your character.



Each lineage includes heritage options that are most common to members of that lineage, so if you want to play a typical dwarf, you'll likely want to select one of the heritage options listed in the dwarf section. However, you can choose any heritage you wish from any section, regardless of your choice of lineage. This flexibility is helpful if you want to play a character with unique origins. For example, if your character has one human parent and one elven parent, you could choose the human lineage option to represent your dominant hereditary traits, but one of the elven heritage options to represent being raised in an elven society.

## ALIGNMENT

Part of deciding your character's traits is selecting an alignment, which broadly describes your character's moral and personal attitudes. Alignment is a combination of two factors: one identifies morality (good, evil, or neutral), and the other describes attitudes toward society and order (lawful, chaotic, or neutral). By default, you choose your own alignment—with the approval of your GM. Alternatively, you can select one of the suggested alignments given in your chosen heritage.

## LANGUAGES

Your choice of heritage dictates how many languages you know. By default, all characters know the Common language and one other language of your choice, but some heritages allow you to choose additional languages. If you are unsure which language to choose, consult the suggested languages provided in each Heritage option.

## DWARF

Dwarves are a hardy people, as sturdy and solid as stone. Indeed, many creation myths claim that dwarves were sculpted from the earth itself and given life in the forge of a progenitor god. Regardless of whether these myths are true, the first dwarven cities were built below the world's surface, filling chiseled mountain halls and sprawling caverns deep within the earth. Surrounded by an abundance of metals and minerals, mastery of stoneworking and metalworking allowed these first dwarves to survive the overabundance of monsters lurking underground.

As ages have passed, dwarves have spread across many worlds, some choosing lives far removed from the subterranean halls of their ancestors. However, modern dwarves still bear many of the adaptations that allowed their ancestors to thrive, including vision well-suited to sunless caverns and innate resistances to the poisonous denizens of the world below.

## DWARF LINEAGE TRAITS

Your dwarf character has certain hereditary traits dictated by their lineage.

**Age.** Dwarves mature at the same rate as humans, but most consider themselves young until they reach the age of 50. On average, they live about 350 years.

**Size.** Dwarves stand between 4 and 5 feet tall and average about 150 pounds. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

**Night Vision.** You have superior vision in naturally dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Dwarven Resilience.** You have advantage on saves against becoming poisoned, and you are resistant to poison damage.

**Dwarven Toughness.** Your hit-point maximum increases by 1, and it increases by 1 every time you gain a level.

## HERITAGE OPTIONS

The following heritage options are most common among dwarven adventurers.

### FIREFORGE HERITAGE TRAITS

Characters who choose this heritage were raised with the values and traditions of the fireforge dwarven clans.

Dwarven legends state the best metal-crafting is done in the fires of the earth itself. Long ago, groups of dwarves that followed this tradition settled near areas of volcanic activity, turning such places into their forges. These dwarves were the founders of the fireforge clans. To this day, these communities toil in the heat of magma, creating weapons, armor, and other goods noteworthy even among the finest dwarven crafts. They trade these goods for necessities not found in the harsh environment of their chosen settlements.

Fireforge communities maintain good relations with elemental creatures, coming to their aid when needed. In return, these elementals assist fireforge clans against giants, dragons, and other volcano-dwelling creatures who often compete with them for territory.

**Alignment.** Choose one of the alignments approved by your GM. Typical creatures of this heritage tend towards Chaotic or Neutral alignments.

**Expert Artisan.** You gain Proficiency with glassblower's tools or smith's tools. Choose one of those tools. Your PB is doubled for any ability check you make that uses the chosen tool.

**Forgecraft.** You are resistant to fire damage.

**Friend to Elementals.** You can speak, read, and write Ignan in addition to your chosen languages.

**Reforge.** Your people have a deep connection with elemental fire and have collectively learned how to repair forged items with a touch. You know the *mending* cantrip, and you can cast it as an action. However, you can use this trait to repair objects made only of metal, such as reconnecting two halves of a broken sword.

**Languages.** You know Common and one additional language of your choice. Typical creatures of this heritage choose Dwarvish.

### STONE HERITAGE TRAITS

Characters who choose this heritage were raised with the values and traditions of the stone dwarven clans.

Regardless of time or circumstance, little changes in the great halls of the stone dwarf clans. Above all else, the residents of these ancient cities value tradition and champion the deeds of the ancestors who allowed their people to find safety within the earth. From infancy, the people of the stone are instructed in the traditional dwarven arts of smithing, metalworking and masonry. Many happily devote their lives to mining and working precious metals beneath the surface of the world.

Though members of the stone dwarf clans take great pride in their society, life in their cities is far from easy. The splendid caverns and mines occupied by the stone dwarves are under constant attack by other subterranean denizens. As children are raised to wield a mining pick, they are also taught to wield the armaments of their people against the many enemies that seek to claim generations of dwarven treasures for themselves.

**Alignment.** Choose one of the alignments approved by your GM. Typical creatures of this heritage tend towards Lawful or Good alignments.

**Dwarven Weapon Training.** You have Proficiency with the battleaxe, handaxe, light hammer, and warhammer.

**Dwarven Armor Training.** You have Proficiency with light and medium armor. Additionally, your speed is not reduced by wearing heavy armor—regardless of your STR score.

**Tool Proficiency.** You gain Proficiency with the artisan's tools of your choice: smith's tools, brewer's supplies, or mason's tools.

**Eye for Quality.** Whenever you make an ability check related to the origin of metalwork or masonry, you can add your PB to the roll. If you have Proficiency in a relevant skill or tool, you add double your PB to the roll.

**Languages.** You know Common and one additional language of your choice. Typical creatures of this heritage choose Dwarvish.

## ELF

Elves are an ancient people, with deep ancestral ties to magic realms populated by immortal creatures. In several cultural accounts, elves are regarded as the first mortal beings to ever walk the world. Some elves claim these first elves were themselves immortal beings, made mortal so they could be stewards of the newborn land. Others believe mortality to be a punishment inflicted on their ancestors for some long-forgotten transgression. Whatever the case, most elven settlements were fully established long before the beginning of other culture's living memory. These beautiful cities are often situated in places inherently rich in magic, within quiet groves deep within ancient forests or atop mist shrouded peaks that touch the sky.

Despite their long history, surprisingly little has changed about the elven people. Perhaps due to their long lifespans, even elves born to communities far removed from elven cities eventually feel compelled to visit the natural spaces so beloved by their ancestors and are driven to seek companionship amongst other creatures who share their long lives.

### ELF LINEAGE TRAITS

Your elf character has certain hereditary traits dictated by their lineage.

**Age.** Although elves reach physical maturity at about the same age as humans, mental and emotional faculties reach full maturity around the age of 100. Elves can live to be 750 years old.

**Size.** Elves range from under 5 to over 6 feet tall and tend towards slender builds. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Night Vision.** You have superior vision in naturally dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Keen Senses.** You have Proficiency in the Perception skill.

**Magic Ancestry.** You have advantage on saves against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

**Trance.** Elves don't need to sleep. Instead, they enter a meditative trance state, remaining semiconscious, for 4 hours a day. You can choose whether or not you can dream while meditating. After resting in this way, you gain the same benefit that other creatures do from 8 hours of sleep.

## HERITAGE OPTIONS

The following options are most common among elven heroes.

### CLOUD HERITAGE TRAITS

Characters who choose this heritage were raised with the values and traditions of the Cloud Elf communities.

Many accounts concerning the origins of the elves have been spun, and almost all are deeply intertwined with tales of magic. In a time long lost to memory, a group of elves clung fast to these tales and named themselves mages, stewards of the magical forces that coursed through the cosmos. These elves were the first of the cloud elf tribes and the towers they built to study the mysteries of the skies eventually became the heart of thriving cities.

Though many elves still dwell within these towering cities, striving for an ever greater understanding of magic, people from all over the world have been drawn into these cloud communities—eager to study the arcane arts at the finest magic academies or simply to dwell among kindred spirits for whom magic is the center of their world.

**Alignment.** Choose one of the alignments approved by your GM. Typical creatures of this heritage tend towards Lawful or Neutral alignments.

**Touch of Magic.** Choose a school of magic for which you have cultivated an affinity. You learn a cantrip of your choice from that school of magic. When you reach 3rd level, choose a 1st-level spell from that same school of magic, and when you reach 5th level, choose a 3rd-level spell from that same school. You learn these spells and can cast them at their lowest level. Once you cast one of these spells, you must finish a long rest before you can cast that spell again using this feature. Your spellcasting ability for these spells is CHA, INT, or WIS (choose which during character creation).

**World of Wonders.** You have Proficiency in the Arcana skill.

**Languages.** You know Common and two additional languages of your choice. Typical creatures of this heritage choose Elvish and Draconic.

### GROVE HERITAGE TRAITS

Characters who chose this heritage were raised with the values and traditions of the grove elf communities.

When elves first walked the world, many chose to settle in the bounteous forests, drawn by the primordial music of the trees and beasts that dwelled among them. These early elves were the first grove elves, who established communities that intertwined harmoniously with the natural world—rather than seeking dominion over them. For ages, these communities have preserved the forests they call home, communing with nature in sacred groves, and taking up arms against those who dare to claim ownership of the land.

As time marches on and natural spaces are threatened by ever-growing populations, all manner of creatures have come to share the values of the first grove elves. All whose hearts are open to the beasts and plants of the wild are welcome to settle among the people of the grove.

**Alignment.** Choose one of the alignments approved by your GM. Typical creatures of this heritage tend towards Good or Neutral alignments.

**Beast Affinity.** Using gestures and sounds, you can communicate simple ideas with beasts, and you have advantage on checks made to interact with nonhostile beasts.

**Canopy Walker.** You have a climbing speed equal to your walking speed.

**Elf Weapon Training.** You have Proficiency with the longsword, shortsword, shortbow, and longbow.

**Languages.** You know Common and one additional languages of your choice. Typical creatures of this heritage choose Elvish.

## HUMAN

By most accounts, humans are the youngest people of the world, but their innate tenacity and adaptability has allowed them to quickly spread across countless worlds. Humans are incredibly diverse in appearance and culture, so it's not surprising their origin stories are similarly plentiful, and few beings can answer when they first appeared. Despite their tangled origins, humans inevitably leave their stamp on the world wherever they go, seemingly possessed by a natural drive to fill their short lives with long lasting achievements.

Humans are found all over the world, living in all manners of communities. Among their differences in manner, the only thing they seem to share is a unique aptitude for learning and a burning desire to succeed at everything they do.

### HUMAN LINEAGE TRAITS

Your human character has certain hereditary traits dictated by their lineage.

**Age.** Humans reach adulthood in their late teenage years and rarely live to be more than 100 years old.

**Size.** Humans vary widely in height and weight, but most adults range between 5 feet to 6 feet tall. If you play a human of average height, your size is Medium. If you choose to play a human shorter than 5 feet, you can choose your size to be Small.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Ambitious.** You gain Proficiency in one skill of your choice, and you gain one talent of your choice. This talent can be from any of the talent lists, but you must meet the talent's prerequisites (if any are required).

### HERITAGE OPTIONS

The following heritage options are most common among human adventurers.

## NOMADIC HERITAGE

Characters who choose this heritage hail from a tight-knit community that does not live continually in the same place, but regularly moves to and from different areas. Your people may do so to follow seasonally available plants and game, follow established trade routes, or for a more unique reason. Whatever the case, people of nomadic heritage are well suited to the rigors of travel and often possess an intuitive understanding of environmental cycles and the hazards or benefits that come with them.

**Alignment.** Choose one of the alignments approved by your GM. Typical creatures of this heritage tend towards Neutral or Lawful alignments.

**Resilient.** You have advantage on checks or saves made to resist debilitating weather effects, such as those caused by extreme heat or cold. Additionally, when you complete a short rest, you can reduce your exhaustion level by one. Once used, you cannot reduce your exhaustion level in this way again until you complete a long rest.

**Traveler.** You have Proficiency in the Survival skill.

**Languages.** You know Common and one additional language of your choice. Depending on the regions your people frequent or the kinds of communities your people trade with, a typical nomadic character would choose Typical creatures of this heritage would choose Dwarvish or Elvish.

## COSMOPOLITAN HERITAGE

Characters who choose this heritage are citizens of the world whose values, interests, and ideas are influenced by exposure to many different types of peoples and cultures. Most commonly creatures of this heritage hail from major cities populated by people from many different parts of the world. Alternatively, it could mean you spent your formative years moving from place to place, immersing yourself in the unique customs and traditions of each community you lived with.

**Alignment.** Choose one of the alignments approved by your GM. Typical creatures of this heritage tend towards Chaotic or Good alignments.

**Street Smarts.** While in a city or other urban environment, you and your group can't become lost except by magical means. While you are in such environments, you also can't be surprised, except when you are asleep or otherwise incapacitated.

**Worldly Wisdom.** Whenever you make a check related to understanding the purpose or significance of a building, rite, or object from a culture you aren't familiar with, you can add your PB to the roll. If you have Proficiency in a relevant skill or tool, you add double your PB to the roll.

**Languages.** You know Common and two additional languages of your choice. Typical creatures of this heritage would choose Dwarvish and Elvish.



# BACKGROUNDS

Your choice of background helps define your character’s personal history (also called backstory) prior to taking up the mantle of an adventurer. When choosing a background, consider how it plays into your heritage and your choice of class. Did your life as a soldier naturally pave the way for you to become a fighter? Did a religious experience pull you away from a community that holds a different faith?

Your choice of background gives you access to additional proficiencies, talents, equipment, and other benefits like additional languages.

## ELEMENTS OF A BACKGROUND

This section breaks down the various components of a background.

### SKILL PROFICIENCIES

Each background gives a character Proficiency in two skills. If your character would already gain the same skill Proficiency from their class, lineage, or heritage features, you can choose a different skill Proficiency instead.

### ADDITIONAL PROFICIENCIES OR LANGUAGES

Most backgrounds grant Proficiency with one or more tools (detailed in “Equipment & Magic Items”) or allow a character to learn additional languages (see “Languages”).

### EQUIPMENT

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

### TALENT

Each background allows a character to choose one talent from a short list of options. These options are typically a mix from all three talent lists, so they represent a unique opportunity to grab a talent from a list your class may not have access to in the future.

### ADVENTURING MOTIVATION

A background contains suggested adventuring motivations based on your background. These motivations help inform your reasons for becoming an adventurer. You can pick a motivation, roll dice to determine it randomly, or use the suggestions as inspiration for creating your own motivation.

### CUSTOMIZING A BACKGROUND

You might want to tweak some of the features of a background so it better fits your character or campaign setting. To customize a background, you can replace one Talent list with any other, choose any two skills, and choose a total of two tool proficiencies or languages from the sample backgrounds. You can either use the equipment package from your background or spend coins on gear as described in the Equipment section. If you spend coin, you can’t also take the equipment package suggested for your class. Finally, choose one adventuring motivation. If you can’t find a feature that matches your desired background, work with your GM to create one.

# SCHOLAR

Whether enrolled in an institution of learning or apprenticed to a distinguished sage, you have spent years researching a particular branch of study. Time spent immersed in academic pursuits has honed your mind, allowing you to view the world through an intellectual lens afforded to few people.

Perhaps you are a new graduate eager to learn more of the world, a retired teacher ready for new adventures, or a discredited researcher driven to prove your theories. Regardless of the exact path, your way has always been lit by your keen mind and driven by an unquenchable thirst for knowledge.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Two skills of your choice from the following: Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion.

**Additional Proficiencies:** Learn two additional languages of your choice or gain Proficiency with one type of tool or vehicle relevant to your field of study.

**Equipment:** A bottle of ink, a quill, a small knife, a reference book on a highly specific subject of your choice, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

### TALENT

As a scholar, you have spent time researching particular academic subjects at an institute of learning or under the tutelage of a knowledgeable teacher. Choose a talent from the following list to represent this experience: Polyglot, School Specialization, or Trade Skills.

### ADVENTURING MOTIVATION

Most scholars happily spend their lives cloistered within libraries, laboratories, and workshops, immersed in academia. When you begin your adventures, consider why you have chosen—or been driven—to leave the comforts of a traditional lifestyle behind to heed the call of the unknown.

#### d8 Adventuring Motivation

- 1 Adventuring supplies me with the coin I need to fund my research.
- 2 Adventuring allows me to gain field experience relevant to my field of study.
- 3 Adventuring is a way to actually experience and see the things I’ve read in books.
- 4 Adventuring is a way to make ends meet until I can prove the validity of my research.
- 5 Adventuring allows me to uncover lost or forbidden knowledge not found within typical institutions.
- 6 Adventuring is the best way to collect data for my patron or employer.
- 7 Adventuring may lead me to the answers I desperately seek.
- 8 Adventuring is a way to escape a life of academia I never wanted.

## SOLDIER

Whether in the employ of a state military or tasked with defending a community, you have spent a significant portion of time risking your own life to defend others. Surviving such dangerous work has demanded rigorous training, discipline, and sacrificing comforts that most people take for granted.

Perhaps you are a veteran searching for a new purpose, a deserter running from the atrocities of war, or a fresh-faced patriot pursuing new ways to fight for your cause. Whatever course you took, you have been forever changed by bearing the heavy weight of duty.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Two skills of your choice from the following: Animal Handling, Athletics, Medicine, or Survival.

**Additional Proficiencies:** Gain proficiency with land or water vehicles and one tool of your choice.

**Equipment:** A symbol of rank (like a letter, badge, or identification tags), a mess kit, a pack of playing cards or a set of dice, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

## TALENT

As a soldier, you have received special training or honed natural capabilities that have kept you safe during your service. Choose a talent from the following list to represent this experience: Armor Training, Combat Casting, or Combat Conditioning.

## ADVENTURING MOTIVATION

As a soldier, you are well accustomed to the dangers and demands of an adventurer's lifestyle, but you must consider how your military responsibilities have altered to accommodate your new path. When you begin your adventures, consider why your duties as a soldier have ended—or changed—to allow for less-regimented pursuits.

### d8 Adventuring Motivation

- 1 Adventuring is a way to support myself after being dishonorably discharged from military service.
- 2 Adventuring is a way to continue fighting, even though the war is over.
- 3 Adventuring is a way to keep protecting others since those I used to protect are now gone.
- 4 Adventuring is a way to employ the skills I learned in military training, without having to dedicate my life to the military.
- 5 Adventuring is a way to perform special missions for those I serve.
- 6 Adventuring is a way to take justice into my own hands without concern for policy or politics.
- 7 Adventuring is the return to action I've craved since my retirement.
- 8 Adventuring is a way to hone my skills before I can return my life as a soldier.

## TALENTS

**Talents** represent the specific ways an adventurer has improved over the course of their adventures. Talents are divided into three categories: magic talents, martial talents, and technical talents. Your class typically determines which talent lists you have access to. Talents are gained in two main ways:

- When a character chooses their background during character creation, they select one talent from a list of options provided in the background.
- When a character class grants an Improvement, they can choose to increase a single ability score by 2, two different ability scores by 1, or choose a talent from the list their class has access to—assuming the character meets any necessary prerequisites.

## MAGIC TALENTS

Most magic talents affect a character's spellcasting abilities, but they also include features that strengthen the mind and defend against harmful magic effects.

### COMBAT CASTING

*Prerequisite:* The ability to cast spells

Experience on the field of battle has given you superior focus to cast your spells. You gain the following benefits:

- You automatically succeed on CON saves you make to maintain your concentration on a spell if the DC is lower than your spellcasting DC.
- When a hostile creature first enters a space within 5 feet of you or provokes an opportunity attack from you, you can use your reaction to cast a cantrip.
- You can use a shield or weapon you are holding as a spellcasting focus—as normal, you can use the same hand or hands holding this focus to perform somatic spell components.

### ELEMENTAL SAVANT

*Prerequisite:* The ability to cast at least one spell that deals damage

Choose one of the following elemental damage types: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. Whenever you cast a spell that deals damage, you can decide to convert the damage type of that spell to your chosen elemental damage type. You must decide to convert the damage type when you declare you are casting the spell.

Additionally, when you roll damage for a spell that naturally uses your chosen elemental damage type—not spells you convert to your chosen type—you can reroll any damage dice results of 1 and you must take the new result.

You can select this talent multiple times.

## MENTAL FORTITUDE

Through rigorous mental exercise, you have fortified yourself against mind-altering effects. You gain the following benefits:

- Once per long rest when you fail an INT, WIS, or CHA save you can choose to reroll the save and take the new result.
- If you are affected by an ongoing spell or magical effect due to failing an INT, WIS, or CHA save, you can repeat the save at the end of each of your turns, ending the effect on a success—even if the ongoing magical effect would not typically allow you to do so.

## SCHOOL SPECIALIZATION

*Prerequisite: The ability to cast spells*

Choose one of the eight schools of magic: abjuration, conjuration, divination, enchantment, evocation, illusion, necromancy, or transmutation. You gain the following benefits:

- Whenever you cast a spell from that school that requires you to make an attack roll, you add +1 to that roll.
- Whenever you cast a spell from that school that requires a target to make a save versus your spell save DC, the DC increases by 1.
- If you use a spellbook to cast your spells, the gold and time you must spend copying a spell of that school into your spellbook is halved.

You can select this talent multiple times.

## MARTIAL TALENTS

Martial talents affect a character's combat abilities, including enhancements to overall fitness and the ability to wield weaponry.

### ARMOR TRAINING

You have trained to master the use of armor. You gain Proficiency with light armor. If you are already proficient with light armor when you select this talent, you gain Proficiency with medium armor and shields. If you are already proficient with medium armor when you select this talent, you gain Proficiency with heavy armor.

You can select this talent multiple times.

### ARMORED COMBATANT

While you are wearing heavy armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC and each instance of bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage that you take from nonmagical attacks is reduced by your PB.

### COMBAT CONDITIONING

You have endured extensive training to withstand the physical rigors of combat, making you harder to cut down.

- Your HP maximum increases by 2 for each level you currently have.

- Whenever you gain a level (including the level at which you gain this talent, if applicable), your new Hit Die is one size larger than your class typically grants. For example, a wizard with this talent would gain a d8 for their new Hit Die instead of a d6. If you already use d12 Hit Die when you gain this talent, this feature has no effect.

## HAND-TO-HAND

Through regular practice wrestling, boxing, or engaging in some other form of martial arts, you have mastered techniques that allow you to efficiently fight without the use of weapons. You gain the following benefits:

- You are proficient with your unarmed strikes.
- Your unarmed strikes deal bludgeoning damage equal to 1d6 + your STR.
- You have advantage on ability checks made to initiate or escape a grapple.

## TECHNICAL TALENTS

Technical talents affect a character's noncombat abilities, granting utility-based improvements to social encounters, exploration, and object interactions.

### POLYGLOT

You have studied language extensively, allowing you to effortlessly communicate in multiple languages and puzzle out critical information from languages you don't know. When you select this talent, you gain the following benefits:

- Learn three languages of your choice—none of which are Common.
- You have advantage on CHA ability checks made to interact with nonhostile creatures for whom any of those three languages is their primary language.
- Whenever you make an ability check related to understanding the meaning of a verbal or written language you don't know, you can add your PB to the roll. If you have Proficiency in a relevant skill or tool, you add double your PB to the roll.

### TRADE SKILLS

You have honed the skills necessary to perform a particular job or profession. When you select this talent, decide what that profession is and then gain the following benefits:

- Gain Proficiency with one skill and one type of tool or vehicle relevant to your chosen profession. Alternatively, gain Proficiency with two types of tools or vehicles relevant to your chosen profession.
- Provided you have access to the necessary equipment and customers, you can spend a day plying your trade and expect to be paid 2 gp or paid with goods and services of equivalent value. You can select this talent multiple times.