

~ World-Building Master List ~

World Basics:

What type of world are you working in? Is it our world, a reflection of our world, or something entirely different?

How is this world similar to ours? How is it different?

What is this world rooted in? What makes it go round? Is it science, magic, religion, etc.? What themes can you use to explore this?

What area of this world will you be focusing on? Are there plans for subsequent books, which focus on different areas? Or are you centring your story around one small area?

Geography and Topography:

What does your world physically look like? What colour is the sky? What are the temperatures like? How many suns and moons?

Have any natural disasters taken place? How did (or will) they affect your world?

How many continents are there? How many countries? How big is each country? Is the country open or isolated?

What is the topography of each country? The climate? How might this effect the people who live there?

Which country borders which (if any)? What relations do they have? What might these countries have to fight over, as far as natural resources?

People and Culture:

What types of people inhabit this world? Are they human, or something else?

If they have magic, what type is it? What are the limitations and strengths?

Think about your magic system. Is it spoken, written, emotionally linked? Where did it come from? How long has magic been harnessed? Who can use magic? Are there different types of magic users? If so, what are they? Which magic is the most powerful? What groups exist that utilize magic, and how do they feel towards it? Are they in competition with other groups?

What are the characteristics of your people(s)? How are they similar and different from one another?

What abilities might these people have? How do these abilities manifest?

How many races are you working with?

Where do they live? What is their culture centered around? What are the roles that people fulfill in these cultures? What jobs are revered, and what jobs are looked down upon? What do these people prize? What is the interaction between families like – friends, romantic links, rivals? What are the rules for marriage? What are their customs, and where did these customs originate? When is someone considered of age, and what is their rite of passage? What are the responsibilities of adult and child?

What is inherent to each race? What does their place in your world look like?

What is their technology like? Fashion? Art? Sports? What do they do for fun?

Have any of your cultures borrowed from other cultures? What does this look like?

Government and Religion:

What is the governing system of your country(s) like? Who rules? Who votes? Who makes decisions?

How fair is this system? Are the people satisfied with it? Is the governing body doing their job well?

How long has this system been in establishment?

What does this system govern exactly? What affairs do they shy away from, and what do they have too much control over?

What are the roads like? Schooling systems? Healthcare? Military? How well does the government defend and care for its citizens?

Are there parties seeking to overthrow this government? If so, what are they and how did they originate?

Is religion a part of government?

Are there several religions or just one? What are they, and what are their practices? Where do people worship?

Is faith important to your people and characters? Does it bring them a sense of peace? How does it play into their lives?

Jobs and Economy:

What is the economy like? Is the country poor or wealthy – and what amount of wealth is shared with the people?

Are there taxes, or what might be taxed? How do these taxes help to run the society (or not)?

What form of money and/or bartering does your country(s) use? How is pay determined?

What classes might divide (or bring together) your society?

How are these classes achieved? Can someone rise in rank, or lower in rank?

What jobs are integral to your society? Who might hold these jobs?

How important is education in the workforce?

How old are people when they begin working, and how old are they when they stop working? Does this connect to their class and/or education level?

History and Architecture:

How does your country(s) history play into their everyday life?

Are the people aware of their history, or is it lost or hidden?

Has your country(s) been ruled by more than one body? If so, how has this change of power affected your people and the current society?

How did your people get to where they are now? What mistakes have they made? What mistakes have they collectively forgotten about and might make again?

What is the architecture like? Simple? Complex? Practical?

What materials are used to build? How readily available are they?

Why are these materials used specifically? Does the weather/terrain affect the materials used?

What is the artwork like? How important is art in your society?

What other materials are used in your society? What is considered beautiful?

Flora and Fauna:

What are the plants of your world like?

Where are certain plants found? What plants are rare or valuable?

What may these plants be used for?

What animals inhabit your world?

Which animals are plentiful? Rare? Extinct? Prized?

What is the relationship between your animals and people?

Myths and Legends:

What myths surround your people, and what are their ideas towards these myths?

Are any of your races considered a myth? If so, why are they in hiding?

Are there forgotten myths that suddenly come to life, or have another affect on your world?

What mythic creatures exist (whether in fact or fiction)?

What myths are scattered with truth, and which are simply stories?

What is a mythical being's reaction to mythology? Do they think themselves misrepresented?

Arms and War:

What arms are used in your world, and where?

What training do warriors receive? Which people can become warriors?

Are there arms that are used with, or interact with, magic? How so?

What are wars like? Are wars common, or not? Who might be planning a war, and what weapons would they use in it?

Is armour used? If so, how practical is it? What is its design? Its weaknesses?

What other clothing might fighters use? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

Language:

What languages are used in your world? How will you portray them in writing?

Consider this: will you use phrases, singular words, sentences, letters? How far in depth do you want to go? What language might your fictional language emulate? What will the grammar be like? The punctuation and accent marks? What is pronunciation like, and how does it change?

What is the common tongue(s), and how many people speak it?

What is writing like? Who knows how to write?

How important is language and writing to your people(s)?

How does language connect to names, places, events, etc.?

How does language in your world change over time, or in different areas?

Characters: (Also see my Character Worksheet)

Who is your protagonist? Is there more than one?

Who is your villain? Is there more than one? Will your story have a villain?

Who are your secondary and side characters? How important are they for the plot?

What is the relationship between your characters? How do they connect to one another?

What is each character's motivation? What is each character's downfall?

Who are the major figures in your society(s)? How do they play into your story?

Where do your characters fit into society? How important (or unimportant) are they seen as?

How does each character drive the story forward? What happens to each character in the end?