Build-A-World Workshop

By Jenai May

			V	vorld name,	/type		
HIGH FANTASY low	HARD SCI-FI soft	ALT-HISTORY	DYSTOPIAN	HISTORICAL	FUTURISTIC	PUNK	
			ТІ	HE GEOGR	АРНҮ		
GENERA	L FEAT	TURES – Mou	intains, Sea	s, Lakes, Riv	vers, Deserts	, Islands, Craters,	Canyons
FLORA –	Trees	, Shrubs, Fun	gi/Moss,	1	FAUNA – Roc	dents, Herding An	imals, Birds,
Seaweed	Seaweed, Fruit, Medicinal, Enchanted			1	Fish, Reptiles	, Magical or Myth	nical

	rctic, Temperate, Significant Weather Patterns
THE SKIES – Suns, Moons, Cloud Types, Sl	ky Color, Nearby Planets, Comets, Scent of Air
IINERALS – Volcanic, crystals, building	RESOURCES – Corn crops, fuel types,
naterials, dyes, medicinal, sands	
	lumber, dyes, fabric, fibers, paper
	lumber, dyes, fabric, fibers, paper content
	content
	content
	content
	content

How long is a year? A day? Major seasona divided?	isons? Where do they occur and for how long? al weather events? How is the year tracked and
	G LANDMARKS
SEAS, LANDMASSES, BOUNDARIES	CITIES, SETTLEMENTS, KINGDOMS

SHRINES, TEMPLES, MONUMENTS	NATURAL WONDERS, TOURIST SITES
	-
MUNDANE	PEOPLE STUFF
HISTORIC ERAS – Examples: Ancient, Mediev Revolution	al, Renaissance, Enlightenment, Tech

EVENTS THAT LINGER – Pompeii's	WARS GONE BY – Examples: Revolutions,
eruption, Witch Trials, The Black Death	Civil Wars, World Wars, Emu Wars
SOCIAL/HISTORIC INFLUENCES ON STORY –	Corruption, Religious Rifts, Discrimination

HIDDEN HISTORY – Prehistory, Unrecorded, [Destroyed History, Coverups
CONSPIRACIES – The Black Death came	CORRUPTION – The King poisoned his
from space, Pyramids were built by	cousin, the headmaster was bribed for
from space, Pyramids were built by demonic rats	cousin, the headmaster was bribed for admission
demonic rats	

THE HISTORIC RECORD – Who records and stu	dules history: where are records kept: is
there a system? What is the oldest record? W	ho wrote it? How old is it? How was it
recorded? Can modern people read it?	
POLITICS FO	OR THE WIN
Choosing a Leader	Divisions of Power – Lords, Serfs, Banks,
Choosing a Leader Conquer, Royal Lines, Voting, Tyranny	Divisions of Power – Lords, Serfs, Banks, CEOs? Religious and Military elite?

Government Nuts & Bolts	Political Tensions	
Houses? Factions? Schedules? Terms?	Agendas, Checks & Balances, Corrupt?	
POLITICAL PURPOSE AND STORY INFLUENCE What is its influence on the world around it	CE – What does this political system stand for? ?	

GODS AND GHOSTS

Religions – How many? Which is primary?	The Afterlife – Predominant afterlife
Are there conflicts between them?	belief? Punishment & Reward? Ghosts?
Deities – Is there one God? Multiple? List	Superstitions – What influences luck?
those most relevant to the story (flip over	Black cats? 4-Leaf Clover? Are there days
to list more)	to be wary of?

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS – What is the central message of this religion? How old is this religion?
Written religious texts? What do these texts teach? Is the content restricted to a select few
or widely available to everyone?

RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE – How are the teachings and beliefs passed along? Is there
church/temple training, a religious school, oral bardic tradition, or secret societies? Who
are the leaders? How are they selected? If there is a hierarchy, how is it designed? How do
common people interact with the church/leaders?

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE & STORY IMPACT — What is this religion's influence on society and		
politics? How could this religion, its leaders, and practices impact the story and its		
characters?		

A MAGICAL REALM

Magic Types – Elemental, Blood,	Becoming Magical – Born with magic?
Mysteries, Time, Science (alchemy),	Inherited? Non-human? Is it taught and
Psychic, Space, Light, Dark	learned? Do potions grant it? How? Why?
Ethics – Rules governing how to use	Reputation of Magic – Feared or revered?
Ethics – Rules governing how to use magic? Regulations? Repercussions?	Reputation of Magic – Feared or revered? Accepted or shunned? Common or rare?

INNER WORKINGS – What is magic's source? What are its nuts & bolts? Is there a spiritual
component? Magical shapeshifting or invisibility? How does that work? What is magic's
relationship with time?

MAGIC EXAMPLE #1 – Describe an instance of magic that is crucial to character or story
development. Describe the magic and the person or creature that worked it. Why was
magic used? How did they do it? What force(s) drive the magic? How does this magic
significantly affect the character(s) and/or plot?

MAGIC EXAMPLE #2 – Describe an instance of magic-gone-wrong in this world. Why was
the magic used, and by whom? How did they do it? Why did it go wrong, and how? How
does a falling out with magic affect characters and/or the environment and setting? Can the
magic be resolved? How and by whom?

LISTING MAGICAL THISES & THATS

Sticks and Stones – Natural magical items,	Star Helpers – List celestial influences:
such as rocks, crystals, seeds, woods	stars, constellations, moon, comets
Tools – List tools the magical system uses,	Magical in Name – What are wielders of
such as a wand, staff, cauldron, goblets,	magic called and how do they differ?
such as a wand, staff, cauldron, goblets, tarot cards, candles	magic called and how do they differ? Witches, wizards, mages, sorcerers

Magical Sites & Temples – List magical	Symbols & Such – List and/or draw sacred
locations such as stone circles, temples,	and magical symbols. Use the back of this
groves, caves	page for extra scribbling space.

From the Bestiary – Dragon, fairy,	The Stuff of Legends – Who was	
gryphon Where do they live? Are they	immortalized for their feats of magic?	
hunted? Do they play well with others?	When and where? Stories and songs about	
Diets? Stories and myths?	them? Are they inspirations or warnings?	

SCIENCY STUFF

Remarkable Feats – Most impactful tech	Origins of Discovery – What influenced
in this world? In the story? How did it	tech? Alien contact? Wars? Medical
develop and why?	necessity? Was it sheer luck?
Ye Olde Tech – Obsolete past tech. Is it	Societal Effects – Does the science/tech
missed? What replaced it? Why?	unite people or divide them? How? Why?

NOT OF THIS WORLD – What about this tech or science is fictional? How does it differ from	
ours? How is it similar? How might it blow our minds? If we received this tech here and	
now, what would happen?	

LAB LISTS

Staying in Touch – How people	From Here to There – The latest
communicate. Audio, written, video,	transportation methods. Flying cars,
holograms, social media	spaceships, hoverboards
Home Doodads – Cool gadgets for every	Medical Marvels – How has medicine
room What is their purpose? Who owns	changed? Transporter treatments,
them? Cons?	scanners, bio implants
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Gadgets Galore – In schools, offices, at	Entertainment Us! – Movies, books,
work Who owns them? Cultural effects?	music, gaming, sports, events, arenas

Running it All – What are the energy and fuel sources? Resource scarcity? How are	
resources acquired? Are there batteries? How long do they run? Environmental impact?	
Fuel efficiency?	

Behind the Curtain – Who are the scientists, inventors, and designers? Historic or artistic
influence on design or function? Manufacturing process? Employment? Are robots doing it?