



TOP-DOWN WORLDBUILDING WORKSHEET

FROM FORGING FANTASY REALMS BY M. D. PRESLEY

A how-to article on this worksheet can be found [HERE](#).

WORLD NAME:

CREATOR:

ANALOGUE CULTURES

Analogue Culture: Real-life cultures that the creator emulates in their work and then applies their fantasy conceits to.

Toehold Details:

Descriptors that specifically trigger the assumption of an analogue culture and time period, and therefore help the audience to mentally populate the scene.

What analogue culture(s) will you be drawing from? What time period in that culture? What are some defining toehold details of that culture?

FANTASY CONCEITS

Fantasy Conceit: What the creator intends to explore in the world, it is where the constructed world deviates from the real world, usually in the form of geography, biology, physics, metaphysics, technology, or culture.

Terra De Facto: The implicit understanding that anything that is not accounted for by a fantasy conceit must therefore abide by the rules of the primary world.

Describe your fantasy conceits for each section. If one does not apply, terra de facto is in effect and you should move on.

Make sure to include any pertinent abilities, limitations, weaknesses, and costs for your fantasy conceits.

GEOGRAPHY



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BIOLOGY

Biology deals with the living things in this world that generally abide by the laws of nature. Each creature or plant generally reflects their environment.

Physics generally means magic. Is the magic hard or soft? Is it ascendant or descendant? Is it well known within the world? Who can wield it?

Metaphysics deals with deities, demi-deities (angels and demons), ghosts and the undead, and if the soul exists after death.

PHYSICS (MAGIC!)

METAPHYSICS



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TECHNOLOGY

Technological levels are often used as toehold details to orient audiences to the analogue culture.

CULTURE

Many cultural changes can be due to other fantasy conceits. You should only list the changes you wish to impart to the analogue cultures as a fantasy conceit here rather than those that occur because of other conceits.

And remember, no culture is monolithic.

Prime Mover: A conceit that cannot be removed without the story world falling apart.

PRIME MOVER

Which of your conceits is the most important, such that the other conceits are often a byproduct of it?



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ANTECEDENTS

List what each fantasy conceit will require to exist. For instance, if magic was created by the gods, then gods must therefore exist.

Geography:

Biology:

Physics (Magic!):

Metaphysics:

Technology:

Culture:

EXTRAPOLATIONS

Concisely list how the world has deviated (if at all) from our world due to these fantasy conceits.

Geography:

Biology:

Physics (Magic!):

Metaphysics:

Technology:

Culture:



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OUTPUT DETAILS

Keeping your analogue culture(s) in mind, list several specific details as to how they have been changed due to the following conceits:

Geography:

Biology:

Physics (Magic!):

Metaphysics:

Technology:

ANCIENT HISTORY

What happened in the world's ancient history either because of or to cause your fantasy conceits?
Remember your prime mover and if it is involved.



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RECENT HISTORY

What are the important events that immediately precede the events of your story?

ADDITIONAL NOTES