



# BOTTOM-UP WORLDBUILDING WORKSHEET

FROM FORGING FANTASY REALMS BY M. D. PRESLEY

A how-to article on this worksheet can be found **HERE**.

**WORLD NAME:**

**CREATOR:**

## OUTPUT DETAILS

List all the things that cannot possibly exist in the real world that appear in your work. Try to keep examples from the first half if you have an existing story. Be brief.

## 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?



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## ORDERING

Place all your output details in the applicable sections. If a section does not apply, you should move on.

Geography concerns the planet itself and includes climates, biomes, and the general terrain.

### GEOGRAPHY

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.

### BIOLOGY



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## PHYSICS (MAGIC!)

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

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

## TECHNOLOGY

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



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## CULTURE

Culture involves human societies, their customs, and worldviews. This includes not only the main characters' culture, but the surrounding cultures as well.

Sentient non-humans most likely have cultures as well.

And remember, no human culture is monolithic.

## GROUPING & INTERCONNECTION

Group your details together based upon their similarities. These similarities can be physical or thematic. It is okay if there are multiple groups in each section.

Now consider your groups. Are there some that are linked to groups in other sections? Do some cause others?

**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.

## FANTASY CONCEITS

Each grouping should constitute a rough fantasy conceit of your world. Now it's time to codify them.



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## FANATSY CONCEITS (pt. 2)

Describe each of your groupings in a sentence or two.

Geography:

Biology:

Physics (Magic!):

Metaphysics:

Technology:

Culture:

## 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:



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## **FANTASY CONCEITS (pt. 3)**

Briefly list the 1) Abilities, 2) Limitations, 3) Weaknesses, and 4) Costs for each of your fantasy conceits. If one is not applicable, move on.



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## FANTASY FUNCTIONS

**Fantasy Function:** When analogue cultures are filtered through fantasy conceits to populate the created world with its output details.

**Streamlining:** Part of Sanderson's third law of magic in which worldbuilding details should be accounted for by already existing fantasy conceits instead of creating whole new conceits.

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

With your analogue cultures and fantasy conceits in mind, you should be able to extrapolate your existing details into underlying rules for your world.

Going forward, internal consistency can be maintained by ensuring all deviations from the rules of the real world abide by these existing fantasy functions.

When considering adding new deviations, it is wise to remember the concept of streamlining

## PRIME MOVER

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

## 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