

CHARACTER PLANNER

HOW TO USE THIS SYSTEM

The core idea to this planner is to guide you through the creation of a killer backstory that it a blast to play. It gives you a great foundation for dynamic roleplaying and character development. Perhaps more importantly not so much history that the character becomes a challenge to remain flexible and develop over time. Great characters are story driven.

Additionally, if supplied to your Dungeon Master, this page could also provide them with the tools to weave your character into the story you collectively tell at the table.

BASICS

These details create an image of your character to work from. Start with a background found in D&D 5th Edition Player's Handbook or another source you use in your games. This serves as a great starting point for character creation and arguably a better starting point than choosing a class as your characters life would likely determine their background.

Theme

This is a simple theme that will be the basis for your character's journey and who they are. Use this to influence your ideas for everything from here forward. This is expressed as a word or simple concept. "Survival" or "The addictive nature of power." This might be their most important to telling a story with your character that has gravity and an arc attached to it. Like any great story, there is a moral, or reason to tell it, in the first place.

BACKSTORY PLANNING

State the Status Quo

This is the world that your character came from and why it isn't the life they are living as an adventurer, or simply, why it isn't right for them. Include their main activity, their surroundings and why it isn't for them. "A butcher in a coastal town of who runs a struggling business" or "A student of a combat school bound for the front lines."

Create the Kickoff

This is the event that changed their status quo, usually some kind of problem, often external forces, that caused their path to change. "Their town was invaded by an underground group of sorcerers." or "Their mentor disappeared without a trace."

Resist Destiny

This is what made your character resist being the one to solve the problem that the kickoff introduced. This step helps to bring a sense of realism and make your character relatable as it is rare to experience a life change with complete ease. This can be external or internal and is easily phrased as a question. "Did they move to the next town and live in fear, or find a way to take down the sorcerers for good?" or "Did they accept their new hostile replacement teacher or seek the truth about their mentor's disappearance?". Whichever way, there was a choice to be made, and like all those destined to be heroes, they made the tough choice.

Call to Adventure

This is when the adventure begins. Your character accepts the call to action, leaves whatever comfort they might have, and ventures into a new world. "They sought out powerful allies in their struggle against the sorcerers." or "They pack their things, to seek out their mentor in and perhaps find their mentor's trail."

WANTS/NEEDS

Ultimate Want

What does your character want? What would bring an end to their adventures should everything go their way? "To exact revenge on the sorcerers that uprooted their life" or "To find their

mentor, and return them to their school."

Explain what they think accomplishing this task will do for them. Having it be a false belief can make a character with more to overcome. "They believe it will satisfy themselves and their people so that they can rebuild their town and survive in peace." or "They believe that with their mentor safely returned, they will become the greatest swords wielder in history."

Ultimate Need

This is the internal need of your character that they likely don't realize. It's what they need to learn in order to actually solve their problems. A simple statement like "They need to learn that revenge won't satisfy but justice may." or "They became the best in their journey, perhaps this was what their mentor intended." Finally, explain how this revelation will improve them. "It will make them into a true hero of their people, and help them thrive" or "It will bring them greater purpose and satisfaction than anything at the school ever could."

TRAITS

These one-word traits should be reflective of their life experiences. They serve as a lens for your character's beliefs to enter the game through. Choose traits that are dissimilar and sound fun to roleplay. Good characters are inspiring but have negative traits they must constantly try to overcome to develop as a character. Consider your favorite characters from film or TV, they are likely not so complex that you couldn't boil them down into 5 simple traits. It is those traits in contrast to the others at your table, and their traits, that create interest, drama and fun within your game.

When choosing, consider the scenarios in which those traits would be exhibited and remember not to pick traits that distance you from the group. You can choose an equal amount of positive, neutral, and negative traits if you want a balanced character, but feel free to choose a custom amount of any category, depending on the tone you want your character to have. As a part of this document, we have included a large list of traits to use or to inspire your own.

NPC's

Ally

This is a figure from your character's past that played a large role in their life and has the potential to do so again. There are a few archetypes that prove a great starting point if you are stuck. Think about them through the lens of a best friend or sidekick, a mentor, a love interest, or a wise fool they met that kicked off their adventure. Consider someone in your party, this can be a great way to tie your characters together.

Nemesis

This is someone that is a counterpoint to your character and their beliefs, that has worked against them in some way in the past, and could return. This character is incredibly valuable to a Dungeon Master, so describing them so if your DM chooses to use them in some way that you might recognize their role... just remember to leave some room for flexibility and creativity for your DM.

PITCH

This section contains several writing prompts that when completed will form a complete thought that should briefly describe the most important parts of your characters backstory to those that are unfamiliar. It covers the beats of their story leading up to their adventuring career and where your roleplaying campaign begins.

Short, simple, and to the point. Referencing this yourself from time to time can help you guide your character, make choosing a path in your game and playing out a story arc for your character easier. After all, there is no story in a static character, leave that to the NPC's.



CHARACTER TRAITS

Pick the traits you want to roleplay from the lists below. Pick 2 positive, 1 neutral and 2 negative (2/1/2) traits. If you are playing in a more heroic fantasy styled game, try 3/1/1. More gritty and realistic? Try 1/2/2. You get the idea.

POSITIVE

NEUTRAL

NEGATIVE

1	Active	Leisurely	1	Absentminded	1	Aggressive	Irritable
2	Adaptable	Liberal	2	Aggressive	2	Aimless	Miserable
3	Admirable	Logical	3	Ambitious	3	Aloof	Mechanical
4	Adventurous	Lovable	4	Amusing	4	Amoral	Meddlesome
5	Alert	Loyal	5	Artful	5	Angry	Melancholic
6	Amiable	Lyrical	6	Authoritarian	6	Anxious	Messy
7	Appreciative	Many-sided	7	Big-thinking	7	Apathetic	Miserable
8	Articulate	Masculine	8	Breezy	8	Argumentative	Miserly
9	Aspiring	Mature	9	Busy	9	Arrogant	Misguided
10	Athletic	Methodical	10	Casual	10	Bewildered	Moody
11	Attractive	Meticulous	11	Childish	11	Bizarre	Morbid
12	Balanced	Moderate	12	Chummy	12	Bland	Muddle-headed
13	Benevolent	Modest	13	Competitive	13	Blunt	Naive
14	Brilliant	Neat	14	Complex	14	Boisterous	Narcissistic
15	Calm	Objective	15	Confidential	15	Brittle	Narrow
16	Capable	Observant	16	Conservative	16	Brutal	Narrow-minded
17	Captivating	Open	17	Contradictory	17	Callous	Negative
18	Caring	Optimistic	18	Conventional	18	Cantankerous	Neglectful
19	Charismatic	Orderly	19	Crisp	19	Careless	Neurotic
20	Charming	Organized	20	Cute	20	Charmless	Nihilistic
21	Cheerful	Painstaking	21	Deceptive	21	Childish	Obnoxious
22	Clean	Passionate	22	Determined	22	Clumsy	Obsessive
23	Clever	Patient	23	Dominating	23	Cold	Obvious
24	Colorful	Patriotic	24	Dreamy	24	Complacent	Offhand
25	Companionly	Peaceful	25	Driving	25	Complaining	One-dimensional
26	Compassionate	Perceptive	26	Droll	26	Compulsive	Opinionated
27	Confident	Perfectionist	27	Dry	27	Conceited	Opportunistic
28	Considerate	Personable	28	Earthy	28	Condemnatory	Oppressed
29	Contemplative	Persuasive	29	Effeminate	29	Conformist	Paranoid
30	Cooperative	Playful	30	Emotional	30	Confused	Passive
31	Courageous	Polished	31	Enigmatic	31	Contemptible	Pedantic
32	Courteous	Popular	32	Experimental	32	Cowardly	Perverse
33	Cultured	Practical	33	Familial	33	Crass	Petty
34	Curious	Precise	34	Folksy	34	Crazy	Pompous
35	Daring	Principled	35	Forceful	35	Critical	Possessive
36	Debonair	Profound	36	Formal	36	Crude	Power-hungry
37	Decent	Protective	37	Freewheeling	37	Cruel	Predatory
38	Decisive	Prudent	38	Frugal	38	Cynical	Prejudiced
39	Dedicated	Punctual	39	Glamorous	39	Decadent	Presumptuous
40	Deep	Purposeful	40	Guileless	40	Deceitful	Preentious
41	Dignified	Rational	41	High-spirited	41	Delicate	Procrastinating
42	Disciplined	Realistic	42	Hurried	42	Demanding	Provocative
43	Discreet	Reflective	43	Hypnotic	43	Dependent	Puritanical
44	Dramatic	Relaxed	44	Iconoclastic	44	Desperate	Reactionary
45	Dynamic	Reliable	45	Impassive	45	Destructive	Regimental
46	Earnest	Resourceful	46	Impersonal	46	Devious	Regretful
47	Educated	Respectful	47	Impressionable	47	Discouraging	Repentant
48	Efficient	Responsible	48	Intense	48	Dishonest	Repressed
49	Elegant	Responsive	49	Maternal	49	Disloyal	Resentful
50	Eloquent	Reverential	50	Mellow	50	Disobedient	Ridiculous
51	Empathetic	Romantic	51	Modern	51	Disorganized	Rigid
52	Energetic	Rustic	52	Moralistic	52	Disrespectful	Ritualistic
53	Enthusiastic	Sage	53	Mystical	53	Disruptive	Sadistic
54	Esthetic	Scholarly	54	Neutral	54	Distractible	Scheming
55	Exciting	Secure	55	Noncommittal	55	Disturbing	Scornful
56	Extraordinary	Self-critical	56	Noncompetitive	56	Dogmatic	Secretive
57	Fair	Self-reliant	57	Obedient	57	Domineering	Selfish
58	Faithful	Selfless	58	Old-fashioned	58	Dull	Shallow
59	Farsighted	Sensitive	59	Ordinary	59	Egocentric	Shortsighted
60	Feminine	Sentimental	60	Outspoken	60	Envious	Sloppy
61	Firm	Serious	61	Paternalistic	61	Erratic	Slow
62	Flexible	Sexy	62	Physical	62	Escapist	Sly
63	Focused	Sharing	63	Placid	63	Extravagant	Small-thinking
64	Forgiving	Shrewd	64	Political	64	Extreme	Steely
65	Fortrthright	Skillful	65	Predictable	65	Faithless	Stiff
66	Freethinking	Sober	66	Preoccupied	66	Fanatical	Stupid
67	Friendly	Sociable	67	Private	67	Fanciful	Submissive
68	Fun-loving	Sophisticated	68	Progressive	68	Fatalistic	Superficial
69	Gallant	Spontaneous	69	Pride	69	Fearful	Superstitious
70	Generous	Sporting	70	Pure	70	Fickle	Suspicious
71	Gentle	Stable	71	Questioning	71	Fiery	Tactless
72	Genuine	Steadfast	72	Quiet	72	Flamboyant	Tasteless
73	Good-natured	Steady	73	Religious	73	Foolish	Tense
74	Gracious	Stoic	74	Reserved	74	Forgetful	Thievish
75	Hardworking	Strong	75	Restrained	75	Frivolous	Thoughtless
76	Healthy	Studious	76	Retiring	76	Gloomy	Timid
77	Hearty	Suave	77	Sarcastic	77	Graceless	Treacherous
78	Helpful	Subtle	78	Self-conscious	78	Greedy	Unappreciative
79	Heroic	Sweet	79	Sensual	79	Grim	Uncaring
80	High-minded	Sympathetic	80	Skeptical	80	Gullible	Uncharitable
81	Honest	Systematic	81	Smooth	81	Hedonistic	Unconvincing
82	Honorable	Tasteful	82	Soft	82	Hesitant	Uncooperative
83	Humble	Teacherly	83	Solemn	83	Hostile	Uncreative
84	Humorous	Thorough	84	Stern	84	Ignorant	Undisciplined
85	Idealistic	Tidy	85	Strict	85	Imitative	Unfriendly
86	Imaginative	Tolerant	86	Stubborn	86	Immoral	Ungrateful
87	Incisive	Tractable	87	Stylish	87	Impatient	Unhealthy
88	Incorruptible	Trusting	88	Surprising	88	Impractical	Unimaginative
89	Independent	Uncomplaining	89	Tough	89	Imprudent	Unimpressive
90	Individualistic	Understanding	90	Trendy	90	Impulsive	Unpolished
91	Innovative	Upright	91	Unaggressive	91	Inconsiderate	Unprincipled
92	Inoffensive	Vivacious	92	Unambitious	92	Indecisive	Unrealistic
93	Insightful	Warm	93	Unceremonious	93	Inhibited	Unreliable
94	Insouciant	Well-read	94	Unchanging	94	Insecure	Unrestrained
95	Intelligent	Well-rounded	95	Undemanding	95	Insensitive	Unstable
96	Intuitive	Winning	96	Unhurried	96	Insincere	Vacuous
97	Invulnerable	Wise	97	Uninhibited	97	Insulting	Venomous
98	Kind	Witty	98	Unpredictable	98	Intolerant	Vindictive
99	Knowledge	Youthful	99	Unsentimental	99	Irrational	Vulnerable
100	Leader	Zealous	100	Whimsical	100	Irresponsible	Willful

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Name **Background**

Theme

Follow the prompts to help flesh out the story of the forces that shaped the views and experiences of your character.

Ultimate Want

What external thing does your character want? What lie about happiness does your character tell themselves?

Ultimate Need

...but what would actually help them become the person they desire to be? What is the internal struggle?

Personality Traits

Pick traits from the list to help guide your roleplaying. For a balanced character, pick 2 positive, one neutral and 2 negative.

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Ally

Who is a close friend or confidant your character can turn to? This could even be someone in your party.

Nemesis

Who does your character keep in the lowest regard? Wether they realize it or not, this person is a threat.

