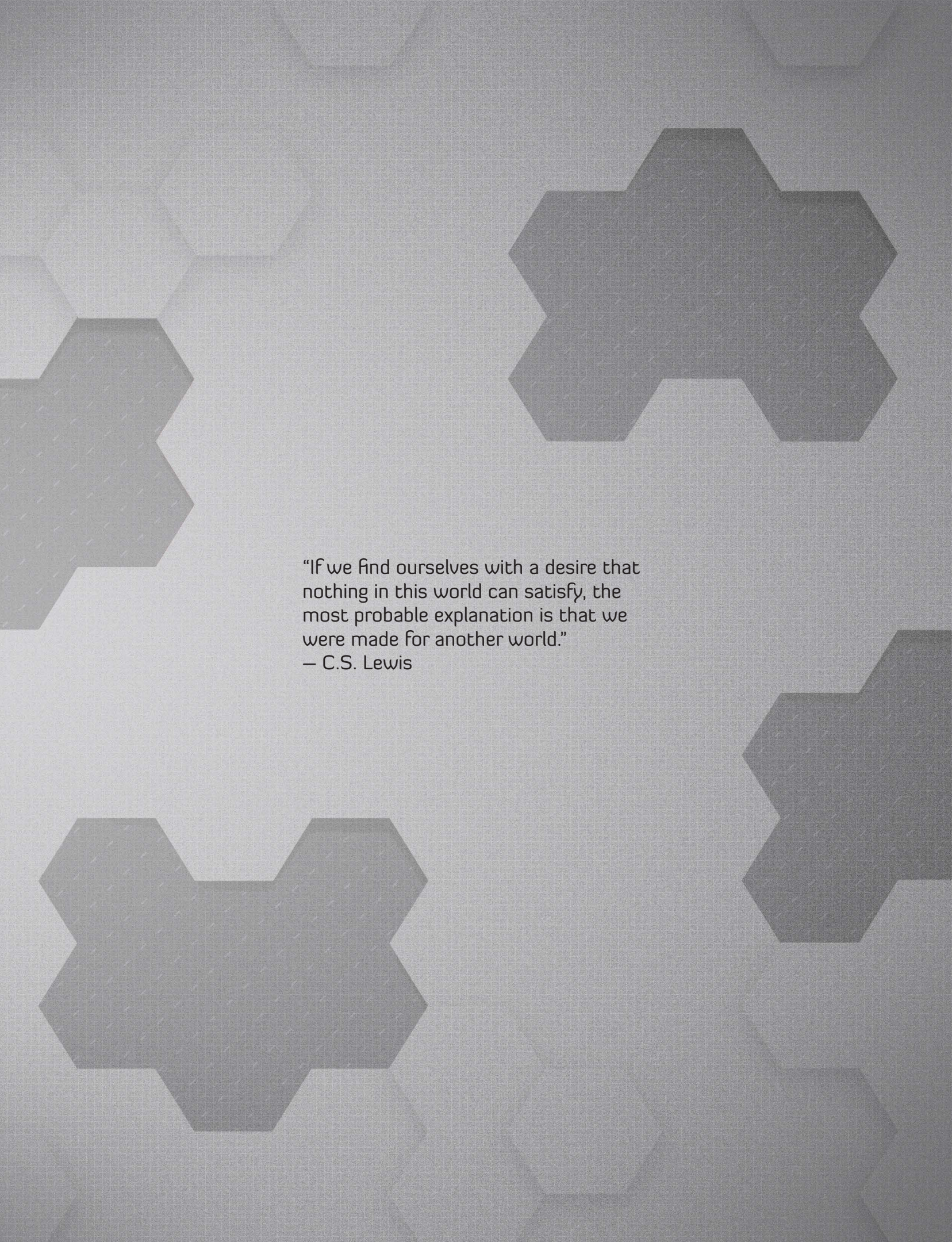




**BOOK ONE:
BUILDING THE WORLD**

BARKER





“If we find ourselves with a desire that
nothing in this world can satisfy, the
most probable explanation is that we
were made for another world.”
– C.S. Lewis



BE A BETTER CAMPAIGN MASTER

BOOK ONE: BUILDING THE WORLD

BY MICHAEL BARKER

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Special Thanks: For Michael Barker the younger, who always quit halfway through. This book is for you.

And for Bradlyn, for her intelligence, banter, and friendship, no matter which football team she likes.

From the basic shape of your world, to the warring populations that inhabit it, you are the decider. You will pull the mountains out of the earth and make the raging rivers flow into the vast seas. You will scatter magical forests and arid deserts across the land, separating the cities and villages that you alone will build from the ground up.

You've been waiting too long to finish your homebrew RPG campaign setting. Now is the time to forge your realm for years to come.

Now is the time to build your own world.

"Put a quote in the front matter? Barker, that's crazy."

— Matt Click



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BE A BETTER CAMPAIGN MASTER

BOOK ONE: BUILDING THE WORLD

BY MICHAEL BARKER

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Hey there! What's kickin'?

For me? Nostalgia. I've been thinking about the past a lot lately, and specifically, how it relates to gaming in my life. I'm coming up on 30 years of age, which means I've spent over half of my life participating in the single greatest hobby the world has ever seen: roleplaying games.

Sometimes, when I look in the mirror, I remember that pencil-necked kid who spent entire days scribbling RPG ideas down in his journal. I remember filling that journal with worlds and campaign setting ideas invented in the moment. I remember the excitement of fleshing out these new worlds for my players to wander around in and adventure across.

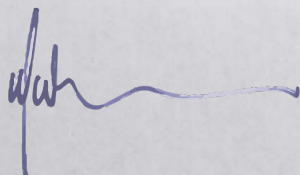
But I also remember running into that first, scary obstacle - realizing exactly what building a world entails, and the fear that it might be too big for me. I remember closing my journal, putting it down, and ultimately discarding every single one of those worlds - not because they weren't good, but because they were unfinished, and I was afraid, overwhelmed, and unsure of where to go next.

I suppose, at the time, I just wasn't ready for it. After all, building an entire world is a grand task. But as I got older, I tried new strategies to build my worlds quickly, or even on the fly while exploring them with my friends. I discovered new methods to focus on the important aspects of my world, instead of getting bogged down in the bottomless pit of trivial things that would inevitably scare me away from an otherwise worthwhile pursuit.

It made me realize that it wasn't me being incapable of building a world - it was the process that kept scaring me away. Not only that, but it made me realize that my fear wasn't something to shy away from - it was something to be harnessed and utilized. That fear went hand-in-hand with excitement - the uncertainty was just another face of inspiration. Building a world is, in fact, scary - but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

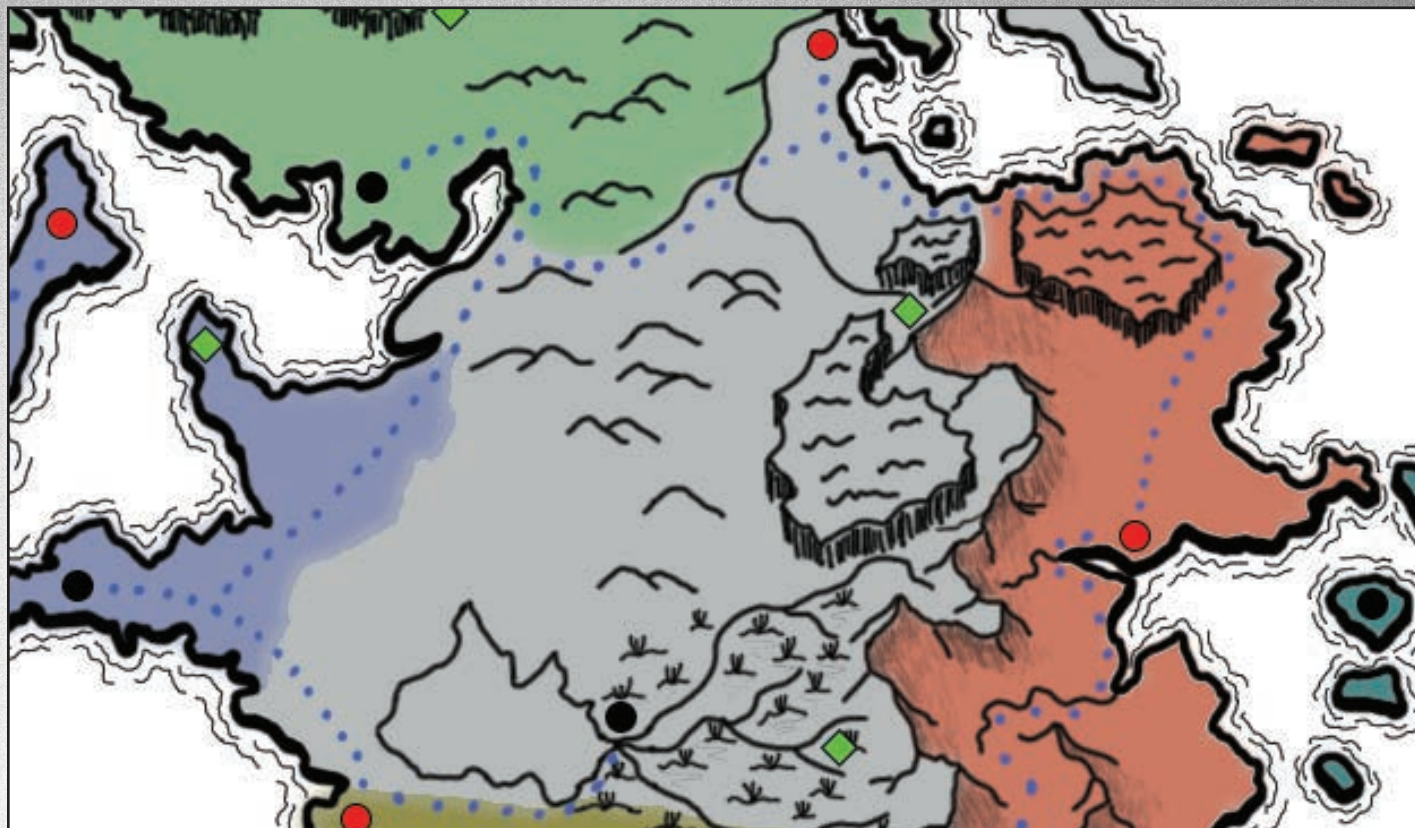
This book contains the world-building strategies and techniques that would have kept 14-year-old me going. The goal of this material is to help you construct the framework of your own homebrew RPG setting, and show you how to fill it in with wondrous details and fantastic aspects. It is the very same book I would take back in time to give my younger self some much needed guidance to harness my virtually endless inspiration. My hope is that it does the same for you now.

So without further ado, welcome to **Be a Better Campaign Master, Book One: Building the World.**



Michael Barker
BeABetterGameMaster

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



This book was designed for you to follow along with it, step-by-step.

Page by page, we will build a world together, starting with your world's map. We'll fill this map with everything from geographical features, to cities and other settlements, and beyond. Of course, if you've already built your world and are looking at different ways to flesh it out, you can also benefit by skipping around to the various chapters and sections at your leisure.

While this book is focused on helping you create a world within the fantasy genre, the tips found within can help you create a realm (or realms) that are inspired by any flavor, including science fiction and even modern influences.

Either way, by the end of the book, you'll have a fleshed-out, interesting, and unique world sitting in front of you. And it will be yours.

We will start our map by creating the basic landmass of your world. This might be an entire continent, a landlocked region of a larger landmass, a small island chain, or even multiple continents, depending on what you want for your homebrew world. Think as big (or as small) as your needs merit.

Next, we'll add some natural features to your world, such as mountains, forests, rivers, and lakes. These geographical locations will provide a backdrop for the action of your campaign, and bring your world to vivid life. We'll look at a variety of roll tables to help you make these locations more unique and tailored to your own world.

After the geographical features of your world are placed, we'll begin populating the world with towns, cities, and other settlements. These are the places where many of your stories will be told! We'll also have a look at the geographical features you created in the previous section, and how they would affect the cities and settlements located within them.



How many moons orbit your world?

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Lastly, we'll make your world unique. We'll breathe life into it by giving it a story, deciding its magic level, talking about its deities and pantheons, and even deciding on a starting point for your first adventure!

So try to resist the urge to flip ahead. Instead, enjoy the process as much as I do, and you might find that the process itself is just as fun as the final product.

What you'll need:

A sheet of paper and a pencil. That's it! Just make sure that your pencil has an eraser on it. World-building is oftentimes a fluid process, despite the step-by-step nature of this book. We will be erasing things, replacing things, and loving every minute of it!

Optional: 3-Ring Binder.

You will be filling out some worksheets over the course of this book, as well as a questionnaire at the end of it, so it will be a good idea to keep everything in one place. This will form the core of your world binder for many years to come!

TO ROLL, OR NOT TO ROLL?

Oftentimes, you might be asked to roll dice. Know that this is completely optional for those of you who want to insert a little random probability into your world. If that doesn't interest you, feel free to pick certain items freely out of one of the many roll tables in this book, or out of the creative realms inside of your own mind!



When you see this icon, it's time to get down with some science! Now, this isn't a science textbook, but the text that accompanies this icon will help you if you're interested in giving your fictional realm a more realistic feel.



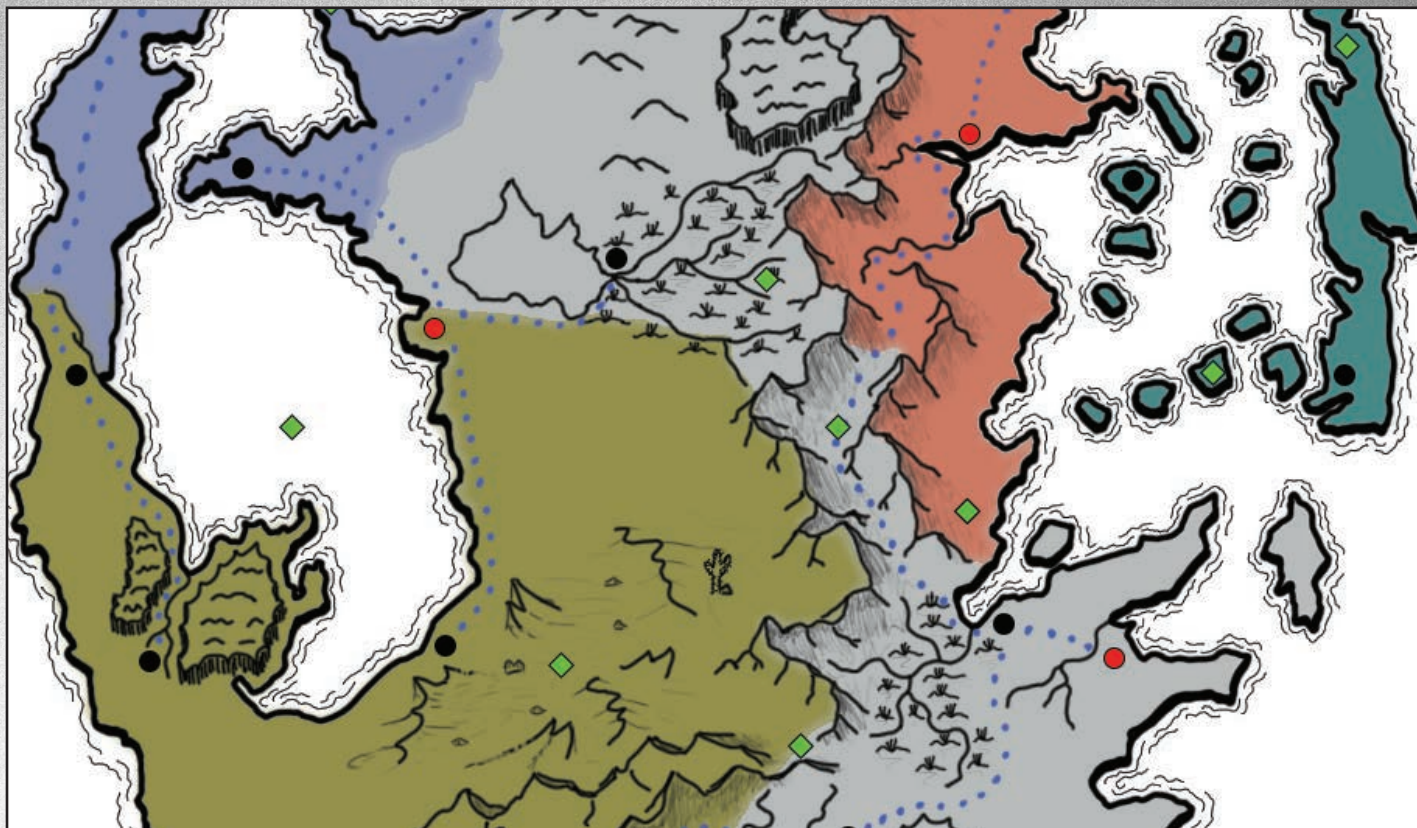
This icon means it's time to infuse a little more fantasy into the world! Any accompanying text will help you to mystify your realm in wondrous and magical ways.



How many astrological symbols are there in the night sky?



DRAWING YOUR COASTLINES



What kind of world will you create?

Will it be a large, continental landmass, ruled by an arcane empire? Or a smaller, scattered archipelago, inhabited by tribal elves, constantly threatened by roving pirate clans? Perhaps you want your players to adventure around a specific region of a larger world instead, similar to Tolkien's Middle-Earth — only yours will be centered around an arcane university, and given an emphasis on political intrigue and deception.

No matter the world, it all starts with drawing your coastlines...

TIPS FOR DRAWING YOUR COASTLINES

- 1. Go Nuts:** Don't be afraid to draw chaotically, like you're creating a fractal. Coastlines can alternate from rugged to smooth quite often, even in our own world.
- 2. Real-World Inspiration:** Crack open an atlas, and take a look at the coastlines of our real-world landmasses. Don't be afraid to copy certain

segments of coastline or continental shapes right out of the atlas. Mixing different things together can result in a very rewarding and unique end-product.

- 3. Get Messy:** Don't worry about the map being pretty. In fact, the uglier the better to start. This applies for all future sections of this book as well. If you draw something gorgeous, it will be difficult for you to justify using your eraser, which will be the best tool at your disposal during this process.
- 4. Cool is the Rule:** If it looks cool, you're doing it right! Remember that this is your world, and you'll be playing games inside of it for years to come. If you ever find yourself not liking the way it looks, don't be afraid to use the eraser on your pencil and redo certain parts. Also, don't feel restricted by our natural world — if you think something looks or feels cool, go with it, even if science would disagree with you.

Now let's choose what type of world we'll be building...



How many suns are there in the sky?

DRAWING A SINGLE LANDMASS

When it comes to throwing all your most creative plot elements and stories into one basket, you can't go wrong with a single-landmass world. From Westeros to our very own Erenoth, single-landmass realms are not only easy on the eyes, they're endlessly fun for players to journey through and adventure in.

CREATING A SINGLE LANDMASS

- 1. Check the Walls:** Take a look at the patterns on the walls of your home. Many walls have interesting shapes molded into them, and these can often result in excellent shapes for continents. Trust me: my homebrew world of Enchea was originally based on an interesting shape on my kitchen ceiling.
- 2. Open an Atlas:** Take a look at the continent of Australia. See how interesting that landmass is? It's got a wonderful blend of rounded edges, mixed with the more rugged and fractalized coastlines near the north and south of the continent. Try drawing your world while looking at a map, adjusting your drawing techniques as you see fit. Your goal is to end up with a good blend of rounded and chaotic coastlines.



- 3. Your Friend, the Eraser:** If you feel like your coastlines are either too rough or too smooth, don't be afraid to remove and adjust small sections until you end up with something you are happy with. Try turning rounded areas into places where the coastline appears "broken," adding some small islands to the area for a more weathered, eroded look and feel.

If you enjoy an emphasis on land travel, a melting pot of cultures, and a more open feel in your games, a single-landmass world might be what you're looking for!

Is land ownership important for a citizen's social status?



DRAWING A REGION

Some of the most famous and exciting worlds are actually just regions of larger landmasses. From Middle-Earth to many exciting published settings, you can't go wrong with choosing a region as your campaign setting. Even the Absolute Tabletop world of Erenoth began as a pair of disconnected regions. Not only do these settings give you the space you need to build your chosen world, but they allow for additional sections of the larger landmass to be added later on, at your discretion.

CREATING A REGION

1. **Terra Incognita:** Ensure that your world isn't completely surrounded by water. The landmass should run off the edge of your sheet of paper, insinuating that there is more to your world than meets the eye.
2. **Ocean Who:** If you're uncomfortable with drawing coastlines, or can't seem to find a shape that you find attractive, you're in luck! You don't need to surround any segments of your realm with oceans if you don't want to. Instead, your realm could be completely landlocked, surrounded by mountains or rivers, or situated on the edge of a great bay.
3. **Don't Fear Impermanence:** You'll find that the coastlines around the uncharted territory will change quite a bit over the course of your world-building. Specifically in those areas of your map, don't be afraid to draw lightly at first, and fill in the more permanent coastlines later on.

If you enjoy all the benefits of a single-landmass world, but want to include some uncharted territory off the edge of the map, a region might be what you're looking for!



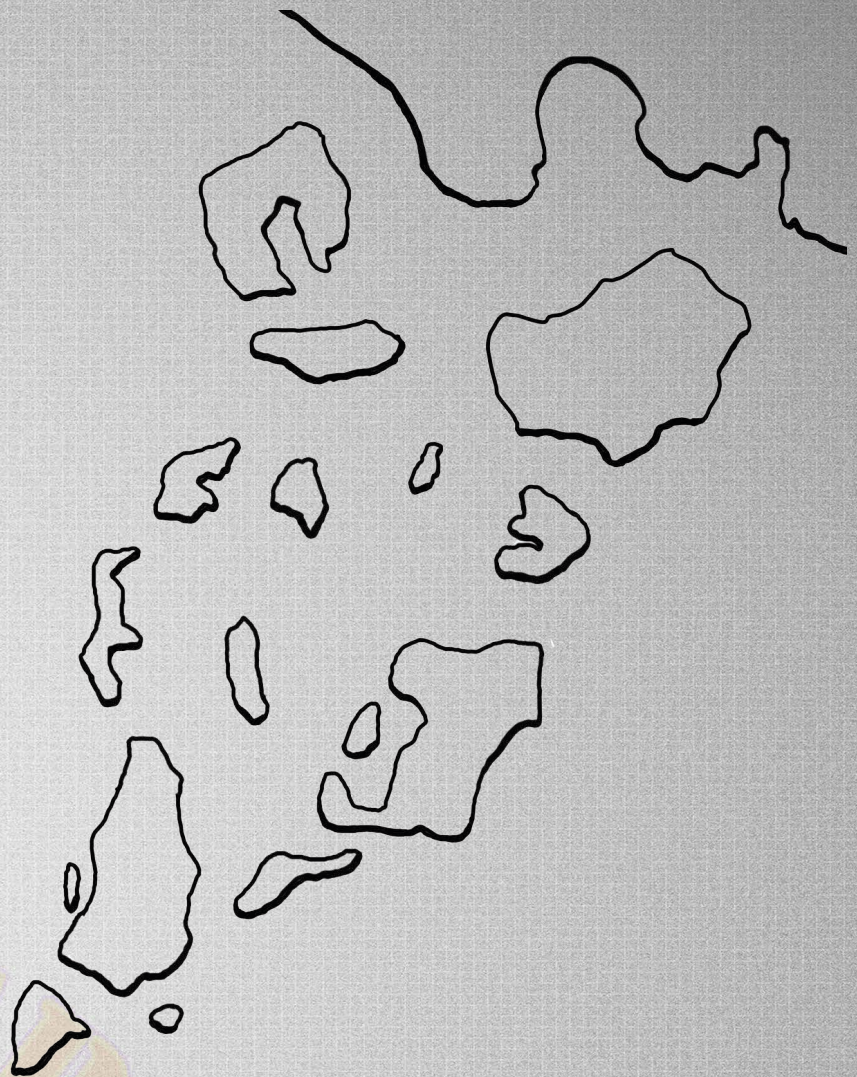
How dangerous is the winter here?

DRAWING AN ARCHIPELAGO

Take to the high seas with one of my favorite world types! This sort of realm will allow you to create a beautiful and visually appealing world map, complete with nations and factions separated by the natural barrier of ocean. Also, you can get away with placing seemingly random adventures and encounters around the campaign map, as the randomness makes more sense when the adventure in question is on its own island. Have an adventure idea involving a man-eating gelatinous monstrosity that wouldn't fit in a "normal" campaign setting? Put it on its own island!

CREATING AN ARCHIPELAGO

- 1. Roll for it!:** Grab a handful of dice and roll them across your sheet of paper. Draw a coastline around half of the dice in order to create the large island in the chain, then remove those particular dice. Then draw a coastline around half of the remaining dice for a mid-sized island. Continue this process, rolling more dice as needed, until you have a visually pleasing archipelago. You can do this with any small object, really – beans, buttons, the bones of your enemies, etc.
- 2. Leave Empty Space:** You might find yourself adding too many islands to your map. I know this problem has plagued me in the past, so if the map starts to become cluttered, don't be afraid to break out your eraser. Empty space (in this case, ocean) can help to make the filled space more apparent and important. You want a focal point on your map, and too many islands can take away from that.
- 3. More Terra Incognita:** If you want to add an unknown area to your world, similar to the region world type, try having the largest island in your chain run off the map a bit. This way, if you ever decide you want to expand the world around your archipelago, you'll have a great place to start!



If you're looking for an emphasis on high seas action, naval travel between locations, and grimy borderland towns, an archipelago might be what you're looking for!

What kind of music is popular among the common people?



DRAWING AN EPIC WORLD

Many new campaign settings combine all of the above world types, and yours might be no different. While this type of campaign setting might be too big and arduous to work with for many (myself included), it is undoubtedly perfect for some of you.

CREATING AN EPIC WORLD

- 1. Start Small:** This might seem counter-intuitive for an epic world, but the purpose of this book is to help people do what is arguably the most difficult task in running a roleplaying game: building the world. It's a huge assignment, and it might be better to start with one of the smaller world types above, and work your way out. If not, don't hold back!
- 2. Cultural Barriers:** Later on in this book, you will start outlining the nations, empires, and cultures that will inhabit your world. When that time comes, consider giving each nation their own "map type" listed above. Perhaps the wood elves will control an archipelago while the dwarven tribes hold the region across a narrow channel of sea.
- 3. Tip the Scales:** When you're building an epic world, you might find yourself immediately overwhelmed by the grand scale of the task. If so, don't be afraid to scale the map down a bit. If it would take a week for an adventuring party to travel between two locations, make it a day instead. By making the world more easily traversable, you'll be making it smaller, which can help reduce the stress of undertaking such a task.



If you feel fenced in by the limitations of some of the above world types, want something more epic than your standard campaign setting, or simply can't make up your mind, an epic world might be what you're looking for!



What was the largest naval battle ever fought?

DRAWING YOUR COASTLINES

ARCTIC COASTLINES

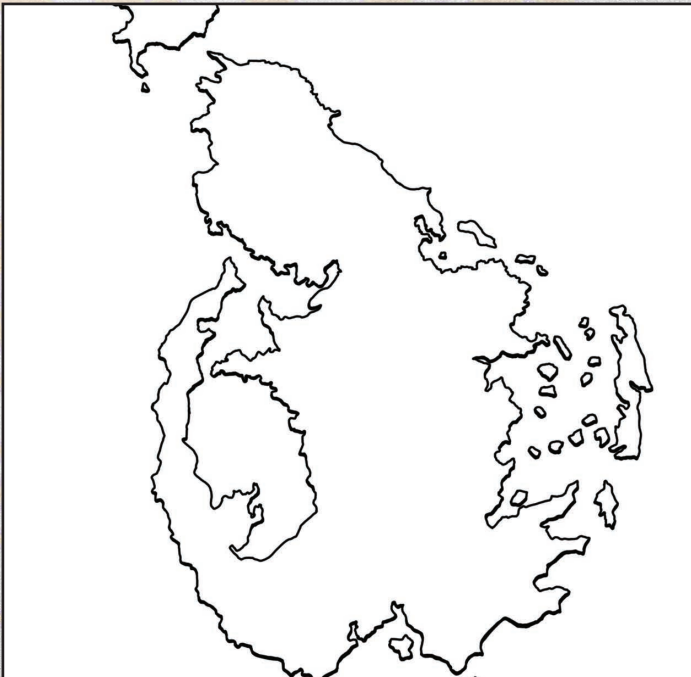
The shape of your coastlines depends on where you are on the map. For example, your northern shores should look different from those further south.

Let's take a look at Greenland.

Do you see how the coastlines appear more fragmented and ragged? Compare that to the smoother coastlines further south in places like the UK and Ireland. Greenland's coastlines have this distinct, jagged edge because of the fjords and other natural features created by the arctic climate.

Try erasing your coastlines at the northern end of your world and replace them with this sort of fractalized coast. It will create diversity in your map, setting the northern regions apart, while simultaneously giving it a more realistic feel. Now think about the cultures living along such a coastline. Would they be expert coastal sailors, weaving their slim ships in and out of these rocky inlets?

The choice is yours...



I've chosen the following continent outline for my world.

The shape is inspired by the elongated form of island nations such as Japan, the long peninsulas and mythical islands of Greece, and the northern fjords of Norway. I've included an inland sea (because I simply love inland seas), and an island to the north where I've already begun a long-running campaign.

This realm will be called Enchea, and I'm excited to see what it becomes over the course of this book!

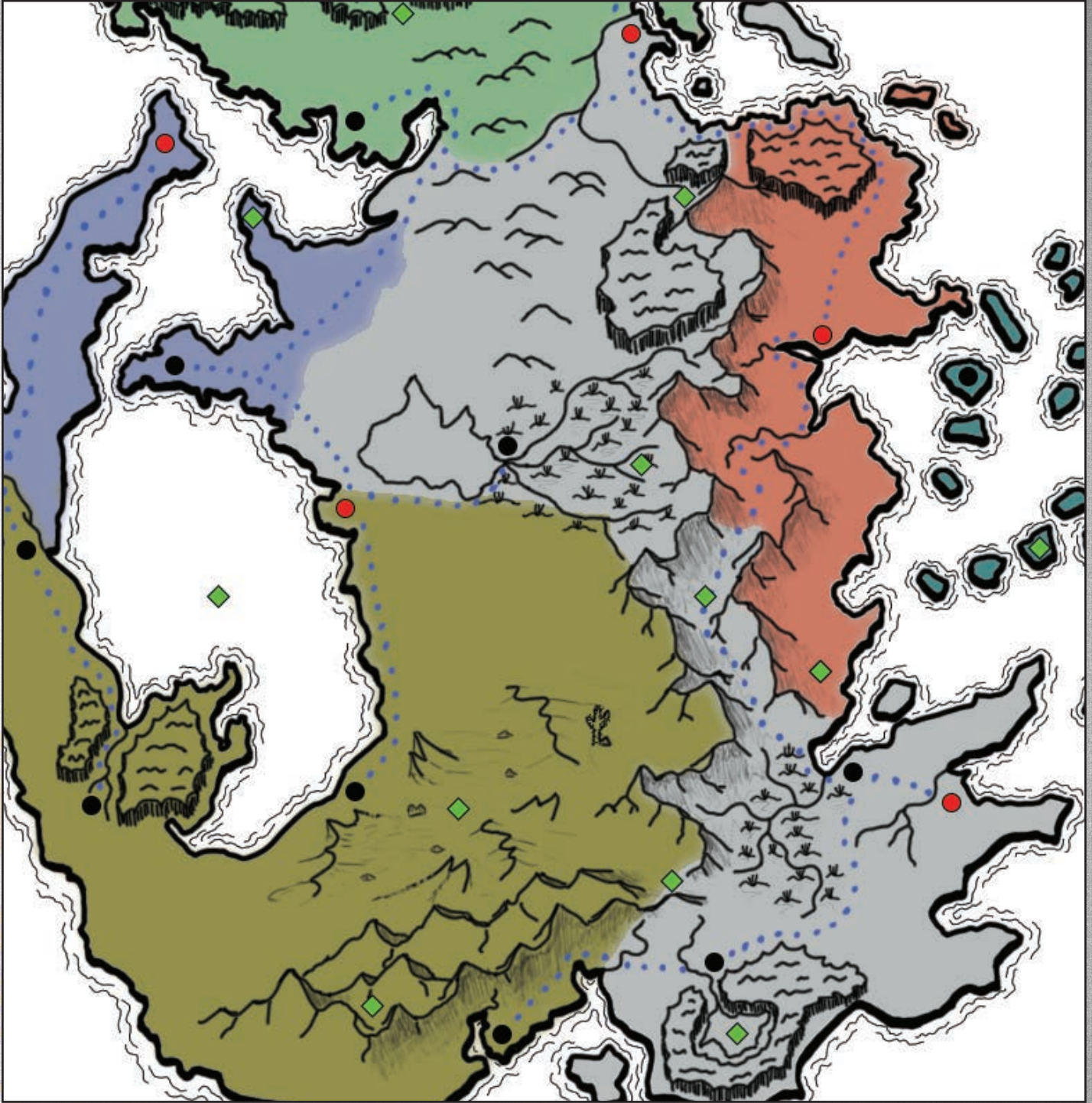
Which is more popular? Wine or ale?



ENCHĒA



ADDING THE GEOGRAPHY



It's time to fill your blank canvas with the mystical and wondrous landscapes that your adventurers will journey across for years to come. Your cities, cultures, and political boundaries will all be profoundly affected by the decisions you make here, so remember the golden rule: if it looks cool, you're doing it right!

What is the most common household pet in the realm?



MOUNTAINS

From the tallest impassable peaks to the lowest rolling hills, mountains start the process of turning your blank canvas into a world. They separate warring nations, help decide where roadways go, and create a lush environment for the stories and adventuring locations that will give character to your world, and provide conflicts to drive your games.

TIPS FOR CREATING MOUNTAINS

- 1. Limit Yourself:** Two or three mountain ranges and a few small clusters of peaks are the perfect amount for your average single landmass or regional map. Keeping the map filled with blank space after you draw your mountains will ensure you have plenty of room for other geographical features, settlements, and nations.
- 2. Run to the Hills:** While hills don't provide the geographical barrier that mountain ranges do, they can provide wonderful environmental factors for the populations that inhabit them, and make the map more visually appealing overall. Feel free to add some foothills at the bases of some of the mountains, and even some in the open plains of your world.
- 3. Ridgelines First:** Lightly sketch out where the mountains will go before drawing them out. This will give you a good idea of what sort of blank space you will have to work with regarding the forests, rivers, and settlements you will be placing later on.

COLLISION COURSE

In the natural world, tectonic plates are on a constant collision course, creating mountain ranges and other geographical anomalies as they slowly, yet relentlessly, smash into each other.



Here are some tips on how you can emulate this natural occurrence in your own world:

1. Draw faint circles around your blank map. Three or four should do. These circles will represent the tectonic plates in your realm.
2. For each circle, roll a d4, where each result is a cardinal direction (N, S, E, and W). You can also choose which direction you wish, or roll a d8 instead, including the intercardinal directions (NE, NW, SE, and SW) in your results.
3. Draw a faint arrow on each circle, depicting the result on the die. This arrow depicts the direction each tectonic plate is moving in your realm.
4. In the places where the tectonic plates are colliding, draw a mountain range.
5. In the places where they are drifting apart, either draw a mountain range with volcanic activity, or split your landmass into two separate regions, separated by a thin channel of water and small islands.
6. Keep in mind that, in the real world, mountains make up around 10 percent of our planet. Aim for that amount when you're creating your own realm, unless you find yourself with an inspirational reason to purposefully deviate from that ratio.



What is the most common name in your realm?

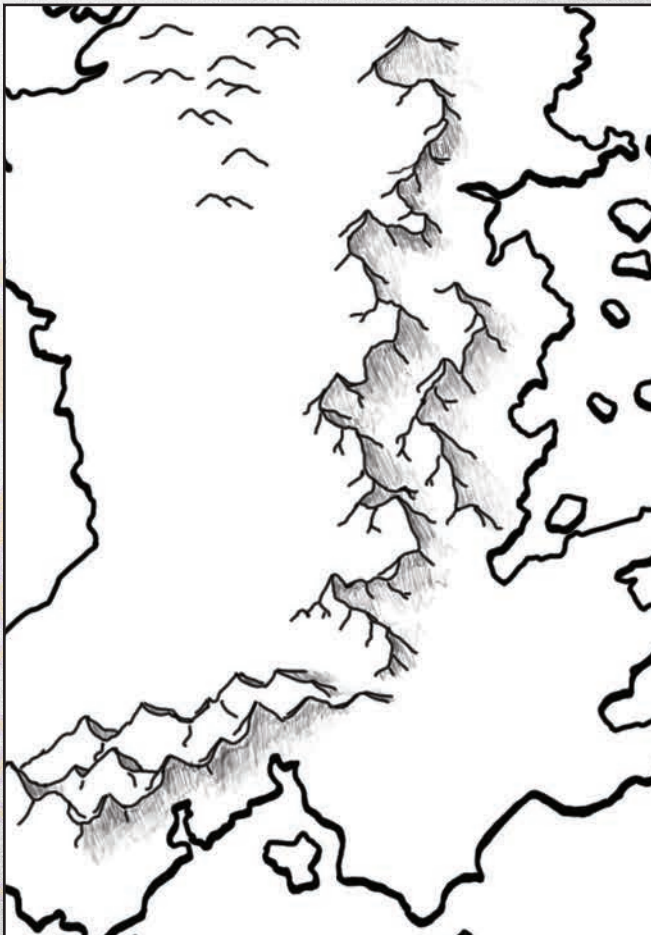
MOUNTAINS



RANGE OF THE ARCANE

Instead of running with the natural tectonic explanation for why a mountain range exists in your world, try one of these more fantastical options:

1. In anger, an almighty goddess pulled the mountains of this world up with her bare hands.
2. An ancient magical device exploded thousands of years ago, forcing the land to shift violently. Many volatile mountain ranges resulted from this detonation.
3. A gargantuan dragon collided with this world like a meteor falling from the sky. The impact created a jagged crest of vicious mountains.
4. Built by the ancient titans, this mountain once served as a wall to keep encroachers out of their territory. It is now weathered and crumbling.



So when it came to placing my mountains, a few things inspired me:

1. I imagine that a massive, ancient earthquake occurred in the top island (I've already included it in my current campaign, so it's sort of locked in at this point), so I placed a high-reaching mountain chain at the south of the island. This chain was the result of that massive earthquake.
2. I am a big fan of far-reaching mountain ranges, and I thought the southeastern edge of Enchea would be perfect for this. It's prominent, visually appealing, and still leaves a lot of blank space for other geographical features down the road. I also placed a small pass at the most southeastern point of the mountain range for a future road or adventuring location.
3. I added a patch of hills in the middle of my continent for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, they looked really cool in this spot. Secondly, they fit nicely near the mountains instead of on their own somewhere else.

These mountains will make for some awesome natural barriers in my campaigns!

Is there a sigil that represents the world as a whole?



ENCHĒA



MOUNTAIN FEATURES

Check out this optional roll table for inspirational ways to turn your ordinary mountains into something interesting and unique to your world:

d100	Geographical Feature
1-2	Angular, sharply pointed mountain peaks.
3-4	A stretch of multi-colored mesas, eroded by time.
5-6	Strangely snowless peaks, located within an icy region.
7-8	A stretch of dormant volcanoes.
9-10	A chain of active volcanoes, the surrounding area marred by their fires.
11-12	A single towering mountain surrounded by foothills.
13-14	Distinctly rounded hills and mountains.
15-16	A mountain range penetrated by many natural tunnels.
17-18	Intensely cramped mountains, intersecting erratically.
19-20	A mountain range eroded by time, its edges crumbling.
21-22	Jagged, chasm-riddled rocks formed by violent tectonic fractures.
23-24	A single peak, topped with a primordial graveyard.
25-26	Large mountains with cascading waterfalls.
27-28	Rock formations that jut from the treeline of an enchanted forest.
29-30	A single, immense volcano.
31-32	A chain of mountains forming a crescent shape, an area of great mystery at their center.
33-34	A large mountain that resembles the open maw of an ancient creature.
35-36	A pair of peaks with a narrow pass between them.
37-38	Two jagged mountain peaks impale one another, creating a precarious twin peak.
39-40	Mountains of moving, living rock that change shape erratically.
41-42	Sheer cliffs housing an ancient, forgotten fortification.
43-44	A mystical mountain that appears different to all who gaze upon it.
45-46	Two powerful, parallel mountain chains of black rock, lava flowing between them.
47-48	Sections of this mountain range float high above the ground, defying gravity.
49-50	A mountain formation resembling the fingers of an enormous hand, jutting from the ground.

Who is the most famous assassin in the world? Who did they assassinate?



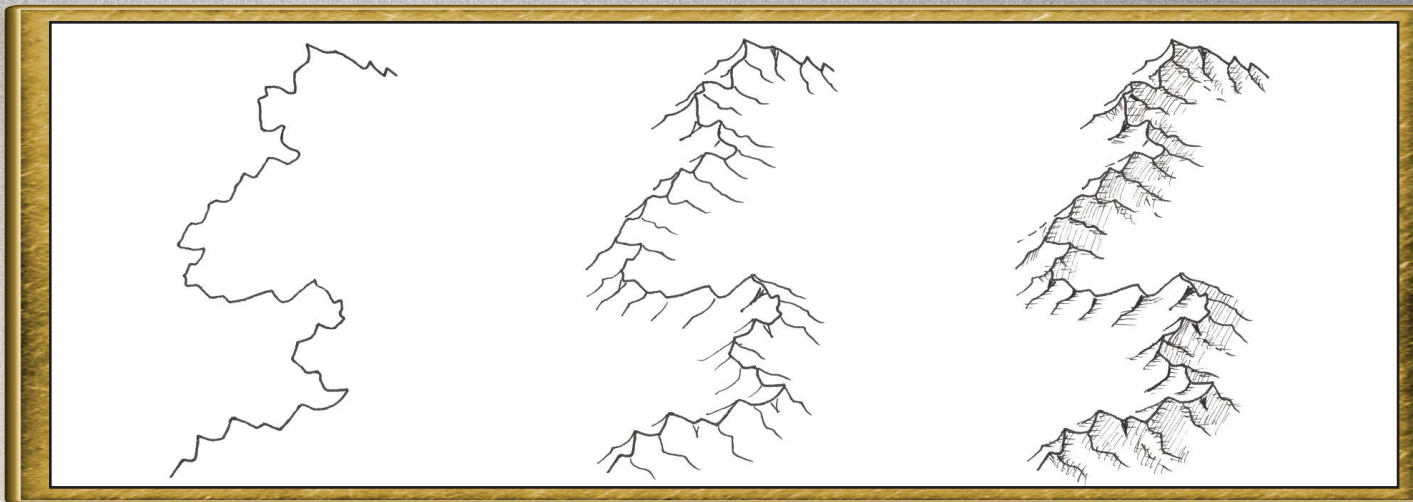
MOUNTAIN FEATURES

d100	Geographical Feature
51-52	A formation of cliffs with arching tops, forming a fallen elemental's ribcage.
53-54	Squat, crumbling mountains riddled with holes, creating eerie music when wind passes through them.
55-56	A formation that appears to be the petrified, decrepit form of a draconic creature.
57-58	Cliffs that glitter and gleam – but only in the moonlight.
59-60	A mountain of translucent, crystalline minerals, growing from the ground like a cresting wave.
61-62	A mountainous formation with a man-made tunnel through the center.
63-64	A time-defying mountain range suspended in the midst of eruption, its shattered pieces floating peacefully.
65-66	Mountains that form an unmistakable "X" shape from a bird's-eye-view.
67-68	Cliffs of red clay, once the home of mountain creatures who dug labyrinthian cave dwellings.
69-70	The immense grooves of this mountain range give it the appearance of having been pulled into existence by some divine or infernal hands.
71-72	A concealed peak, shrouded constantly by clouds.
73-74	A gorgeous, tree-covered mountain, sitting upon the bank of a large lake.
75-76	Numerous jagged peaks, not considerably tall, but covered with thick moss.
77-78	This range of hills forms a strange, region-spanning runic pattern that can be seen from the sky.
79-80	An angular, gray formation of cliffs, carved into the shape of a half-finished humanoid face.
81-82	Ruby red plateaus stacked on top of one another to impossible heights.
83-84	Dormant volcanoes with small lakes sitting calmly in their craters.
85-86	Rolling blue hills that seem to stretch for miles.
87-88	An odd volcano that expels mud, its eruptive materials hardening, expanding the volcano with each day.
89-90	Tall, cylindrical formations of rocks.
91-92	Mountains that steam and fester, acidic and volatile.
93-94	A colossal crater, with razor-sharp ridges flanking its rim.
95-96	A young, region-spanning mountain range of black rock.
97-98	A single, jagged mountain that towers from within a large body of water.
99-00	This mountain is little more than a massive pile of rubble, shattered long ago by something unnatural.



How do the wealthy classes like to spend their money?

HOW TO DRAW MOUNTAINS



1. Begin with a bold, jagged ridgeline. It takes practice, but try to predict where peaks are going to be found along the way.
2. Where the ridgeline juts out at angles, draw slope lines on either side. Vary the angles, allow some to join together, and experiment to see what looks good.
3. Shade one side of the ridgeline to help the mountains pop off the page a little, and shade the other side lightly in places too. Shading with pencil is a good way to start, but if you prefer ink, use a very fine point and hatching so you don't totally cover up your slope lines. Experiment and practice! Mountains can be tricky. If it's not clicking, don't be afraid to go with a simpler style.



Taking it further: In nature, many of the slope lines would likely become other ridgelines branching off. Keep branching! Also, consider small, rounded foothills around the edges of mountain ranges.



What color usually signifies nobility?



RIVERS

Serving as the dividers of nations, the feeders of the people, and arguably the most critical natural barrier when it comes to defending a settlement, rivers are vital to any campaign setting. Your cities will thrive off of them, your armies will despise them, and your players will travel along them. All you have to do now is place them...

TIPS FOR CREATING RIVERS

- 1. Start High:** Rivers go with the flow, beginning their journeys in higher altitudes and taking the path of least resistance down through the fields and valleys of your world, finally emptying into larger bodies of water.
- 2. Start Small:** Rivers usually start out as very small waterways, forming via rainfall or glacial melt, becoming larger as they merge with other waterways.
- 3. Merge, Don't Separate:** Rivers rarely split off into two smaller waterways. Instead, they start individually, and merge with each other farther down their paths. Of course, the rare occurrence when they do split could be a cool (and perhaps even magical) way to make your world more unique.

TEARS OF THE ALMIGHTY

What if the source of your rivers is something more unnatural than precipitation or glacial melt? Here are some interesting ways to spice up your rivers in a fantastical way:

- The god of the natural world, saddened by the encroachment of modern civilizations into his domain, weeps a raging river out of his home — a magical forest.
- An ancient fire giant has been trapped beneath the arctic ice for generations. Only now that she is awakening has that ice begun to melt into large, raging waterways.
- A powerful wizard, in order to run the watermills of his industry at faster speeds, has called upon the elemental arts to create a rushing river in his territory. Emerging from a doorway into the elemental plane of water, it begins at his tower in the north, and runs all the way to the southern sea.
- A slain god upon a mountaintop, his dark, mineral-rich blood flowing out to sea. Priests the world over make pilgrimages to this river of divine blood, drinking of its essence, and experiencing vivid visions of the past, the future, and alternate presents.
- The waters of this river aren't formed by any natural precipitation. Instead, the water is the blood of the world itself, flowing up to the surface from the ground beneath.



What stories are told to children in your world to keep them from getting into trouble?

RIVERS

LIFE IN THE WATERSHED

Oftentimes, multiple rivers will coalesce at the same point when heading out to sea. These locations, packed with many different waterways in the same area, are known as “watersheds.” They can exist in both small or large areas of your realm, and can provide you with some great inspiration for cultures and civilizations in and around them.

Try adding one of these watersheds to your map, and think about the kinds of settlements and civilizations that would spring up around such a prevalent source of food, trade, and fresh water. Your world may thank you for it!



Placing my rivers took some time, but I finally settled on some pretty cool ideas:

1. I went with three expansive tributaries. I felt that any more than that would take up too much space and turn my world into a massive marshland. I also kept enough space in between them to keep things interesting.
2. Outside of those three major tributaries, I added some other rivers of varying length around the map, leading specifically to areas of coastline that look like small inlets.
3. I decided during the process that I wanted one of the major tributaries to run into a lake instead of an ocean or sea. The large river system in the center of my main continent seemed like a good place to do this, so I ended the rivers somewhat early. You'll see why in the next step!

What color is the sky?



ENCLEA



RIVER FEATURES

Check out this optional roll table for inspirational ways to turn ordinary rivers into unique and interesting elements in your world:

d100	Geographical Feature
1-2	The bed of this crystal clear river is made up of flat, smooth stones, each with an arcane rune etched upon it.
3-4	A river of thick mud, moving slowly but persistently.
5-6	A long, winding river, serpentine around several jutting landforms.
7-8	Dozens of tributaries collide, forming a large, raging river.
9-10	The waters of this stream seem to slow the effects of aging, and heal minor wounds.
11-12	A river that forks starkly, forming a large "Y" shape.
13-14	This river flows mostly underground, emerging at points only to dip back under the surface.
15-16	This river is drying up, marred by an unnatural blight.
17-18	A river with deep umber banks, its waters murky from clay.
19-20	A stretch of thin rivers, all running parallel, forming small islands where they intersect.
21-22	Legends persist that this river was carved into the ground by ancient primordials.
23-24	This river is oddly angular and geometric, with great stretches of perfectly straight lines.
25-26	A river that rushes over a mass of razor-sharp stones.
27-28	The banks of this river are caked with ice, and its waters are frigid.
29-30	A river of molten lava, flowing slowly and charring the land around it.
31-32	A gorgeous brook that winds through lush, green foothills.
33-34	The waters of this river change in hue, depending on the weather.
35-36	A riverbed that has carved out a deep valley.
37-38	A river that runs into an underground system of caves.
39-40	This river seems to think for itself, aiding or impeding travelers depending on its mood.
41-42	A river that mysteriously runs up a mountain, effectively creating a reverse waterfall.
43-44	The longest river in the realm – it touches every region of this landmass in some way.
45-46	A river that runs in different directions sporadically, with no rhyme or reason.
47-48	A river of acidic fluid that scars the lands it gushes through.
49-50	A river that originates from a high, cylindrical rock formation, defying gravity and spiraling around its circumference.

Are there any holy cities in your world?



RIVER FEATURES

d100	Geographical Feature
51-52	A raging river of rapids, unforgiving and unrelenting in its force.
53-54	Rivers spewing from the top of a high plateau, flowing down the various sides of it.
55-56	A river that runs serenely to a high cliff, broadening into an enormous waterfall.
57-58	This river only flows at night – as the sun rises, it dries up.
59-60	A river of glowing, green water, certainly not natural, illuminating the surrounding landscape.
61-62	A river chain that forms a complex runic pattern when seen from above.
63-64	A large river that is split by a mountain that it encircles, converging into a single entity again on the other side.
65-66	A realm-spanning river, known for the various bridges of differing cultures built over it.
67-68	A serene river that passes under two immense statues of a long-forgotten culture.
69-70	A river whose water has been said to whisper the fates of crossing travelers.
71-72	A chaotic river, waterfaling multiple times over the sides of a massive series of cliffs.
73-74	A river that flows into several prominent lakes, but never into the ocean.
75-76	A ruby red river that empties into a crystal blue sea.
77-78	This river is the source of a strange and mystical species of tree.
79-80	A treacherous river, known for the razor sharp rocks emerging from the surface.
81-82	This river is the source of a growing nearby mountain range, as if the mountains are being fed by it.
83-84	This river runs underground and never reemerges. It is said to be the entrance to a hidden part of the realm.
85-86	A river which boils and steams, heated by an unknown force.
87-88	A man-made river whose bed is made of various metals and wood.
89-90	This is a river of liquid starsteel, fed by falling celestial objects.
91-92	This series of rivers looks like a compass rose, expanding in each of the four cardinal directions.
93-94	A blood-red river, said to be the flow of a constantly bleeding dragon.
95-96	This river is absolutely still – even when disturbed by the outside world.
97-98	A river that magically keeps those who traverse it lost, unless they know its secrets.
99-00	This river makes a strange, deep droning sound that has no natural explanation.



Did one race of people come before the others?

LAKES

Serving as a primary food source, as well as a hub of all sorts of regional wildlife, lakes will be an excellent addition to your world. The adventuring possibilities are endless – lake towns, underwater treasures, small-scale trade disputes, and more.

TIPS FOR CREATING LAKES

1. **Where the River Flows:** Lakes are often created by the rivers that flow into them. Try ending one or two of your rivers at a lake instead of the usual ocean.



2. **The Biggie:** Give yourself one big lake to work with. Something like Lake Superior in the northern United States (to scale with your world, of course) that will inspire some wonderful and unique inland sea sailing cultures in your world.

3. **Surrounding Spaces:** Consider the area around your lakes as ripe for adventure and story. Everywhere you place a lake, start thinking about the natural wildlife and societies that will begin developing around it.

I didn't go crazy with the lakes in my world, but I found a few great spots for them.

1. My current campaign began in a small town near a lake, so I had to add it to the map first. You can find it on the eastern edge of the island to the north end of the world.
2. I added another small lake to the southern edge of the map too. I figured this would be a great place for a natural forest to grow around, providing for some neat cultures and adventures.
3. Now check out the rivers that I ended prematurely in the last step. They now empty into a large lake near the center of the larger continent. This will probably be a great place for some marshlands in the future!

CRATER LAKE

In the real world, places that have been struck by meteorites sometimes become geographic phenomena themselves. These craters, if located in regions with high precipitation, can become lakes as rainfall fills them with water.

Here are some other, more fantastical ways to introduce crater lakes into your world:

- A mighty demon was cast down upon the material plane and created a massive crater upon impact.
- This chrome-dotted crater is filled with starsteel, from the last starfall that took place over a thousand years ago.
- Said to have been dug out by a progenitor dwarven race, this crater lake feeds the countryside by the thousands. Many travel from far and wide to pray at its steep banks.



Have there been any major wars in recent history?



ENCHĒA



LAKE FEATURES

Check out this optional roll table for inspirational ways to turn your ordinary lakes into more fun and explorable bodies of water.

d100	Geographical Feature
1-2	A flooded forest – naked treetops emerge from the lake’s surface.
3-4	This lake’s surface is black and placid – who knows what lurks within?
5-6	Three rivers feed into this lake, each from a different region of the world.
7-8	This seep lake is fed from an underground water source.
9-10	A small island emerges from the center of this lake, dominated by a single, large tree.
11-12	This narrow lake separates two other geographical features.
13-14	Predatory mawfish populate this lake – it’s best avoided.
15-16	This lake produces a constant, eerie fog, which rolls across the surrounding countryside.
17-18	A beautiful water spirit inhabits this lake, appearing differently to all who look upon it.
19-20	The waters of this crystal-clear lake are famed for quenching the red-hot blades magical swords.
21-22	The bones of some great leviathan protrude from the lakebed.
23-24	A stone doorway on the bottom of the lake leads to an ancient, labyrinthian substructure.
25-26	Alchemists the world over flock to this lake, for its waters create the most potent potions.
27-28	A tribe of sapient fish-like creatures call this lake home.
29-30	Music emanates from the rippling water during certain celestial alignments.
31-32	The sewers of a nearby city empty into this lake.
33-34	This lake is filled with boiling black tar.
35-36	This now-dry lakebed holds a legendary weapon in its center, surrounded by the bodies of those who have tried to claim it.
37-38	This lake is considered holy by the population of the realm.
39-40	This lake is small, but its waters are sweet and delicious, tasting of exotic berries.
41-42	The waters of this lake allow for nearby vegetation to grow twice as fast as normal.
43-44	This series of lakes is a pale and putrid green.
45-46	A large saltwater lake shows evidence of formerly being an inlet, as an old nautical vessel sits atop its shallow bed.
47-48	This lake is murky and brown.
49-50	This lake is said to have an underwater cave system that holds ancient treasures.

What is the most widely celebrated holiday?



LAKE FEATURES

d100	Geographical Feature
51-52	This lake contains four large drainage chambers of ancient construction.
53-54	A series of ancient and weathered runes surrounding this lake refer to a nearby lost city.
55-56	This lake shows a reflection day and night – a reflection which shows the greatest flaw of any who gaze into it.
57-58	This chain of lakes is the center of trade for many primitive societies.
59-60	A bright, spherical object lies at the bottom of this lake, rumored to give the water luminescent properties.
61-62	This lake is the home of a very old city that is slowly sinking.
63-64	This small lake is inhabited by sentient algae that adheres to anything it touches.
65-66	Despite its small size, this lake is still affected by the tidal pull of the moon.
67-68	Water from this lake is said to be divinely blessed, though many argue by which deity.
69-70	This large lake has a ring of dry land within it, with another smaller lake at its center, like an archery target for the gods.
71-72	This lake's waters drink a portion of the memories of anyone who enters.
73-74	This lake serves as a natural wishing well, filled with the oxidized coins of many hopeful travelers.
75-76	This mystical lake emits rainfall – strangely, it “falls” upward.
77-78	This lake is terribly cold, no matter the season or weather.
79-80	A clawed, skeletal hand as large as a boat grips the shore of this lake, its wrist disappearing into the mud.
81-82	This series of lakes roughly forms the symbol of a lost deity.
83-84	This tranquil lake is filled with beautiful blue waters and a natural cliff, perfect for diving and swimming.
85-86	This lake is an elaborate illusion, protecting what truly lies beneath.
87-88	This lake is permeated with a weak acid, slowly eating away at the gear of any who enter it.
89-90	The waters of this roughly triangular lake are an opal white and unnaturally salty.
91-92	The surface of this lake is constantly on fire.
93-94	This lake is haunted by the specter of a powerful hero who drowned here.
95-96	The shores of this lake are the only source of a rare and delicious mushroom.
97-98	This lake is inhabited by a single magical fish that is said to grant any who catch it a single wish, so long as they release it afterward.
99-00	This lake is said to be a portal into the elemental plane of water.



How many seasons are there in your world?

OCEANS

The great dividers of civilizations, and the final frontier for almost every fantasy world, these great, barren seas stretch far and wide. But more than meets the eye can be found in the depths of these titanic geographical wonders. The high seas beckon your adventurers to action! What will your oceans look like?

TIPS FOR CREATING OCEANS

1. Uncharted Waters: Even the most advanced societies in a fantasy setting might not have the means to explore every stretch of the world's oceans (we have yet to fully explore our own oceans, after all). If you have an idea that doesn't quite fit into another region of your world, this is your chance to use that idea on the high seas. Lost islands and primitive cultures can often be placed here without issue.

2. A Special Place: Oceans provide a wonderful canvas that can take your world to the next level. What starts as a stereotypical fantasy realm immediately transforms into an interesting and original world when the oceans become fantastical too. Consider adding magical elements to the seas that surround your campaign setting.

3. The Real World: Later on in this book, we'll start deciding what sorts of cities and settlements will inhabit the land. Start thinking about the cultures and societies that will emerge as sea powers in your realm. How will that affect their outlook on trade? Warfare? Technology? Food? All of these questions are important to consider when it comes to developing unique peoples.



INLAND WATERS

Inland seas have served as natural barriers and interesting geographical features in the real world for almost all of recorded history. Check out the Black Sea, located between Europe and Western Asia.

What if you put something similar into your world? How would that affect the surrounding societies and natural wildlife? Would it be largely inhabited by a diverse ecosystem, similar to the Black Sea above? Or will it be largely devoid of life, much like the Dead Sea, due to its harsh environment?

Either way, remember that if it looks interesting and cool, you've done it right!



"We build the worlds we wouldn't mind living in. They contain scary things, problems, but also a sense of rightness that makes them alive and makes us want to live there."

— Anne McCaffrey

Are ancient relics scattered around the world?



OCEANS

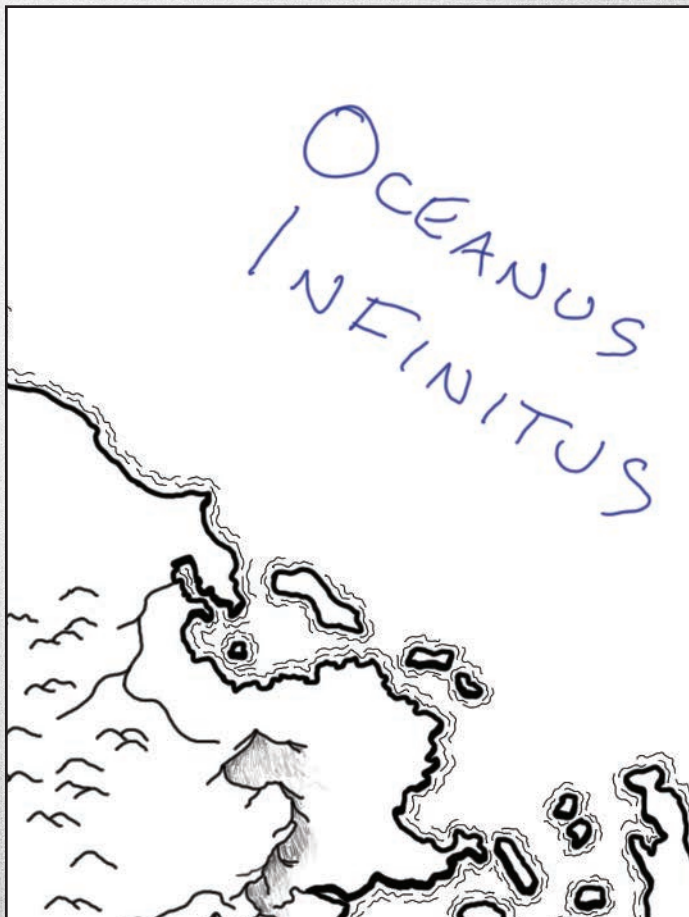


THE MAIN INGREDIENT

Is water too boring for your world? Would you rather one of your oceans or inland seas be filled with something more unusual, dangerous, or magical?

Here are some more fantastical elements to fill your world's oceans:

1. Liquid metal
2. Acid
3. Blood
4. Lava
5. Arcane energy
6. Insects
7. Tar
8. Nothing. This sea is an empty, dry bowl of harsh winds and swirling dust.



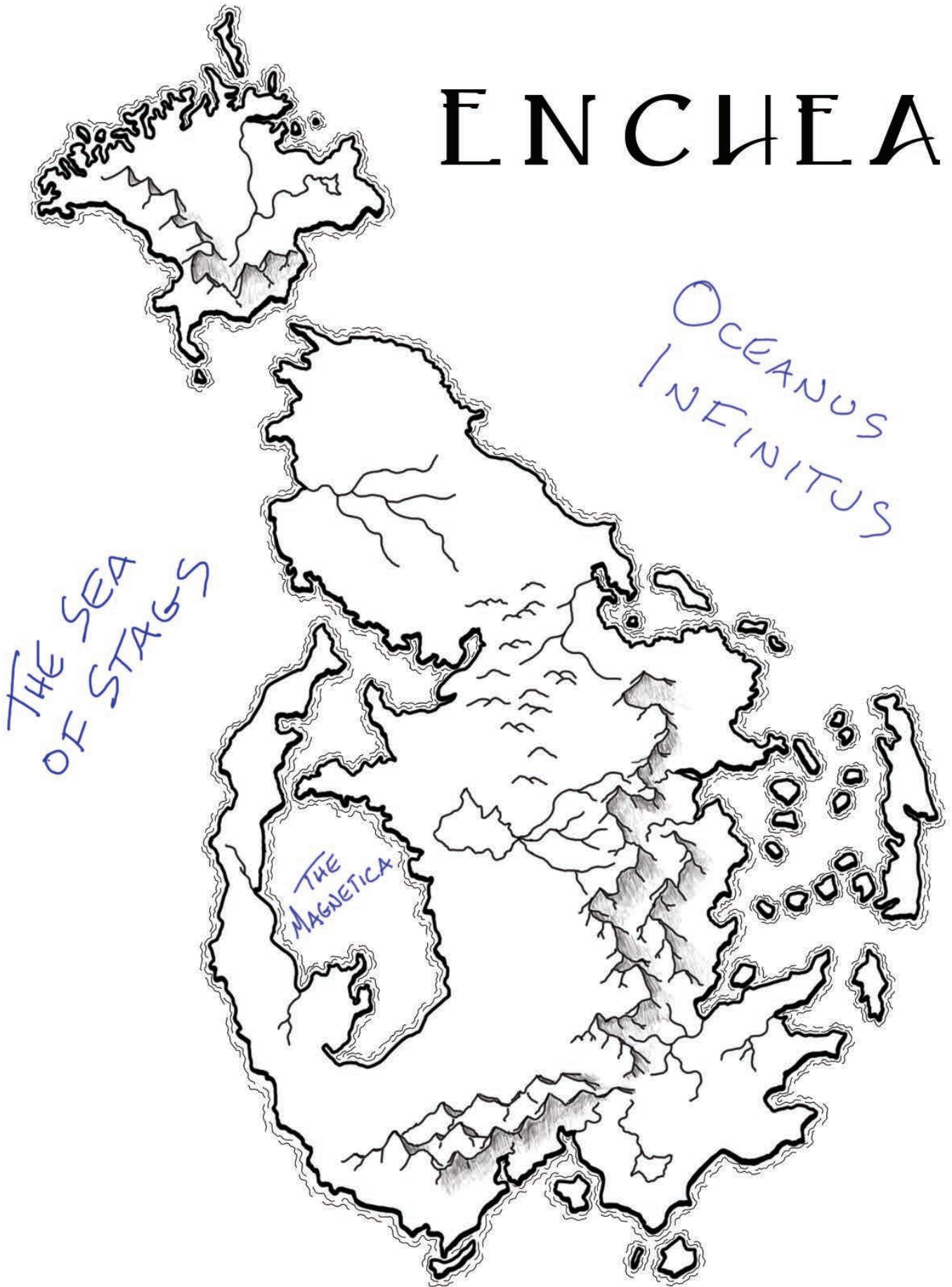
I took a tip from Sellsword Maps regarding my coastlines, and added two rows of wavy lines around each landmass. I also came up with some pretty cool names for my seas!

1. The Sea of Stags will be known for the magical storms that can be seen on the horizon, commonly shaped like the antlers of gigantic stags.
2. The name, "Oceanus Infnitus" was inspired by the Latin words for both ocean and infinite. It was named by the people of Enchea due to its endless horizons and total impassibility. Those who have sailed out into the expanse have never returned.
3. The Magnetica was named as such, very simply, because I thought it was an awesome name. Perhaps it also contains magnetic properties? Either way, I can't wait to explore these possibilities!



Are the nobles of your world's most empirical nation decided by popular vote or bloodline?

ENCHĒA



OCEAN FEATURES

Check out this optional roll table for inspirational ways to turn your ordinary oceans into something more majestic and distinct:

d100	Geographical Feature
1-2	A cyclonic maelstrom spins in the center of this ocean, pulling unwary sailors to their deaths – or worse.
3-4	The ocean spills over the sides of a great, bottomless canyon.
5-6	This ocean's high saline content makes it poisonous to most forms of life.
7-8	Near-constant lightning storms make this ocean dangerous to traverse.
9-10	A great city collapsed into the sea long ago, and now lies on the ocean floor, preserved.
11-12	Leviathans lurk beneath the waves of this dark, tumultuous sea.
13-14	Flotillas of lashed-together boats serve as floating settlements on the ocean.
15-16	Sub-aquatic steam vents boil the water around them, creating a bubbling, roiling sea.
17-18	This ocean is deceptively calm and still – but the rare storms are a force to be reckoned with.
19-20	Wildly varying depths and unforeseen shallows make this ocean treacherous to sailors.
21-22	A massive reef dominates this ocean, teeming with all manner of strange, aquatic life.
23-24	This ocean extends infinitely into the distance, seemingly without end.
25-26	The water of this ocean is breathable by all creatures.
27-28	A great maelstrom of arcane energy roils above this sea.
29-30	Strange creatures often breach the surface of this ocean.
31-32	This ocean dispels all nearby magic.
33-34	The water in this sea warps and eats away at wood, making sailing especially difficult.
35-36	This ocean is perfectly reflective.
37-38	An entire world can be seen beneath this ocean, as if it is some sort of illusion.
39-40	The currents of this ocean are abnormally strong and dangerous, like that of a raging river.
41-42	Fumes of different colors rise off the surface of this sea.
43-44	This ocean is thicker and more viscous than water.
45-46	This sea is an opaque black.
47-48	Those who know the secrets of this hostile sea may cross as if it were land.
49-50	The underwater lifeforms in this ocean are not afraid to pirate those vessels crossing it.



What is more valuable in your world? A single cow, or a single gold coin?

OCEAN FEATURES

d100	Geographical Feature
51-52	Time moves at a different pace for those who sail upon this ocean's waters.
53-54	This ocean's treacherous waters are said to be commanded by a powerful sorceress.
55-56	This ocean is filled with life, and it is impossible to look into the waters and not see movement.
57-58	This ocean is home to a benevolent race of beings who bestow gifts on the good, and punishments on the evil.
59-60	This ocean is the last refuge of a tribe of nomadic sailors.
61-62	The tides of this ocean are incredibly unpredictable.
63-64	This powerful ocean controls the moons orbiting the world.
65-66	The tops of many lost, ancient structures peer just above the waterline of this sea.
67-68	Many miles of this ocean are always frozen, no matter the season.
69-70	This gigantic ocean is comprised of fresh water.
71-72	An aquatic ooze thrives in this thick and gooey sea.
73-74	This ocean boils with the fury of numerous active volcanoes beneath its surface.
75-76	This ocean has risen quickly over the past few decades, forcing surrounding societies to adapt.
77-78	The salt of this sea can be used to create a powerful explosive.
79-80	This ocean is said to be the corpse of a colossal water elemental.
81-82	Those that can find a way to dive to the bottom of this ocean will find a labyrinth of underwater waves with breathable air.
83-84	This ocean's waters have been touched by the feywild, and its waters can be carved into elemental blades.
85-86	Those who sail this ocean's currents return without memory.
87-88	This ocean is draining mysteriously, much to the chagrin of those who rely on it for trade and food.
89-90	Many island cities can be found upon this ocean – some abandoned; others thriving.
91-92	This ocean is said to be the final resting place of a deity.
93-94	This ocean has become toxic from ancient necrotic energies that stir in the deep.
95-96	This ocean was recently parted, creating a dry roadway up its center for any travelers brave enough to use it.
97-98	This ocean is divided up the middle by an impassable reef wall, constructed by two warring aquatic factions.
99-00	This ocean is the result of an arcane catastrophe long ago, and it's still teeming with magical creatures as a result.

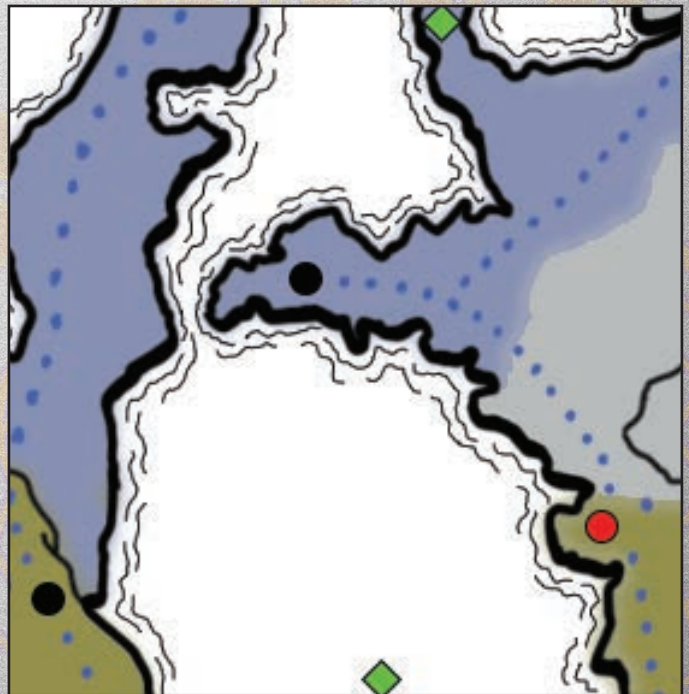
Are diseases and plagues prevalent?



HOW TO DRAW RIVERS, LAKES, AND OCEANS



1. Plot a lake anywhere on your map. Consider low areas where water would gather or basins between mountains. Leave an opening for a river out to sea.
2. Draw in a windy river that drains your lake out to the sea, remembering that water flows to the lowest elevations.
3. Add detail in the form of wave effects and thicken the southern coast of the lake to add dimension and match the overall coastline. You may also add tributaries, which are smaller rivers or streams that flow into a larger river.



What sort of unsavory creatures come out at night?

FORESTS

What is a fantasy world without a forest? Magical and mundane alike, sprawling woods are a staple of campaign settings and fictional realms. They are cliches for a reason, and your world simply wouldn't be complete without them.

TIPS FOR CREATING FORESTS

1. **Free Reign:** Take this opportunity to look at the blank spaces on your map, and sketch out possible areas for two or three forests. Where will your forests look best? Where would they be most surprising? Choose what you think works best!

2. **Water is Life:** Trees need two things: water and sunlight. When placing your forests, think about the needs of the plants and wildlife. Try placing some small patches of forest around a few of the lakes and rivers in your world.

3. **Imagine:** In the next section of the book, you will begin placing your first settlements and cities. Start considering now how different geographical features such as forests will affect the people living nearby. Get excited about this prospect! This is when your world will begin coming to life.

MAGICAL WOODLANDS

I'm hard-pressed to find a fantasy world in fiction or tabletop roleplaying games that doesn't have some sort of magical forest in it. But even those without an enchanted forest or two still contain certain regions of the world where magic has altered the local geography into a place of magic and mystery. What makes these locations great is that the effect they have on the people and wildlife residing within them is specific.

For example, there is a magical forest in my homebrew world of Enchea called the Crimson Wood. But instead of just saying, "this forest is magical in myriad ways," and being done with it, I decided that this forest would cause hallucinations to those trekking through it. This specificity makes it easier on me as a Game Master to decide what will happen if the characters end up traveling through it. It will also help the characters in my games understand what the exact ramifications of using the road through the forest might be.

This is one of those cases where painting with fine strokes is a better idea than being broad and nonspecific about something.



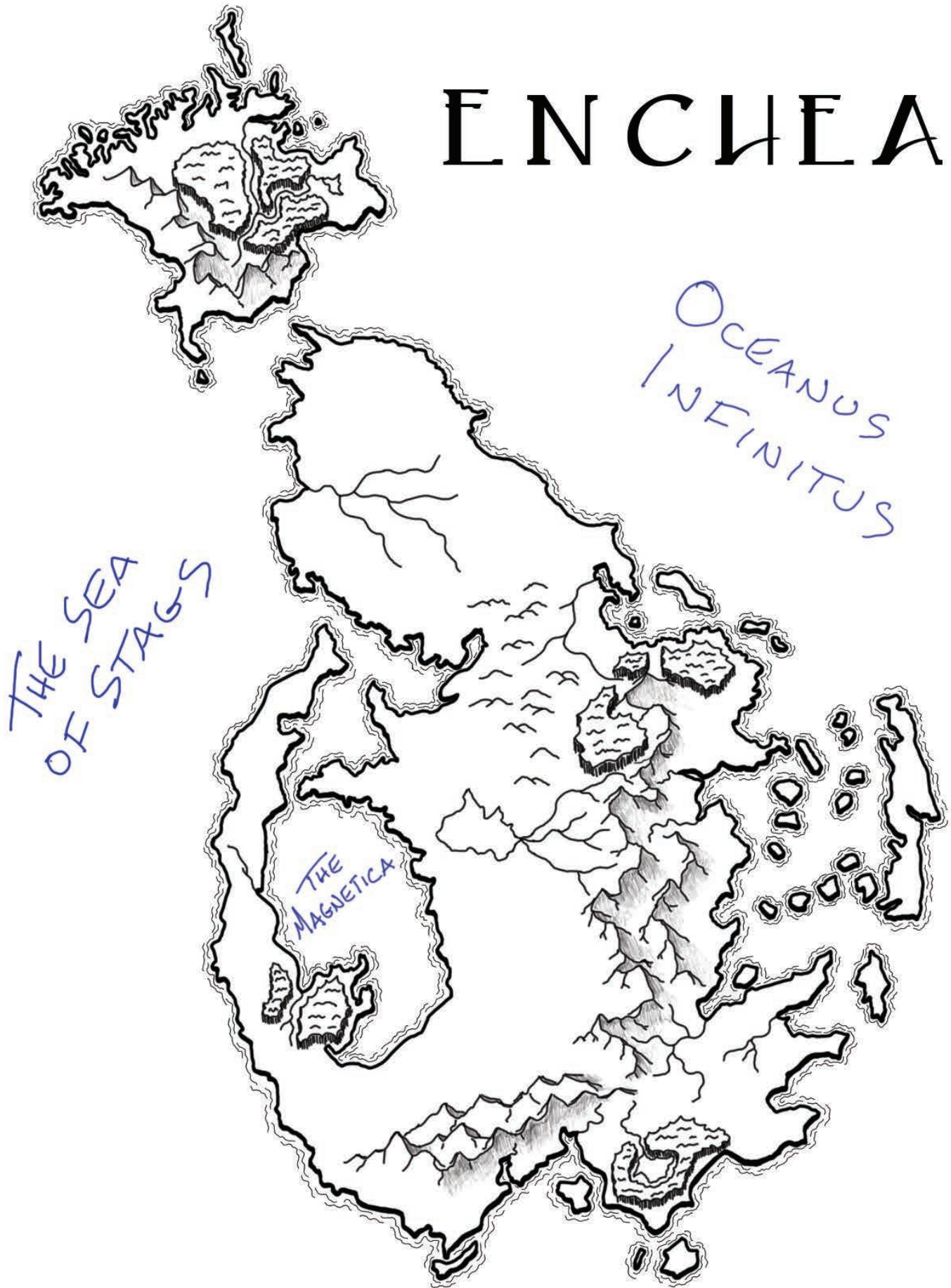
I was excited to place my forests from the beginning of this process, namely because my current campaign is centered around a fairly large and magical one.

1. The forest on the northern island of the map is called the Crimson Wood. It is incredibly magical and rife with dangerous and exotic adventure.
2. I placed some other forests around the map. I'm not sure what their stories will be, but I'm very excited for the forest on the southern coast of Enchea. That lake, combined with this new forest and a town, will make for some fun games.
3. I feel like the large tributary near the top of my main landmass will be a great location for a forest, but I would prefer it to be a dense jungle instead of a more ordinary forest. So I'll wait until the next step to place it.

Does a common language exist?



ENCHĒA



FOREST FEATURES

Check out this optional roll table for unique features for the forests of your world:

d100	Geographical Feature
1-2	This forest was the site of a gruesome battle, and evidence of the violence still remains.
3-4	This forest is renowned for a rare flower that grows within it, used to flavor expensive wines.
5-6	Within this forest, those who slumber may freely traverse their dreams and memories.
7-8	The ironbark in this forest is used to outfit the locals with light, durable armor.
9-10	The trees in this forest are filled with musical sap, and many bards tap the trees.
11-12	A fire recently tore through here – many of the old trees have toppled and burned.
13-14	This forest is lush and full, with a thriving ecosystem of all manner of creatures.
15-16	This forest is home to a treant hydra, hiding in plain sight and ambushing unwary travelers.
17-18	This is no natural forest – it is a garden cultivated by giants.
19-20	Dryads in exile from the feywild have claimed this forest as their own.
21-22	This forest is full of trees that magically regenerate, providing virtually unlimited lumber.
23-24	This forest nullifies all magical effects.
25-26	This forest did not grow – it was built, and is crafted of metals of all kinds.
27-28	This forest surrounds the base of a razor-peaked mountain.
29-30	The trees of this forest are the tallest in the realm, and a diverse, treetop city sits atop it.
31-32	This forest is the graveyard of an army of devils, and twisted, black trees have risen up from their resting place.
33-34	Every part of this forest sits within a foot of water, the shallow dwelling place of water elementals who tend the trees.
35-36	This forest has deadly living plants that are the apex predators of the area.
37-38	This forest is shrouded in illusion. Many of its trees are not real.
39-40	This entire forest has a reptilian appearance – scaled trees and clawed flora.
41-42	There is a string of trees in this forest that grow crystal fruit. When broken, they produce magical properties.
43-44	Two tribes of barbarians live in this forest, and have carved contradicting histories into many of the trunks of the trees.
45-46	This forest is full of mirrored stones that reveal the future ailments of creatures who look upon them.
47-48	The trees in this forest only grow when watered with blood – and it is lush and full.
49-50	The king of this nation was crowned in this forest – his descendants still wear the wooden circlet carved from a branch of yew.

What is the most common musical instrument?



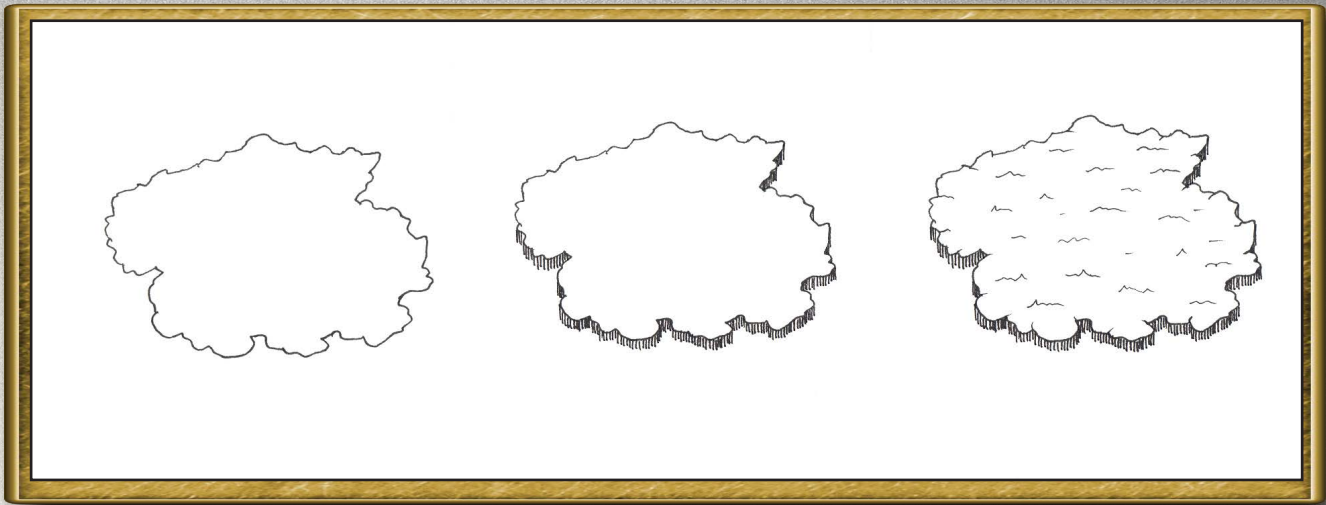
FOREST FEATURES

d100	Geographical Feature
51-52	This forest has grown in and around a once-mighty kingdom, now abandoned.
53-54	This forest hosts several species of large, ancient birds, carnivorous and deadly.
55-56	This area is barren and featureless, except under starlight, when a spectral forest appears.
57-58	This forest is inhabited by a clan of dwarven lumberjacks.
59-60	The trees of this forest are scorching hot, and their stone-like bark is grooved with tribal designs, filled with a glowing molten substance.
61-62	There are large portions of this forest where the trees – still rooted – have been carved into gorgeous statues depicting various historic scenes and legendary figures.
63-64	A thick fog rolls along this forest's floor, hiding its deadly drops and chasms.
65-66	Many petrified creatures have been encased in the bark of these trees.
67-68	This forest is known for its highly flexible wood, used often to craft nigh-unbreakable spears and powerful bows.
69-70	This forest is a place of serenity, but under dark of night, brings people's worst fears to life.
71-72	The resourceful goblins of this forest use the plentiful moss and vines to construct traps.
73-74	Many of this forest's trees have been hollowed out, and are marked with angular hatch marks. Deadly giant spiders dwell within them.
75-76	This is a large, crescent shaped forest, whose trees are coniferous and plentiful.
77-78	Thousands of banners are tied between the treetops, creating a multi-colored canopy.
79-80	The trees grow in immense, interconnected tangles, creating a treetop roadway.
81-82	This forest is known for its tranquility – those who stay too long lapse into a deep sleep.
83-84	This forest is full of pale white trees and shrubs, appearing as though covered with snow.
85-86	This forest runs across several regional borders, outfitted with well-maintained byways to travel between them quickly.
87-88	All that remains of this forest are dead stumps.
89-90	This beautiful forest experiences frequent and chaotic tempests.
91-92	This forest is lush and full. Over the years, it has become a hub for trade, containing numerous merchant carts and tents.
93-94	The leaves of this forest's trees are black and smoke-like, dissipating when touched, only to return to their original shape.
95-96	This forest is always autumnal, its red and orange leaves floating on the crisp air.
97-98	This forest is walled-in, and a settlement exists between the boughs.
99-00	The elemental flowers of this forest bloom and create effects of fire, water, earth, and wind.

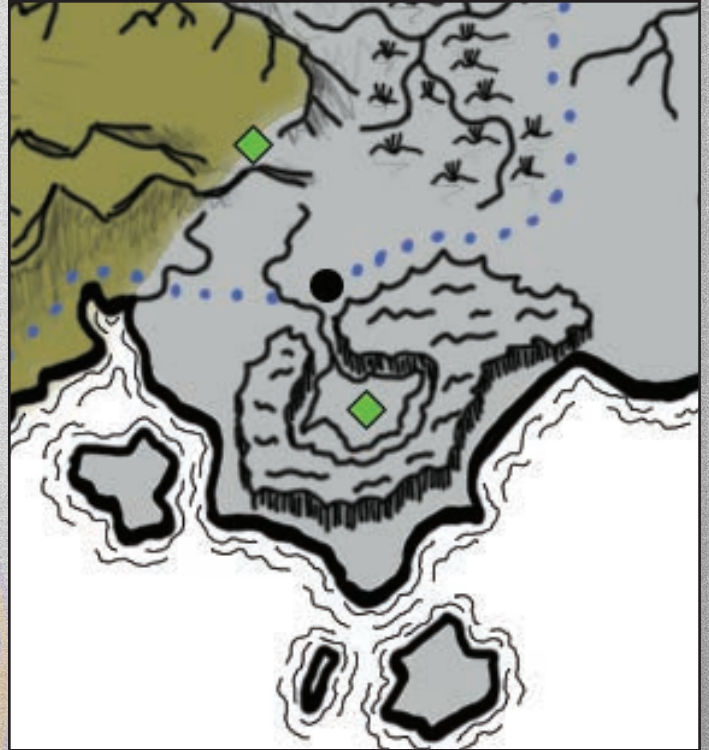


What is the strangest festival celebrated in your realm?

HOW TO DRAW FORESTS



1. Outline a rough forest shape with a mix of jagged and rounded edges.
2. Add vertical hatching to the front of the forest to give it dimension and represent tree trunks.
3. Add some texture using a mix of rounded and pointy lines. Experiment and find what looks good for the forest you want to create.



Are there any animals in the world that are illegal to hunt or kill?

JUNGLES

Dark, murky, and teeming with exotic life, jungles are the source of mystery that many adventurers crave. To go a day in a jungle without experiencing the dangers of vicious carnivores or deadly diseases is a lucky day indeed.

TIPS FOR CREATING JUNGLES

- 1. Weigh Your Options:** Vast rainforests don't necessarily fit into every fictional world, so consider them a rarity, or totally optional for yours. If placing a jungle inside your realm makes the whole world feel more inconsistent, magical reasoning notwithstanding, feel free to remove it!
- 2. Separate and Equal:** Try to find a location inside your world where a rainforest can exist without connecting to a more usual forest. This separation will help your jungle feel more natural, unique, and interesting in your world.
- 3. Where the Rivers Are:** Look at the places on your map where many rivers intersect, creating watersheds or other large tributaries. Oftentimes, if the rest of the climate is right, these are excellent places for jungles.

PUT THE WILD IN WILDLIFE

Jungles are dangerous. Knowing that, consider rainforests as your chance to go a little crazy. Here are some different things you can add to this region of your world to show the players that this isn't an everyday forest:

1. The birds here are cannibalistic and have four wings.
2. There is a special leopard here that can camouflage like a chameleon.
3. The mosquitos are known to pass extremely unpredictable diseases.
4. The vines of the strangler trees are sentient, and can move as swiftly as any adventurer.
5. The local sabrecats use their razor-sharp bone blades to slice through thick foliage and ambush their prey.
6. It takes an especially perceptive traveler to notice the pits of quicksand in this jungle.



“In Ireland, novels and plays still have a strange force. The writing of fiction and the creation of theatrical images can affect life there more powerfully and stealthily than speeches, or even legislation. Imagined worlds can lodge deeply in the private sphere, dislodging much else, especially when the public sphere is fragile.”

— Colm Toibin



What is your world called?

JUNGLES



CAPRICORN AND CANCER

In the real world, most jungles are located in a very specific region of the planet, between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. If you're looking to add a little more realism to the rainforests in your world, you should ask yourself some questions:

1. Is your world relatively large? If so, you could create tropics of your own, running through the center of your realm in the same way they run along the center of the Earth.
2. Is your world fairly small? If you want your world to be smaller and more easily traversable for potential adventurers, it's entirely possible that there will be no jungles, or that the entire realm will be covered in large tropical areas.

Consider the Carribbean region of the Earth, for example. Almost all of this region finds itself inside a tropical biome. Africa, however, is large enough to contain many differing climates, from desert to rainforest, and beyond.



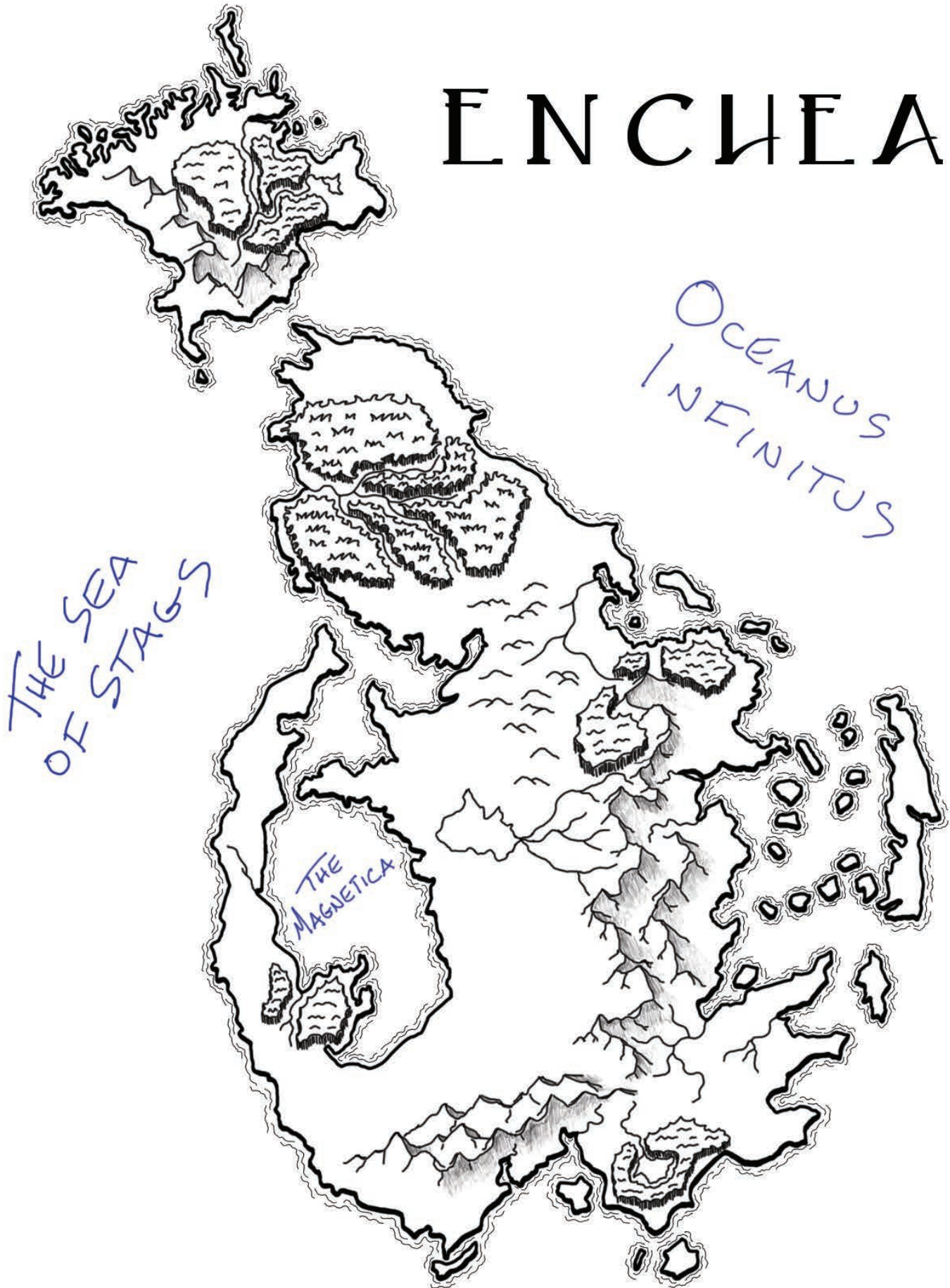
I only wanted one jungle in my world, but I wanted it to dwarf the rest of the forests. This place will be called the Thicket, and it will be near impassable due to the monsters and other dangers lurking within. I also like the idea of a faction called the Scarlet Wish, located in the Thicket. Renowned as dragon hunters in ancient times, they now profit from escorting wary travelers safely through the jungle.

It should be noted that I also left a small bit of blank space to the east of this rainforest for a possible road in the future. I like that people would still be able to travel around the Thicket, even though the road will be quite dangerous as well.

Who is the most famous musician in the world?



ENCHĒA



JUNGLE FEATURES

Enrich the jungles and rainforests of your world with this roll table:

d100	Geographical Feature
1-2	The trees of this jungle smolder without heat or flames.
3-4	This jungle is dotted with dark, murky swamps.
5-6	Temples from a forgotten age remain intact, scattered about this jungle.
7-8	The trees of this jungle soar upwards for thousands of feet, creating an ocean of trees.
9-10	This jungle, once lush and thick, is now cursed, petrified to stone.
11-12	This jungle has been decimated by deforestation by the surrounding settlements.
13-14	This jungle grows wildly on the side of a huge volcano.
15-16	This jungle is plagued by a magical darkness, day and night.
17-18	This jungle is known for its rivers, which are said to be the blood of an ancient fey creature.
19-20	This jungle is home to a race of tribal, sentient trees.
21-22	This jungle is slowly fading into an alternate plane of existence.
23-24	This jungle has several large clearings, in which walled settlements have sprung up.
25-26	This jungle grows at the bottom a deep, pitted vale.
27-28	This jungle has grown polluted from local industrialization.
29-30	The stone lanterns hanging from the trees remain lit while danger is near.
31-32	This horrid jungle teems with creatures that steal flesh.
33-34	This jungle is a neutral zone where warring tribes celebrate a ceremonial truce for one week.
35-36	This jungle is full of large, half-plant creatures whose regenerative capabilities make them ideal war beasts.
37-38	This jungle grows magically, and it extends across most of the region, expanding even when cut back.
39-40	This jungle contains archaic ceremonial pods that – with the right ingredients – are able to create a perfect copy of a person.
41-42	This jungle has been artificially grown, and is partially an illusion to hide an enormous, underground gnomish city.
43-44	The floor of this jungle is layered with immense stone coins, each etched with a deep runic pattern.
45-46	This jungle is rumored to produce humanoid versions of its indigenous creatures.
47-48	This jungle is the final resting place of a serpent god, and snakes of all sizes overrun it.
49-50	A labyrinth dominates the center of this overgrown jungle, patrolled by a minotaur cursed with eternal life.

Are politicians widely revered? Or are they widely distrusted?



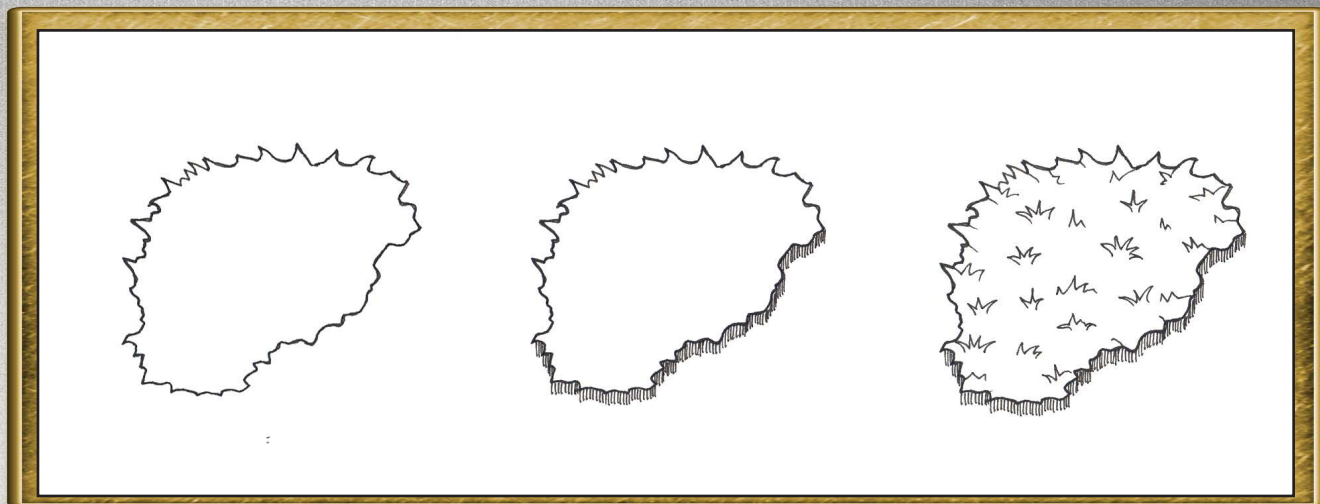
JUNGLE FEATURES

d100	Geographical Feature
51-52	This jungle was a training ground for a warlike tribe, and is littered with many man-made traps and hazards.
53-54	This jungle contains a special mineral that can be used to make potent healing medicine.
55-56	This jungle is lush and full, home to many creatures and a balanced ecosystem.
57-58	This jungle is the crash site of an extra-planar vessel, long-forgotten and covered in plant life.
59-60	An ancient, sick dragon resides in this jungle, living out the rest of its days among the trees.
61-62	The trees of this jungle are enchanted, and they literally capture sunlight in a way that allows the plants to be used as an energy source.
63-64	This tropical jungle is an anomaly, with regions covered in snow.
65-66	When carefully inspected, many of the trees in this jungle are growing out of the screaming mouths of long-rotted corpses.
67-68	This jungle is plagued with constant prismatic rainfall.
69-70	This jungle is a battlefield where a war of giants was waged – immense weapons and tools remain.
71-72	Monstrous humanoids call this jungle home, striking out at nearby settlements for slaves.
73-74	The plant life in this jungle is animated, and writhing together to create a large structure.
75-76	This jungle is the habitat for a species of ember gorillas – their smoldering, molten hands and feet leave scorch marks on the branches and stones they tread on.
77-78	Trolls are the dominating species in this jungle, though some are being driven mad by a dark force within the trees.
79-80	The rainfall here nullifies the effects of magic.
81-82	The vines of this jungle sap the memories from creatures, keeping them for themselves.
83-84	Clans of monks call this jungle home, using the herbs to enlighten and heal themselves.
85-86	This jungle is home to a circle of druids who assist any who enter with noble intentions.
87-88	This jungle contains a series of pits that – when opened with a spell – lead into the abyss.
89-90	This jungle produces the sweetest fruit in the region, though it is rare and treacherous to pick.
91-92	This jungle is the home to seven clans of sprites, who have divided the jungle equally.
93-94	The last of an endangered species roams this jungle.
95-96	This jungle is home to a small group of fallen angels, and they heal any who pass.
97-98	This jungle is full of savage frogmen who have never been exposed to anything outside their own culture.
99-00	This jungle is the location of a lost group of famous wizards who uncovered an ancient secret.



What is the most famous battle in the history of your world?

HOW TO DRAW JUNGLES



1. Plot out a forest as you normally would, but make the edges more jagged. On the top edge, make curvy spikes especially prominent.
2. Add vertical hatching to the front of the forest as you normally would.
3. Draw in spiky leaves and tree tops that mimic palm trees without trunks and other exotic tropical plants. Experiment and find what looks good. You may even draw some lone palm trees near the edges of the main forest to emphasize the feel of a tropical region.



What is the most dangerous creature in the sea?



DESERTS

Large expanses of arid lands are often as impassable as high mountain ranges. Yet the journey can be worth it for many who seek riches beyond measure. Many great realms contain these vast lands, as well as the unique people who live there. In the adventures that take place in your realm, what part will deserts play?

TIPS FOR CREATING DESERTS

1. **One and Done:** One desert might be enough for your world. They work well as rare geographical features in a fictional realm, so the fewer you have, the more special they will be. (Unless you want to deviate from this by design, making deserts more prevalent in your world.)

2. **Dividers of Civilization:** Take a look at your map and wonder where some great civilizations might thrive. Try placing a desert in the blank space between these two locations, and consider how that will affect the trade, diplomacy, and warfare between these regions of your world.

3. **Hard Living:** Deserts present many challenges – natural hazards, lack of water and other resources, desperate predators, and more. Deserts should be dangerous and exotic, and the people and creatures inhabiting them likewise should be molded by their environment. Think about the unique threats and hazards facing your adventurers as they enter the deserts of your world.

NATURALLY ARID

In the real world, mountains tend to block the moisture of ocean air, trapping the wet, coastal areas between the mountains and the ocean, and creating dry desert regions behind them. Here's a way to simulate this phenomenon in your world:

1. Imagine that there is a moist wind blowing over your realm, emanating from the sea.
2. Find the places where this wind would be blocked by a mountain range.
3. Place a desert behind the mountain range, where it would not receive this ocean breeze.
4. Place a coastal, fertile land on the opposite side of the mountains.
5. Consider what great trade empires might thrive in the fertile region.
6. Consider what other unique cultures might inhabit the desert region.



I took a lesson from science when it came to placing my deserts.

1. I imagine that much of the moist, warm, ocean air comes from the southeast of this world, and that quite a bit of this moisture is blocked by the mountain range along the east coast.
2. Behind those mountains, I placed an arid desert to showcase just how much of this moisture was being blocked. This created a natural feel to the world, while also placing the desert in a convenient plot of blank space.

This desert fits well into the storyline of the world itself. In its current position, it will serve as a natural barrier between the main portion of the continent and the western peninsula, creating an interesting environment for the nations that will eventually inhabit this world. How will trade be affected? Will there be a road through the desert? Or will people prefer sea travel across the Magnetica?



What is the most common natural disaster in your world?

ENCHĒA



THE SEA
OF STAGS

OCEANUS
INFINITUS

THE
MAGNETICA

DESERT FEATURES

Deserts are more than just barren wastelands. Use the roll table below to spice things up:

d100	Geographical Feature
1-2	The sand of this desert is infertile volcanic ash.
3-4	A tribe of roving pirate half-elves inhabits this desert, skimming across the dunes in vessels.
5-6	This desert is constantly held in the burning heat of high noon.
7-8	The winds of this desert kick up sand of black, powdered glass.
9-10	A strange, upward-growing root appears throughout this desert, never blossoming.
11-12	This desert is a boneyard, peppered with the remains of lost travelers and behemoth creatures.
13-14	The hallucinations brought on by traveling this desert are vivid and often deadly.
15-16	A rare magical resource is hidden under the dunes of this desert, and many factions desire it.
17-18	The vultures circling this desert grow to the size of large whales.
19-20	Constant sandstorms have shaped this desert into a single, enormous peak of sand.
21-22	This desert has a copper-colored sand that, when heated and cooled to the right temperatures, makes a light, malleable metal.
23-24	This desert is occupied by a large stretch of deep dunes, leading to a half-buried pyramid.
25-26	A single, tremendous black tree grows in the center of this large desert.
27-28	This desert bolsters fire magic during the day, and illusory magic at night.
29-30	A secret system of aqueducts beneath this desert provides water to those who know of it.
31-32	Numerous geysers of hot wind blow scorching sands across this desert.
33-34	An undead pharaoh lives beneath the sands of this desert.
35-36	The hollow skull of a demon lord rests within this desert, surrounded by large, pointed stones.
37-38	A water nymph with a small following of water elementals has formed a gorgeous oasis in this scorching place.
39-40	Sapient undead nomads roam this desert – their humanity was lost to a terrible entity.
41-42	Dry lightning storms occur constantly, causing the dormant sand creatures dwelling in this desert to fly into a rage.
43-44	Ancient creatures with technology beyond what is common in this realm have begun terraforming this large desert.
45-46	This desert serves as the natural barrier between two cultures that war eternally.
47-48	A large, magical creature floats slowly across this desert, feeding on sand, and expelling a gorgeous, glass-like material.
49-50	This desert is the prison region of the surrounding cultures, full of the corpses of many forsaken criminals, as well as a select few exiles who have survived its extremes.



What is regarded as the most dangerous form of magic?

DESERT FEATURES

d100	Geographical Feature
51-52	This desert is full of derelict dwarven digging equipment, seemingly left in a hurry.
53-54	Invisible predators dwell in this desert, their outlines barely discernible in the sandy winds.
55-56	The color of this desert's sand ranges between blue and green.
57-58	A powerful young dragon rules this desert and any who dare enter it.
59-60	When seen from the sky, this desert has a pattern that resembles a large compass rose.
61-62	Walls of airborne sand sweep across this desert slowly.
63-64	A series of large, ancient structures create a safe tunnel that one can use to traverse this treacherous place in shade and with the occasional fountain.
65-66	The sands of this desert are stark black, and its skies are an ever pale purple.
67-68	A caravan of blind fortune tellers wander around this desert, allegedly learning its secrets.
69-70	This desert doesn't experience any rainfall. Instead, a hail of stones and sand occurs daily.
71-72	Once a lush forest, this desert houses a kingdom that drained the natural energies of the land to save their society.
73-74	The desert houses creatures made entirely of swirling dust, though their outlines resemble powerful predatory cats.
75-76	Raiding hobgoblins use this desert as a place of retreat, as they have mastered its elements, and none can pursue them safely.
77-78	Angular obelisks, some crashed to earth, others still floating, drip water in certain sparse areas of this desert.
79-80	A circular river forms the natural boundary for this arid desert.
81-82	This desert was once a fertile land, before an arcane explosion obliterated the landscape.
83-84	This desert is inhabited by strange, plant-like creatures that catch the rain in their toothy maws before it touches the ground.
85-86	While the daytime temperature in this desert is scorching, the night brings dangerously freezing conditions.
87-88	The ground here is a dark gray, and nothing grows.
89-90	This desert is dotted with plentiful oases.
91-92	This impassable desert is said to contain an ancient city of gold at its center.
93-94	This desert was once at the bottom of a large sea – it is peppered with ancient shipwrecks.
95-96	This desert is an execution ground – the condemned are sent to starve in its vast wastes.
97-98	The ground here is hard, flat, and splitting in the burning sun.
99-00	The dunes of this desert move like the waves on a ferocious sea.

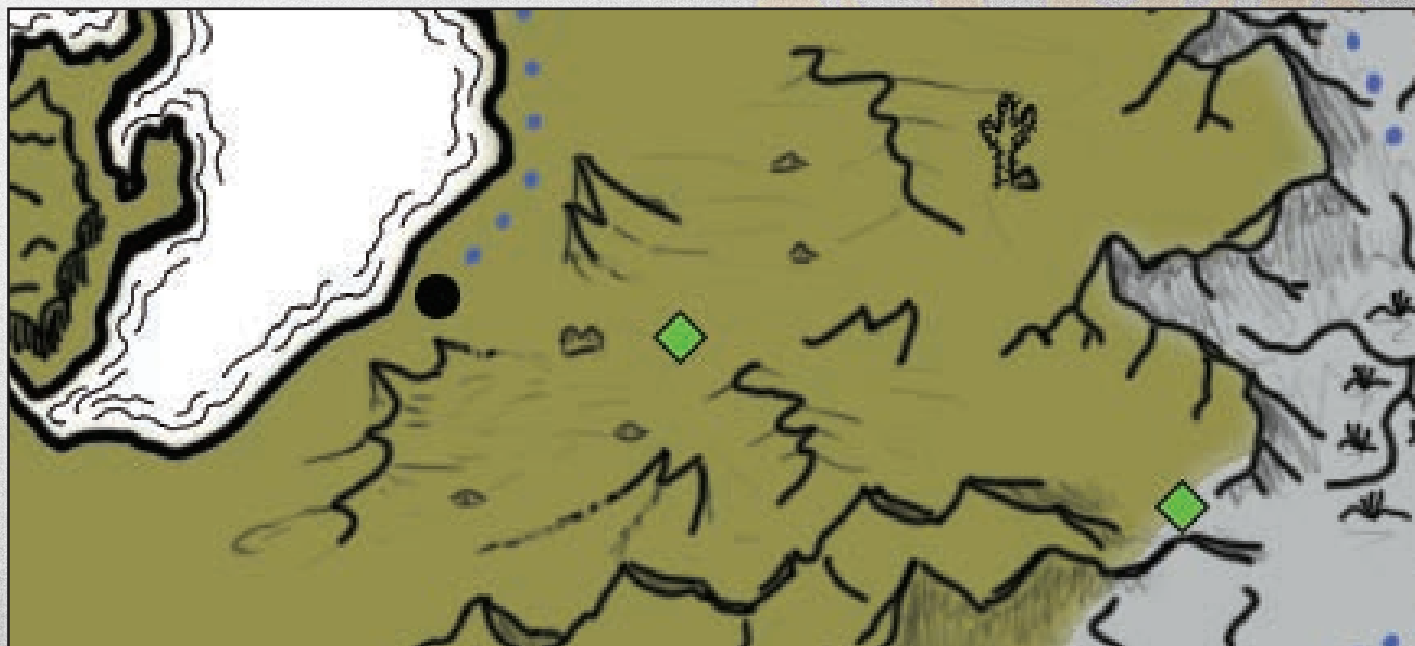
Are dragons a myth, a frequent sight, or nonexistent?



HOW TO DRAW DESERTS



1. Draw some wavy lines for the ridges of dunes and a few pointed, curved outcroppings. These rocky outcroppings are not like any I've seen in a real desert, but I've found they give your desert a rugged and fantastical feel.
2. Use thin, sweeping lines to indicate the subtle lift of the desert sand up to the ridgelines and pointed outcroppings. Draw more thin, sweeping lines around the region to give it a barren, windswept feel.
3. Add some rocks and lightly shade the dunes and outcroppings. Optionally add a cactus or other desert objects, depending on the style of desert you are wanting to portray.



What special ways do the political leaders in your world execute heinous criminals?

SWAMPS

The wetlands of many worlds are renowned for their murky waters and sinister reputation. In a world of light and love, swamps are where the more sinister creatures play. From tribal fiends to long-lost lichs, these areas will pave the way for the darker and more horrific adventures at your table.

TIPS FOR CREATING SWAMPS

1. **Below Sea Level:** Find an area on your map where many rivers travel, yet isn't quite coastal. This region might be a place where water seems to sit and fester. A perfect place for a swamp.
2. **Evil Lands:** Many fictional worlds and campaign settings contain a place where evil forces reside.

Oftentimes, this might be a dark forest or jagged mountain range, but swamps fit well in these locations too. If it suits your world, choose a place for more sinister happenings to occur, and place your swamp nearby.

3. **Life Abundant:** Swamps aren't just spooky, grim places, though – they are often fertile, beautiful landscapes, teeming with life and overgrown with all manner of tree and shrub. The waters host many fish and reptiles, the trees are home to birds of all kinds. Don't be afraid to make your wetlands places of beauty, as well as dark mystery.

SWAMPS! SWAMPS EVERYWHERE!

In the real world, wetlands are actually very common. In fact, they exist in every one of the 50 United States, and in almost every single country around the world. In fantasy settings, however, there are typically only one or two large swamps in the entire realm.

If you're looking to emulate reality when it comes to your wetlands, try placing lots of smaller swamps around your map, instead of just one or two big ones.



There were a couple obvious locations for wetlands in Enchea. Namely, the larger tributaries.

1. That large tributary that runs into the lake seemed like a perfect spot for a large marshland. I imagine there will be a town near the convergence of those rivers, filled with people that utilize the waterways for canoe travel and trade.
2. The tributary located in the southeastern portion of the map seemed like another perfect place for a swamp. I imagine this location, as well as the forested lake to the south, will both be a part of a larger nation of independent states. I'm really excited for this!

Who is the most famous general in your world?



ENCHĒA



SWAMP FEATURES

Swamps are as diverse and varied as you make them. Find some cool wetland options below:

d100	Geographical Feature
1-2	This swamp is known for its foul smell and endless, mucky quicksand.
3-4	This swamp was once a large lake, and is littered derelict trade vessels.
5-6	The water in this swamp is luminescent, and changes hues depending on the time of day.
7-8	This swamp is a tropical wetland that discharges into a vast but shallow lake.
9-10	This swamp is the wet and decaying corpse of an extra-planar elemental.
11-12	This swamp has an ecosystem of creatures made entirely of small, harmless undead.
13-14	The mud of this swamp is mineral-rich. It is sought after as a material component for spells.
15-16	This swamp is tiered, with marshy waterways spilling into lower areas.
17-18	This swamp is home to a herd of large, docile creatures that are nearly extinct due to the value of their magical bones.
19-20	This swamp is slowly growing, flooding nearby farming fields.
21-22	A series of large, ancient structures are rising very slowly from all portions of this swamp.
23-24	This swamp is peppered with large obelisks that serve as a portal to another plane.
25-26	The acidic muddy waters of this swamp are acrid, though they are said to restore one's youth.
27-28	This swamp is the resting place of a recently slain army, and their ghosts haunt its mire.
29-30	Beneath this swamp is a culture of dwarves who have mastered the art of wetland digging.
31-32	Once a lush, fertile grassland, this swamp is the result of years of magical testing and research.
33-34	The waters of this swamp are strangely, pleasantly warm.
35-36	This swamp rests within the eyehole of the skull of a primordial creature.
37-38	The vegetation within this swamp is sentient, and knows some long-forgotten secrets.
39-40	This swamp slowly moves across the countryside. No one knows why or how, as it has no distinct pattern in its gradual migration.
41-42	This is a swamp known for cheering even the deepest despair – it's hallucinogenic fumes create euphoria – and addiction.
43-44	Thin black trees, devoid of leaves or branches, fill this swamp. They are as hard as steel, and make excellent weapons.
45-46	This swamp slopes ever so slightly. At its lowest point is an archaic grate.
47-48	This swamp has gravity that is lower than usual, created by the gases belched forth from the innumerable hot springs within.
49-50	This swamp is home of swarms of deadly, infinitesimal insects that bore into the flesh of creatures, reproducing within them and feeding off of their insides slowly.

Did all the races in your world emerge out of one primordial race?



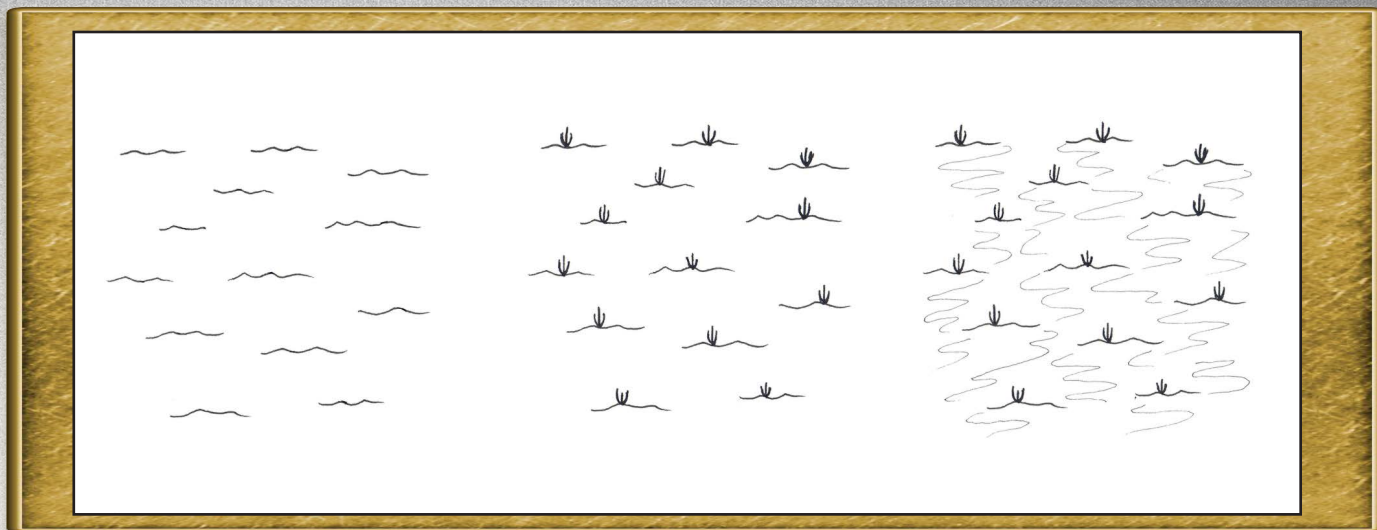
SWAMP FEATURES

d100	Geographical Feature
51-52	This swamp is shrouded in an endless fog, and many who enter never leave.
53-54	This swamp is the source of constant thunderous sounds said to be a demigod battling endlessly beneath its murky waters.
55-56	This swamp is riddled with craters that belch lightning erratically.
57-58	This swamp is long and thin, having formed from the banks of a mighty river.
59-60	A pair of towering mountains have begun to degrade into mud, forming a swamp in the valley of their bases.
61-62	This swamp is shallow, but covers most of the region, forcing people to grow submerged crops, such as rice, to survive.
63-64	This is a swamp shrouded in shadows, magically unaffected by natural light.
65-66	This swamp is surrounded by a large stone wall. It is a decrepit well for giants.
67-68	This series of swamps runs from one coastline to another, the mighty footprints of a god.
69-70	This swamp is small in area, but very deep, and the home to a primal aquatic race.
71-72	This swamp has a stark red color, said to be cursed with blood magic.
73-74	This swamp is peaceful, and contains no predators. Its insects make harmonious music.
75-76	This swamp covers the top of a plateau, dripping its muck onto the dry lands below.
77-78	This swamp is the source of nutrients for a gargantuan tree.
79-80	This swamp is said to be the resting place for a group of heroes who carried a mighty magical item when they were felled here.
81-82	Every part of this swamp is brightly colored, with intricate patterns.
83-84	The mud from this swamp, when mixed with holy water, is a powerful repellent of the undead.
85-86	This swamp is known for being a source of precious metals, if you can traverse its poisonous water and flora.
87-88	This swamp has formed over a buried tomb, and undead emerge from the murk often.
89-90	This swamp known for its delicious water berries.
91-92	This wetland teems with green plantlife, smelling of rich, dark soil.
93-94	This swamp is inhabited by massive bats who feed on creatures stuck in the mud.
95-96	The trees in this swamp weep when nearby innocents are threatened.
97-98	This swamp is the location of a banished necrotic deity.
99-00	A tribe of humanoid herons maintain a secretive but friendly community within the depths of this wetland.



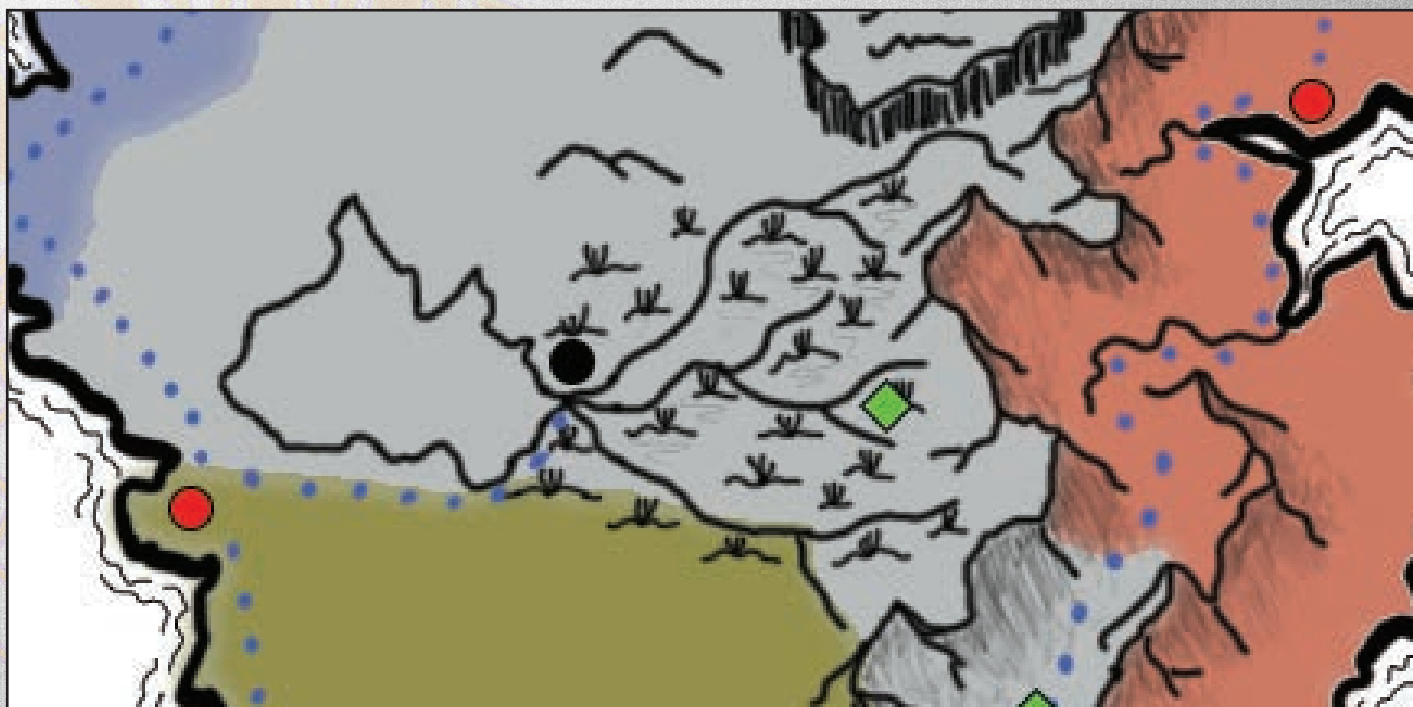
Does gunpowder exist?

HOW TO DRAW SWAMPS



1. Draw a bunch of wavy horizontal lines to start.
2. Draw in some plant life. This adds texture and also indicates that the area is not just water.
3. Scratch in some light wavy lines between your other lines. This gives the impression that there are little streams and pools of water throughout.

**SELLSWORD
MAPS**



How deep do the oceans run? Are there any sentient societies down there?

POLAR REGIONS

Even the coldest, most barren landscapes contain life and interesting adventures. Some of the best immersive descriptions in your campaign can occur in the marvelous reaches of the freezing tundras and snow dunes of your realm. It's time to add these areas to your world.

TIPS FOR CREATING POLAR REGIONS

1. Polar by Any Other Name: Sure, the word "polar" specifically refers to those regions located the farthest north or south in your realm, but consider the other frozen regions of your world, such as high

mountain peaks or lands infused with ice magic. These can benefit from a "polar" twist as well!

2. Drawing Blank Spaces: Polar regions are not easily drawn in the traditional sense of the word. Actually, many polar areas will be left blank, as large glacial regions and massive sheets of ice are usually featureless. Still, you should lightly highlight or shade in the icy areas of your realm, so you can easily describe the climate to a traveling party of adventurers that journey there.

AURORA UNNATURALIS

In the real world, the magnetic poles of the Earth combine with the solar winds of our Sun in order to create one of the most beautiful phenomena on the planet: the Auroras, or the "Northern Lights."

So what if you want to place something similar in your fantasy realm, but want to give it a fantastical or arcane twist? Roll on this feature table to spice up your auroras.

1. Blue
2. Green
3. Red
4. Orange
5. Yellow
6. Black
7. Purple
8. Multicolored
9. Wispy, geometrical shapes in the sky
10. Lightning storms emanate from this aurora.
11. Whispering voices can be heard coming from the lights.
12. The aurora is made up of the lost souls of a forgotten empire.
13. The source of these lights is actually on the ground – some wizard's mischief.
14. Every creature in the area, no matter how sentient, comes out to watch the lights when they are in the sky.
15. The lights from this aurora can be seen from everywhere in the realm.
16. The aurora is utilized as a power source for a magical civilization.
17. This aurora is the source of all magic in the realm.
18. These lights are created from the eternal conflict between two deities.
19. The aurora was left in the sky eons ago, as a dying gift from a benevolent archwizard.
20. The circle of this aurora forms a massive, ethereal prison for seven powerful demons.



How high are the tallest city walls in your world?

POLAR FEATURES

Polar regions are far from desolate, lifeless wastelands. Give them some life with the roll tables below.

d100	Geographical Feature
1-2	The temperatures in this region can drop drastically in a matter of seconds, freezing travelers into sculptures of ice almost immediately.
3-4	The snowy fields of this region resemble the dune seas of many deserts.
5-6	This near-impassable region is peppered with many natural ice caves.
7-8	There is no road over this massive sheet of ice, yet the journey is necessary for regional trade.
9-10	The snow here falls in shards of ice – travelers would do well to find shelter.
11-12	An ancient temple is buried in the ice of this region.
13-14	Lush, persistent trees inhabit this icy landscape, surviving despite the freezing conditions.
15-16	This polar region is actually the icy surface of a massive lake.
17-18	This once-frozen wasteland has begun melting – the governors fear the oncoming floods.
19-20	This polar region is inhabited by gigantic, carnivorous penguin-like creatures that slide down the slopes in pursuit of their prey.
21-22	An enormous diamond emerges out of the center of this frozen landscape.
23-24	The snow here is constant but gentle.
25-26	A tribe of sledding pirates inhabits this region.
27-28	This large polar region is shaped like a blade.
29-30	The small towns that pepper this area make their annual income off of the snowed-in travelers that must stay the night.
31-32	This tundra is barren, save for a large forest of crimson trees.
33-34	High, arching gates from a long dead culture stand in this tundra, leading the treacherous way.
35-36	Strange, razor-sharp steel walls jut from many parts of this tundra.
37-38	This icy region is a location that amplifies magic, if the user can survive the elements.
39-40	A coven of powerful witches shrouds the region in frost and fog to hide their whereabouts from a tenacious witch hunter.
41-42	A bordering culture trains rocs and fitted them with barding to travel across this arctic region.
43-44	This haunted, frozen area was once a thriving trade town, until the weather changed.
45-46	Snow apes are hunted in this polar region, because their pelts are immune to ice magic.
47-48	Barbarian horselords are the prominent culture of this tundra, using their large, powerful snow steeds to proctor their lands.
49-50	This arctic region is known for its breathtaking flowers that only grow in freezing temperatures, and can be used to augment learning.

Do the gods ever walk upon the world as physical beings?



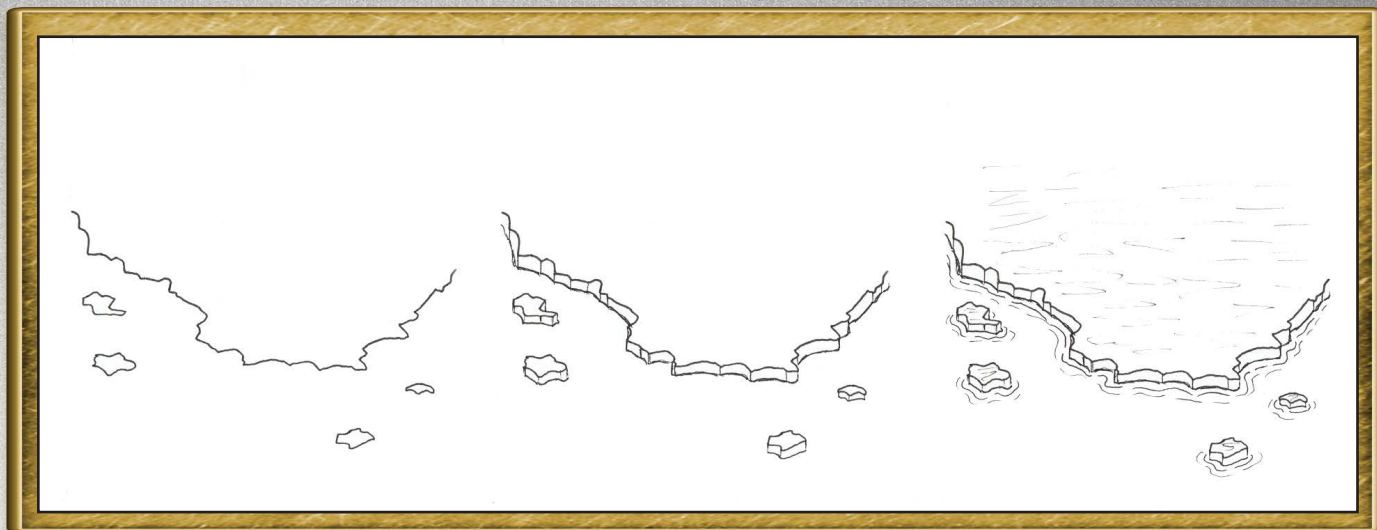
POLAR FEATURES

d100	Geographical Feature
51-52	Ice trolls rule this frozen region with an iron fist, capturing and eating any trespassers.
53-54	This arctic region is beautiful, and home to a thriving ecosystem of polar creatures.
55-56	Brutal hailstorms and avalanches plague this polar region.
57-58	A small, temperate forest exists as a warm oasis in this frozen region.
59-60	All manner of colossal bones emerge from the frozen snow, now effigies of an icy war that occurred between snow giants.
61-62	This arctic region has narrow, razor-peaked mountains lined with frozen rivers.
63-64	A kingdom of snow-dwelling elves lives atop the treacherous mountains of this arctic region.
65-66	A group of polar bear lycanthropes dwell in this tundra, seeking to control or defeat their curse.
67-68	An orc chieftain took a remnant of his clan to this frozen region to start anew.
69-70	The ice in this frozen region is enchanted and doesn't melt when handled correctly. It can be sculpted to make powerful weapons.
71-72	Larger than average, barbaric goblins worship a god of winter in this arctic region.
73-74	This polar region is home to an old culture whose temples are made to repel ice and stop snow from blocking its entrances.
75-76	This region is covered in ice, though much of its landmarks show through.
77-78	This polar region is home to a circle of druids who struggle to bring balance to the frozen wasteland.
79-80	This tundra is dotted with frozen pyramids, sticking partly out of the snow.
81-82	Beneath the layers of ice lies a dwarven kingdom. They are rumoured to thrive underground, appreciating the isolation from outsiders.
83-84	This tundra is surrounded by temperate regions, its weather caused by an arcane mishap.
85-86	The snow of this tundra takes twice as long to melt than normal snow.
87-88	An antediluvian kraken lives below this tundra in its frozen waters. It surfaces once a month, breaking through the ice to claim victims.
89-90	Many travellers are claimed by the numerous snow spiders that dwell in this tundra, nearly impossible to see.
91-92	Previous cultures have marked these frozen wastes with glowing blue patterns.
93-94	A group of arctic griffons thrives in this tundra, flying low to ambush prey.
95-96	The snow here flows like a mighty river.
97-98	This tundra was once a thriving village, now buried beneath the layers of frozen waste.
99-00	This arctic region has leafless trees that jut through portions of the snow and ice.



Write a poem about a famous king.

HOW TO DRAW POLAR REGIONS



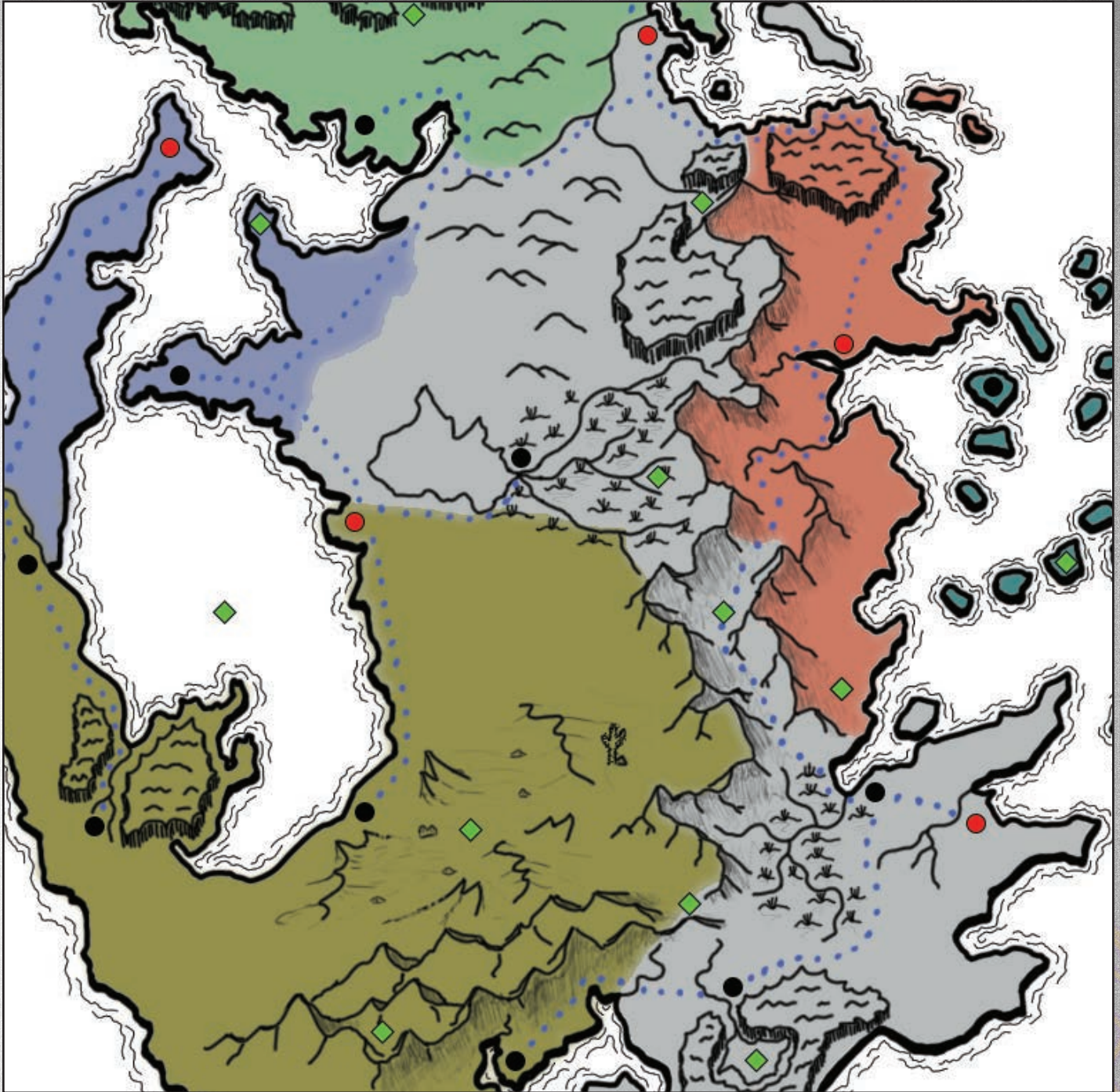
1. In the far North or far South of your world draw a jagged coastline and some small jagged islands. These island will become floating icebergs.
2. Draw vertical lines coming down from the most jagged corners of your coastline and close the bottom edge off to indicate where it hits the water. Now you have a landmass (or ice mass) that protrudes from the water.
3. Add wavy lines around the edges of the coast to indicate water, and sketch in some thin wandering lines on the arctic surface.



What kind of music is popular among the wealthy elite?



CITIES AND SETTLEMENTS



Now you've created the vast landscapes that make up the foundations of your world. You've created stretching mountain ranges, raging rivers, dense forests, and magically mysterious landscapes. Many amazing adventures will take place in this realm, but first, we need to add the most important part of any world – the people.

The cities and other settlements that dot your world will be the stage on which your stories will be told. Your task now is to decide where to put them, so let's get started...



How many days are there in a year?

THE TWO TYPES OF SETTLEMENTS

RESOURCE SETTLEMENTS

There will be many valuable resources in your world, from the strategic resources like coal, iron, and arcane energy, to the luxurious resources such as gemstones, gold, and furs. It is common for thriving cities to be built on top of these resources, using them as trade goods for the population.

Place some of these cities around your realm, while following some guidelines:

- 1. It's Your world:** If you want to place more or fewer of these cities, do it! Do whatever makes your world feel more like you want it to, no matter what these guidelines say. Your world can be sparsely populated, with ranges of wilderness between settlements. Or it could be well-established, with roads between the walled cities of civilizations.
- 2. Two Days' Travel:** Separate your cities out a bit. They'll be some of your world's most prosperous settlements, so make sure adventurers can't get from one to another without stopping somewhere for the night. I usually measure distance in my campaign settings in days, instead of kilometers or miles. This helps me to know how far settlements are from one another, and what sorts of adventure a group of people might find during their travels. When in doubt, space your cities about two days average travel apart.
- 3. Roll For It:** Here's a useful list of resources or exports that a city might be built around. They could be natural resources found in or near the city, or they might be things the city creates using craftsmen unlike any other in the world.

d100	Resource
1	Ale
2	Spirits
3	Weapons
4	Spices
5	Cattle
6	Pigs
7	Sheep
8	Pepper
9	Coal
10	Coffee
11	Copper
12	Diamonds
13	Perch (fish)
14	Emeralds
15	Furs
16	Gold
17	Gravel
18	Iron ore
19	Nutmeg
20	Arcane energy
21	Jade
22	Bamboo
23	Lead
24	Agriculture
25	Limestone

Are the town garrisons generally considered fair? Or are they more often considered corrupt?



THE TWO TYPES OF SETTLEMENTS

d100	Resource
26	Lumber
27	Silk
28	Coconut
29	Paint
30	Marble
31	Bison
32	Nickel
33	Illicit drugs
34	Timber
35	Oat
36	Bananas
37	Fresh water
38	Oysters
39	Cabbage
40	Armor
41	Paper
42	Cherries
43	Parsley
44	Cocoa
45	Pearls
46	Grapefruit
47	Platinum
48	Clay
49	Sugar
50	Incense

d100	Resource
51	Rye
52	Salmon
53	Salt
54	Wheat
55	Sand
56	Dyes
57	Tourism
58	Porcelain
59	Magical metals
60	Chickens
61	Ivory
62	Tin
63	Shrimp
64	Cotton
65	Medicine
66	Cloves
67	Arable land
68	Crawfish
69	Lobster
70	Olives
71	Sapphires
72	Silver
73	Stone
74	Coral
75	Sulfur

d100	Resource
76	Crab
77	Sunflower
78	Tobacco
79	Oranges
80	Swordfish
81	Talc
82	Elk
83	Tea
84	Jewelry
85	Oil
86	Trout
87	Wine
88	Woodland game
89	Zinc
90	Carts, Wagons, etc.
91	Whales
92	Leathers and hides
93	Medicine
94	Furniture
95	Luxury oils
96	Horses
97	Naval ships
98	Art and antiques
99	Exotic creatures
100	Fabrics and Textiles



What does a farmer in your world worry about more? Famine or vicious creatures?

THE TWO TYPES OF SETTLEMENTS

TRAVELER AND TRADER SETTLEMENTS

What happens when two large cities are too far apart to make for a one-day trip? Oftentimes, if the road between two settlements is frequently traveled, traveler and trade cities will begin to rise out of what was once a small encampment. These settlements are usually known for their comfortable inns, debaucherous taverns, and packed market districts.

Place some of these settlements around your realm, using the following guidelines:

1. **Tale of Two Cities:** Place some of these settlements in between the larger, resource-based cities you placed previously. Imagine where they might crop up out of small encampments and mobile trade centers.
2. **Let's Go to the Market:** Even traveler/trade cities have a thriving marketplace. Oftentimes, more so than other cities! If you're looking for an easy adventure hook, or just want to see what's hot at the market today, use the resource table from before to see what people are trading.



I decided that eight large cities would fit well on my map, separated by 15 smaller towns and villages. I placed the larger cities primarily on the coasts of the world, save for a couple exceptions that I've already included in my current campaign:

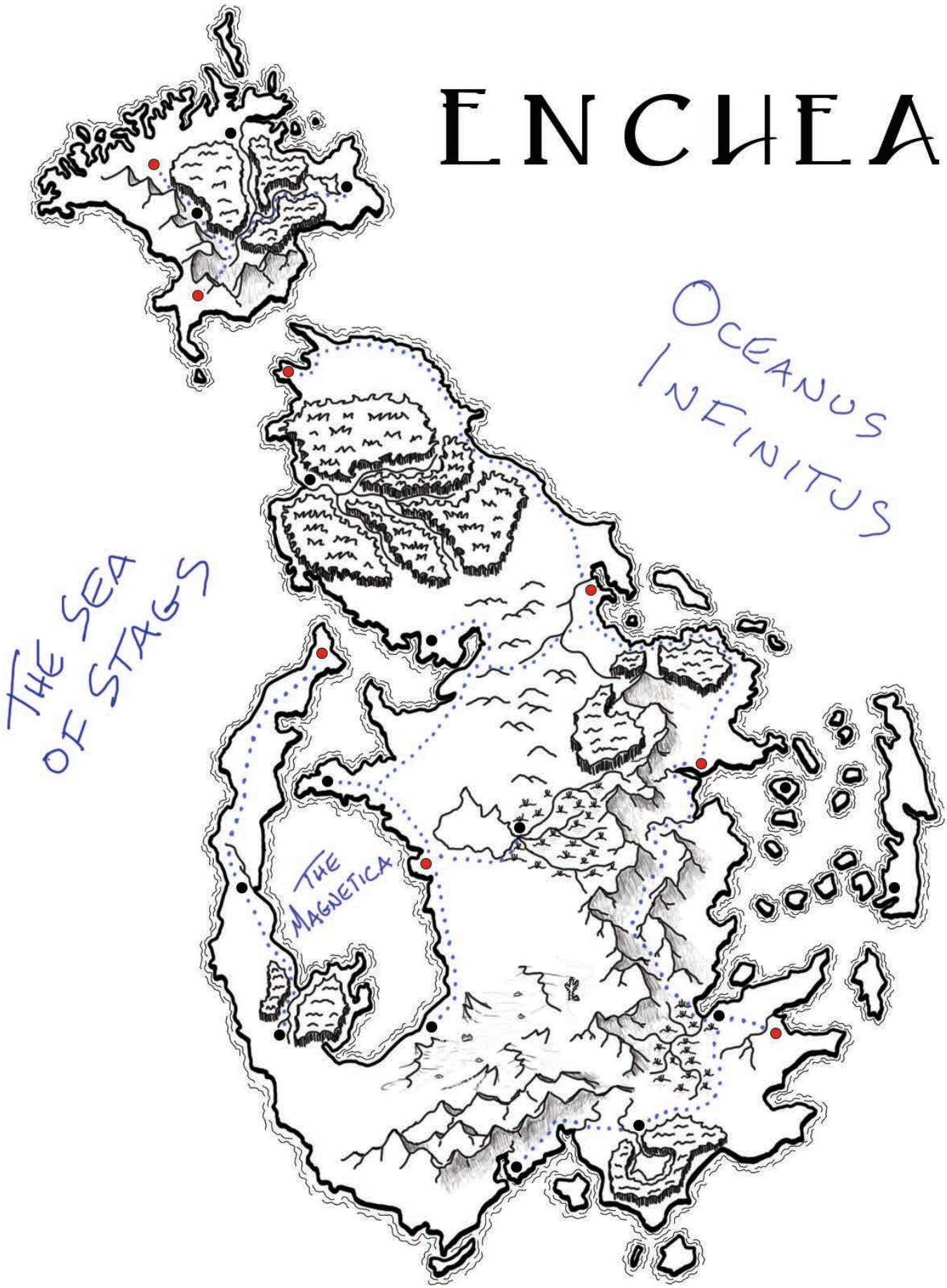
1. **Hallowhall:** This is the capital of the mountain dwarves in my world. It is located on the southwestern tip of the northern island, under the mountain. I imagine it as a massive, underground city, infused with technology and magic.
2. **Talonfall:** This floating city, located in the northwestern corner of the same island as Hallowhall, will be a corrupt and hedonistic society, centered around gambling on the dangerous aerial races that happen there.
3. **Aurora:** Located at the tip of the western peninsula, this is the beacon of high elf civilization in Enchea, and the launch point for many of the power's colonial endeavors around the world.

I'm not sure what I'll do with most of the small towns around the map, but I've got some inspiration for a few of them:

1. **Three Rivers:** Located at (and named after) the convergence of the three rivers at the central lake in Enchea, the town of Three Rivers thrives off the resources in the local marshlands. The locals traverse the canals via small boats and mud boots.
2. **The Dogpound:** A small, borderland town of brigands and bandits, the Dogpound is the only settlement located in the jungles of the Thicket. Many criminals and fugitives seek refuge in this lawless place.
3. **Merrickor:** This small fishing village is where my current campaign started over a year ago. Located on the eastern coast of the northern island, it is known for its boisterous population of hill dwarves.

Are there any folk heroes commonly referred to in stories and ballads?

ENCHĒA



MOUNTAIN TOWNS

d20	Mountain Town Description
1	This dusty mining town sits in a mountainous cul de sac with only one way in or out.
2	The huts in this hunting village are made from the skins of the very mountain stags that inhabit the range.
3	This village was built around a mountaintop monastery once the peak was found to bear a rare and delicious fruit.
4	This mountain village serves as a waypoint between two larger cities on either side of the range – the debauchery practiced by the travelers here knows no bounds.
5	This mountain town is built upon a water source that causes its inhabitants to go blind, but gives them truesight.
6	This town has a military that is known for their prowess using shields made from the stone around them.
7	The small mountain town is unsuspecting, but is actually the front for an assassin's guild.
8	This town has a powerful oracle, who can read futures, but only for the price of a memory.
9	Near the peak of a mountain, this town breeds griffons of all kinds.
10	The elves that live in this mountain town hate the forest, and seek to build an empire of stone.
11	This mountain town is perched next to a lush river and waterfall.
12	This small town is built within the shattered head of a monument that was carved out of this mountain.
13	This once-thriving small town was used to summon a pitiless horde of devils, who now rule these mountains.
14	This town worships earth elementals, and the people constantly build, empowered by their granite leiges.
15	Master jewelers seek this town for its gorgeous and rare stones.
16	This mountain town is actually an abandoned ambush point, full of traps and kept up by crafty goblins.
17	This mountain town is known for its guild of lycanthrope hunters.
18	This small town is the only way to pass through the mountains quickly, and is protected by a large gate on either side.
19	The direwolves of the mountain mysteriously protect the inhabitants of this town.
20	This mountain town is overrun by ghouls.

What is the fastest way to travel from one place to another?



FOREST AND JUNGLE TOWNS

d20	Forest or Jungle Town Description
1	This lumber town has a long history of telling scary stories to their children in order to keep them out of the treacherous forest.
2	This forested village thrives off the local tarpits, no matter how mysterious and dangerous they might be.
3	This town is known for the hollowing out of trees for their precious sap. Ominous musical tones play through the hollow trees at night, when the winds begin to blow.
4	Sitting on the edge of a prominent forest, this borderland town is known for its adventurers guilds and questing opportunities.
5	This village resides on the banks of a large river, where the people make sacrifices to the gods.
6	This settlement thrives off of the large insects abundant in the surrounding region. They are a source of food, armor, and even recreational substances.
7	If you can find this hidden jungle town, it is traditional that one of its warriors will serve as your bodyguard for one week.
8	This forest city is built on stilts, with traps that keep the enormous ants below at bay. Submersion in the ant mounds below is used as punishment for heinous crimes.
9	The people of this village believe that the purple crystals in the cave nearby offer eternal life – if they could just figure out how to harness their power.
10	Built inside a jungle clearing, this village is known for the most beautiful pottery in the realm.
11	This forest settlement is home to two famously talented blacksmiths – they are bitter rivals.
12	This woodland town is covered in ice, and has been for as long as anyone can remember. Many believe it is cursed.
13	This jungle settlement is known for its particularly strategic position along a body of water, allowing its people access to places it takes others much longer to travel to.
14	This floating village uses the creeks and canals of a large tributary for transportation and commerce. Floating market stalls are commonplace.
15	This forest village is home to a tribe of particularly cultured barbarians who believe knowledge, not rage, wins wars.
16	This jungle city is believed to be the feeding place of several vampire spawn, using the charmed townspeople as unwitting cattle.
17	The people of this town don't seem to age – the surrounding forest has healing properties.
18	This region of forest is especially fertile, and many farming communities exist within it.
19	This forest town is said to be the hiding place of the treasonous outlaws who tried to kill the current monarch.
20	The people of this forest settlement are masters of the elements, and have imprisoned elemental slaves to do their bidding.



What is viewed as an honorable way to die?

DESERT TOWNS

d20	Desert Town Description
1	This small village is built around a single, lush oasis.
2	The well of this village runs dry annually. The locals take this time to celebrate a festival of thirst until the monsoon season returns.
3	This dusty town is built upon the parched sands of a long dried riverbed.
4	This town would be a thriving city if it weren't for the regional powers keeping the water dried up.
5	This desert settlement is home to the most prolific black market in the realms.
6	This desert city is often collateral damage in a war against opposing, desert-dwelling ape-men.
7	This desert outpost is a military encampment that has been allowed through a treaty, though it is very hostile territory.
8	A race of gnomes live in this desert community. They have mastered the art of soul-switching, and use it as a devilish means to steal younger bodies.
9	This desert city thrives, sitting in the shadow of two titanic skeletal hands that reach up from the desert sands.
10	This area serves as the permanent camp of a sand-crawling, crypt-raiding adventurers guild. They're recruiting.
11	This hidden desert city is known as the Baron's Refuge, said to be a safe place to retire for any lords and leaders who have made enemies in their tenure.
12	This desert city is built atop the crumbling ruins of an ancient, polyhedral monument.
13	This was once a great desert town. Ransacked, and rife with undead, it's now a blight on the sands.
14	This desert outpost is home to a handful of mystics who have mastered body control to the point of needing little to no water.
15	This industrious desert settlement mass-produces many wondrous items.
16	This nomadic desert community hunts the giant scorpions of the desert, fashioning their carapaces into armor.
17	This desert hamlet is kept thriving by a benevolent hermit who lives nearby. He is a master instrument maker, and supports the city financially with his exorbitant custom-crafting fees.
18	This town hovers 30 feet off of the desert sands – just high enough for travelers to see it in the distance. They charge quite an entrance fee.
19	This desert city is hidden beneath the sands. Several hidden elevators exist, all marked with mundane plants and rocks.
20	A tribe of desert goblins has bred large trap-door spiders that they control with pheromones. They lurk beneath the sand, lying in wait.

Are people generally allowed to marry freely? Or are most marriages arranged?



SWAMP TOWNS

d20	Swamp Town Description
1	This hamlet is built on stilted buildings and wooden boardwalks.
2	This small village is home to the Gatorskins, a group of brave hunters that slay the dangerous local reptiles.
3	This town is defended by a skilled town guard, known for fighting on the back of riverbears – large otters, skilled in both running and swimming.
4	The locals here must travel in pairs, just in case one person falls into the swallowing mud of the swamp.
5	Farmers on stilts till the fertile marshland soil, growing aquatic produce.
6	This marshy village thrives on the capture and export of rhino-fins, massive, horned fish considered a delicacy by many affluent connoisseurs.
7	Fire is outlawed here, as the gasses emitted from the swamp are highly flammable. The locals light their homes with bioluminescent fungi.
8	Special craft that “skim” the swamp’s surface are used for transportation here.
9	The women in this marshland settlement serve as its warriors, a tradition established by a legendary figure known as the Bog Queen.
10	The settlers of here have magically adapted to the environment – many possess gills and fins.
11	The locals are adept spear-throwers, hurling their weapons expertly and winding them back using attached leather cords.
12	A band of dwarven craftsmen has settled here. The weapons they quench in the murky waters of the swamp have a greenish, rippled tinge to them.
13	Wild halflings live peacefully among the gnarled roots of the massive swamp trees growing here – but they set elaborate traps to dissuade outsiders from approaching.
14	A tribe of savage frogmen lives beneath the yellowed bones of an ancient black dragon – their chieftain holds court from inside a massive eye socket.
15	The winding, widespread waterways of this marshy village make it an ideal trading post.
16	This swampland settlement is as diverse as they come. It was established by a group of elven, dwarven, and human exiles, driven from their respective homelands.
17	The medicine man in this marsh hermitage is a retired cleric, famed for the cure he developed for a destructive plague.
18	The tavern here serves “swamp swill,” a potent spirit brewed using the pungent waters of the surrounding marshlands.
19	This remote village was founded by a usurped king. He and his scattered followers scrape out a meager living in the mud now.
20	The massive swamp spiders have been domesticated by the wild elves dwelling here – they attack from above on their arachnid mounts.



Do the people of your world petition to multiple gods? Or are they loyal to just one?

COASTAL TOWNS

d20	Coastal Town Description
1	This people of this fishing village have taken on the characteristics of fish, and outsiders are not welcome.
2	This small port houses a secret safe house that can protect anyone from anything – for the right price.
3	This small settlement is nestled inside of a large coastal grotto.
4	This small peninsula village is slowly being swallowed as the sea level rises.
5	The largest lighthouse ever built warns sailors of the treacherous rocks, and guides them through massive storms.
6	The greatest culinary academy for many miles resides in the center of this village.
7	The people of this village make a living salvaging the graveyard of boats just off the coast.
8	This town contains multiple competing gambling houses.
9	This town has two distinct classes: the immensely rich in their mansions on the coast, and the poor serfs and servants inland.
10	Overfishing has caused nearly everyone to abandon this once great fishing village.
11	The ruler of this land holds the citizens of this town hostage by threatening to destroy the dam and flood the city.
12	The main mode of transportation through this city is by way of the many canals that run through it.
13	Due to pollution coming from deep underground, the citizens of this city have gone mad with rage.
14	This city was suspended in time to save it from a tidal wave but caster responsible died before unfreezing it.
15	The sheer cliffs of this settlement make it impregnable from the sea hundreds of feet below.
16	A great religious leader resides in and rules this coastal city-state.
17	The primitive, tribal frog people of this town await the signs of a great prophecy that foretells the swallowing of the entire world by the water.
18	The last artisan of a dying art has retired to this town and refuses to teach his art to anyone not worthy.
19	In this city, the punishment for poaching on land or sea is death.
20	Magma slowly dribbles from a volcano into the coastal waters of this town.

Is slavery a common sight in the world?



POLAR TOWNS

d20	Polar Town Description
1	This research encampment has grown into a small village, peppered with sleds and igloos.
2	This small town is built around a frozen lake, whose fish keep the populace fed.
3	Built at the base of a glacier, the locals of this village use the dripping water as their primary source of water.
4	This village is known for its fighting pits – the arenas are coated with a slippery layer of ice.
5	The denizens of this frozen settlement don the thick, white pelts of the local arctic wolves to stay warm.
6	The ice surrounding this town melts for just one week per year – an event known as the Fleet-ing Spring.
7	An imprisoned fire elemental heats the homes in this remote polar village.
8	The half-giant smith of this hamlet creates weapons and armor of glacial steel, quenching her creations in the ice. The steel has a blue, almost crystalline appearance.
9	The tundra halflings here dig long, winding burrows beneath the snow, creating a subterranean settlement of frigid ice.
10	An aging, humanoid snowy owl serves as this town's leader – it provides wisdom to those who accept it humbly.
11	Shaggy snow rams pull the sleds in this village, carrying tundra rangers quickly across the ice.
12	This unassuming hamlet half-buried in snow is home to a famous retired swordsman, known the world over as one of the greatest blademasters to ever live.
13	Pillars of ice ring this town, soaring and unmelting. In the light of the moon, they gleam with an eerie silver glow.
14	This village is populated by druids, who have mastered the art of shapeshifting into polar creatures to survive the subzero temperatures.
15	The structures of this town are chiseled into the ice of a towering glacier.
16	A glacial river called the Melt runs through the heart of this polar settlement.
17	Standard currency is not accepted in this distant, frozen village. Instead, favors are exchanged for goods.
18	This settlement is little more than a crumbling, frozen tower. A cryomancer rules here, locked away in his study, attempting to answer an ancient riddle.
19	The hollow carapace of a remorhaz serves as the market in this polar settlement.
20	Every time the silver moon wanes, a sacrifice is made to appease the gods of winter – one volunteer is sent out into the tundra to freeze.



What is generally regarded as the most dishonorable crime in the land?

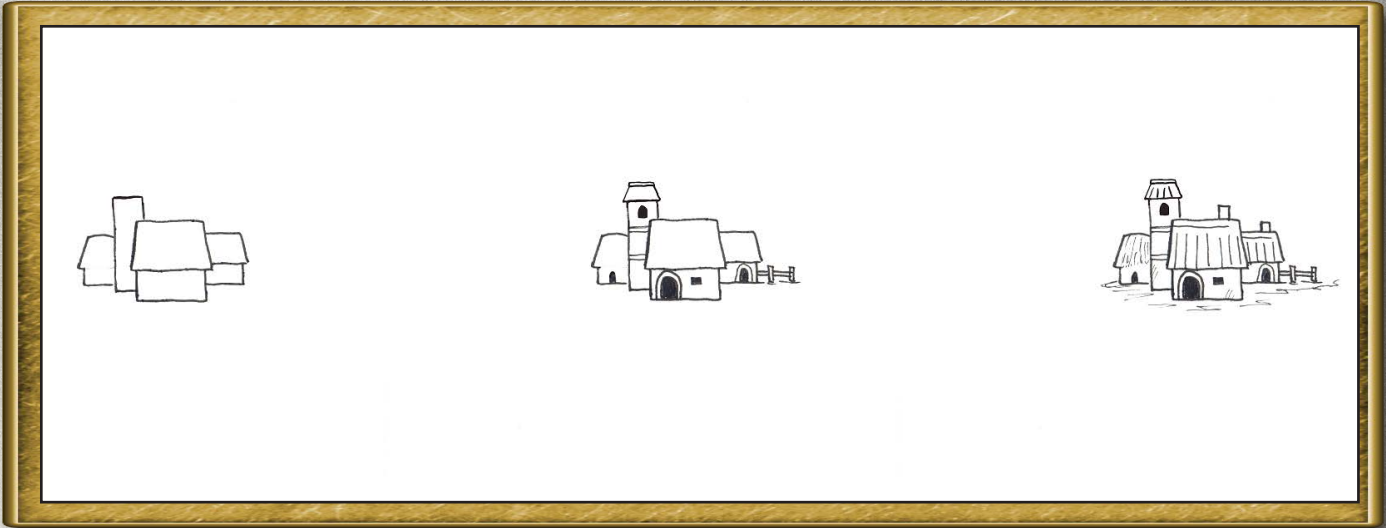
GRASSLAND TOWNS

d20	Grassland Town Description
1	Tourism drives this small town, as many flock to see its ancient glyphs.
2	This village is built on a single hill, and is known for its cultivation of grapes and fermenting of fine wines.
3	This portable village can be packed up and moved swiftly, if the leadership deems it necessary.
4	Almost every language can be heard simultaneously in the market district of this borderland town.
5	This nomadic village is known for raising some of the deadliest horse archers in the world.
6	The augurs of this settlement hear omens in the unfettered wind that races across the plains.
7	This grassland settlement is known for creating glass eyes that you can use to replace one of your own, magically enhancing your vision.
8	This stretch of small villages dotting the planes are all in league with each other, each fabricating different materials to build impeccable war machines.
9	On the plains, this town of bone collectors is able to forge bone into material harder than steel, creating light and deadly weapons and armor.
10	This grassland hamlet is small, but beautifully crafted and safe, designed by a famed architect who lives there.
11	This barren plane has a small hamlet on it that was intended to be an upstart city, but failed. The founding baron lost everything and lives in poverty there.
12	This plain is home to a village that is built within a depression of land, so that one cannot see it on the horizon.
13	This melting pot of cultures is located in a desolate grassland. Any are welcome there so long as they follow its tenets – regardless of their past.
14	This hamlet is known for the best grass-fed livestock in the region, and though small, is powerfully protected.
15	This now abandoned grassland town always has a blue storm raging above it. It is said to hold the lamp of a powerful djinn who tricked the previous inhabitants into forfeiting their souls.
16	This village is mysterious, as it is surrounded by towering walls on all sides, and is protected from above by large, hideous avian creatures.
17	This grassland settlement is the only place in the region to get a particular metal that can be found in the earth in their location.
18	This small village is built within an enormous tree – the only one on the plain.
19	This long, narrow town is hidden on all sides by an illusory wall.
20	This grassland village is home to a group of civilized gnolls who keep to themselves, though they are not discriminatory with who they eat.

What color are the clouds?



HOW TO DRAW TOWNS



1. Sketch in the basic shapes of a few overlapping buildings and roofs.
2. Add windows, doors, and other details. You could even add a fence, a wheelbarrow, or a minecart to add some character to your town.
3. Add some chimneys, roof lines, shading and other details. Every town might look different, so play around with it.



Do many people smoke?

MOUNTAIN CITIES

d20	Mountain City Description
1	Stone homes and roadways make up this city, carved into the side of a mountain range.
2	This city thrives on both sides of a mountain range, with highways tunneled through the mountains from one side to the other.
3	This city is positioned between two massive statues of former heroes, carved out of the snowy peaks the population calls home.
4	With wings crafted using the feathers of large birds, the people of this city ride the air currents to get around.
5	The final resting place of a once great hero lies near the summit of this mountain, and a city has sprouted up around it.
6	Many people make the treacherous journey to this city as part of a religious pilgrimage.
7	This hub of commerce lies in the only mountain pass for hundreds of miles.
8	This city looks deceptively small as most of it exists in the manmade caverns dug into the mountain.
9	The air of this city is thin, as it lies above the clouds.
10	This city sits atop a series of jagged, floating peaks, suspended in the air.
11	An ancient, well-worn staircase carved into the side of the mountain is the only way in and out of this city.
12	This mountainous settlement is protected by a massive moat.
13	Everyone in this mountainous village wears a mask to conceal their faces, believing that their actions are more important than their identity.
14	This large city is built atop a volcano, and they use its heat to power an enormous forge.
15	This mountainous city is known for its delicious, cured meats – exotic and delicious, it's harvested from the hard-to-capture creatures that dwell in the mountains.
16	The economy of this mountain settlement is based on its non-lethal fighting pits.
17	Barely a city, this loose group of mountain-dwelling families live off the land, but leave it as untouched as possible.
18	This mountain city is protected by a young dragon whose life the inhabitants saved years ago.
19	This dwarven city is populated by dwarven outlaws, sentenced to above-ground exile by the dwarves within the mountain.
20	Deep in the mountains, this city is home to a small, dedicated cult that allows extra-planar creatures to inhabit their bodies.

Is overpopulation an issue anywhere in the world?



FOREST AND JUNGLE CITIES

d20	Forest or Jungle City Description
1	This massive city is built entirely, roads and all, from the lumber of the surrounding forest.
2	This city is known for its beautiful textiles and fabrics, woven from the fibers of the forest's leaves.
3	An interconnected system of vines and bridges make up this city in the trees.
4	This forest city is home to an academy for young warriors. It is very difficult to be accepted.
5	The inhabitants of this jungle city have learned to terraform the surrounding land slowly into anything they need.
6	This large forest settlement was built purposefully atop the back of an enormous, mighty beast that slumbers seven years, then hunts for one. The people have adapted to this routine.
7	These temples sit within a dying forest, and have become a center of trade for monstrous humanoids.
8	This serene jungle city is covered in runes that keep it hidden to those who wish it harm.
9	This entire forest city is outfitted with animated objects that serve the people.
10	Halflings live in this forest, and have built a large city in the trees to avoid the deadly predators that roam the forest floor.
11	This jungle city is built around a well of spirit water, and its inhabitants have harnessed the water to heal all manner of ailments.
12	This large forest settlement is built around a temple to a long dead god of malice and destruction. Some say his curse still lingers.
13	A forest has grown around this dwarven city built into the base of a crumbling mountain.
14	This forest town is a miracle of steel and glass, and a hub of arcane and scientific research.
15	This city, located deep in the jungle, is inhabited by a tribe of goblins who have been around since the last age. They are more patient and wise than their kin.
16	This forest city houses one of the region's most deadly vigilante groups, who react violently to all who do not adhere to their ways.
17	This large jungle city features a perfectly lifelike statue of an ancient dragon – rumors persist that is not a statue at all, but a petrified real dragon.
18	This forest metropolis is home to two separate cultures: the gnomes who work by day, and the moonkin specters who work by night.
19	The people of this large jungle city have mastered control of the weather.
20	This forest city is notorious for its bards, and many congregate there to try to get noticed.



How would a beggar react if they witnessed someone performing magic?

DESERT CITIES

d20	Desert City Description
1	This gargantuan city of glass was constructed using the sands of the surrounding desert.
2	Built underground to take advantage of the shade and water, this huge city appears as nothing more than a small hut on the surface of the burning desert.
3	This city is known for the expensive spices collected from the surrounding arid regions – assuming the spice merchants can survive the arduous journey.
4	This desert empire is known for its breeding of hounds – from high quality natural canines, to magical and exotic ones.
5	This desert city is considered sacred ground by the surrounding peoples, and no blood can be shed here.
6	Home to a prolific clan of warriors, the people of this desert city believe vehemently in pacifism.
7	Flaming, jackal-headed guardians appear to any who wish this desert city harm.
8	A band of giants promise this desert city protection, so long as tribute is paid monthly. Rumors say the people are preparing to fight back.
9	The creatures of this city are friendly, though they have a hideous appearance. They use illusory magic to appear as more common races.
10	This desert city is home to three sibling archmages. Rumors persist that they are trying to unlock the secrets of undeath by becoming lichs.
11	A small oasis serves as the magical doorway to this extra-planar city.
12	The halflings living in this desert city are in a sort of trance, working tirelessly and only saying, “We wait for our master’s return.”
13	This desert city is sculpted from the sand itself.
14	This desert city is constructed around a deep pond, which is protected by high walls.
15	This desert city is known for its undefeatable army, who fight for anyone with enough coin.
16	This intricate desert city is rumored to be an enormous lock that opens a vault from ages ago.
17	This desert city appears as a hazy mirage to travelers, but is solid and real once approached.
18	The inhabitants of this city hidden among the dunes are able to walk lucidly through their dreams.
19	The people of this desert city command sand golems as guardians and sentries.
20	Known as the city of no consequence, there are no laws in this brutal, sun-baked settlement.

How many bedrooms would a middle-class home contain?



SWAMP CITIES

d20	Swamp City Description
1	The stench here, caused by the surrounding swamps, goes unnoticed by the jaded populace.
2	This city prides itself on its clean streets and gambling-centered tourism, despite the horrid swamps on the outskirts.
3	This city is divided into three districts, each run by different factions, arguing over how best to divide the magical resources created by the surrounding wetlands.
4	Despite the efforts of the local mage's guild, this city is slowly sinking into the sodden marshlands, giving it a tilting appearance.
5	The magical pollution flowing from this walled city into the swamp has led to some unnatural mutations among the local wildlife.
6	A shaky alliance has been struck between the lords of this marshy city, and the tribal vampires who call the surrounding swamp home.
7	An ancient relic known as the Bogblade is displayed in this city's divine temple – travelers come from all corners of the world to glimpse this ancient weapon.
8	Solid ground is a commodity in this muddy marsh, so this city is built high instead of wide – its stone towers soar hundreds of feet into the air.
9	Insects are a delicacy here. The massive swamp bugs are grilled, fried, braised, or eaten raw.
10	This city is an elaborate network of treehouses and rope bridges, suspended over the murky waters of the swamp. The mayor holds court in a hollowed-out trunk.
11	This city was once a dirty, meager village. But the discovery of mithral beneath the mud of the swamp has caused this place to flourish and grow exponentially.
12	This city thrives off the hunt of an odd species of bog deer. Their meat is sour and tastes of the muck, but their antlers are useful for medicines and potions.
13	The people of this swamp city are known as the ravagers – their lands were once fertile and forested, but magic was overused to rush crops.
14	This city is surrounded by a harsh, wet environment, but shows no signs of ruin or degradation.
15	Known as the Flame of the Swamp, this city has survived against all odds due to the stalwart resolve of its people.
16	Swamp giants have abandoned this city, and it has become the home of frogman tribes.
17	This swamp city looks deserted, but is alive and thriving under the surface.
18	A simple but stalwart castle is the centerpiece of this city that somehow stays afloat amidst miles of muck and mire.
19	This city is known for disposing of corpses cheaply and efficiently, sinking them into the swamp. But the murky waters are getting crowded...
20	This large swamp city was purposefully collapsed into the marsh. A malevolent force slumbers within it, and it is guarded day and night.



Are the naval ships powered by oar, sail, or something else entirely?

COASTAL CITIES

d20	Coastal City Description
1	Built upon a cliff overlooking the ocean, the town's miners rappel down the sides in order to mine a rare and valuable gem – the swooping pterodactyls are to be feared, however.
2	This city is known for its man-made harbor, which stretches miles into the ocean to allow for hundreds of docked ships.
3	This city is built out of the wreckage of a massive battleship.
4	This city is actually a flotilla of lashed-together vessels, connected by precarious bridges and tangles of rigging. It's anchored now along the coast.
5	The lord of this sprawling coastal port is a retired pirate – his city is founded with pillaged gold.
6	The locals of this coastal settlement dine on reef sharks – the deadly fish is a delicacy, though dangerous to net.
7	The town guard carry hooked, bladed staves – as useful as a weapon as they are for pulling ships into dock.
8	The mage's guild in this port is known for training tempest mages, who use their abilities to temper storms and brings ships safely into port.
9	This city once thrived, until a submerged tomb broke open and flooded the town with disease-ridden corpses.
10	This coastal city is said to have the ability to generate – and protect itself against – deadly tsunamis.
11	This coastal city is dedicated to keeping the news of the region in the ears of its people. A network of criers walks the coast, keeping everyone informed.
12	The beauty of this coastal city is deceptive – it is home to the bloodiest battle arena in the region. The losers are floated out to sea.
13	Benevolent aquatic creatures protect the shores of this city, and the inhabitants offer food in return.
14	The people of this city have used magic to grant themselves water-breathing abilities, and keep their vaults and banks beneath the waves.
15	This coastal city is built atop myriad coastal plateaus, connected by intricate and masterful bridges.
16	This coastal city was built too close to the resting place of a great old one. The people were driven mad.
17	This city is known for breeding and training sharks.
18	This coastal city is built within the hollowed-out shell of a colossal turtle.
19	This city is built along a gorgeous and temperate coast. The large fireflies provide light to it year-round.
20	This coastal city is the chosen spawning ground of a seafaring demigod.

What is the survival rate for those who visit the doctor?



POLAR CITIES

d20	Polar City Description
1	Built on a large sheet of ice, this city's imports and exports keep the people alive and in luxury.
2	The route to this city is near impossible to trek without a skilled ranger to navigate through the blizzards.
3	Carved out of a massive slab of glacier, this indoor city is known for the weaponsmiths that forge their arms and armor out of the magical ice.
4	This arctic city is hewn from the ice itself, sculpted by cryomancers of the highest caliber.
5	Constant snowstorms shield this city from the outside world – but the riches contained within still draw many foolhardy travelers to its walls.
6	Contrary to their species, the elves of this frigid city have built their city under a snow-capped peak, burrowing deep into the earth to escape the chill of this land.
7	A council rules this city, known as the Six Lords of Winter. Each is responsible for a different facet of the city's infrastructure and economy.
8	A soaring, spiked wall of ice has been raised in the center of town, separating two warring noble families.
9	The annual Ice Diving festival is in full swing here – dozens of brave (or foolish) men and women diving into the frigid waters for gold and glory.
10	A great, wooly beast is stuffed and displayed in this city's town hall. Legends say the settlement's founder slayed the creature and survived the frigid tundra by sleeping inside of it for warmth.
11	This city is famed for a peculiar drink known as the ice-flow – so cold that when drunk, frosty breath curls from the drinker's mouth.
12	The thick walls of this polar city have withstood countless sieges by the nearby ice giants – the guards are also master giant slayers.
13	Ice is shipped from this city to the nearby settlements. These huge, frozen blocks are used to preserve meat and produce.
14	The ice from this polar city is cured with arcane recipes, so it doesn't melt until a command word is spoken.
15	This polar metropolis is home to an ancient clan of dwarves who seek their long-lost deity.
16	This polar city subsists on the elemental whales that swim beneath its icy waters.
17	This city is home to the Ice Khan, a violent and destructive warlord.
18	An active volcano has melted a ring in the ice around its base, and a city has thrived there for decades.
19	This polar city is known for the large, dwarven stone carvings that surround it. When the polar winds blow, it plays haunting hymns.
20	Fire-blooded tieflings populate this tundra city, melting the ice with their potent fire magic.



What ancient empire is regarded as having been the most powerful?

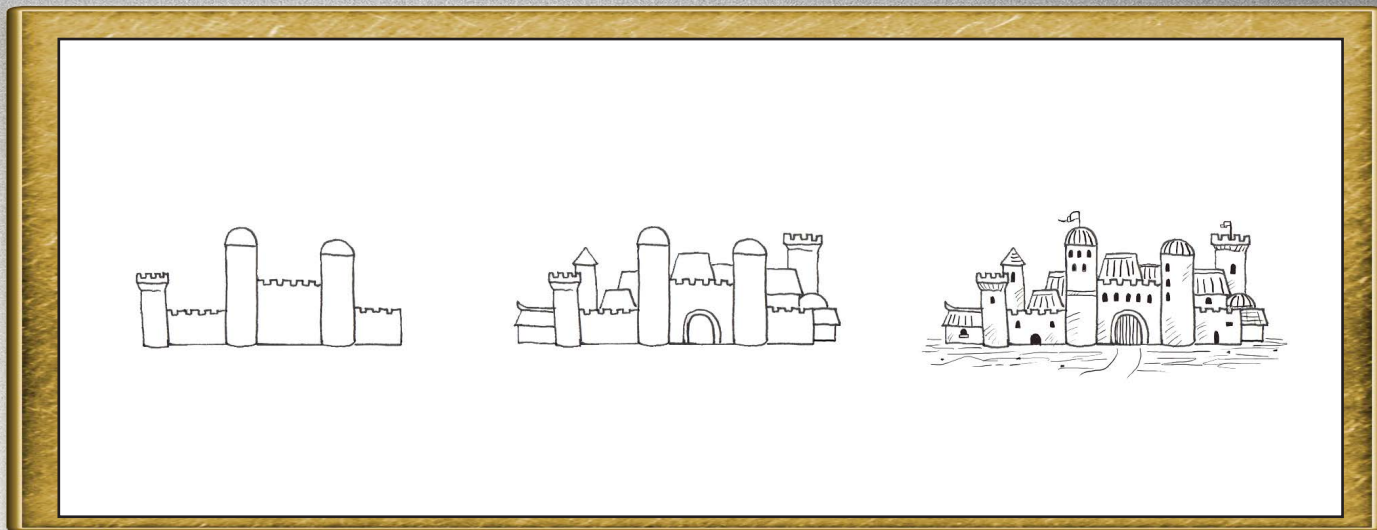
GRASSLAND CITIES

d20	Grassland City Description
1	A beacon of civilization in the region, this huge city is a melting pot of almost every race.
2	Every road in the realm leads to this city, where every pleasure imaginable is available for those who can pay.
3	Home to the most famous tavern in the land, this city is packed with inns that provide beds to the thirsty travelers of the realm.
4	The many miles of streets, farms, and other lands that make up this city are surrounded by a single, large wall – the city does not extend beyond it.
5	The finest horses in the realm are reared here. Travelers come from hundreds of miles away just to purchase one of these magnificent creatures.
6	This city is protected by the Reapers, horseman who wield long scythes and roam the plains.
7	A single, mountain-sized tree sprouts from the center of the city, providing shade and a bounty of fruit to the citizens below.
8	This walled city has a landlocked seep lake at its heart, devoid of fish but providing plenty of fresh water.
9	The craftsmen of this plains city craft wondrous, supple armor by intricately weaving the long grass of their homeland.
10	These plains people have tamed the local predatory cats of the savannah – it is seen as a sign of great wealth to walk the streets with a domesticated lion.
11	This city shows little mercy to lawbreakers. Dozens of corpses hang from its sandstone walls, backing in the sun of the plains.
12	The king of this city was usurped decades ago. It is ruled now by a guild of artisans, and protected by a volunteer militia.
13	Tucked against a cluster of hills, this small city enjoys an easily defensible position and access to a freshwater lake for fishing.
14	The nomadic dwarves of this caravan city have developed rudimentary black powder weapons, and have used them to drive a local species of grazing animal to the brink of extinction.
15	This city acquired its great wealth by subjugating the nearby native tribes. The descendants of these plainsmen tribes now reside in slums outside the city walls.
16	The spires of this ancient grasslands settlement stand as a beacon of hope to weary travelers and wayward wanderers.
17	This city is built around the impact crater of a small meteorite. The meteoric material was used to create the circlet worn by the city's ruler.
18	For cultural reasons, this ancient city has been purposely abandoned for decades.
19	This city is known for its gorgeous obsidian walls.
20	The roads in this naturalistic city are composed of the very grass that surrounds it.

Are there large expanses of evil caverns underneath the world?



HOW TO DRAW CITIES



1. Draw some towers, connected by walls. Don't worry about symmetry or making things uniform if you are trying to portray a sprawling urban center.
2. Add more structures in the background and even spilling outside the walls. Having overlapping rooftops will create the illusion of density and dimension. Draw a front gate.
3. Add windows, smaller doors, roof texture and other details.

SELLSWORD
MAPS



Who is the most powerful mage in the world?

ROADS

We've created our world's cities. Now let's connect them!

When deciding where roads should be placed, look at a settlement on your map and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do people want to go there? If so, there is a significant chance there will be a road to this location. People will find a way to make traveling to this place easier, even if that means going by a more dangerous route.
2. Is there something in the way, such as a mountain range, vast desert, or rogue bandits? If so, many common travelers will seek an easier way around, no matter how long it took. Consider drawing a well-maintained road around the obstacle, as well as an unmarked and arduous trail through it.
3. Are there too many roads on my map? If you look at your world and think you've overdone it, don't be afraid to erase some of what you've drawn. This will allow for many future adventures that take place off the beaten path, whereas if your world is filled with roads, that backwoods ranger character might feel a little out of place.



Do any of the world's monarchs have any secret deals?

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

One of the most important (and most difficult) tasks in building a world is deciding on names for your features and locations. What is that mountain called? What is the origin of this city's name? Do the dwarves use the same word to describe this haunted forest as the elves do? A name should be informative yet memorable, unique yet simple. It should say something about the place it describes, but it should also be easy to say and recall — for your own benefit as well as your players'. As fun as the Rülash'yut Molrath Wastes might be to say aloud, it's not very descriptive, nor will it be easy for you or your players to remember a session or two later.

Here are three tried-and-true methods for naming your locations.

SIMPLE, YET EFFECTIVE

Look at a settlement or geographical feature on your map — think about the terrain around it, the cultures who call it home, the weather it experiences. What is unique about this place? Then assign it a simple descriptor-noun name. Does this arctic mountain have a distinct, angular shape (Cutlass Peak)? Do the people of this remote town specialize in marshland fishing (Black Lure)? Is this forest known for its petrified trees and prevalent undead (Lichwood)?

While these names might be too on-the-nose for you and your world, you can bet they will be remembered by your players amid hundreds of other names and titles. Sometimes, simplicity is the most effective method.

UTILIZE YOUR LORE

An easy way to inject a little history into your world without exposition is to utilize your lore in the names of your settlements and features. Think about the great events and legendary figures of your world, and honor them by eternalizing their names.

Was this city once saved by a hero who gave her own life in its defense (Beleran's Fall)? Did a deity plummet to earth long ago, creating this crater lake (The Eye of Helial)? How would the locals name a grassy field where, just a decade prior, two great armies clashed for the fate of the realm (The Last March)?

Your players will have any easy time remembering these names, and your world will feel richer and more lived-in as a result.

DELVE INTO WORDS

While this technique should be done sparingly to avoid an overabundance of unfamiliar words, it can be very effective when utilized carefully. Many of the words in our language have roots in other tongues and ancient dialects, and utilizing these roots and foreign words can result in unique yet descriptive names.

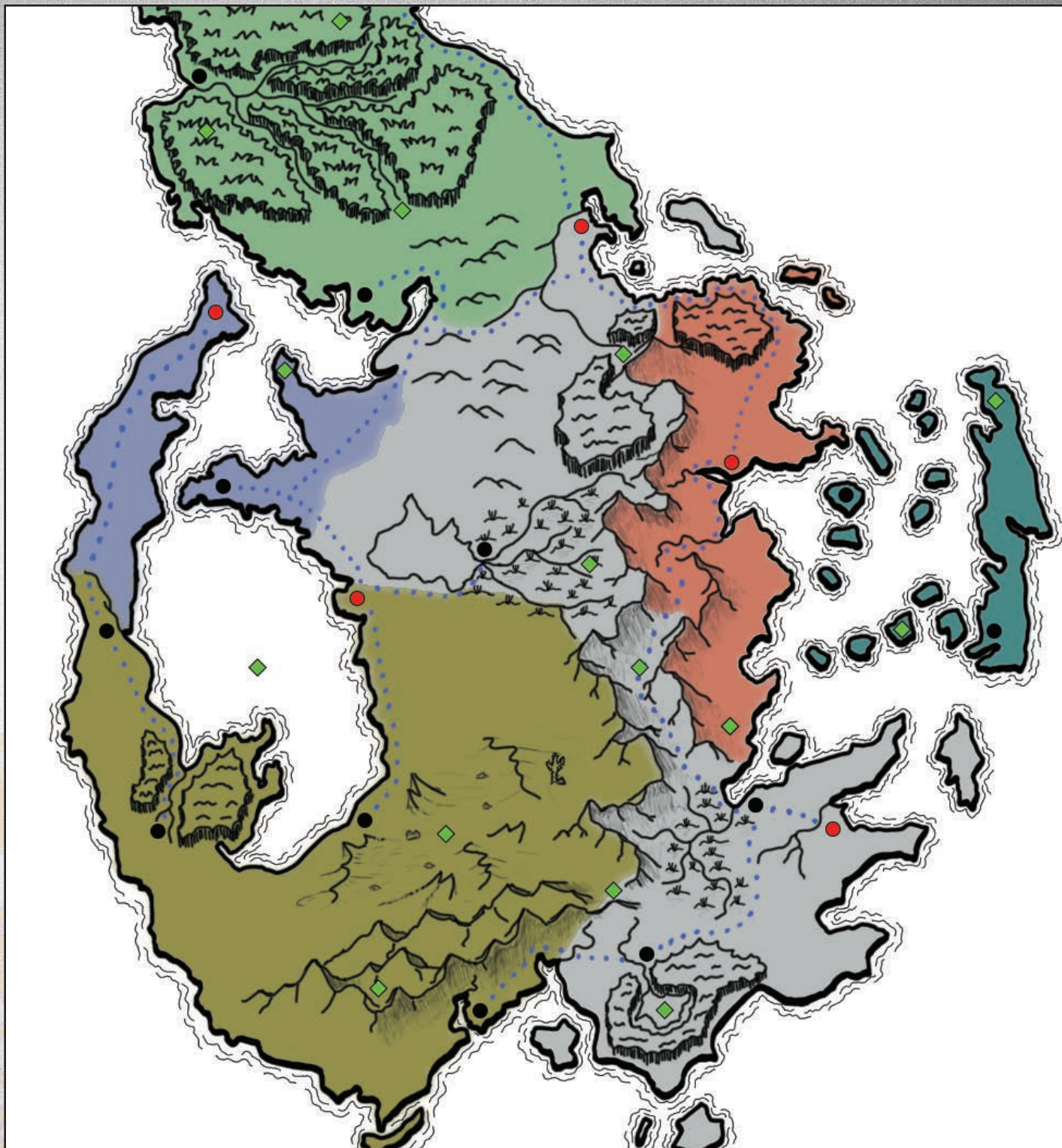
Using Latin, you discover a cool-sounding name for a prominent volcano in your world (Ignis). Your marshland village finds a name in an Old English root word (Marisk). Delving into ancient Akkadian, you come across the perfect name for the wide, life-giving river that runs through a desert of your world (Ahatu).

The internet is an awesome resource for finding cool and unique words to use in your world — just be wary of throwing too many unfamiliar or hard-to-pronounce names at your players.



Are bloodletting and other superstitious healing beliefs a commonality?

NATIONS, FACTIONS, AND EMPIRES



Now that you've placed an array of settlements around your realm, it's time to figure out how each of these independent locations are related. It's time to build the nations of your world...

Is the world round, flat, or some other shape?

NATIONS, FACTIONS, AND EMPIRES

NATIONAL BORDERS

National boundaries have existed since time immemorial, in many different ways. Let's go through your realm and begin dividing some of the lands up into separate nations, factions, and empires. Here are some great methods of doing this:

1. **Geographical Boundaries:** Many nations utilize the landmarks or other geographical features around them for natural defensive positions. Lightly sketch out certain regions that are enclosed by mountain ranges, rivers, forests, oceans, lakes, or any combination of those, to locate potential borders in your world.
2. **Climate Boundaries:** Elven nations have long called the forests their home, while the dwarven clans of the mountains secure their boundaries underground. Take a look at the regions of your world where these sorts of climate-oriented nations might thrive, and lightly sketch out those regions for those potential nations to exist.
3. **Political Boundaries:** Oftentimes, political powers on either side of two separate nations will draw a line where one did not naturally exist beforehand. If you take a look at a map of Africa or the United States, you can see where these boundaries exist. Is this something that might fit in your world? If so, lightly sketch one of these borders on your map.
4. **City-States:** Existing beyond the hold of the vast empires around the world, city-states operate as independent political powers, existing within the confines of a single city (and oftentimes surrounding villages and hamlets). These locations are fun to adventure in, and can be as crazy and outside the box as you'd like. After all, city-states are sort of like islands among a sea of nations. If something doesn't quite fit into the rest of your world, you can usually toss it in a city-state without issue! Circle one or two of the cities in your realm to serve as independent city-states.
5. **Wild Lands:** Not every acre of land needs an owner. Choose a region of your world to exist outside the boundaries of law and order. Perhaps this will be a great impassable desert, filled with nomadic elven tribes. Or it might be an evil realm, formerly ruled by a malicious dark lord. Either way, it will serve as the hub of untamed adventure in your world.
6. **Final Decisions:** By now, your world should have many boundaries drawn on it, and you probably have a good idea of where the various nations and factions will be located. The number of these powerful nations will vary depending on the size of your world, and can range from one or two, to dozens. Either way, it's time to sketch out your final borders, erasing any unused lines from before.

ETHNIC ORIGINS

Many fantastical worlds are inhabited by a number of various species such as elves, dwarves, halflings, orcs, and a near infinite quantity of others. We oftentimes see entire nations and empires primarily consisting of one race. If you're looking to create this in your own world, now is the time!

Go through the borders you have drawn and, if you wish, designate each land as the property of a powerful nation of a certain race. The regions you do not designate will be melting pots of the various races of people that live nearby. This can be a great way to see where political tensions might rise!



What colors are the moons?

NATION AND FACTION GENERATOR

The roll table below, featured in **Be a Better Faction Master**, can be used to create thousands of unique nations, guilds, and organizations for your game. Roll a d20 once to find a cohesive faction, or roll it four times to create an intriguing combination of aspects. Perhaps your off-colored theocracy is headed by a grizzled paladin, whose sigil demands a change among the royal elite (a tipped chalice). Or maybe your group of renegade arms-dealers was formed in a prison, and is led by a former revolutionary looking to rise again.

#	MOTIVATION	BACKGROUND	LEADER	SIGIL
1	Reclaiming religious relics.	Formed by an ancient hero, set on destroying heathen artifacts.	A dwarven archaeologist, committed to protecting ancient things.	The symbols of different deities, superimposed into one large sigil.
2	Usurping political leaders.	Traces its origins to an ancient noble family.	A former revolutionary, looking to emerge again.	A tipped chalice.
3	Hunting monsters.	Evolved from a small group of daring adventurers.	A grizzled paladin, scarred and troubled by his past.	A dragon's jaw.
4	Carrying out assassinations.	Originally formed in a prison.	A cunning half-orc woman with one arm.	A black dagger.
5	Advancing technology.	Formed by a group of intellectuals driven underground.	A whimsical, nearly-blind halfling with gray hairs sprouting from his ears.	A monocle dangling from a bubbling vial.
6	Returning to the "old ways."	Formed by descendants of a usurped monarch.	A clumsy yet charismatic half-elf with a silver tooth.	Two gold coins, no longer in circulation.
7	Seeking out the gods.	Organized by rogue clerics.	A massive human man, clad in robes.	A silver lion.
8	Escorting trade caravans.	Formed from the remnants of an illegal fighter's guild.	An elven master swordsman who wields a broken blade.	A battered shield.
9	Running the gladiatorial pits.	Founded by exiled slavers.	A former champion with a missing ear.	Iron manacles.

How many days are there in a week?

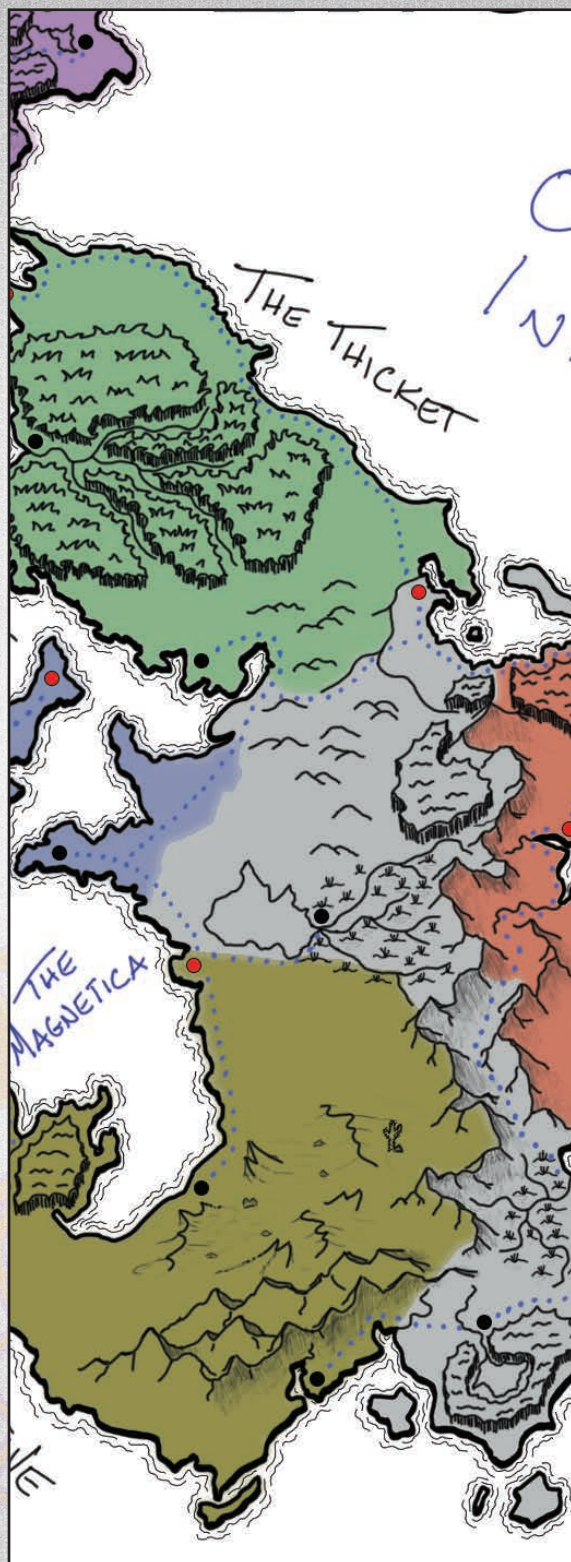


#	MOTIVATION	BACKGROUND	LEADER	SIGIL
10	Feeding the masses.	Organized by excommunicated holy men.	A kind-faced dwarven woman who smells of incense.	A cornucopia.
11	Identifying magic users.	Formerly a guild of witch hunters.	A human wizard no longer capable of magic.	A broken wand.
12	Achieving peace through solitude.	Initially formed by monks in hermitage.	A bald-headed dwarven man who meditates 12 hours a day.	A lonely mountain.
13	Putting an end to all wars, at any cost.	Formed from the remnants of a decimated army legion.	A retired captain of the army with secrets of his own.	A sword buried to the hilt in the earth.
14	Increasing life expectancy.	Founded by radically progressive alchemists.	A cleric of life, whose copper pendant is tarnished by rust and old age.	A crimson heart in front of a geometric sun.
15	Nature's reclamation of civilization.	Formed by a council of elven druids.	A barbaric human man draped in a cloak of spiderwebs.	A gnarled tree.
16	Selling weapons to both sides of a war.	Traces its origins back to disgruntled veterans of a catastrophic war.	An albino half-orc man wielding a double-bladed spear.	A double-bladed spear.
17	Protecting a long-guarded secret.	The founders disguise themselves as local street-sweepers.	An elderly half-elven man, charged with emptying the city's commodes.	A sealed envelope.
18	The minting of valuable metals into currency.	Founded by scheming loan brokers.	A shrew-faced halfling who walks with a silver cane.	A coinpurse.
19	The discovery of faraway lands.	Once pious, but now more materialistic in nature.	The defected leader of another faction.	A spyglass in front of a sunrise.
20	The destruction of other organized factions.	Created by a group of vengeful plague survivors.	Three brothers who go by the same name.	A burning banner.



Are lycanthropes a prominent threat in the world? Or are they just a legend?

NATIONS, FACTIONS, AND EMPIRES

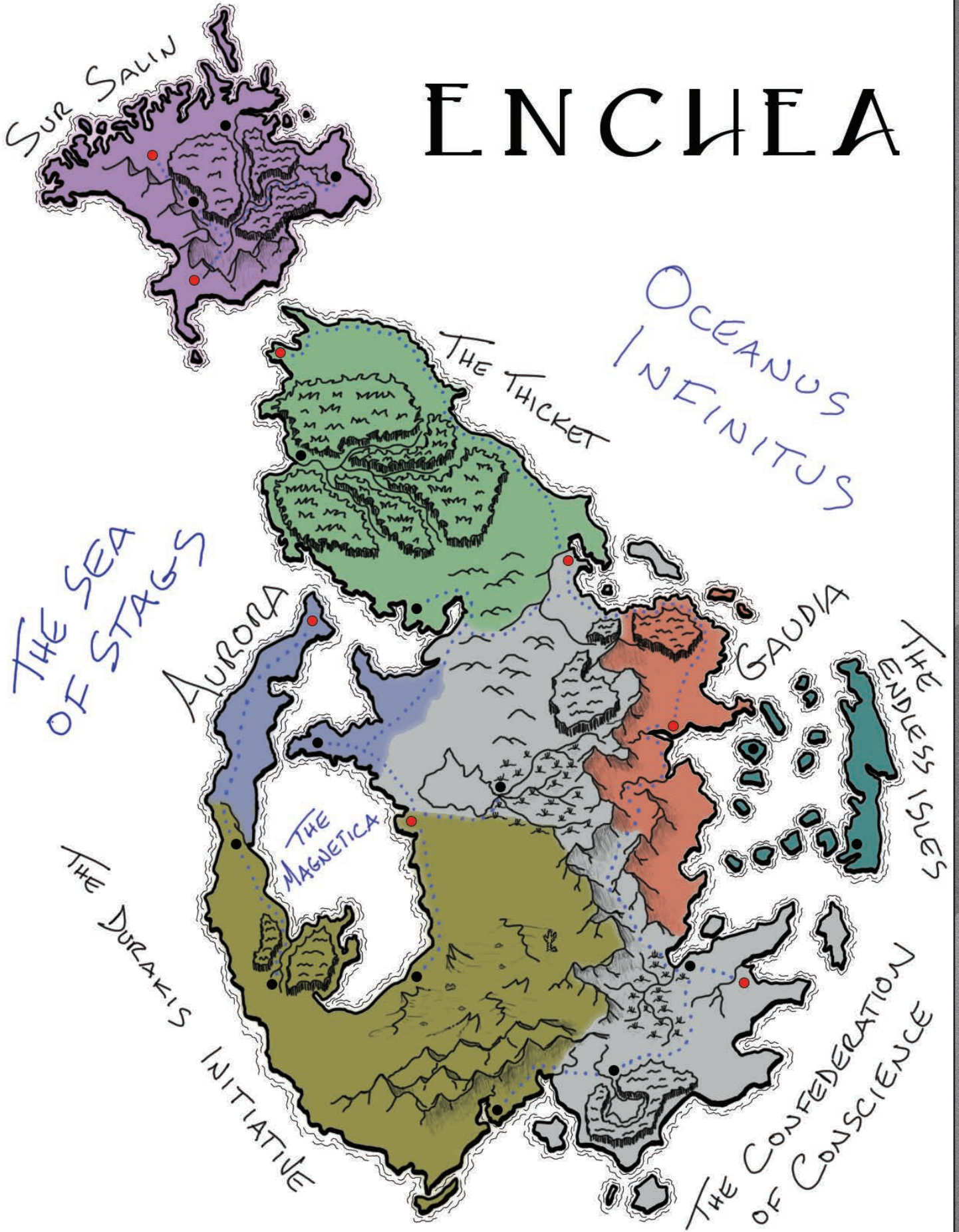


Almost done! Here are the nations I've decided on to populate Enchea, based on the decisions I've made thus far in the world building process:

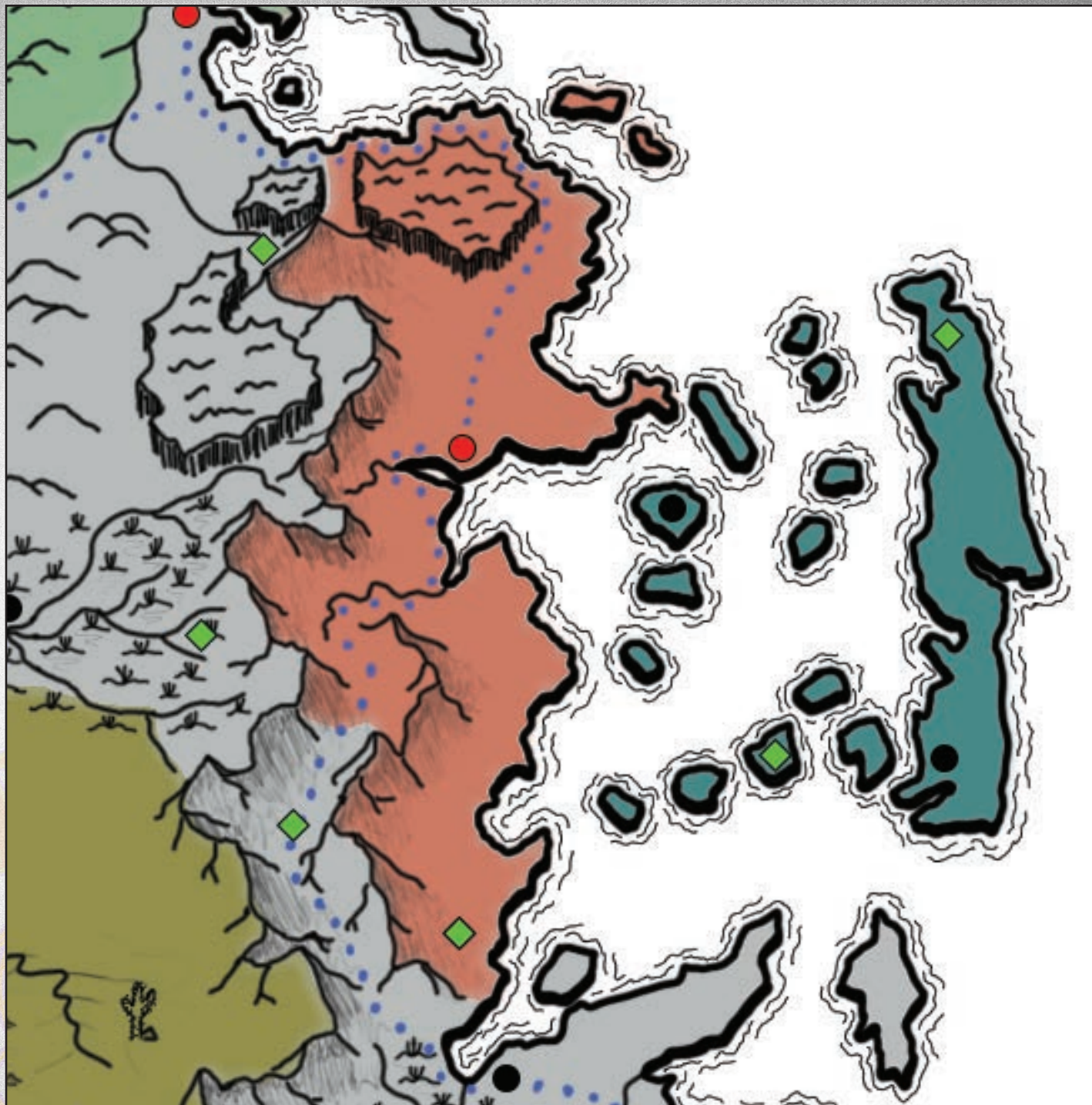
1. **Sur Salin:** Where my current campaign started, this is the land of the hill dwarves of Enchea, and the site of the world's most magical forest. Many of the world's powers are vying for political leverage in the region, oftentimes greedily seeking the arcane resources provided by the Crimson Wood.
2. **The Thicket:** More of a territory than a nation, the Thicket is named after the dense, near impassable jungle that takes up most of this tropical space. The Dogpound is located in the jungle, and an Auroran city, formed initially as a small colony, resides at the north end of this region.
3. **Aurora:** The land of the high elves is one of the most prominent powers in the world, due to its strategic position at the mouth of the Magnetica. It is known for its vast riches, highly skilled (albeit small) military, and its colonial endeavors abroad.
4. **The Durakis Initiative:** More of a faction than an actual nation, the Durakis Initiative inhabits much of the land that many consider uninhabitable. From there, the faction seeks to spread its influence around the Magnetica (often to the chagrin of Auroran leadership) and beyond.
5. **Gaudia:** Originally the home of Enchea's halflings, this nation experienced an extreme economic depression over the past couple centuries. Now pulling itself out of difficult times via trade and exploration into the nearby Endless Isles, Gaudia serves as the world's most stereotypically medieval fantasy realm.
6. **The Confederation of Conscience:** While not exactly a nation in and of itself, this large portion of land contains the many free city-states of Enchea that are unhappy with the politics of larger countries.
7. **The Endless Isles:** This fey-touched archipelago is the most unexplored region of Enchea. Islands seem to appear and disappear out of nowhere, and some loony locals have often reported returning from the Isles after a month of travel, only to find that hundreds of years had passed.

Are the people primarily monotheistic?

ENCHĒA



ADVENTURING LOCATIONS



There is more to your realm than just the towns and cities spread across it. Your adventures will take place in a variety of locations in the wilderness, including fortresses, caverns, crypts, ancient ruins, and dungeons.

With the national borders you've just created in mind, feel free to fill some of the remaining blank space in your world with these fun and interesting locales. They can also be used inside or underneath the cities you've already placed.

Are there any racial tensions in your world? Or do people get along quite peacefully?

FORTRESSES

Flawless in design and invaluable for a nation's defense, fortresses can turn the tide in any war.

d100	Fortress Description
1-2	Tucked into a mountain alcove, the broad walls of this fortress keep it well defended.
3-4	This gigantic fortress was constructed by the titans. The surrounding mountain ranges make up the walls and defenses.
5-6	This narrow fortress resides in a thin mountain pass where defenders can offer miles of resistance against marching armies.
7-8	This fortress is literally a hollowed-out mountain, reinforced with natural ramparts.
9-10	This fortress was built with multiple tunnels through a nearby mountain, useful for ambushes.
11-12	This fortress is built at the very top of a mountain peak – the pride of an arrogant queen.
13-14	A long tramway is the only easy way into this high-altitude mountain fortress.
15-16	This fortress is built on an active fault line – earthquakes are common.
17-18	It has been many centuries since this fortress was utilized, yet it is still maintained in case of a regional emergency.
19-20	Dozens of fortified ballista emplacements jut out of the mountains above this fortress.
21-22	This fortress, carved out of a cliff face far above the ground, is only accessible via ladders.
23-24	This fortress is built halfway into a cave, the tunnels inside allowing for indefinite resupply.
25-26	Wooden palisades surround this encampment, protecting it from the local ogre clans.
27-28	This fortress is surrounded on all sides by tributary rivers, making it nearly impenetrable.
29-30	Built into the canopy of the rainforest, the defenders of this fortress are known for raining arrows down upon climbing attackers.
31-32	This underground network of tunnels, dug for guerrilla warfare, consists of hundreds of inter-connecting bunkers and plenty booby traps.
33-34	This fortress has been constructed naturally – the trees have been slowly bent and shaped over centuries to form the walls and other fortifications.
35-36	Built into a hollowed hill, this fortress is nearly invisible to the naked eye on the forest floor.
37-38	Built upon a thin isthmus of desert, this fortress protects the realm from an attack by land.
39-40	This desert fortress is surrounded by a minefield of magical traps.
41-42	Known as "The Unbreachable," this desert fortress is surrounded by 60-foot sandstone walls.
43-44	The broad embattlements of this fortification protect a sacred and magical item.
45-46	Shards of glass pepper the sands outside of this stronghold, creating agony for any invaders.
47-48	This fortress is built upon a large desert plateau, surrounded on all sides by 400-foot cliffs.
49-50	The green mists of the local swamps keep visibility low for those attacking this fortress.



Are visions and prophecies a commonality?

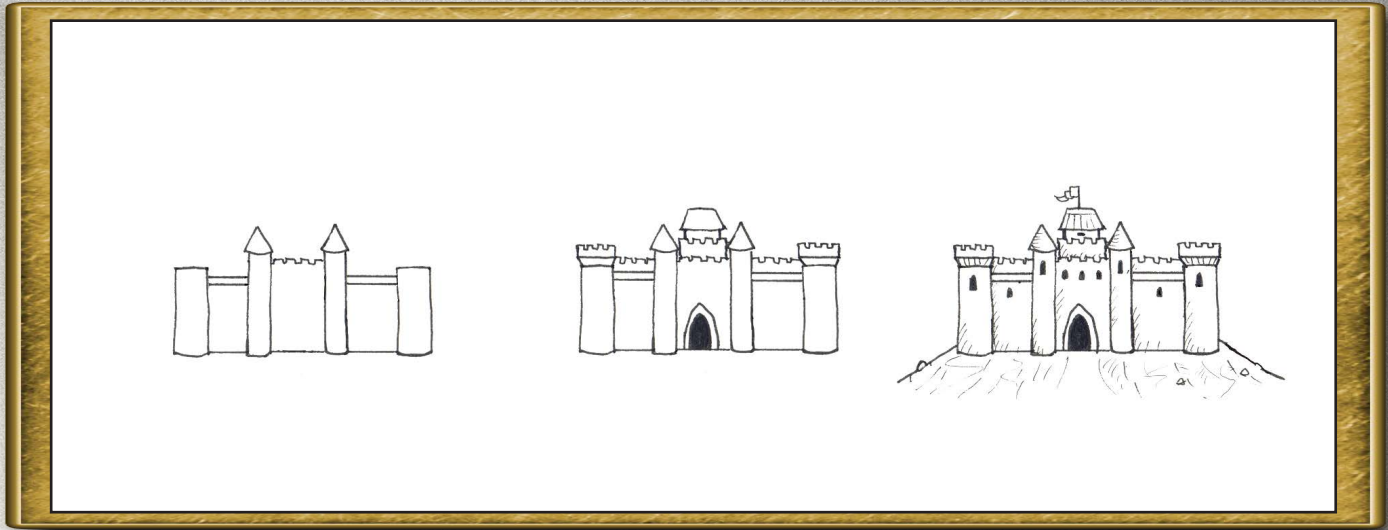
FORTRESSES

d100	Fortress Description
51-52	The boardwalks outside this fortress can be moved and controlled by its defenders, making it difficult for attacking forces to traverse the swamp.
53-54	This fortress has a secret – the nearby levees can be opened to flood out oncoming attackers.
55-56	A moat of thick, grasping swamp mud rings this stronghold.
57-58	Surrounded by cliffs that rise hundreds of feet above the ocean, the only way into this fortress is through a narrow passage of land – or perhaps to climb the cliffs themselves.
59-60	This coastal fortress is defended by floating cannons, magically set to act as automatic turrets, defending the settlement from enemy ships.
61-62	The back gate to this fortress opens directly to the sea, making it virtually impossible to besiege the settlement without naval assistance.
63-64	This fortress utilizes underwater ballistas to deal with any invaders from below the surface.
65-66	The harbor guarded by this fortress is defended by lengths of huge chains – when tightened on the water's surface, enemy ships run up against them.
67-68	Surrounded by a gigantic wall of ice, this stronghold was built by frost giants.
69-70	This fortress is known for its massive spear walls, carved out of the ice.
71-72	The ice surrounding this fortress is kept frozen and slick, making an attack here extra arduous.
73-74	This fortress is shaped like a seven-pointed star, with each point manned by a large ballista.
75-76	The ground has been shaped into the trenches, walls, and ramparts of this natural fortress.
77-78	This fortress is actually three connected forts, each positioned on a separate hill in a triangle.
79-80	This castle has three consecutive gates – attackers that break through one are immediately trapped again behind another.
81-82	The walls of this fort contain angled chutes, where defenders drop boulders on the attackers.
83-84	This pristine fortress was built centuries ago, but has yet to be used for defense.
85-86	This massive fort covers a large area of land – the walls extend to a circumference of 20 miles.
87-88	This gargantuan fortress is actually the capital city of a prominent region.
89-90	This ornate fortification also serves as the home of the region's monarch.
91-92	This fortress is known for its technologically advanced cannons, carved ornate engravings.
93-94	Sharp, iron spikes coat the walls of this fortress.
95-96	Undead guardsmen patrol the ramparts of this fortress, unsleeping.
97-98	A carved dragon's head hangs above the gate of this fortress. Attackers are greeted with a gout of flame from its open maw.
99-00	This fortress is abandoned and overrun with trolls covered in thick, black fur.

Has anyone ever done unlawful and heinous experiments on magic users in your world?

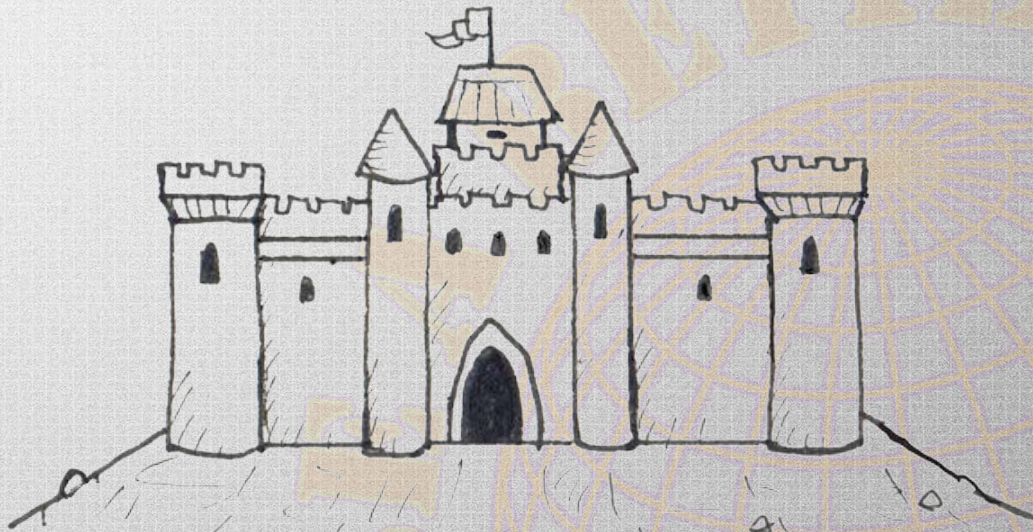


HOW TO DRAW FORTRESSES



1. Start with your main towers (bastions), and block in basic walls connecting them.
2. Add battlements to the top of desired towers and walls, a front gate, and a keep near the middle of the castle
3. Add some texture to roofs, and bits of shading on walls and towers. Add tall, thin, windows, a flag or two, and if you want you can place your castle on a hill to make it look more prominent.

**SELLSWORD
MAPS**



Does resurrection magic exist? How does this affect the politics in your world?

RUINS

Serving as the relics of an ancient world, ruins bring both mystery and culture to the realm.

d100	Ruin Description
1-2	This was a fortress of great renown, but half-collapsed, it's fallen to the elements.
3-4	This once gorgeous amphitheatre is toppled and flooded.
5-6	A series of statues is now a pile of rubble, collateral damage of a terrible war.
7-8	This watchtower has been battered, and looks as though it was converted to an inn before it was sacked and burned.
9-10	This once-peaceful halfling celebration hall was ravaged by a flash flood, its waterlogged ruins remaining.
11-12	This coastal shrine to the earth was marred and battered by a tidal wave.
13-14	Destroyed from within, most of this guard house was eaten by enormous termites.
15-16	An unnatural blight caused the rich soil to swallow up this elven city.
17-18	This military outpost was burned to the ground, only a charred shadow of its former glory.
19-20	This small hamlet was decimated by the rockslide that buried it.
21-22	This temple of frozen wonders was lost to the freezing elements.
23-24	This trading outpost was overtaken when the creatures of the forest became violent and bloodthirsty.
25-26	This bridge has fallen from high above, now shattered in the canyon.
27-28	This temple to a deity of old was crushed under foot of a giant.
29-30	A failed magical experiment destroyed this secluded arcane college.
31-32	This small keep was ravaged and obliterated by dueling archmages.
33-34	The bones of a colossal creature sit atop the ruins of a city, destroyed as it fell dead upon it.
35-36	This canal city is mostly sunken in the waters it once rested upon.
37-38	This druidic ritual site is overgrown with twisted, necrotic plant life.
39-40	This magically floating town was brought crashing to the ground in a catastrophe.
41-42	Made an example of by hobgoblin warlords, this treetop village came toppling down when its trees were hacked to pieces.
43-44	Destroyed in a siege, this enormous stone structure once belonged to dwarves.
45-46	This once-prominent trade city was savaged by a volcanic eruption. What didn't melt is petrified within the hardened volcanic rock.
47-48	This lighthouse was destroyed in a famous naval battle.
49-50	An earthquake claimed this once-mighty mountainside kingdom, built by the dwarves.

What is the average life expectancy among the wealthy in your world? Among the poor?



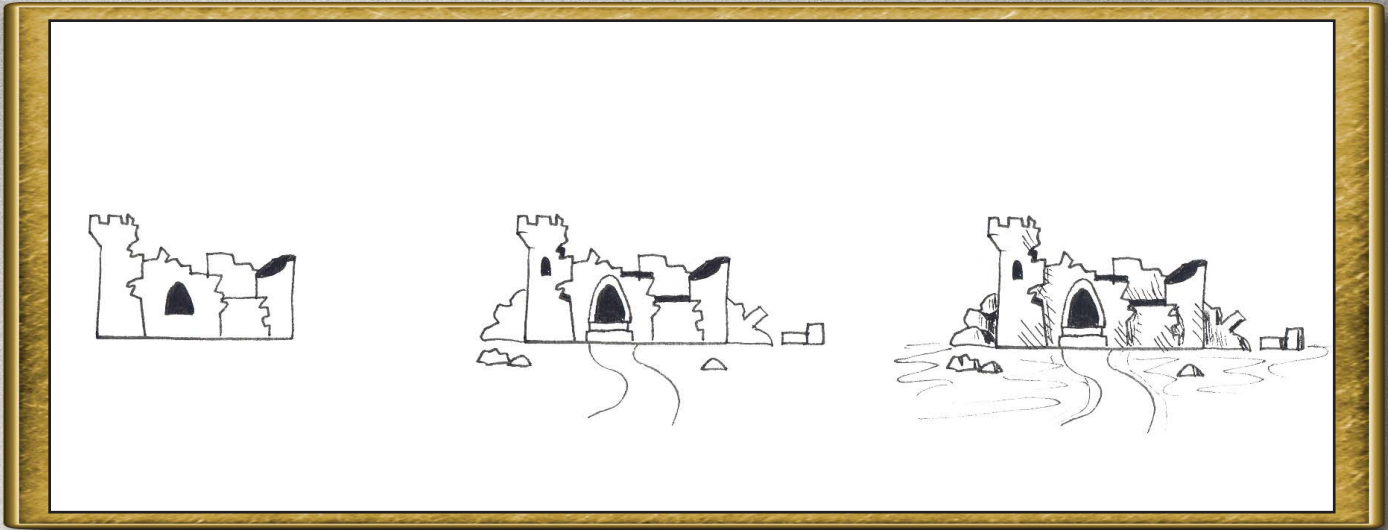
RUINS

d100	Ruin Description
51-52	A sinkhole swallowed up this once-great castle.
53-54	This primeval castle built by scores of elementals was destroyed when they turned on each other.
55-56	These ruins have an odd hue and shape, and further inspection reveals them to be the remains of a colossal golem, now hollow.
57-58	These ruins are the collapsed remains of an interplanar portal.
59-60	This was once a halfling bank, situated to reach many cultures, but it was overrun with undead.
61-62	These ruins are a series of well-hewn pillars, once ornate, and now detritus.
63-64	Nothing but large, scattered stones remain of what was once a mighty royal memorial.
65-66	This hanging garden has collapsed, and all of its exotic flora have grown around it.
67-68	Demolished to be rebuilt, this armory's remains instead fell prey to a swarm of rock-eating trolls.
69-70	A monument to science, this ancient orrery is now in pieces.
71-72	This stone, star-shaped building exploded mysteriously.
73-74	This sacrificial temple sits in the middle of a lake, marred by the ever rising water.
75-76	This aviary was overtaken by its inhabitants, and is now in tatters as they ravaged the inside.
77-78	This open-air ceremonial temple fell to the elements centuries ago.
79-80	This hollow dragon turtle shell served as a bunker, but has been gnawed away by scavengers.
81-82	This centaur war villa was destroyed by a terrible cyclone.
83-84	This abandoned and run-down mansion has partially collapsed in on itself.
85-86	This shrine to a dark god was demolished by the forces of good, but its pieces – and some of its power – remain.
87-88	This mighty memorial wall was destroyed by a malevolent force, and still magically burns in effigy.
89-90	This crystal fortress was once a beacon of hope, but the forces who built it were defeated.
91-92	This structure was made of innumerable bones of all sizes, but has degraded and collapsed.
93-94	This entire city was ravaged by a violent arcane tempest.
95-96	This wooden structure was once a shop to buy all manner of wondrous items, – until they came to life and destroyed it.
97-98	This lodge was filled with stuffed trophies of all kinds, from aberrations to magical beasts.
99-00	This garden of statues has been defaced and sacked.

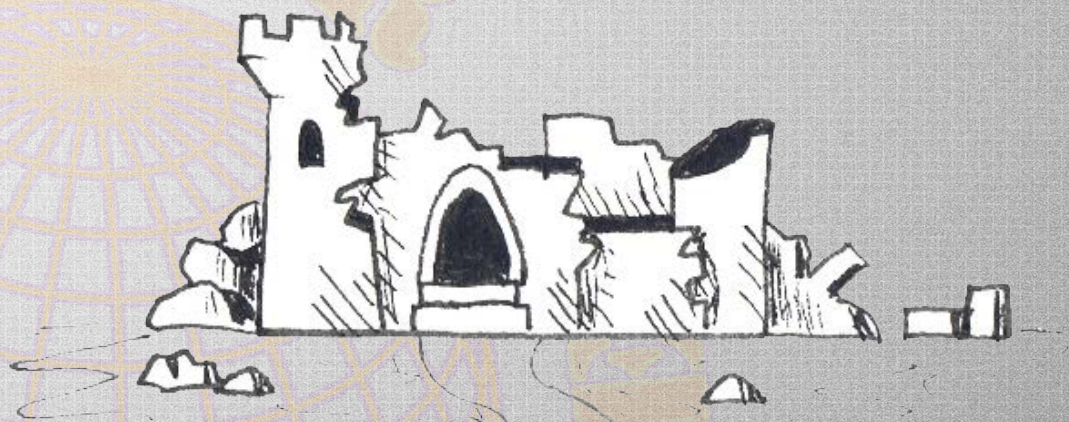


Are there airships in your world?

HOW TO DRAW RUINS



1. Outline some ruined buildings. Experiment with different structures, shapes and jagged edges to find what looks good to you.
2. Add some additional rubble around the edges, and then add details like windows, doors, steps, and an old road.
3. Shade lightly trying to find places where the light would be unlikely to reach.



Has anyone ever scaled the tallest mountain in your world?



CAVERNS

A vast underground network of natural caverns and tunnels can be called home to many dangerous beings.

d100	Cavern Description
1-2	This chain of dripping caverns is inhabited by a vengeful tribe of reptilian creatures.
3-4	This is the largest cavern system in the world, with dozens of entrances throughout the realm.
5-6	This small cave is just big enough for a family of impoverished half-elves to call home.
7-8	This cave is the eye socket of a long dead giant – a group of bandits makes camp here.
9-10	This cave system is known for the delicious blackberries that grow within, as well as the many ancient and forgotten traps that litter the rooms.
11-12	This cave is completely flooded – only the best swimmers can navigate its underwater halls.
13-14	While sufficient for a small camp, this cave is nothing more than a small alcove in the hill.
15-16	This long cavern system was dug by the titans for quick, underground transportation – it stretches in a straight line across the realm.
17-18	A legendary yeti calls this ice cave home.
19-20	Home to a group of sinister cultists, these caverns have been worked into an underground city.
21-22	The water that runs through these caverns is caustic, eating away at any metal it touches.
23-24	The slender “straws” that grow from the ceiling of this cave are perfect for making beautiful flutes – if you can traverse the many chasms to get them, that is.
25-26	This cave is made from the salt of a nearby sea. Ironically, a tribe of sentient slugs lives here.
27-28	The spirit of a powerful lich haunts this cavern – the glowing purple crystals that coat the walls are part of his phylactery.
29-30	A large, underground river flows through this cavern – pirates have taken root here.
31-32	It is said that vast riches can be found in these caverns – on the other side of a huge gorge.
33-34	Travelers come from far and wide to see the beautiful formations inside this large system of caverns – if only they knew of the warlike hobgoblin tribe residing in the deep.
35-36	The stalactites of this cavern fall frequently, creating a dangerous environment for travelers.
37-38	This cave is known for the millions of vicious bats that devastate the countryside in a massive, annual feeding frenzy.
39-40	This cavern was formed by a black dragon’s lightspeed fall from the stars.
41-42	It is said that this long string of caverns is enchanted with a powerful hallucinogenic curse.
43-44	The winds that blow through these caves create ominous musical tones.
45-46	This watery cave is used by locals as a natural waterpark.
47-48	This cave is home to the realm’s assassin’s guild – if one believes in that sort of thing...
49-50	A group of renegade constructs, looking for a life outside of slavery, calls this cave home.



Are teachers rather wealthy? Or are they terribly poor?

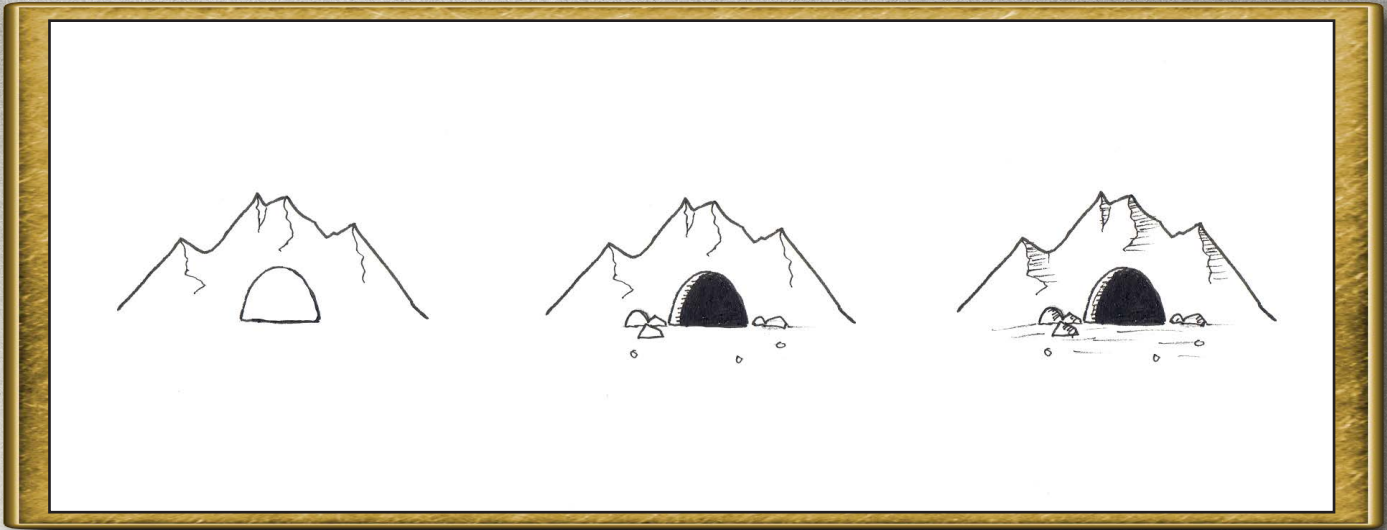
CAVERNS

d100	Cavern Description
51-52	The waters in this cavern have become diseased by some sort of evil, lurking within.
53-54	A scholar calls this cave home – vials, beakers, and burners litter the room as he researches the mystical energies emanating from the walls.
55-56	A large species of mushroom grows throughout this cave – the perfect food for the insectoid creatures who call the place home.
57-58	The walls of this cave glow with a golden light, illuminating the beautiful features inside.
59-60	The pyramid of an ancient, tribal people serves as the focal point of this cavern, holding many dangerous secrets locked inside.
61-62	Once the site of a disastrous battle, this cavern is now haunted by the fallen soldiers' spirits.
63-64	This cavern is the site of a large archaeological dig, seeking out a great power lurking behind the walls.
65-66	The region's merchant's guild works out of these caves.
67-68	Massive spiders inhabit this cave, using their web to lure fish out of the murky waters.
69-70	This cave is home to the source of all life in the world – a massive cauldron, eternally bubbling.
71-72	A race of sub-intelligent halflings live in this cave – they have devolved into primal behaviors.
73-74	This cavern is a serene place. Monks from far and wide seek solace and meditation here.
75-76	This cavern is home to a clan of especially crafty goblins who are training to be trapmakers.
77-78	This cave is a sacred place to local druids. Tribal art can be seen on every wall.
79-80	This magical grotto allows any who submerge themselves in its waters to pass through the caves unharmed.
81-82	This cavern is home to a band of stranded, extraplanar creatures, looking for a way home.
83-84	This cavern grants any who can survive its harsh elements the ability to see into the future.
85-86	This cave was once a glorious and masterfully built dwarven mine, but it was sabotaged, and many were killed. It is a shadow of its former glory.
87-88	This cave network is used by a tribe of panther-like humanoids for their druidic celebrations.
89-90	This grotto is the entrance to a large, underwater kingdom.
91-92	The reverberating sounds of this cavern whisper a message from the wraiths who haunt it.
93-94	This cave is an entrance to a fabled labyrinth, and a minotaur can be seen skulking about if one is lucky (or unlucky).
95-96	This cavern is full of thick, dark mushrooms, which are a powerful narcotic.
97-98	This cavern was once the lair of a thieves guild. It is now defunct and mostly abandoned.
99-00	This cavern is full of luminous webs, which snag at clothing irritatingly.

What special types of metal are there in your world?



HOW TO DRAW CAVERNS



1. A cavern opening could be nestled in a mountain, or a small hill. It could potentially even be a hole in the ground. First, simply trace an outline of the opening.
2. Heavily shade in all or most of the opening and add some rocks and rubble nearby.
3. Shade the rocks and the hill or mountain. Then add some thin lines near the rocks to give the ground some texture.

SELLSWORD
MAPS



When was the last time a prominent political leader was assassinated?

CRYPTS, TOMBS, AND DUNGEONS

The dead have their homes too, as do the monsters and adventurers squatting within.

d100	Crypt, Tomb, or Dungeon Description
1-2	This crypt is full of dwarven ghosts who make slave diggers of all who enter.
3-4	This tomb houses the long-dead leaders of a dragonborn kingdom – it is always guarded.
5-6	These barrow downs are feared for the presence of wights, who wail into the night.
7-8	This crypt is a labyrinth, and only those who hold the map can traverse it safely.
9-10	This tomb is a clockwork wonder – it shifts and changes shape frequently as a safety measure.
11-12	This dungeon is a sunken temple, full of docile and deadly cat people.
13-14	This crypt is used as a courthouse, and a place for weddings, in honor of the dead.
15-16	The tomb is the final resting place of the six heroes (or what's left of them) who saved the realm a century ago.
17-18	This dungeon was designed for torture – the sound of screams is magically dampened.
19-20	This crypt has been robbed so many times that most consider it a joke.
21-22	This is the tomb of an ancient dragon, who was sundered in half defending the kingdoms.
23-24	This dungeon is wide and tall, built by ogres as a place to keep prisoners.
25-26	This crypt is covered in the slime, moss, and fungi created by the moisture of a nearby river.
27-28	This tomb is a front for a black market fence who buys and sells questionable goods.
29-30	This stone and wood dungeon caught fire recently, but that hasn't stopped vile creatures from inhabiting it.
31-32	The plague-ridden corpses in this crypt have decayed, and the air itself is poisonous.
33-34	This tomb is clean and dry, and was peaceful and quiet, until the aberrations took hold.
35-36	This dungeon was crafted perfectly by militant humanoid insects, and they are seeking to expand their kingdom above ground.
37-38	This crypt has a fake dragon's head emerging from a faux wall to deter visitors.
39-40	This tomb is high atop a mountain, where the birdfolk of the region are laid to rest.
41-42	This dungeon is overrun with mimics who have taken the shapes of doors and chests throughout the structure.
43-44	This floating crypt is reserved for those who give their lives in the name of a certain deity.
45-46	This tomb is reserved for the faithful steeds, warhounds, and pets of the local nobles.
47-48	This dungeon was built into the edge of a cliff, and many parts of its floor have crumbled, leading to a terrible drop.
49-50	This crypt is manned by clergy at all times, though it has no bodies yet. It was emptied to make room for the lords and dukes marching off to an impossible war.

What do the people of your world regard as “the final frontier”?



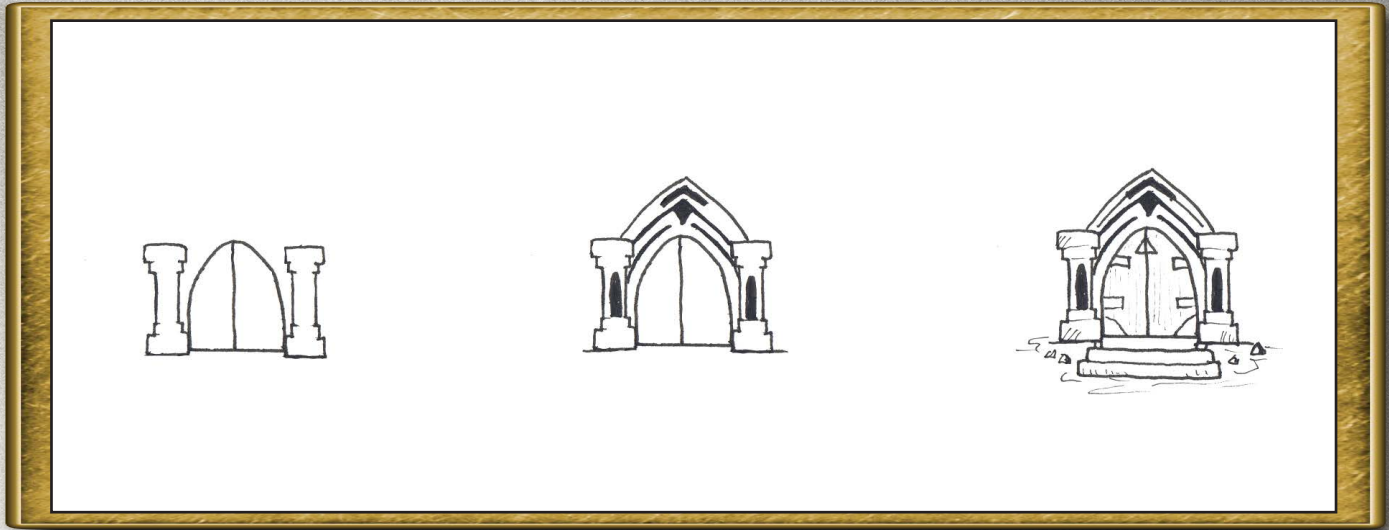
CRYPTS, TOMBS, AND DUNGEONS

d100	Crypt, Tomb, or Dungeon Description
51-52	This tomb lies within a mysterious crater, and over time the bodies stay perfectly preserved.
53-54	This submerged dungeon is full of venomous crustaceans.
55-56	This crypt is hewn of pure emerald, though none dare to take it or they will be cursed.
57-58	This tomb lies on neutral ground of a nation in a civil war, and any may go there to bury their dead from either side, and mourn without fear of being harmed.
59-60	This dungeon is full of constructs that were created for long-distance warfare.
61-62	This crypt is reserved for the elite crossbow marksman of the nation's famed military.
63-64	This tomb is guarded by acidic arcane clouds, dismissed only with a secret command word.
65-66	This dungeon is a famous library full of rare books, now fallen to countless monsters.
67-68	This crypt is the most sought after in the land. Once per year, anyone who has been laid to rest there may be contacted for a short time.
69-70	This tomb is guarded by a powerful djinn who is under the control of the family buried within it.
71-72	This dungeon is a network of planar gates that are defunct and crumbling – all but one, that is.
73-74	The only people buried in this crypt are those who have been assassinated within the nation's borders – where it is legal on certain days to do so.
75-76	This tomb is within the base of a raging volcano, and many dwarves are buried there.
77-78	This dungeon is the labyrinthian root network of an enormous tree, and is infested with trolls.
79-80	This crypt is in the capital city of its nation, and is a tourist attraction.
81-82	This colossal tomb for giants stands almost as tall as the mountain it neighbors.
83-84	This dungeon is a crumbling ruin inhabited by cultish barbarians who worship a snake god, wearing his poison as war paint.
85-86	This crypt is reserved for powerful druids only, and the structure is made of fallen treants who volunteered for the purpose.
87-88	This tomb is whimsical and decorative, a resting place for fey.
89-90	This dungeon was once a tremendous hanging garden, full of exotic and beautiful plants. It has been overrun with outsiders from another plane.
91-92	This crypt floats atop the waters of the city's inner sea – a buoyed bridge is the only access.
93-94	This tomb and its riches are lost to time, victim to countless flash floods in a low-lying grove.
95-96	This dungeon is fortified with the bones of all who have fallen there.
97-98	This crypt is full of magical, intelligent owls who can speak with the dead under the right circumstances.
99-00	This tomb houses tall shafts with no ladders, created by creatures who are able to fly.



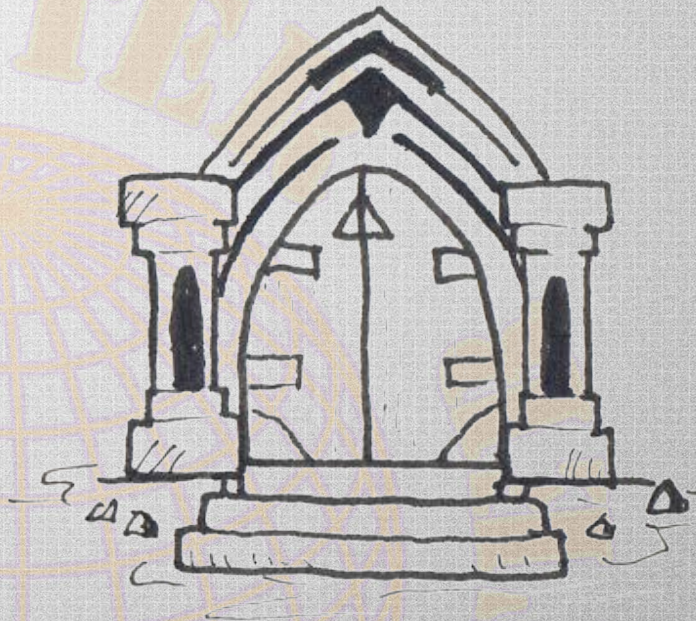
What nation or empire is regarded as having the most military might?

HOW TO DRAW CRYPTS, TOMBS, AND DUNGEONS



1. Draw some double doors and some prominent pillars on either side.
2. Add some decorative arches above the doorway, and shade in some details on the pillars. Experiment and find a design that looks good to you. Perhaps you could even try a skull or a menacing eye as a symbol centered in the arch.
3. Add some details to the door, steps leading to the doors, and some rocky ground.

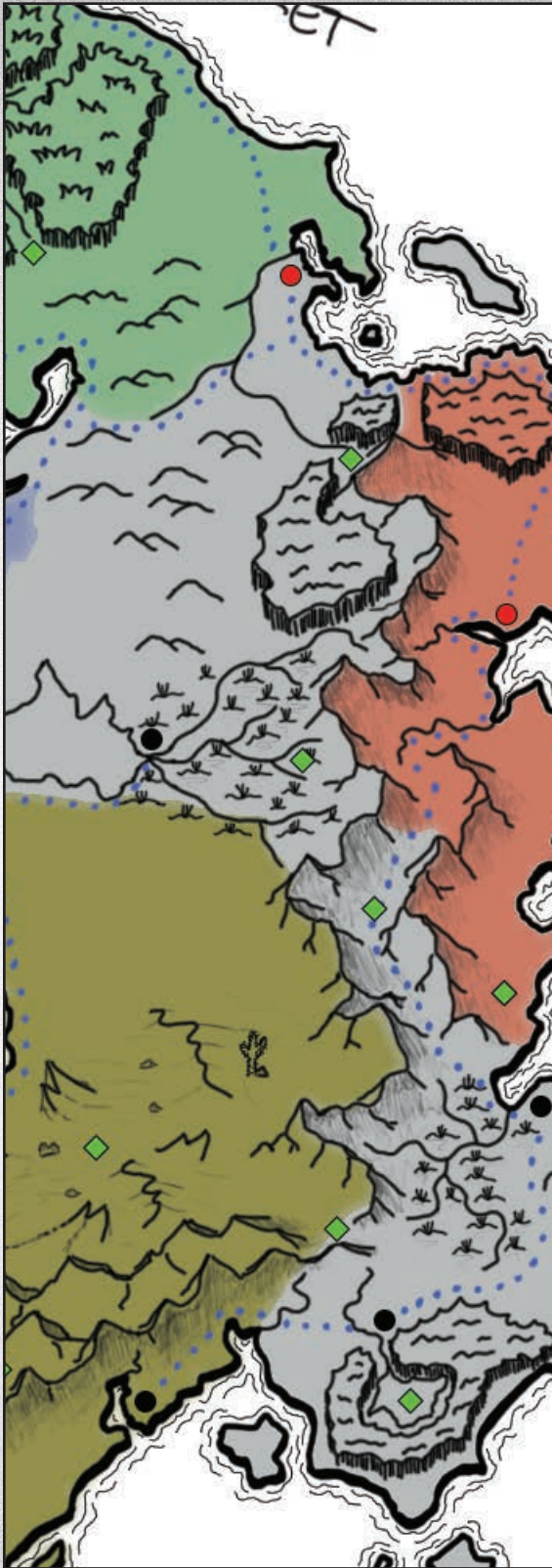
SELLSWORD
MAPS



What is the most widely desired resource?



ADVENTURING LOCATIONS



I chose my adventuring locations primarily based on geography, as well as those places that I find interesting and visually appealing. Here's how I went about it:

1. I decided that the Thicket would be especially adventurous, so I placed three adventuring locations there. All three will be the ruins of failed Auroran colonies.
2. I thought it would be cool to place an abandoned fortress between the Confederation of Conscience and the Durakis Initiative, located in that mountain pass I created early on in the world-building process. This location will be haunted by the souls of the soldiers who fell during an ancient battle there.
3. One of the characters in my current campaign is originally from Gaudia. His home town of Bramleberry was once a thriving town known for its wineries, but is now an abandoned, poisonous wasteland after a world-changing blight. This abandoned and toxic town will be located at the southern tip of Gaudia.



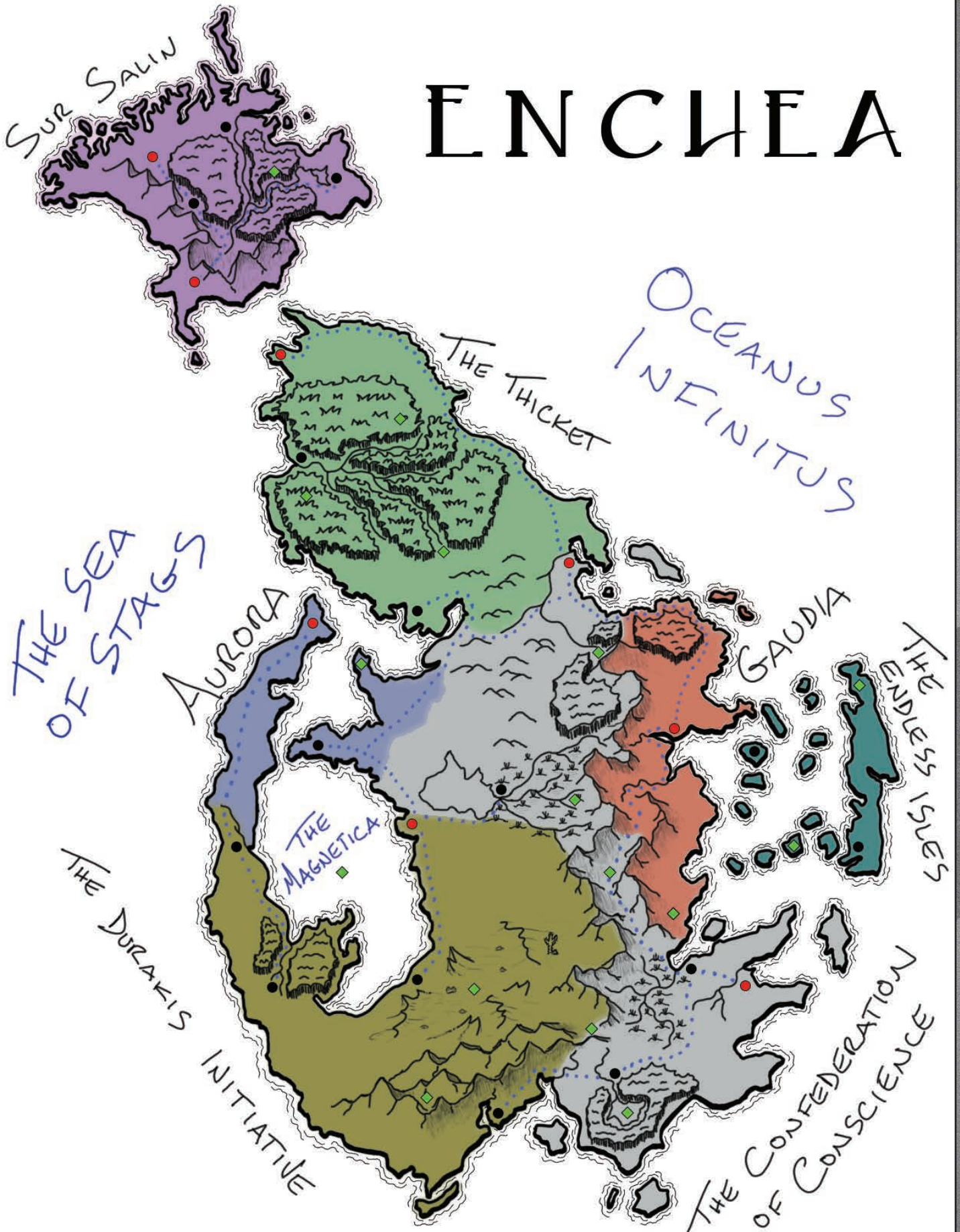
"When I was small, I was always thinking about the different worlds in my head."

— Hideo Kojima



How is meat stored in wealthy homes? Is magic involved?

ENCHĒA



BRINGING YOUR WORLD TO LIFE

You're almost done!

Before you are vast and beautiful landscapes, winding trails and cobbled roads, beacon cities of civilization, and the evils that threaten to snuff out the light. Your world is nearly complete. In fact, if you wanted to, you could stop right here and start running games! On the map and worksheets you've filled out, there is undoubtedly enough information and inspiration to provide for a large number of adventure hooks and stories to fuel your campaigns for years.

But if you're looking for that extra unique flare, that world-encompassing storyline that will set your homebrew campaign setting from any other, let's continue on just a little further in this journey.

Listed in this section are some optional ways to spice up the overall flavor of your world. This might be the visual "feel" of the realm itself, or it could possibly include a worldwide storyline or current event that will shape the setting into something completely unique. This isn't necessarily something the adventurers will be involved in (though it may provide plenty of adventure hooks), but it will create a living, breathing backdrop, and give your world an arc of its own. Feel free to adapt, adjust, or add to the list as you see fit. After all, it's your world!

COLD WAR

1. Select two nations on opposite ends of the world. These nations are now involved in a competitive, non-violent "cold war."
2. Other nations and factions will find themselves caught in the middle of this struggle, and will suffer from the poverty and embargoes caused by the conflict. Many people are starving and desperate. Likewise, some will have pledged support to one side or the other.
3. Certain goods and resources will be hard to come by, as trade is disrupted. The adventurers may come across military encampments, guarding roads and passes, and staging themselves for imminent conflict. Cities and settlements may be sympathetic or hostile towards one side of the cold war or the other.

Will these two nations ever make peace? Or will it escalate into a bloody, full-scale conflict?

IMMINENT INVASION

1. Ensure there is a wild, uncharted area off the edge of your map. If there is none, imagine there is another unknown landmass across the sea, or perhaps another plane of existence.
2. The settlements nearest the uncharted lands report invasive movement into the realm by a large, powerful force.
3. Settlements fall, one by one, to the invading force, while neighboring nations mobilize to meet the threat. Or, alternatively, close their gates and prepare for imminent siege. Until this problem is solved, one borderland settlement will be sacked every in-game month.
4. The invasion is ignored or brushed off until a valuable resource or strategic position is lost to the invading force – only then will the powers of the world take notice.

Who are these invaders? What do they want? How can the people stop them?



Write a popular idiom for your world, such as "don't play with fire."

BRINGING YOUR WORLD TO LIFE

THE DANGERS OF TECHNOLOGY

1. Place five dangerous magical item symbols around your world. They can be whatever you choose, but they must be powerful.
2. A faction or country has discovered one of these items, alerting the world to their existence. Now everyone is looking for the remaining four.
3. A rumor has circulated that these magical items offer absolute power to the one who combines them into a single entity.
4. Lastly, create a secret organization, dedicated to ensuring these items remain hidden.

How will the world deal with this? Will nations go to war over these items? Will they mutually agree to destroy them all? What if someone with evil intentions got their hands on them?

THE ARCANE UNIVERSITY

1. Place an Arcane University symbol in one of the cities on your map.
2. Nearly every family in the realm is avidly trying to get their children into the university, but only 10 percent of the applicants are accepted.
3. Those families that are unsuccessful are often left to lives of poverty.

What would a family do to ensure their child was accepted? Is there bribery involved? Murder? Who is controlling this university, and how much power do they have?

WAR TORN COUNTRYSIDE

1. Choose two adjacent nations. One of them is invading the other.
2. Pick one to three settlements in one of those nations to have been recently conquered and liberated from the other nation.
3. Add two or three more ruins symbols near the border.
4. Describe the local streets as being lined with executed prisoners and deserters. The remaining portion of the bullet should be separate and not numbered.

CHAOTIC CLIMATOLOGY

The world is changing gradually. Every three months of in-game time (or faster/slower, if desired), do the following:

1. Forests become jungles.
2. Jungles become deserts.
3. Deserts become lakes.
4. Lakes become forests.
5. What happens when the important item sought after by a party of adventurers is now at the bottom of a lake? Is the population of the realm used to this? Do they evacuate the city once per year before it sinks to the bottom of a lake, only to move in again after the lake grows into a forest?

Are books very rare/valuable in the world?



BRINGING YOUR WORLD TO LIFE

EVIL EMPIRE

The dark powers of the world have triumphed, and the forces of good are in retreat. Do the following:

1. Turn half the settlements in your realm into ruins.
2. Turn all but one of the remaining settlements in the realm into small villages.
3. Turn the final settlement into a large, fortified city. This is the home of the dark sorceress herself.

In an evil world, what does it mean for the adventurers? Are they evil as well? Or are they working for the good of the realm in secret, avoiding the dark powers that would stop them?

ROMAN NATIONALISM

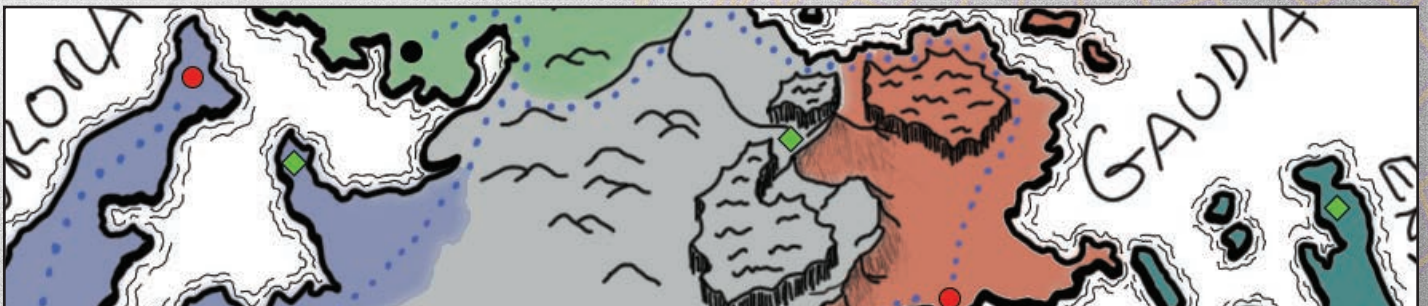
If you're looking to add an ancient Roman historical spin to your world, do the following:

1. Choose one city to serve as the capital and hub of all political dealings.
2. Ensure that all the world's roads eventually lead to this city.
3. This city will be the home of a large and influential senate. Every d6 months, they vote on something that might change the entire world.
4. Every d8 months, a prominent political figure is assassinated.
5. Ensure that there is a wild, uncharted territory off the edge of the map. This might even be across the sea. Powerful, tribal armies frequently raid the settlements near this uncharted territory.

WORLD WAR

Alliances can be powerful ways to defend your territory, but they can oftentimes do more damage than good. In those times, the entire world might go to war. If you're interested in inserting this game-changing story into your world, do the following:

1. Choose one nation to invade another.
2. Choose a third nation to invade the first, due to their invasion of the second.
3. Continue this process until every nation is at war.
4. Perhaps this is a free-for-all, with every nation on their own. Or you might choose two or three distinct sides that enter the war against each other. Either way, the landscape will change drastically.
5. Along the borders between any warring nations, draw fortifications and symbols to denote armies and fleets.



Does your world have a lottery?

OTHER ASPECTS OF YOUR WORLD

DEITIES AND PANTHEONS

Many fictional worlds, no matter the genre, have one thing in common: the gods. From the monotheistic societies in a modern world, to the polytheistic theocracies that hold sway over the fantastical lands in many roleplaying campaign settings, the pantheons of fiction vary dynamically from realm to realm. While this is not a book about creating deities, it would be incomplete without some inspirational guidelines that get the process started for your world.

When determining what role the god(s) will play in your world, here are 15 inspirational questions to ask yourself:

1. Are the gods real?
2. On a scale from one to ten, how active are the gods in the matters of the material world?
3. How many gods are there?
4. How powerful does a being have to be before a common person views them as a god?
5. How do the magical and divine clerics or priests of your world gain their power?
6. Is there a campaign setting that already exists for you to choose a pantheon from?
7. Is there a god of life? If so, is there a god of death? Are these two entities opposed?
8. Is there a god of nature? Is there a god of industry? Have these gods ever gone to war?
9. Do the common farmers pray to the same gods as the wealthy bureaucrats?
10. Do the gods care about what happens on the material plane?
11. Is there one god who stands above the rest?
12. Are there any malevolent gods? If not, what about demons or devils?
13. Do the gods answer the prayers of the people directly, indirectly, or not at all?
14. Can the gods die? If so, how?
15. Do each of your gods represent a specific idea or domain? Consider the following:
 - Life
 - Death
 - Nature
 - Agriculture
 - Murder
 - Love
 - Beauty
 - Speed
 - War
 - Celebration
 - Spring, Autumn, Summer, or Winter
 - Fertility
 - Construction/Architecture
 - Games
 - The perfection of the humanoid form
 - Darkness
 - Light
 - The past and/or future
 - Naval travel
 - Trade

By answering these questions, you should be well on your way to laying the foundations of a great pantheon in your world! Ultimately, remember that if adding a pantheon doesn't make your world better immediately, feel free to wait a bit. It's a decision that can be made down the road.

"There are two worlds we live in: a material world, bound by the laws of physics, and the world inside our mind, which is just as important."

— Alan Moore

Is there a common birth defect plaguing the world?



OTHER ASPECTS OF YOUR WORLD

MAGIC LEVEL

From the lands of wizards with tremendous powers, to the realms where even the smallest magical trick is seen with a shocked expression, variations on magic (specifically, how much there is) fluctuate from setting to setting. What will your world be like? Will arcane universities and magical storms be the norm? Or will your fantasy realm feel more like a replication of real-world medieval history?

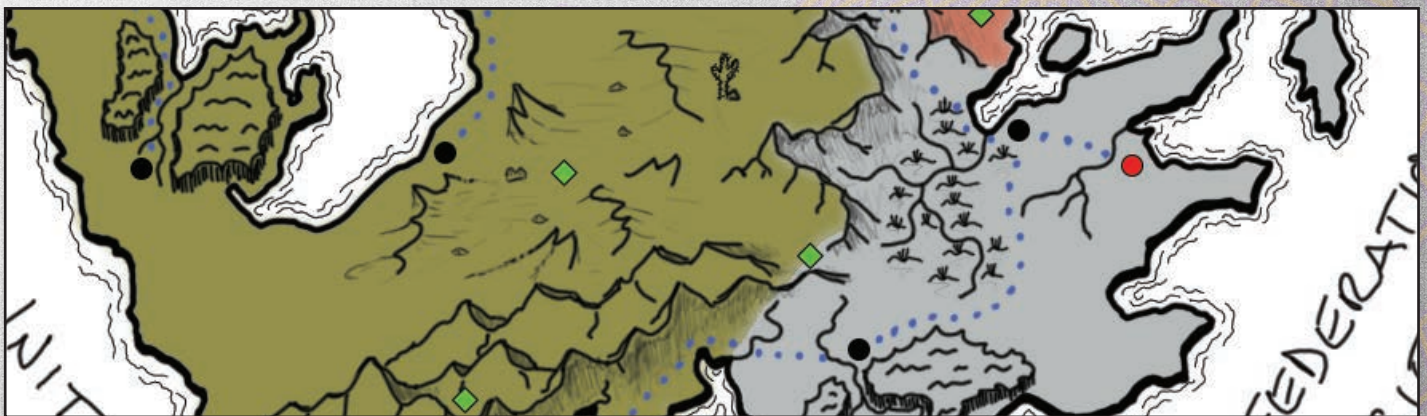
When determining what role magic will play in your world, here are 15 inspirational questions to ask yourself:

1. How would a street beggar react if given a slightly magical item?
2. Does resurrection magic exist? If so, is it reserved for the rich and powerful, or do the impoverished have a chance at rebirth as well?
3. How has magic affected warfare? Are the realm's battlefields ablaze with magical fireballs and arcane-infused weapons?
4. If someone publicly announced that they had magical abilities, would they be offered a job? Or would they be sent to the gallows?
5. Is alchemy in your world based primarily on magic or science?
6. Are there any forms of magic in your world, outside the usual two (arcane and divine)?
7. How easy is it to craft a magical weapon?
8. Does magic come from the ground, the sky, the water, or somewhere else?
9. Is magic inherently good, evil, or does it depend on the wielder?
10. Can magic be harnessed into mundane items, such as jewelry or armor?
11. Look at the most magical location in your world. Where does it get its power from?
12. Are people born with magical abilities? Or do they have to learn them in their studies?
13. Have certain nations or factions made efforts to limit the amount of magic in the world?
14. What percentage of the population in your world believes magic exists?
15. Are spells cast out of thin air? Or does the casting of magic require the sacrifice or depletion of some other resource?

After answering these questions about your world, you should begin to have an understanding how magic works inside of it. Keep in mind that, the more magic you have in your world, the less "magical" it will seem. If everything is special, nothing seems very special.

"Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere."

— Carl Sagan



Do adventurer's guilds exist?

LEAVING BLANK SPACES

TABLETOP TERRORS!

Think about the planet we live on. Imagine the whole Earth. You can't, can you? Not all at once. At most, you may be able to muster a blue sphere with some landmasses and clouds, but nothing more detailed than that. Okay, so let's try something easier. Imagine the entire country you live in. Still can't? Another vague shape? Maybe a satellite image? A memory of a topographical map? We can go on and on, and ask you to imagine your entire state, and your city, or even a three-mile radius of your current location — but the fact is, it's impossible. So if it's impossible to even begin to imagine the actual, physical realm that surrounds us in perfect detail, why do we put this pressure on ourselves as Game Masters for the campaign worlds we build?

Never forget that you don't have to finish every part of your campaign world — or even know everything — to begin playing in it. Even the most well-known and well-loved campaign settings started as a tangle of vague ideas in someone's mind. And those tangles become untangled through the passage of time, through exploration and adventure, and through focusing on the small, manageable parts that inspire you.

This book is not only designed to give you advice on how to build a campaign world for your roleplaying game — but it also has an exact, step-by-step process to do so. As you embark on the journey to create your world using this book, remember these four simple but imperative things:

1. Don't try to finish everything. The best campaign settings have unexplored corners waiting to be discovered

2. Don't be afraid to skip something that you're stuck on. This is where most people quit in the world-building process. Instead, leave that thorn in your side as a beautiful blank space to fill in later.
3. Don't be afraid to start small. When you're starting up a campaign, try beginning the story in a single town or village on your map, working outward from there, and mapping as you go. This can be a great way to build your world while playing.
4. Don't be afraid to stop at any point and explore something that inspires you. The steps in this book are simple, and will get you to a fantastic finished product. But if you build a mountain that you want your players to explore now, don't wait — it's more about building a story together than waiting to finish your coastlines.

We can't wait to see the worlds you build using this book. But remember, a world full of blank spaces isn't unfinished — it's a world full of opportunities.



“Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought.”

— Henry David Thoreau

What do the different regions of the world call their currency?



THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

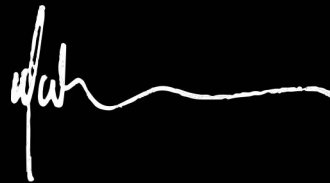
You've done it. You've completed the most challenging and rewarding quest issued to all Game Masters. Your world now lays before you, ready for your next campaign. Use the worksheets and questionnaire included at the end of this book to help you flesh out your already expansive realm, and file these worksheets, your map, and your notes in a folder or binder for safe keeping.

So now what?

Here are some ways I would get a campaign started in this new world:

1. **Start Small:** Choose a specific location in your world. This could be a town, city, fortress, or tiny island. You have already created enough in terms of adventure hooks and plot devices to get going without hesitation. Maybe one of the local villages is overrun by ogres, or a haunting has been reported at a nearby fortress. Either way, your world is now rife with possibilities for story and adventure.
2. **Work Outward:** Slowly but surely add the surrounding locations into your campaign, using the adventure ideas and hooks you've created throughout the book to spur the players into action. You've now created enough of a framework to allow for even the most sandbox of campaigns.
3. **Never Stop:** The world-creation process should never end. That's the fun part in all of this. As each campaign you run passes by, the history of your world is continuously written. Don't be afraid to erase and replace the items on your map, even long after this initial process has finished.

I wish you a lifetime of rewarding adventures, fellow Game Master. I wish you a tableful of laughter, friendship, and memories for years to come. I wish for you what I found for myself: peace and fun at the gaming table. Happy Worldbuilding!



Be sure to check out the next book in this series:
Be a Better Campaign Master, Book Two: Telling the Story



ADVENTURING LOCATION

NAME

TYPE

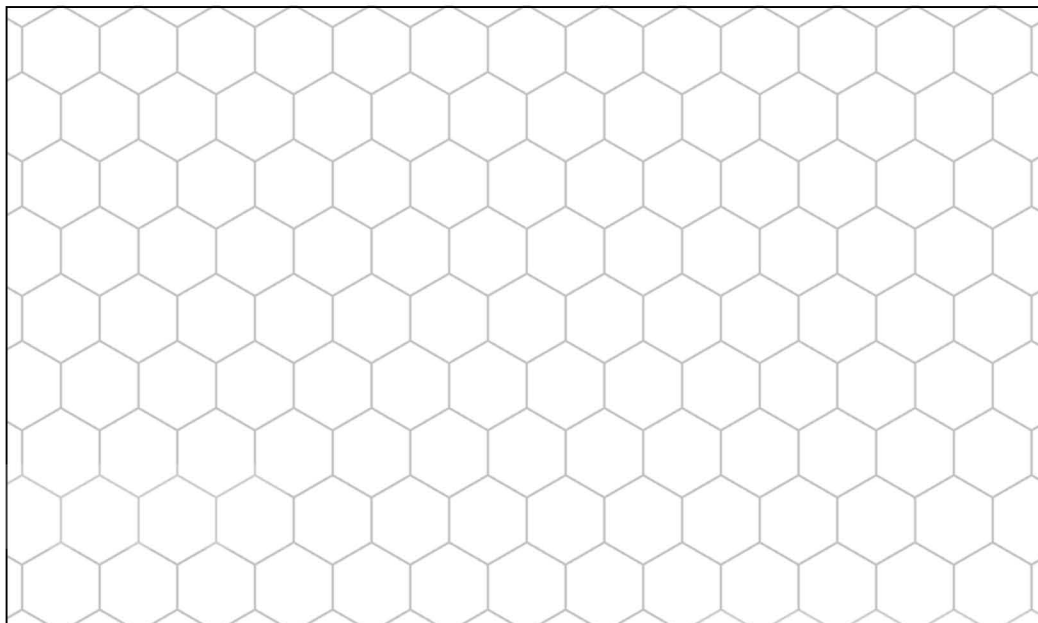
(fortress, ruins, dungeons, etc.)

FEATURES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

PLOT HOOKS

MAP



GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURE

NAME

TYPE

(forest, mountain, swamp, desert, etc.)

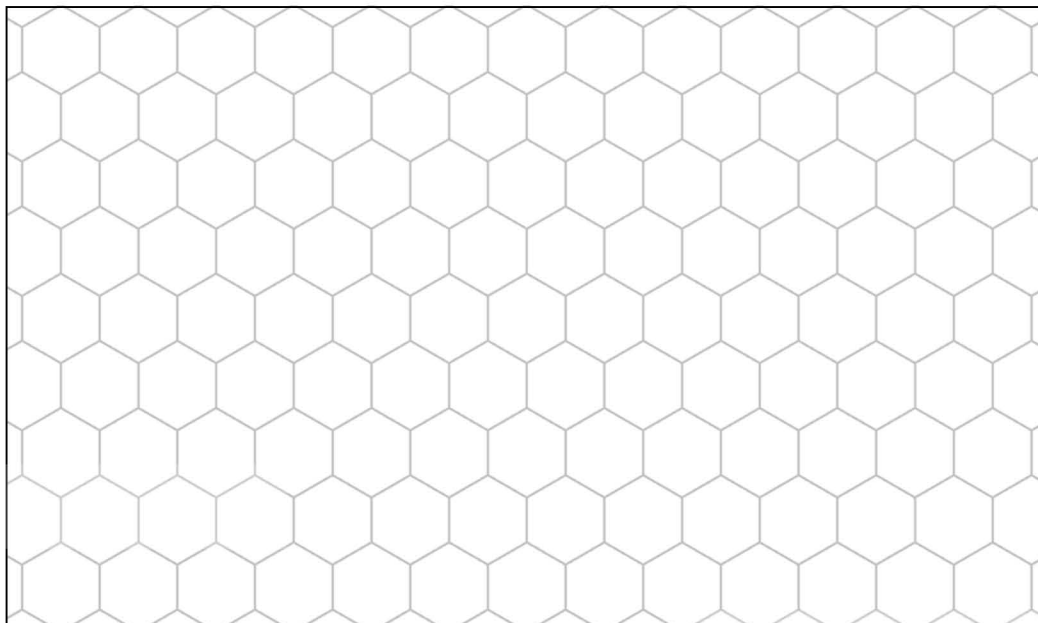


FEATURES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

PLOT HOOKS

MAP



NATION

NAME

TYPE

(monarchy, theocracy, empire, etc.)

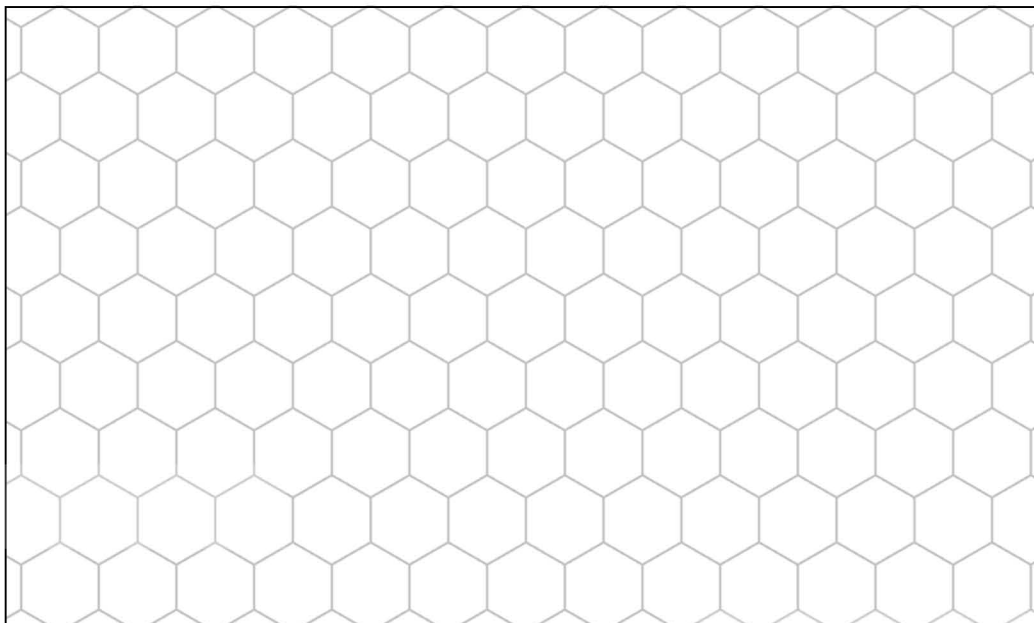


CURRENT EVENTS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

PLOT HOOKS

MAP



SETTLEMENT

NAME

TYPE

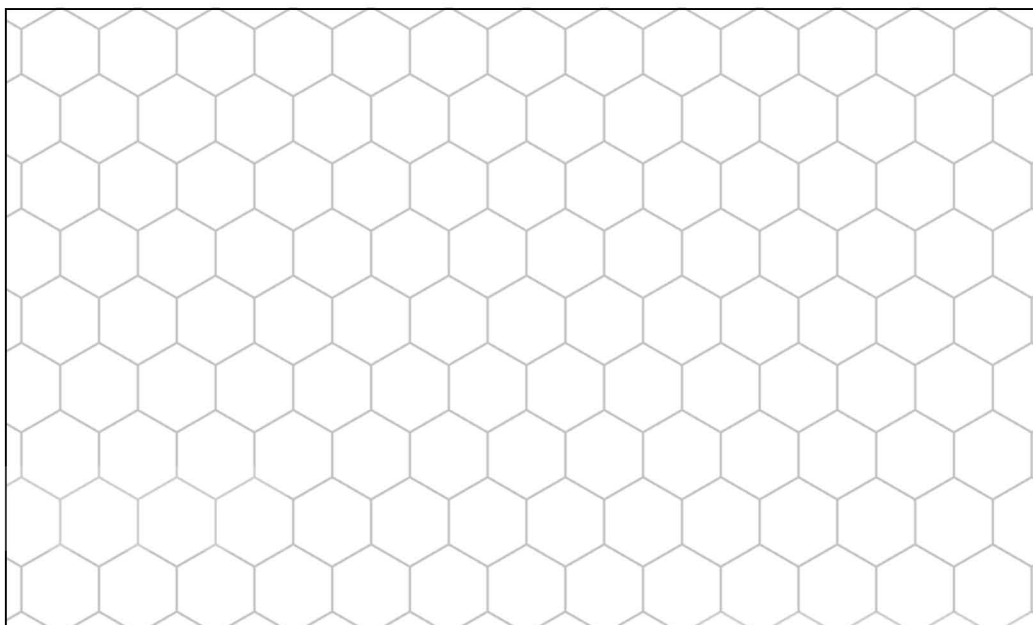
(city, town, village, hamlet, etc.)

NOTABLE PEOPLE & PLACES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

PLOT HOOKS

MAP



THE REALM OF _____

NOTABLE NATIONS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

NOTABLE PEOPLE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

NOTABLE PLACES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLOT HOOKS



1. How many moons orbit your world? _____
2. How many astrological symbols are there in the night sky? _____
3. How many suns are there in the sky? _____
4. Is land ownership important for a citizen's social status? _____
5. How dangerous is the winter here? _____
6. What kind of music is popular among the common people?

7. What was the largest naval battle ever fought?

8. Which is more popular? Wine or ale? _____
9. What is the most common household pet in the realm?

10. What is the most common name in your realm?

11. Is there a sigil that represents the world as a whole?

12. Who is the most famous assassin in the world? Who did they assassinate?

13. How do the wealthy classes like to spend their money?

14. What color usually signifies nobility?

15. What stories are told to children in your world to keep them from getting into trouble?

16. What color is the sky?



17. Are there any holy cities in your world?

18. Did one race of people come before the others?

19. Have there been any major wars in recent history?

20. What is the most widely celebrated holiday?

21. How many seasons are there in your world? _____

22. Are ancient relics scattered around the world?

23. Are the nobles of your world's most empirical nation decided by popular vote or bloodline?

24. What is more valuable in your world? A single cow, or a single gold coin?

25. Are diseases and plagues prevalent?

26. What sort of unsavory creatures come out at night?

27. Does a common language exist?

28. What is the most common musical instrument?

29. What is the strangest festival celebrated in your realm?



30. Are there any animals in the world that are illegal to hunt or kill?

31. What is your world called?

32. Who is the most famous musician in the world?

33. Are politicians widely revered? Or are they widely distrusted?

34. What is the most famous battle in the history of your world?

35. What is the most dangerous creature in the sea?

36. What is the most common natural disaster in your world?

37. What is regarded as the most dangerous form of magic?

38. Are dragons a myth, a frequent sight, or nonexistent?

39. What special ways do the political leaders in your world execute heinous criminals?

40. Who is the most famous general in your world?

41. Did all the races in your world emerge out of one primordial race?

42. Does gunpowder exist?



43. How deep do the oceans run? Are there any sentient societies down there?

44. How high are the tallest city walls in your world?

45. Do the gods ever walk upon the world as physical beings?

46. Write a poem about a famous king.

47. What kind of music is popular among the wealthy elite?

48. How many days are there in a year?

49. Are the town garrisons generally considered fair? Or are they more often considered corrupt?

50. What does a farmer in your world worry about more? Famine or vicious creatures?

51. Are there any folk heroes commonly referred to in stories and ballads?

52. What is the fastest way to travel from one place to another?



53. What is viewed as an honorable way to die?

54. Are people generally allowed to marry freely? Or are most marriages arranged?

55. Do the people of your world petition to multiple gods? Or are they loyal to just one?

56. Is slavery a common sight in the world?

57. What is generally regarded as the most dishonorable crime in the land?

58. What color are the clouds?

59. Do many people smoke?

60. Is overpopulation an issue anywhere in the world?

61. How would a beggar react if they witnessed someone performing magic?

62. How many bedrooms would a middle-class home contain?

63. Are the naval ships powered by oar, sail, or something else entirely?

64. What is the survival rate for those who visit the doctor?



65. What ancient empire is regarded as having been the most powerful?

66. Are there large expanses of evil caverns underneath the world?

67. Who is the most powerful mage in the world?

68. Do any of the world's monarchs have any secret deals?

69. Are bloodletting and other superstitious healing beliefs a commonality?

70. Is the world round, flat, or some other shape?

71. What colors are the moons?

72. How many days are there in a week?

73. Are lycanthropes a prominent threat in the world? Or are they just a legend?

74. Are the people primarily monotheistic?

75. Are there any racial tensions in your world? Or do people get along quite peacefully?

76. Are visions and prophecies a commonality?



77. Has anyone ever done unlawful and heinous experiments on magic users in your world?

78. Does resurrection magic exist? How does this affect the politics in your world?

79. What is the average life expectancy among the wealthy in your world? Among the poor?

80. Are there airships in your world?

81. Has anyone ever scaled the tallest mountain in your world?

82. Are teachers rather wealthy? Or are they terribly poor?

83. What special types of metal are there in your world?

84. Is there a single threat that all the people of the world must join together to face?

85. When was the last time a prominent political leader was assassinated?

86. What do the people of your world regard as "the final frontier"?

87. What nation or empire is regarded as having the most military might?

88. What is the most widely desired resource?



89. How is meat stored in wealthy homes? Is magic involved?

90. Write a popular idiom for your world, such as "don't play with fire."

91. Are books very rare/valuable in the world?

92. Does your world have a lottery?

93. Is there a common birth defect plaguing the world?

94. Do adventurer's guilds exist?

95. What do the different regions of the world call their currency?

96. Is there a place in your world where one nation of people is encroaching on another?

97. What is the most evil organization in the world, and what is keeping them from rising up?

98. Do the poorest of the poor have access to the food they need?

99. Fill in the blank: "All roads lead to _____."

100. What exists outside of your world? Anything?

101. What is the largest breed of fish in the sea? Has anyone ever caught one?



102. On a scale from one to ten, how dangerous is sea travel?

103. What is the most common beast of burden in your world?

104. How safe are the highways?

105. Are there illicit substances in your world? What kind? How are they trafficked?

106. Has a mage ever been kidnapped for their power?

107. Is cult activity prevalent?

108. Who is the most powerful politician in the world?

109. How easy is it to travel between planes?

110. If the heir to the throne of your most prominent nation were kidnapped, how would the nation react?

111. Has an entire city ever been destroyed by a natural disaster?

112. Is the world named after a famous person or event? If not, where did it get its name?



113. Is being an adventurer very profitable? Or is it reserved for the poor classes with nothing left to lose?

114. How old is the world?

115. Who is the most famous artist in the world?

116. Is there a single, diplomatic world entity? Something like a fantasy "United Nations"?

117. What percentage of the world's population are males?

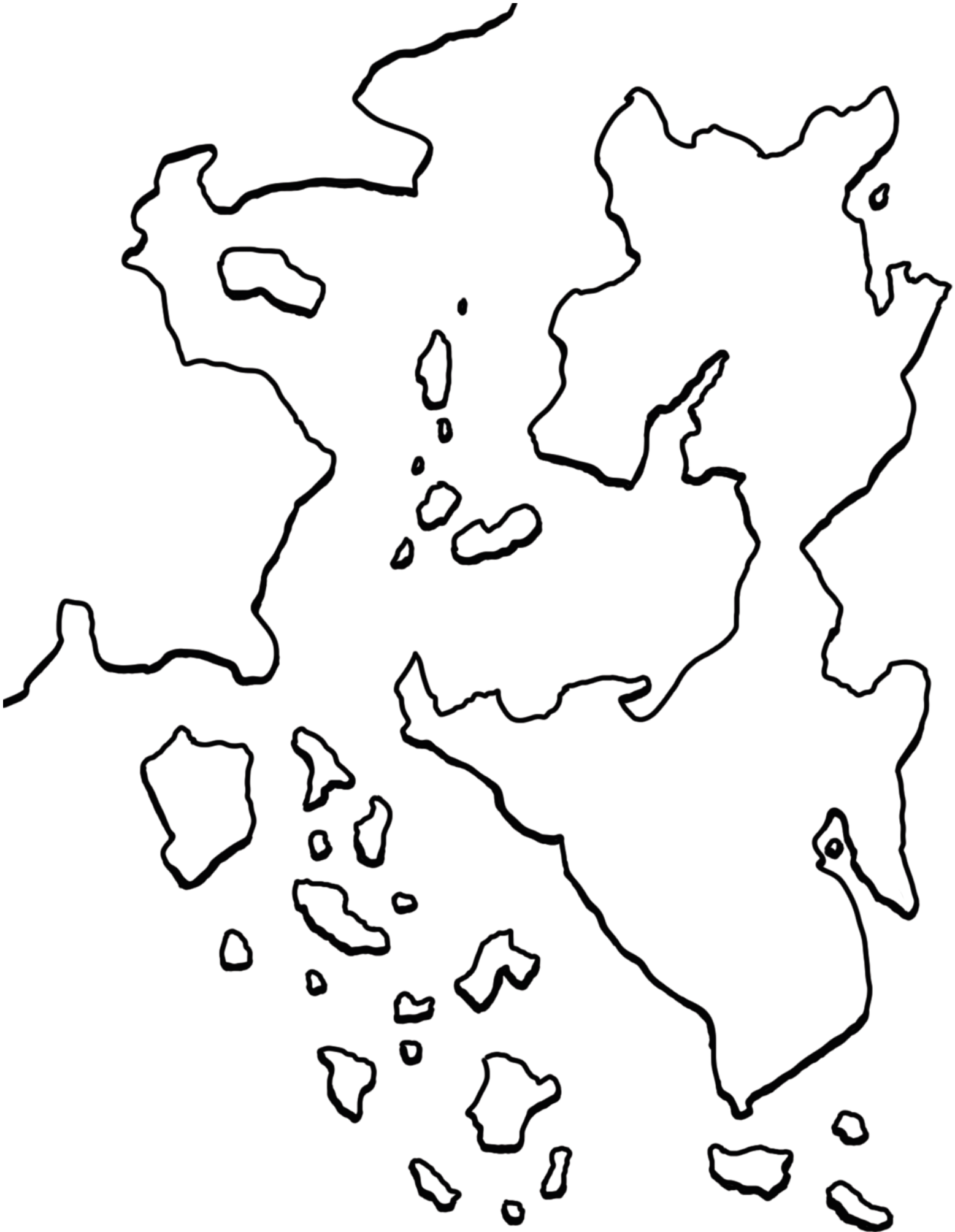
118. Are the undead a serious threat in your world? Or just a myth?

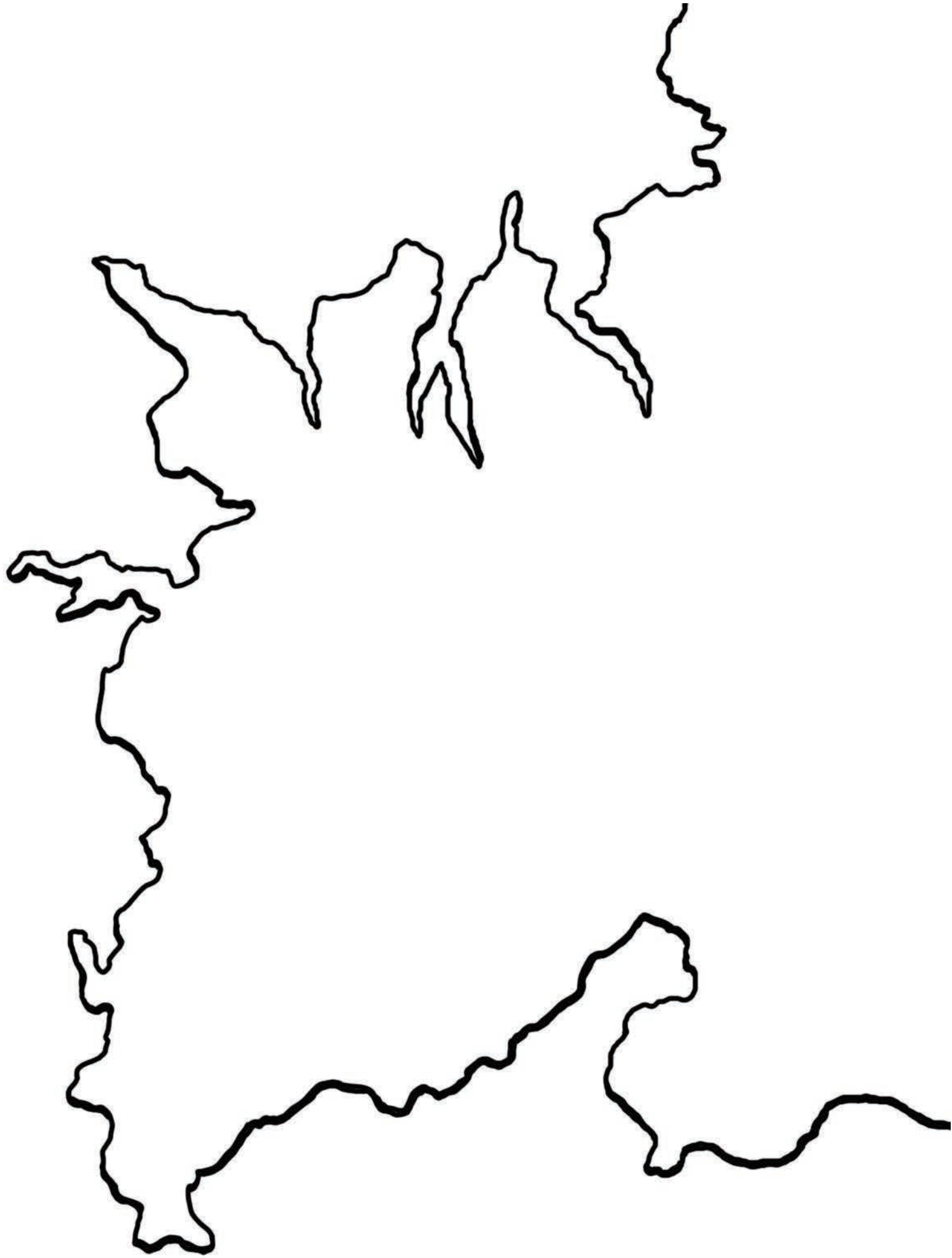
119. Does the world revolve around the sun? Or vice-versa?

120. Has a malevolent power ever tried to control the entire realm?









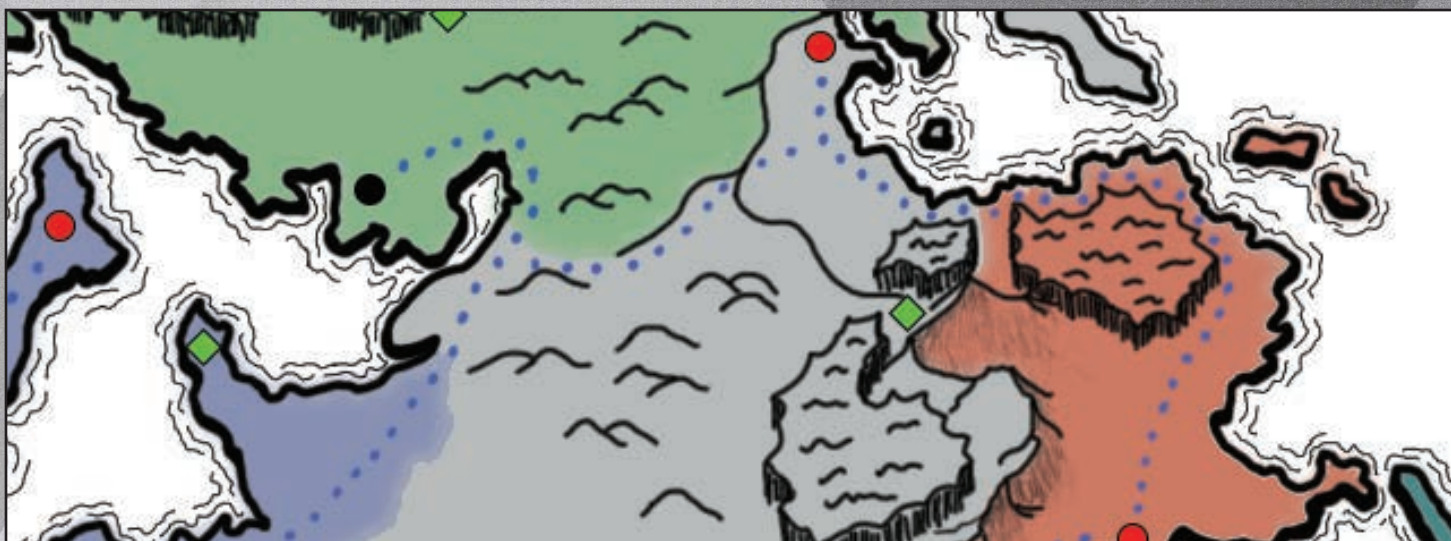




BE A BETTER CAMPAIGN MASTER

BOOK ONE: BUILDING THE WORLD

BY MICHAEL BARKER



From the basic shape of your world, to the warring populations that inhabit it, you are the decider. You will pull the mountains out of the earth and make the raging rivers flow into the vast seas. You will scatter magical forests and arid deserts across the land, separating the cities and villages that you alone will build from the ground up.

You've been waiting too long to finish your homebrew RPG campaign setting. Now is the time to forge your realm for years to come.

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YEAR OF THE HERO