

D&D CHARACTER BACKSTORY

In order to bring a sense of purpose and fun your adventure, it is vital that you have a clear and deep understanding of your character’s backstory—what was their life like before they became an adventurer? Why did they choose a life of adventure? What are they hoping to accomplish? Having depth and specificity in your approach here will allow you to make good in-character decisions in the game, which will make it a rich experience for you and for your group.

Developing specific character backstories is something that all (good) writers and actors do.

How you communicate this is up to you: you could write a story or a selection of important journal entries or a short play or an epic poem or... whatever choice your imagination suggests. Whatever form you choose, it will need to be detailed, specific, and thorough. This can be done in your comp book, on loose-leaf paper, or in an electronic document.

You will be assessed on the following criteria:

Detailed and Specific	Thorough	Clarity of Communication

Note: in this instance, Clarity of Communication looks like:

- Engaging the reader—how do you draw them in and keep them in?
- Having a sense of flow and a consistent writer’s voice
- Proper use of conventions (spelling, punctuation, sentence and paragraph structure) so that the reader can follow your ideas clearly, without hesitation or confusion

Required aspects

- Family background – class (upper-class/noble, working class, etc.), what parents (if known) did for a living, siblings, where you grew up, education (if any), etc.
- Physical characteristics – height, weight, eye and hair color, body type, scars or other markings (if any), way of holding your body, way of speaking, etc.
- Background – how did you attain this background? What is the story?
- Personality – how did you develop your personality traits, bond, ideal, and flaw(s)? What are the stories there?
- Class – how did you choose your class? Were you mentored? Did you go to an official training academy? Were you self-taught? (Each “Class” section of the PH gives you ideas of what to think/write about here)
- Features and Spells – how did you learn your go-to spells and the features that come with your class and background?
- Languages – how did you learn the languages that you are fluent in?
- Adventuring – how and why did you choose the life of an adventurer? What is your motivation?
- What is your most prized possession? Why is it so dear to you? What is the story behind other important items that you carry?
- Relationships – do you have any existing relationships that affect how you think or behave? These might be parents, siblings, friends, loved ones/spouses, mentors, or pets.