Worldbuilding Template

Fill the seven ★ fields before you start drafting; fill the rest when a scene asks. Gray italic text is an invented example (Mist-Veil City). Type over it or leave it. Free to use. From litmemo.com/en/templates/worldbuilding-sheet

1. World sheet: 26 fields

Field	Example: Mist-Veil City	Your world
Geography & nature		
★ Size of the stage	*One coastal kingdom, three cities, five days' ride from end to end.*	
Climate & seasons	*Wet and cold. A fog season of forty days each autumn, a short dry summer, storms in between.*	
★ Terrain & travel	*Cliff coast, one river inland. By road, five days between the port and the capital; by boat, two, when the fog allows.*	
Resources	*Fish, salt, whale oil. Almost no timber, so every ship is bought from the south.*	
History		
Origin event	*The Lighting of the First Lighthouse, year 0: the pirate captains agreed to guide ships instead of wrecking them.*	
★ The most recent upheaval	*The Purge, twelve years ago: the crown broke the old cliff houses, House Su among them.*	
The history nobody tells	*The first lighthouse keepers went on wrecking ships for another sixty years. The guild's founding charter is a forgery.*	
Politics & power		
★ Form of rule	*A crown in the capital. In the port cities, the Lighthouse Keepers' Guild rules everything that touches the sea.*	
Law & punishment	*Lighting an open fire in the fog: branding. Sheltering a purged house: death. Smuggling: a fine the guild collects.*	
Military & policing	*A city guard under the crown. Guild couriers carry blades on the docks by custom, not by law.*	
The powerful and the opposition	*Captain Ren runs the guard for the crown. The guild masters tolerate him. The survivors of the purged houses do not.*	
Society & daily life		
Rank & class	*Crown families, guild members, dock workers, the purged. A guild badge moves you up one layer; nothing moves you out of the last one.*	
Family & marriage	*Houses pass to the eldest child, son or daughter. Guild rank is never inherited.*	
Food, clothing, housing	*Salt fish and barley. Oiled wool. Stone houses cut into the cliff, one room per family, shared stairs.*	
Education & literacy	*Guild members read; most dock families don't. The guild school takes one child per family.*	

Field	Example: Mist-Veil City	Your world
Economy & technology		
★ Currency & the price of bread	*Silver marks and copper bits. A loaf of barley bread costs two bits; a courier earns thirty bits a day.*	
Main industries & trade	*Salt and whale oil out, timber and grain in. Everything goes through the guild's harbor.*	
★ Level of technology	*Sailing ships, oil lamps, hand-set type in the capital only. No gunpowder.*	
Magic & powers		
★ What it can do	*Sound-sight: a few people can map a space by its echo, out to the size of a large room. Nothing else counts as magic here.*	
Cost & limits	*Headaches that worsen with use; the old practitioners are half deaf. Useless in wind or rain.*	
Who has it & how society treats them	*Born with it, about one in ten thousand, mostly in the old cliff houses. The guild hires them quietly; the crown keeps a list.*	
Religion & belief		
What is worshipped & what it asks	*The Keeper, saint of the first lighthouse. The faith asks two things: keep a lamp lit at night, and never let a ship wreck unaided.*	
Religion's distance from power	*The guild is the church. The crown tolerates it because the ships keep arriving.*	
Language & names		
Languages & the common tongue	*One coastal tongue; the southern traders speak their own. Guild couriers learn enough of both to haggle.*	
Rules for personal names	*Old families put the house name first (Su Wan). Everyone else has one name plus a trade (Ren the Captain).*	
The sound of place names	*Plain descriptive compounds: Mist-Veil City, Saltreach, the Lamp Stairs.*	

2. Entry table: one row per place, faction, people, or object

Name	Type	Description	History	Rules	Connections
Mist-Veil City	*Place (port city)*	*A port built into sea cliffs, in fog most of the autumn. Ships come in by lighthouse, not by sight*	*Founded by pirate captains about three hundred years ago; taken by the crown as a border fortress*	*The gates close at dark. No open flame in the fog (fire draws the mist beasts)*	*Su Wan's home; seat of the Lighthouse Keepers' Guild; hunted by the mist beasts*

3. Add-on fields by genre

Field	Example: Mist-Veil City	Your world
Fantasy		
Peoples & species	*Humans only. The southern traders are another nation, not another species.*	
Creatures & monsters	*Mist beasts: never seen whole, they take livestock left out in the fog. Fire draws them, which is why the fog law exists.*	
Calendar & timekeeping	*Years counted from the First Lighthouse; it is now Lamp Year 312. The forty fog days have numbers, not names.*	
Gods: do they act?	*The Keeper has never answered a prayer. The guild says that is the point.*	
Magic's history	*Sound-sight was a cliff-house secret until the Purge. The crown's list of sound-sighted names dates from that year.*	
The map in travel days	*Port to capital: five days by road. Port to Saltreach: two days by boat, none in fog season.*	
Science fiction		
Travel time between worlds or stations		
Communication delay		
What is automated, and who lost their job to it		
Who owns the air, water, or power		
Technology that is banned, and why		
Historical or contemporary		
What you changed from the real record		
Real events happening in the background		
Words and objects that don't exist yet		
Your sources for prices, laws, and travel		

4. Magic system worksheet

Write the cost and the limits before the wonder, then note the chapter where the story tests each one.

Field	Example: sound-sight	Your magic
What it can do	*Map a space by its echo.*	
Ceiling (the most anyone can do)	*One large room.*	
Cost	*Headaches; deafness with age.*	
Can never	*Work in wind or rain; see through thick stone.*	
Who has it	*Born with it, about 1 in 10,000.*	
How society treats them	*Hired by the guild, listed by the crown.*	
Where the story tests each limit	*Ch. 1 ceiling; ch. 11 rain; ch. 24 cost.*	

5. Worldbuilding questions by category

When a field stays blank, answer one of these instead.

Geography & nature

- What does a traveler see in the first hour after arriving?
- Which route does everyone take, and what happens to people who take the other one?
- What season is it in chapter one, and what will the next season make impossible?
- What does the land run out of first in a bad year?
- Where is the one place nobody goes, and why?

History

- What happened a lifetime ago that old people still argue about?
- Who wrote the official history, and what did they gain from it?
- Which holiday, monument, or curse word comes from the last war?
- What would your antagonist say really happened?
- What does everyone believe about the founding that isn't true?

Politics & power

- Who can have someone arrested, and who can get them released?
- What is legal here that a reader would expect to be banned, or the other way around?
- Who wants the current ruler gone, and what stops them today?
- How long does an order from the top take to reach a street corner?
- Who collects taxes, and what happens to people who can't pay?

Society & daily life

- What does a working family eat on an ordinary night?
- What would get your protagonist thrown out of a respectable house?
- Who may marry whom, and who breaks that rule anyway?
- At what age is someone treated as an adult?
- How do strangers greet each other, and what counts as an insult?

Economy & technology

- What does a day's wage buy?
- What gets smuggled, and who looks the other way?
- What does every household own one of, and what do only the rich own?
- How does news travel, and how fast?
- What breaks often, and who fixes it?

Magic & powers

- What is the most a practitioner can do on their best day?
- What does it cost, and who pays when the user can't?
- What can magic never do, no matter who tries?
- How is it learned, and who controls the teaching?
- What would an ordinary person do if they saw it used in the street?

Religion & belief

- What do people do at a birth, a wedding, and a death?
- What do people swear by?
- Who in the faith holds real power, and who only appears to?
- Which rule do most believers quietly break?
- What happens to people who don't believe?

Language & names

- What do locals call the city, and what do outsiders call it?
- What does a name tell you about someone's family or class?
- Which words will your protagonist use that the reader won't know, and how will the reader learn them?
- Is there a language only some people speak, and who uses it to keep secrets?
- How do people address someone above or below them?

Free to use for your own writing. From litmemo.com/en/templates/worldbuilding-sheet