

Priming Players

Hooray! You are about to play in the renowned 5e campaign, *Dungeon of the Mad Mage*. As a player, there's some basic information you might find handy before you begin developing a character.

Unless otherwise stated by your Dungeon Master, you will begin this campaign in the Forgotten Realms setting, on the Sword Coast, which is in the north-west continent of Faerum, which in turn is on the planet Toril. You will be heading south on the Coast Way, past Beregost and the legendary Candlekeep, and eastward towards the Greenfields. If you're new to the Forgotten Realms, worry not. While the world lore of *Dungeons & Dragons* is vast and can be overwhelming for new players, you don't need much information to dive into this campaign.

If you are new to the Forgotten Realms, the following section is a quick guide to help you understand the cosmology of the setting, its different planes of existence, and how they interact. Should you desire a more in-depth explanation of the planes of existence, refer to Appendix C in the *Player's Handbook* or Chapter 2 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

A Brief Understanding of the Planes of Existence

The cosmology of the Forgotten Realms contains a vast multiverse consisting of the planes of existence. The majority of player

characters will have at least some basic understanding of these planes.

The Material Plane is the foundation and centerpiece of all planar knowledge. It contains multiple worlds, like Eberron, Greyhawk, and Toril, and is the starting plane for most any adventure. In general, the Material Plane makes up the mundane world around all characters, and the many different worlds within it act almost as alternate dimensions.

Traveling Between Planes

Traveling between planes, whether between other worlds on the Material Plane or to more foreign corners of the multiverse, almost always requires magic.

When such travel occurs, most use either the Ethereal Plane or the Astral Plane to complete their journeys. These planes primarily serve as pathways between one plane to another. The Astral Plane is a realm of thought and dream while the Ethereal Plane is a realm of mist and distortion, often reflecting the other planes nearby. Of the pair, the Ethereal Plane is more well known and more commonly used for planar travel.

The Shadowfell and the Feywild

The Shadowfell and the Feywild are reflections of the Material Plane. A forest that exists in the Material Plane also exists in the Shadowfell and the Feywild, similar to an alternate reality. However, the

Shadowfell is marked by its lack of color, lethargy, and apathy. The reflected forest would be grim and rotted, haunted by foul creatures.

Alternatively, the Feywild is known for its overwhelming color. It is opulent and wild; rich with an overwhelming abundance of chaos and life. A forest reflected in the Feywild might have trees with crystal leaves.

The Inner and Outer Planes

The Inner Planes are composed of the four Elemental Planes: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. They are prone to great elemental chaos and most are unsafe for non-native creatures.

The Outer Planes consist of over a dozen planes, each considered either an Upper Plane or a Lower Plane with either positive or negative energy respectively. The Upper Planes are generally home to good aligned beings, like angels and devas. Elysium, for instance, is one of the most commonly known Upper Planes and is the home of the good aligned gods. Conversely, the Lower Planes are home to more morally ambiguous or evil creatures. The Nine Hells is one of the most commonly recognized Lower Planes.

Character Creation

This basic understanding of the planes of existence will help improve your player experience going forward. Unfortunately, the world of *Dungeon of the Mad Mage* offers little background information and your player will have exceptionally little knowledge about the setting of the campaign. You will soon dive into the dark unknown. But first you must develop a character.

Using this Primer

Character Creation is an important aspect of *Dungeons & Dragons*, but creating a compelling character and backstory can be difficult. The purpose of this primer is to inspire players' creativity and help develop unique characters that they may have not considered without rolling on the following tables.

This primer should also help target player character backstories towards the *Dungeon of the Mad Mage* campaign setting, allowing the Dungeon Master to better integrate them into the narrative.

It's possible you already have a strong character concept in mind, in which case you may not need to use all the tables available in this primer. However, if you feel you need more detail, you can consult the tables, either picking the idea that fits best or rolling for a truly random addition to your character concept. Ultimately, you'll want to consult with your Dungeon Master to be sure your player character will work for the campaign.

Should you choose to create a character entirely by rolling, it may be more fun to avoid reading all the available options to maintain a sense of surprise. Additionally,

to achieve the best results, it's recommended that this guide be used in a session zero with other players to help build bonds and foster connections between the members of the adventuring party.

Backstory

The following tables will help you discover your character's origins. First, you'll start with your character's hometown and family composition. Afterward, you'll figure out a few of the more important relationships in their lives.

Hometown

Discovering your character's hometown will help determine the foundation of their backstory. While the table below will provide a home or birthplace for your character, it is up to you to determine your character's relationship with that location. Was your character both born and raised in this location? Or were they born elsewhere, but have lived in this settlement the majority of their lives? Is your character well traveled or have they rarely left their hometown? The details are yours to develop

Roll on the table below to discover your character's hometown.

d100	Home Settlement	Size
1 - 15	Baldur's Gate	City
16 - 25	Beregost	Town
26 - 35	Elturel	Town
36 - 45	Berdusk	Town
46 - 55	Greenest	Village

56 - 65	Asbravn	Village
66 - 75	Corm Orp	Village
76 - 85	Triel	Village
86 - 00	Unmarked Hamlet	Hamlet

City: Baludr's Gate

Baludr's Gate, also called simply the Gate, was the largest metropolis and city-state on the Sword Coast, within the greater Western Heartlands. It was a crowded city of commerce and opportunity, perhaps the most prosperous and influential merchant city on the western coast of Faerûn. Despite its long-standing presence as a neutral power, the leaders of Baludr's Gate were members of the Lords' Alliance of powers in the west.

Town: Beregost

Beregost was a town on the Coast Way, halfway between Baludr's Gate and Amn. It was a popular stop for many visiting merchant caravans, especially those en route to Waterdeep in the north or to the Sea of Fallen Stars in the east.

Town: Elturel

Elturel was the farming center of the Fields of the Dead and thrived on the trade that passed through its domain. It was commonly rated as the second-most economically powerful city in the Western Heartlands after Scornubel and it was quite wealthy. Linking overland caravan and river barge trades, it also served as a market for farms on fertile Fields of the Dead and Chionthar banks.

Town: Berdusk

Berdusk is an important trading center, much involved in the shipment of goods. Woolen mills in the city serve farmers from all over the southern Vale, many of whom go to Asbravn for its large shearing market, selling the wool there to Berduskan millers. Berdusk also produces a highly favored sweet wine, Berduskan dark, which is like very dark amber sherry, heavy and burning to the tongue.

Village: Greenest

Greenest was a small town surrounded by the wide open Greenfields, a large plains in the southern Sword Coast. The town itself is surrounded in wheat farms that act as both its food and primary trade, centering itself around a temple to Chauntea, the goddess of the harvest.

Village: Asbravn

Asbravn had lush farms, wood lots, well-kept barns, drainage ditches, ponds, and an air of tranquility. Its main attraction was its large market around a dilapidated temple to Ilmater, the god of martyrdom. Many shops and wears come too and fro this market, making the small village its earnings.

Village: Corm Orp

A small village in the Western Heartlands on the Dusk Road, Corm Orp is primarily inhabited by halflings, though traders of all races come through and the town itself is run by a human. This town grew orchards of grapes, a wide variety, including one of their own called 'blue eyes'.

Village: Triel

Triel was a small village in the Fields of the Dead located at the intersection of the Trade Way and the Dusk Road, south of Boareskyr Bridge. few farms in the area and had to import everything it needed, especially food. Much of the room behind the stockade was used to store grain and dry vegetables for the winter months when merchant visits were few and far between.

Unmarked Hamlet

There are a variety of other settlements along the Sword Coast, too small and unimportant to be included on most maps. These miniscule villages and hamlets are home to no more than a few dozen inhabitants each.

Family

Your family is your first social network. In the most general sense, a character's family consists of two parents and their siblings, all of which are blood related. However, the composition of a family can vary greatly. It's possible that your parental figure was instead a mentor or an aunt. It's possible that you had over a dozen half-siblings from a particularly promiscuous parent and that the majority of those siblings are dead. However supportive or dysfunctional, loving or absent, your family has helped define you.

Using the size of your hometown as a base, roll on a pair of the following tables to determine the size of your family.

Family Size (City/Town)

d100	Number of Parents	d100	Number of Siblings
1 - 10	1d4 + 2	1 - 12	2d4 + 2
11 - 45	2	13 - 38	1d4 + 2
46 - 80	1	39 - 88	1d4
81 - 00	0	89 - 00	0

Family Size (Village/Hamlet)

d100	Number of Parents	d100	Number of Siblings
1 - 15	1d4 + 2	1 - 20	2d4 + 2
16 - 50	2	21 - 50	1d4 + 2
51 - 85	1	51 - 80	1d4
86 - 00	0	81 - 00	0

Fateful Relations

Every character has or has had relationships that have helped shape their personalities. These important relations might be family, friend, or a mentor. They might also be someone the character has wronged, creating an unfortunate rival or enemy. No matter the details, these relationships are crucial to that character.

If you encounter an inconsistency by rolling on the following chart, such as rolling an option that notes a parent but your character has no parents, you may change that option to denote a different relation, like to a sibling or friend.

Roll a d4 - 1 (minimum 1) to determine your number of fateful relations. And then roll that number of times on the following chart to determine the nature of those relations.

d100	Relationship
1 - 3	Twin Paradox: Your identical twin vanished mysteriously years ago, leaving you haunted by their absence and driven to discover their fate.
4 - 7	Oathbound Protector: You swore a childhood oath to protect a younger sibling, a responsibility that weighs heavily on you and shapes your every decision.
8 - 10	Lost Love: A past romance ended tragically, leaving you heartbroken and wary of opening your heart again.
11 - 13	Unlikely Comrade: You formed an unexpected bond with a creature typically considered monstrous, challenging societal expectations and forging a unique friendship.
14 - 16	Master and Apprentice: You were trained by a legendary figure who vanished without a trace, leaving you with powerful skills and a burning desire to find your mentor.
17 - 20	Fractured Family: A bitter feud within your family tore you apart, leaving you estranged from loved ones and grappling with conflicting loyalties.
21 - 23	Chosen One's Burden: Raised in a secluded community, you were prophesied to play a pivotal role in the world's fate, a burden you struggle to accept.
24 - 27	Unfulfilled Promise: You made a promise to a dying loved one, a vow that continues to guide your actions and haunts your dreams.

28 - 30	Childhood Rival: A competitive rivalry from your youth has rekindled, leading to clashes of ambition and bitter taunts.
31 - 33	Found Family: After a traumatic past, you found solace and belonging in a group of adventurers, forging unbreakable bonds that define your present.
34 - 37	Betrayed by Trust: Your closest confidante betrayed you for their own gain, leaving you with deep emotional scars and a distrustful nature.
38 - 40	Stolen Birthright: Your rival usurped your rightful position of power or inheritance, driving you to seek revenge and reclaim what is rightfully yours.
41 - 43	Blood Debt: A family member was wronged or killed by your enemy, fueling your burning desire for vengeance and justice.
44 - 46	Philosophical Clash: Your fundamental beliefs clash with those of a powerful figure, leading to constant ideological conflict and a struggle for dominance.
47 - 50	Accidental Antagonist: You inadvertently caused harm to someone important to your enemy, unknowingly igniting a bitter rivalry.
51 - 53	Mastermind Manipulator: A cunning villain controls the strings from the shadows, pitting you against others and using you as a pawn in their grand scheme.
54 - 56	Past Sins: A dark secret from your past resurfaces, threatening to expose your transgressions and fuel the flames of your enemies' hatred.
57 - 60	Cursed Connection: You and your enemy are bound by a powerful curse, forcing you into unwilling cooperation while secretly plotting

	against each other.
61 - 63	Mirror Image: Your enemy is your antithesis, reflecting your own flaws and worst qualities, forcing you to confront your inner demons.
64 - 67	Corrupted Friend: A once close friend has become corrupted by evil forces, turning them into your enemy and leaving you with a painful sense of loss and betrayal.
68 - 70	Spirit Guide: You are haunted by the benevolent spirit of a deceased ancestor, offering guidance and wisdom on your journey.
71 - 74	Star-Crossed Lovers: You are destined for love with a person of opposing social standing or alignment, leading to a forbidden romance fraught with danger.
75 - 77	Symbiotic Bond: You share a unique magical or physical bond with another creature, creating a codependent relationship that both benefits and challenges you.
78 - 81	Oath of Vengeance: You swore an oath to avenge the death of a loved one, driving you on a relentless quest for justice that consumes your every waking thought.
82 - 84	Mysterious Patron: A powerful and enigmatic entity offers you aid in exchange for your service, leaving you questioning their true motives and the ultimate cost of their assistance.
85 - 87	Prophesied Hero: You were prophesied to save the world from a great evil, a burden you initially reject but eventually embrace.
88 - 90	Marked by a Falling Star: A falling star granted you a unique mark and a sliver of its celestial power, attracting both wonder and suspicion.

91 - 93	Guardian of a Lost City: You are the sole guardian of a lost city, sworn to protect its secrets and prevent its rediscovery by those who would exploit its power.
94 - 97	Haunted by Prophetic Dreams: You are plagued by vivid prophetic dreams, offering glimpses of the future but leaving you burdened with the knowledge of potential tragedies.
98 - 00	Debt to a Monster: You owe a debt to a powerful monster, forced to do their bidding or face the consequences.

Personality

Now that you've laid the foundations of your character's past, you'll switch focus to their personality and tastes. What kind of employment is your character familiar with? Do they have any particular quirks or phobias? What event or events in their life gave your character these personality traits?

Background

First you'll start with your character's background. Choosing a background is essential for character creation. Not only does a background give you some insight to your character's employment or life experience, but it also gives you proficiencies and starting gear that represent that experience.

Roll or chose a background from the following table.

d20	Background	Source
1	Acolyte	PHB
2	Charlatan	PHB
3	City Watch	SCAG
4	Cloistered Scholar	SCAG
5	Courtier	SCAG
6	Criminal	PHB
7	Entertainer	PHB
8	Fisher	GoS
9	Folk Hero	PHB
10	Guild Artisan	PHB
11	Haunted One	CoS
12	Hermit	PHB
13	Knight of the Order	SCAG
14	Noble	PHB
15	Outlander	PHB
16	Sage	PHB
17	Sailor	PHB
18	Pirate (Sailor)	PHB
19	Soldier	PHB
20	Urchin	PHB

Phobia

Dungeon of the Mad Mage is a high fantasy adventure, but not all of the story is magic

and excitement. Fear always has its place in a story of rising evil.

At one point in their lives, your character developed a phobia, an anxiety driven fear that borders on the irrational. How or why your character developed this fear is up to you. Your character has a very difficult time dealing with this particular source of anxiety and will avoid situations that might force them to face their fear.

If you think a certain phobia would be particularly difficult to portray or if you find the idea of having a phobia difficult or a source of personal anxiety, feel free to disregard this table. Otherwise, roll on or choose from the following to determine your character's phobia.

d20	Phobia	Fear of
1	Acrophobia	Heights
2	Agoraphobia	Open or crowded spaces
3	Aphenphosmophobia	Being Touched
4	Arachnophobia	Spiders
5	Astraphobia	Thunder Storms
6	Ataxophobia	Disorder or Untidiness
7	Autophobia	Being Alone
8	Catoptophobia	Mirrors
9	Claustrophobia	Confined Spaces
10	Cynophobia	Dogs
11	Elurophobia	Cats
12	Hemophobia	Blood
13	Iatrophobia	Doctors or Healers
14	Insectophobia	Insects

15	Mysophobia	Dirt or Germs
16	Nercophobia	Death or Dead Things
17	Nyctophobia	Darkness
18	Pedophobia	Children
19	Pyrophobia	Fire
20	Zoophobia	Animals

Favorite Food & Drink

The Sword Coast is home to all variety of beasts and to miles of farmland. Your character will have come into contact with all sorts of dishes and will likely have a favorite. While picking a favorite food or drink is a rather trivial detail in the long run, they're details that will help flesh out your character and bring them to life.

d12	Favorite Food
1	Fish Pie - Hearty stew packed with fresh-caught cod, haddock, and salmon, simmered in creamy ale with flaky puff pastry topping.
2	Dragonwing Bread - Crusty loaves twisted into spiraling shapes, rumored to grant fleeting firebreath after consumption (harmless, but fun for adventurers!).
3	Neverwinter Spiced Soup - Warming blend of carrots, turnips, and barley, seasoned with a secret mix of spices traded from the frozen north.
4	Troll Roast - Roasted boar or elk shoulder slathered in a sweet and tangy glaze made from honey, apples, and wild herbs.

5	Faerie Firebread - Delicate rolls infused with glowing berries, casting an ethereal light for a few hours after eating.
6	Stone Soup - Simple broth flavored with whatever travelers can contribute – vegetables, scraps of meat, even a lucky mushroom found along the road.
7	Helm's Deep Mead - Strong, heady honey mead favored by dwarves, perfect for warming up after a long day in the mines or battling goblins.
8	Waterdeep Wyvern Wings - Spicy, crispy bird wings marinated in a fiery chili and rum sauce, popular among the roguish crowd in the Dock Ward.
9	Elven Mooncakes - Sweet pastries filled with creamy cheese and fruit preserves, a delicacy enjoyed under the moonlight during elven festivals.
10	Gnomish Tinker Stew - Inventive concoction of whatever the gnome chef can scrounge, from nuts and berries to salvaged vegetables and mysterious alchemical concoctions.
11	Orcish Grogg - Brutal mix of fermented barley, berries, and a secret (possibly goblin) ingredient, guaranteed to knock you on your backside.
12	Hill Giant Honeycomb - Gigantic chunks of golden honeycomb straight from the hives of mountain giants, a rare and luxurious treat.

Trinkets

A trinket is an odd or peculiar object your character has collected. A trinket usually has no use or intrinsic value, but your character has kept it for one reason or another. Maybe the item reminds them of a dead parent or maybe it was the first thing they ever stole.

The *Player's Handbook* has a trinket table. Roll on it to see what trinket you get.

Quirks

For the last section of personality development, you'll roll for a quirk. Everyone possesses a little eccentricity, from a curious habit to a peculiar preference. A player character should be no different.

d20	Quirks
1	Always Smells of Ink: You have an insatiable curiosity and constantly scribble notes in a well-worn journal, leaving you perpetually smudged with ink.
2	Lucky Charm Obsession: You carry a collection of odd trinkets you believe bring good fortune, fiddling with them nervously before important rolls.
3	Insists on Fancy Hats: No matter the occasion, you adorn yourself with the most flamboyant hats you can find, often clashing hilariously with your attire.
4	Speaks in Rhyme: Your thoughts weave naturally into rhyming couplets, making even mundane conversations sound like bardic recitations.
5	Obsessed with Local Legends: You spend every opportunity collecting folktales and rumors, adding your own embellishments and theories to keep the stories alive.
6	Compulsive Coin Flipper: You rely on coin flips to make all major decisions, from combat tactics to romantic pursuits, leading to unpredictable and often hilarious outcomes.
7	Speaks in Third Person: You refer to yourself by name in all your conversations, adding an air of

	whimsical grandeur to even the most mundane tasks.
8	Collects Trinkets: You have a magpie-like obsession with collecting odd trinkets and souvenirs, each one holding a special memory or story.
9	Left-Handed World: You do everything in reverse, from opening doors to wielding weapons, making you a master of surprise attacks but a klutz in everyday life.
10	Superstitious: You carry around lucky charms, avoid walking under ladders, and believe in all sorts of omens, good and bad.
11	Secretly a Singer: You have a beautiful singing voice, but you only perform in private, afraid of revealing your hidden talent.
12	Has a Lucky Number: You roll dice, choose paths, and make decisions based on your lucky number, believing it guides your destiny.
13	Obsessed with Symmetry: You can't stand lopsided pictures, uneven stacks of coins, or asymmetrical anything, driven by a need for order and balance in the world.
14	Full Amount: You can't stand carrying change. Should the opportunity arise, you'll trade coppers and silver for a round number of gold coins
15	Preferential Warfare: You have a favorite weapon which you have named.
16	Exotic Linguist: You claim to speak an exotic language. If asked to demonstrate this proficiency, you make up gibberish. No one has called you out on it so far.
17	Bibliomisia: You are actually illiterate, and will stop at nothing to make sure no one knows that fact
18	Fidget Ring: You like to wear rings on

	your fingers and will sometimes fidget with them
19	Avian Spies: Birds unnerve you. You feel as though any bird perched nearby is watching you.
20	Talks to Plants: You believe plants have feelings and wisdom, and you spend your time whispering to them, learning their secrets and tending to their needs.

Mysterious Secret

Your character has a mysterious secret, either terrible or seemingly benign. This Player Primer has a separate, accompanying document entitled, *Mysterious Secrets*, that contains a list of secrets that pertain to the *Dungeon of the Mad Mage* campaign. These secrets can help your Dungeon Master integrate your character into the module.

If you are a player, do not open the *Mysterious Secrets* document unless you have permission from your Dungeon Master. If you are the Dungeon Master, use the *Mysterious Secrets* document privately and distribute the results individually to your players.

Found [Here](#)