# World Building CHecklist

Here are some areas to consider when building your fantasy world. This isn’t an exhaustive list by no means, so please look online for other resources, but it may give you a head start!

## The world/nations/land

This is often the first stop for most people. Here are some questions to get you thinking:

* What is the world? Is it a planet? Is it Earth or Alt-Earth?
* What is the time period? Future, modern, medieval?
* How many continents are there? Countries? Islands?
* What races exist in this world? Human? Elf? Something else?
* What cultures do these countries have? Are they based on real-world ones?
* How are these countries tied together? Physically and socially?
* What landmasses are there – mountains, rivers, forests, oceans?
* What threats exist hiding in the mountains, forests etc?
* What animals exist in this world? Are they dangerous? Cattle?
* Are there any major landmarks? Man-made ones?
* What about the climate – what’s the weather like? Are natural disasters common?
* Does your world have seasons? Are these limited to certain countries only?
* Does your world have time zones?
* Does your world adhere to the same calendar?
* How long has this world existed? What’s its history? Are there ancient cultures that came before?
* If magic exists, how does this impact on the world?

Think of how the world impacts the culture of the people living there. The two go hand-in-hand. If the world is mostly water or a lot of rivers, perhaps they live on boats and use the rivers to trade. If your people live on the mountains, how does this shape their daily life? Is it cold up there? Do they live in caves or use tools for climbing? What clothes do they wear to reflect the climate? What do they eat from the world? Do they hunt or grow food? Has your fantasy race evolved to make use of their environment, or are your people settlers and have adapted their way of life to survive their conditions?

Next, take a look at cities:

* What cities are there? Smaller towns, villages?
* Is there a capital city? Where is it located? How does it compare to other cities?
* What technologies are present? Do you have heat, lighting, and sewage?
* What defences do your cities have? Do they get attacked often?

Once you have the basics down for your world/nations/races, you can start to go in more detail:

* What regional differences exist between your people?
  + Not everyone in the same country act the same. Maybe the northerners hate the southerners, or they have different accents and wear different clothes.
* What language do they speak? Does each country have its own, or is there a universal language?
* How do each nation get on with each other? Are there wars? Treaties?

## Society and culture

Thinking about how the world impacts the people living there, or vice versa, then leads you to developing their culture:

* Are people divided into classes? Is there royalty, nobility, and peasants?
* Are people divided between race or skill or something else?
* What is social mobility like between the classes? Can anyone become anyone?
* Who owns the land? Nobility? Businesses?
* What are the major trades? How do people make a living?
* Do they have a military, navy etc? Is conscription normal?
* What are the personality traits for each nation?
* Are there any stereotypes?
* What customs do they have?
* What are the religions, if any? How do people worship? Any temples? Gods?
* Is there an afterlife? For real, or just what the people believe? Do they fear a Hell?
* What traditions or rites do they adhere to? Do they LIKE their traditions?
* What traditions are there for birth, death, and marriage?
* What do people eat and drink? To survive or recreationally?
* What about alcohol and drugs? Are these legal?
* How do people entertain themselves? Arts, music, theatre, sports? Popular hobbies?
* Any major holidays or events? What happens during these?
* What do people wear? What are the fashion trends? Do these change?
* Do people wear tattoos or jewellery? Do they dye their hair?
* Are there any major sports in your world and any famous sports stars?
* Are there any celebrities or heroes in this world? Who? What makes them famous?
* Do people keep pets? What kind? Any banned ones?
* Think about crime and punishment – what crimes are common, and how are people punished? Are these strict? Fair trails? Are there prisons?
* If magic exists, how does this impact on culture and daily life? Could magic be used to make life easier or harder, for example?

When thinking about culture, link these to the physical world and environment to see how the affect one another. For example, a hot climate in the desert could mean the people wear certain clothing and don’t waste water and perhaps they spend their afternoons inside instead of out in the heat.

Also, when thinking of what customs people would adopt, or what trends they would follow, ask this for each of your classes. If you have nobility and peasants, then each are going to have different customs, speech, hobbies, and ways of looking at the world.