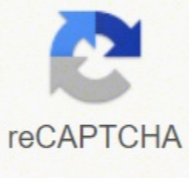




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World building guide pdf

Writing a novel requires more than good writing chops and fancy literary devices...you need solid worldbuilding in order to craft a realistic image for our readers. Worldbuilding, or 'world building' as it's sometimes referred to, is being discussed a lot, especially in association with the science-fiction and fantasy genre. No matter what type of book you're writing, worldbuilding should be one of the first steps you do, even before outlining your book. In this post, we'll walk you through how to world build in your novel with tips and questions to make sure your book is well-rounded. Here are the elements of worldbuilding: What is worldbuilding? Worldbuilding is the process of creating a fictional world within your novel that offers an entirely new and unique location with exotic creatures, societies, religions, and governments. Worldbuilding gives the writer a clear understanding of what their world looks and feels like. It's completely up to the writer what they want their world to be. The imaginary world serves to establish where the story takes place. Its purpose as the setting of the story is to anchor the reader into the book by giving them a concrete location. When a writer makes the decision to half-heartedly world build, it shows. The world they create lacks authenticity and leaves the reader wanting. Worldbuilding is a chance to capture the imagination of your reader. Once the reader is immersed in your world, they will be able to suspend disbelief and fully engage with the entire story structure to enjoy a full experience. But, how does one go about achieving this? Worldbuilding might seem daunting, but it can be broken down into simple steps that will make the process thorough and fun. It is important to think of how the world you are creating is going to be unique to your story ideas. However, it is just as important to keep in mind how your world will serve the plot and affect the characters. Four general questions to ask yourself before you start building your world are as follows. How to Worldbuild in a Novel: Questions & Guide Worldbuilding can be intimidating OR your favorite part. It can change depending on your personal preferences with writing and storytelling. We're here to make it better no matter which camp you fall in. Here are some of the core areas of worldbuilding to tackle, questions to answer, and guides to help you create a rich world every reader wants to step foot in. #1 - Physical Appearance The physical appearance of your world makes a big difference. Because you have to describe the story setting, you need to know what that looks like. Here are some questions you can use to do this: Is it a small dense area, or a vast world full of different environments?How much of your world are you going to need to show in order to support the story? How does the terrain influence the story? What is the weather like regularly as well as when it's severe?What does the landscape look like? (Hint: this will influence transport and clothing)Are the characters going to be concentrated in one area like a small town, or inside a labyrinth? If so then all you need to world build is that location and focus on elements such as: is this location safe and what is the social structure within this location? However, if the cast is going to be traveling within your world, then things get more complex, and you may need to create multiple countries or planets. Creating multiple countries means analyzing how they will be different from each other. Here are some questions to get this part right: Where do the borders lie? What are the languages spoken?Are the natural resources? What are they?What are the various cultures and cultural practices? If you are creating multiple planets, how do they differ from ours? Are there seasons? Is there more than one moon/sun? What life forms exist on these planets?Knowing these details upfront can also help you shape the cultures and customs around the world itself as we have done in this world. Your worldbuilding will appear more natural this way as well. Here's an example of how you can use the very first opening scene of your novel to introduce the worldbuilding:This example works for the world's physical appearance for a few reasons:Right away, we get a feel for the environment: sandy, brown riverWe learn there are two sunsWe know the buildings are made of polished stoneOverall, it paints a vivid picture of what this world looks like #2 - Inhabitants or People Think of your main cast. Since your characters drive the story, it's important to be clear on every type of person involved from the start of the story to the end. Answer these questions for worldbuilding your inhabitants: Are they human, alien, or hybrids? What is their population? How did they get to be a part of this world?Is there a class system among inhabitants? Is the class system defined by wealth or some other factor? What of gender, race, and species? How do the inhabitants of the world you are building get along? Are there natural alliances between particular groups? Are some of the inhabitant's oppressors towards the others? What resources do the inhabitants have?Knowing these details can not only help you shape the plot, but being able to slide in these details will make your world appear more lifelike and therefore, more entertaining for your readers. #3 - History History is important, it tells of how things came to be the way they are. Your fictional world, just like the real world, is going to have to have a history—and this history can often be very influential to plotting your novel. Therefore, you have to know it. While it is not vital for you to know every minute detail in regards to the history of your world, it is crucial to know what are some of the important events of the past. Here are a few aspects to consider: Who have been the major rulers? What key events took place during their reign? How did their reign change the governments? How did the countries or settlements arrive at the state they are currently in?Is there a recent historical event of note?What are the religious and political historical events that are impactful to your plot?What have been the major environmental disasters? Famine, plagues, flooding? How have these impacted the land and the people?Wars - what nations have been at war with each other in the past? What nations are still at war? Have there been any civil wars?This can be the most fickle and influential part of your worldbuilding ventures. The more you know about your world's history, the more opportunities you have for foreshadowing, plot twists, and a more comprehensive story in general. An author who excels at weaving history into his storyline is George R.R. Martin in his Game of Thrones series. #4 - Society Rules Every society has codes of conduct, a set pattern of behavior expected to be followed. Having rules in place will give an understanding to character actions and reactions as well as the overall character development process. Ask yourself what the guidelines in your world are, who enforces them, and how these will affect the plot. Here are more questions for worldbuilding your society: What is the political structure of the world? Who holds power, influence, or authority? Is it an individual or a group? Is there a ruling monarchy? Or is it a form of totalitarianism, authoritarianism, or a democracy?Are characters going to be breaking or bending the rules, or will they be the ones administering them? Are the rules considered fair and just, or is the society at large frustrated by the rules imposed upon them? How are inhabitants punished if the rules of society are broken?This is a great starting point for crafting the mood and general vibe of your book, not to mention building your main character and others to fit these standards. #5 - Religion & Customs Readers and critics generally frown upon worldbuilding so unimaginative that it contains only one race of people. Creating a society filled with inhabitants of different races means there will be a variety in the traditional practices from one particular cultural group to the other. A well-developed world will have its national/religious holidays, dress customs, cuisine, and linguistic characteristics. How will this affect your characters? What are the legends and fairy tales that serve as a means of entertainment or education for inhabitants? Here are more religious and social customs worldbuilding questions: What is the religious belief system? What gods, if any, exist? Do the gods play a tangible and active role in the world, or are they entities people believe in? Are there religious services attended to at a house of worship? How much does religion play into the daily life of the layperson? What is considered sacred? Are particular symbols revered?What are some rituals or customs related to religion in your world?How many inhabits believe in the religious system?Are there any quarrels between different religions?Are there any specific festivals or celebrations that occur? Do people work all week? Are there holidays? Do people celebrate their birthdays?How do the various social classes behave? What customs to they adhere to? Gender roles are how they are defined? How do families, marriages, and other relationships operate? How is death handled - are services held, and do loved ones mourn? Is procreation done out of love or duty? Do people get to choose their own partners? What behaviors are generally considered to be improper or immoral?While there are a lot of questions for this section in particular, these are some of the most important, as they have the power to shape motives, societies, and characters in full. Even if you decide to create a society that is a monolith - where the entire cast is of the same race or religion, you still need to clearly state what the customs unique to your world are. Worldbuilding for Science-Fiction and Fantasy Specifically These book genres are among the most important for worldbuilding. So much so that we created an entire article about worldbuilding for fantasy, but we'll still cover the basics below. From the halls of Hogwarts, to the Starship Enterprise, to the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros, a captivating and unique world is what sets the SFF genre apart from the other genres. When it comes to science-fiction and writing fantasy, there are some key worldbuilding elements to consider in addition to the above. Worldbuilding for Fantasy Questions Fantasy is a genre that includes magical elements or a supernatural humanoid races/species such as elves, vampires, dwarfs, and fairies and that means it needs a set of worldbuilding criteria that differs from the above. Magic Systems Magic systems need rules, regulations, and overall, its own set of worldbuilding. Here are some worldbuilding questions for your fantasy magic system: How does the magic system operate?Who is able to use it and where does it come from?Are some individuals more adept at magic than others?How are magic users grouped and perceived? How do people hone their magic skills and become stronger?What is the general attitude towards magic. Are people accepting of magic, weary of it, or both?Any limitations and rules of the magic?What happens when these rules are broken?Are there any exceptions to these set rules and how are they possible?Supernatural Humanoids These creatures run rampant in both science fiction and in fantasy, but we'll touch on fantasy right now. Here are some worldbuilding questions for supernatural humanoids in fantasy: How are they received in society?How ethnically and culturally diverse are they within their own species?Did they evolve or migrate from somewhere?Where do their powers come from?Generally speaking, are they a friendly species?Who or what do they worship?What languages do they speak?Are there any cultures or customs distinctive to what they are specifically?Worldbuilding for Sci-Fi Questions Science-Fiction is a genre that typically deals with futuristic concepts: advanced science/technology, artificial intelligence, time travel, space exploration, and extraterrestrial life. Because of all these elements we don't experience in our day-to-day lives (yet, in some cases), you have to be diligent with ensuring the world makes sense. Here's some help with world building for science fiction. Advanced Science and Technology Because this is the backbone of what makes a novel belong in the sci-fi genre, you should spend a great deal of time in this area. Here are some questions to help you world build for sci-fi technology: How developed is the tech?How does this affect day to day living?With what and how does communication work in your world?What ones are used for entertainment?Technology is used to travel?What is weapons technology like?Who can afford the technology and how does technology affect social structure?Who created these technologies?What are some up-and-coming technologies?What technologies cause the most issues in your culture's society?Which technologies are the most helpful?Artificial Intelligence This is another hot and ever-growing topic in the sci-fi world. Because artificial intelligence is so significant right now, you have to remember to include it and ensure it sounds natural in your world. Here are some questions for developing artificial intelligence in your sci-fi book: Who created the artificial intelligence?How does the artificial intelligence operate?Are they self-aware?What form do they take? Are they easily identifiable?How do they communicate with each other in order to complete tasks?Are AI considered a lower caste? If so are they assigned roles of caretakers of the world? How have humans managed to sustain supremacy over the artificial intelligence?Do artificial intelligence feel the need to break out of their assigned roles?Time Travel Another common practice when writing a sci-fi novel is to include some sort of time travel. While not all sci-fi novels have this concept, if yours does, it's helpful to get clear on some details to avoid plot holes later in your writing journey. Here are some worldbuilding questions for time travel: Who can time travel?What is the time travel paradigm?Can people meet their past/future selves?How far back/forward in time can one travel?What are the repercussions of time travel? Does the time traveler physically change upon returning? Does time travel have effects on mental health?How is time travel viewed in society?What happens when the laws of time travel are abused?Space Exploration Many science fiction books include space exploration or travel at one point or another. Here are some worldbuilding questions for space exploration: Who was the pioneer of space exploration?Is this a new undertaking, or have multiple worlds been aware of each other and living as a large community?How many planets and how many solar systems does a galaxy comprise of?What is the system of travel between worlds?How is the language barrier between worlds solved?Who regulates space travel?What sort of documentation is needed for space travel?Can anyone space travel or is it reserved for specific individuals?What is the purpose of space exploration and travel?How was space exploration made possible in your world?Extraterrestrial Life Aliens are a natural part of space exploration so if this is in your novel, you may want to work on worldbuilding this particular bit as well. Here are some questions for worldbuilding with extraterrestrial life: How were they discovered?Are they friendly or antagonistic?What are their goals/motivations?How does their presence affect the community?What do they eat?What are their weaknesses and strengths?How do they communicate?Does the public know of their existence?How long has their presence been known for?Final Steps for Worldbuilding in a Novel Worldbuilding can be as simple or as complex as the author chooses. Keep in mind, even though you will be developing your world from scratch, not every single element of your world needs to be revealed to the reader. It is important to not overwhelm your audience, and avoid the dreaded info dump. Elements of your world should be sprinkled in slowly, the details woven into your story in a manner that is enjoyable for the readers instead of dropped all at once in exposition. Your imaginary world will naturally grow and develop as you write. When done correctly, worldbuilding can be a wonderful way to enhance your story. Need some help? Disclosure: Some of the links above may contain affiliate partnerships, meaning, at no additional cost to you, Self-Publishing School may earn a commission if you click through to make a purchase.

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