



adventures and earning experience points.

Before starting to use this system, you'll need to generate a set of ability scores and decide on the character's race; the tables in this section take care of the rest.

To finish generating the character, simply choose the type of adventuring activity he undertook at each level, stopping when you have the character level you want. For example, if you want a 9th-level character, use the tables in this section nine times. You can roll percentile dice or choose the result you like.

This variant is a quick way to bring a new character into an ongoing campaign. You'll get a character who's had some life experiences and built up a personal history. It's also a useful variant if you want to create characters for a new campaign that starts with characters of higher than 1st level. This background variant works best in conjunction with the [event-based reputation](#) variant and the [contacts](#) variant; if you aren't using reputation and contacts, then ignore those columns in the tables that follow.

As a general rule (if it matters, depending on how you use this variant), each of these background selections is considered to take up 1d6 months of game time. For example, if you create a dwarf character who begins adventuring at age 48 (see [Table: Random Starting Ages](#)) and you apply four background selections to the character, the dwarf's age as a 4th-level character is 48 years + 4d6 months.

If you let the dice fall where they may with this variant, you'll get more multiclass characters than you would in a standard campaign where PCs start at 1st level or build their characters to a target level before the campaign begins. spellcasters in particular lose significant power if they have more than a handful of nonspellcasting levels, so you'll want to monitor the dice results closely.

## Background Descriptions

Each of the tables in this section contains eight pieces of information. Here's what the information means.

### Activity

A word or phrase that summarizes what the character focused his attention on, or learned the most about, during the time he spent advancing from one level to the next.

### Class

The class in which the character's most recent level was gained. Some of the entries in this column are prestige classes or classes with [alignment](#) restrictions. If you don't qualify for the class indicated, select one of the other classes on the table instead.

### Feats

The character chooses one of the given feats if he is at a level when he ordinarily would gain a new feat (such as 1st, 3rd, or 6th) or when he gains a bonus feat by virtue of his new class level (such as 5th level in wizard). If the feat selection requires a choice because more than one feat is mentioned, it's okay to wait until you're done determining the character's entire background before making that choice. If the character doesn't meet the prerequisite for a feat or already has the feat, take one of the listed alternatives (if applicable) or a feat that appears elsewhere on the table you're using. If the character has a feat that has an improved or greater version (such as [Weapon Focus](#), [Spell Penetration](#), [Cleave](#), or [Weapon Specialization](#)), he can take the improved or greater version of the feat whenever the basic version appears on the table.

### Skills

This column identifies three or more skills that the character must spend skill points on at his new level. Start at the beginning of the list in an entry, taking one rank in each skill listed, in the order the skills are presented, until you're out of skill points. If you reach the end of the list with skill points remaining, spend the rest however you like.

### Gear

This column provides guidance for equipping the character, and it only matters when you've finished creating the character's background. In general, a character spends up to 30% of her wealth on the gear associated with her most recent activity, up to 20% of her wealth on the gear for her second most recent activity, and up to 10% on the gear for her third most recent activity. Background choices made earlier than "third most recent" don't affect the character's equipment. You can spend the character's remaining wealth on anything you choose.

For example, you want to create a 5th-level wizard with a background entirely in academic magic by rolling [d%](#) five times on the table below to represent the five levels. At 3rd level, the [d%](#) result is 34, and the Gear column gives Wand/staff with abjuration spells." At 4th level the result is 63 (Wand/staff with illusion spells), and at 5th level the result is 11 (Rod or staff).

A 5th-level character has wealth equal to 9,000 gp. The character can spend 30% of this amount, or 2,700 gp, on a rod or staff—a [staff of fire](#) with 7 charges, for instance. She can spend 20%, or 1,800 gp, on a wand or staff that holds an illusion spell, such as a wand of invisibility with 20 charges. She can spend up to 10%, or 900 gp, on a wand or staff that holds an abjuration spell, such as a fully charged wand of shield.

### Contacts

This column applies only if you're using the [contacts](#) variant and the character would earn a new contact at this level.

### Reputation (Rep)

Similarly, this column applies only if you're using the [reputation](#) rules. If a bonus appears in this column, add it to your Reputation score.

### Recognition

With accomplishments come rewards, in the form of recognition by one's peers or by others who may be impressed by a character's status. To benefit



This reward has no specific game effect, but the game master is free to grant an ad hoc bonus of some sort when a famous or accomplished character interacts with those who are impressed by the recognition that character has earned.

## Academic Magic Background

Many adventurers come from tall towers of magic academies and colleges. They find the adventurer's life much different than the cloistered life they knew when they were learning the secrets of magic. But the lessons in power such characters learned in the classroom serve them well wherever their adventures take them.

Recognition in the academic world takes the form of academic degrees or membership in honorary societies.

A character's ranks in Spellcraft provide a bonus on recognition checks related to degrees, and his ranks in Knowledge (arcana) provide a bonus on recognition checks related to societies.

### Example Societies and Degrees

The names of societies and academic degrees given below are provided as a starting point. Depending on the players' interest and the game master's plans for the campaign, the societies could become full-fledged secret cabals, or they could remain honorary societies that rarely meet and don't have agendas beyond their field of study.

#### Societies

Society of Arcanophysical Studies, The Gnarled Hand, Circle of the Three Mysteries, Ruby Robe Fraternity, Xau Hathra Vox, Society of Karsis, Arcane Aid Association, Guild of the Enigma.

#### Degrees

Hierarchy of Eldritch Power (in a particular school of magic), Unsurpassed Master in Arcane Arts, Adept of Cast Spells.

#### Academic Magic Background Activities

| d%     | Activity         | Class              | Feats                                | Skills  | Gear  | Contacts    | Rep | Recognitio  |
|--------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|-------------|-----|-------------|
| 01-07  | Item creation    | Wizard             | Any item creation                    | Spellcraft, Craft (any), Concentration          | Any magic item                              | Skill       | +0  | Society, DC |
| 08-15  | Metamagic        | Sorcerer or wizard | Any metamagic                        | Know (arcana), Concentration, Spellcraft        | Rod or staff                                | Influence   | +0  | Degree, DC  |
| 16-23  | Spell research   | Wizard             | Spell Mastery                        | Spellcraft, Know (arcana), Concentration        | Extra spells in spellbook                   | Information | +½  | Degree, DC  |
| 24-29  | Training         | Wizard             | Leadership, Persuasive               | Spellcraft, Know (arcana), Sense Motive         | Wondrous item for interaction/communication | Influence   | +1  | Society, DC |
| 30-35  | Abjuration       | Wizard             | Sp Focus (Abj)                       | Spellcraft, Concentration, Know (the planes)    | Wand/staff with abjuration spells           | Information | +0  | Degree, DC  |
| 36-41  | Conjuration      | Wizard             | Sp Focus (Conj)                      | Spellcraft, Concentration, Know (the planes)    | Wand/staff with conjuration spells          | Information | +0  | Degree, DC  |
| 42-47  | Divination       | Wizard             | Sp Focus (Dlv)                       | Spellcraft, Concentration, Know (the planes)    | Wand/staff with divination spells           | Information | +0  | Degree, DC  |
| 48-53  | Enchantment      | Wizard             | Sp Focus (Ench)                      | Spellcraft, Concentration, Diplomacy            | Wand/staff with enchantment spells          | Information | +0  | Degree, DC  |
| 54-59  | Evocation        | Wizard             | Sp Focus (Evoc)                      | Spellcraft, Concentration, Know (arcana)        | Wand/staff with evocation spells            | Information | +0  | Degree, DC  |
| 60-65  | Illusion         | Wizard             | Sp Focus (Illus)                     | Spellcraft, Concentration, Perform (any)        | Wand/staff with illusion spells             | Information | +0  | Degree, DC  |
| 66-71  | Necromancy       | Cleric or wizard   | Sp Focus (Necro)                     | Spellcraft, Concentration, Know (religion)      | Wand/staff with necromancy spells           | Information | +0  | Degree, DC  |
| 72-77  | Transmutation    | Wizard             | Sp Focus (Trans)                     | Spellcraft, Concentration, Know (arcana)        | Wand/staff with transmutation spells        | Information | +0  | Degree, DC  |
| 78-85  | Creature studies | Wizard             | Spell Penetration, Improved Familiar | Know (nature), Know (arcana), Know (the planes) | Wondrous item that mimics monster ability   | Influence   | +½  | Society, DC |
| 86-94  | Battle magic     | Sorcerer or wizard | Combat Casting, Any metamagic        | Concentration, Spellcraft, Know (arcana)        | Bracers of armor or cloak of resistance     | Information | +½  | Society, DC |
| 95-100 | Divine magic     | Cleric             | Sp Focus (any)                       | Concentration, Know (religion), Spellcraft      | Prayer beads or divine scrolls              | Skill       | +½  | Society, DC |

Know = Knowledge; Sp Focus = Spell Focus.

## Aristocratic Background

The noble court formed an important center of medieval life, where knights, troubadours, and artisans experienced the scope of feudal life (minus the peasants). Aristocratic adventures center on intrigue and political maneuvering, but courts also feature ritualized combat such as duels and



A character's familiarity with the ways of the noble court provides a bonus on recognition checks; each time the aristocratic background is selected for this character, the bonus increases by 1.

### Example Aristocratic Titles

The noble titles below are examples drawn from medieval Europe (Britain in particular), so they're suitable for most sword-and-sorcery settings. Other historical feudal and quasi-feudal cultures (such as Japan and India) can also inspire noble titles for your game.

#### Titles (Lowest to Highest)

Knight, Baronet, Baron or Baroness, Viscount or Viscountess, Count or Countess, Marquess or Marchioness, Duke or Duchess, Grand Duke or Grand Duchess, Prince or Princess, King or Queen, Emperor or Empress.

Sometimes counts are called earls, and marquesses are referred to as marquises or margraves. Germanic culture refers to dukes as grafs and baronets as ritters. Prince or princess can either be a noble title or it can describe a familial relationship: son or daughter of the king or queen.

#### Aristocratic Background Activities

| d%     | Activity          | Class                             | Feats                                  | Skills  | Gear                                 | Contacts  | Rep | Recognition  |
|--------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----|--------------|
| 01-07  | Noble warlord     | Fighter or paladin                | Leadership, Weapon Focus               | Intimidate, Diplomacy, Know (nobility and royalty)                                  | Armor                                | Influence | +1  | Title, DC 22 |
| 08-14  | Landed gentry     | Bard                              | Leadership, Skill Focus (Diplomacy)    | Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Know (history), Know (nobility and royalty), Perform       | Wondrous item that aids interaction  | Influence | +1  | Title, DC 22 |
| 15-21  | Church potentate  | Cleric                            | Leadership, Persuasive                 | Diplomacy, Know (nobility and royalty), Spellcraft                                  | Rod or staff                         | Influence | +1  | Title, DC 24 |
| 22-28  | Dragon-blooded    | Sorcerer                          | Leadership, Sp Focus (Ench)            | Diplomacy, Know (nobility and royalty), Concentration                               | Rod or staff                         | Influence | +1  | Title, DC 24 |
| 29-39  | Troubadour        | Bard                              | Skill Focus (Perform), Sp Focus (Ench) | Perform (any), Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Know (nobility and royalty), Know (local)   | Wondrous item that charms or compels | Influence | +½  | —            |
| 40-49  | Court jester      | Rogue                             | Acrobatic, Agile                       | Perform (any), Tumble, Jump, Know (nobility and royalty), Balance                   | Wondrous item that aids movement     | Influence | +½  | —            |
| 50-59  | Court arcanist    | Wizard or loremaster <sup>1</sup> | Sp Focus (Ench), Sp Focus (Illus)      | Know (nobility and royalty), Know (arcana), Know (local), Spellcraft, Concentration | Extra spells in spellbook            | Influence | +½  | —            |
| 60-69  | Religious advisor | Cleric                            | Negotiator, Sp Focus (Dlv)             | Know (religion), Know (nobility and royalty), Spellcraft                            | Item with divination aura            | Influence | +½  | —            |
| 70-80  | Chivalric knight  | Paladin                           | Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack         | Ride, Intimidate, Diplomacy   | Armor                                | Influence | +½  | Title, DC 24 |
| 81-90  | Seneschal         | Bard                              | Negotiator, Investigator               | Sense Motive, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Know (nobility and royalty), Know (local)      | Item with divination aura            | Influence | +½  | —            |
| 91-100 | Duelist           | Fighter or duelist <sup>1</sup>   | Combat Expertise, Improved Feint       | Bluff, Perform (any), Tumble, Sense Motive, Know (nobility and royalty)             | Weapon                               | Influence | +½  | —            |

Know = Knowledge; Sp Focus = Spell Focus.

1. Indicates a prestige class. Only available if the class is allowed in the campaign.

### Cross-Cultural Background

This disparate set of background activities differs from the other backgrounds because it represents time spent away from the character's home culture. Unlike with the other backgrounds, there's no character class attached to each activity-select whatever class you picked at the previous level, or choose a class if this is your first background selection. Your time with another culture affects your feat and skill choices, and any contacts you gain during cross-cultural background activities are probably members of that culture.

It's almost impossible to define what form recognition takes in this background, because it depends heavily on the nature of the culture your character is visiting. The exact nature of the recognition earned is up to the game master-it could take the form of rank, title, society membership, or decoration.



|        |                 |     |   |   |  |             |    |       |
|--------|-----------------|-----|---|---|--|-------------|----|-------|
| 01-20  | Primitive tribe | Any | Track, Self-Sufficient  | Know (nature), Survival, Diplomacy, Spot, Listen                          | Armor                                  | Skill       | +0 | DC 28 |
| 21-50  | Far-off culture | Any | Exotic Weapon Proficiency   | Know (geography), Speak Language, Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Know (history) | Weapon                                 | Information | +½ | DC 26 |
| 51-60  | Extraplanar     | Any | Sp Focus (Abj), Spell Penetration   | Know (the planes), Speak Language, Diplomacy, Decipher Script, Spellcraft | Wondrous item that provides protection | Influence   | +½ | DC 28 |
| 61-85  | Racial minority | Any | Weapon Focus (any racially favored weapon), Improved Critical (any racially favored weapon) | Know (local), Speak Language, Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Gather Info        | Weapon                                 | Influence   | +½ | DC 26 |
| 86-100 | Refugee         | Any | Endurance, Diehard  | Know (geography), Bluff, Gather Info, Hide, Move Silently                 | Armor                                  | Information | +0 | DC 30 |

Know = Knowledge; Sp Focus = Spell Focus; Gather Info = Gather Information.

## Government Background

This set of background activities includes jobs performed for those who work for a city, provincial, or national government other than those in the army or navy, who are covered under the military and maritime backgrounds described below.

Most of the recognition associated with a government background comes in the form of increases in rank (whether military or civilian in nature).

Each activity in this background is associated with a particular skill—the one mentioned first in the entry's Skills column. A character's ranks in that skill provide a bonus on recognition checks.

### Government Background Activities

| d%     | Activity       | Class              | Feats                          | Skills  | Gear                            | Contacts    | Rep | Recognition    |
|--------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------|-----|----------------|
| 01-12  | Administrator  | Bard or rogue      | Leadership, Investigator       | Know (local), Diplomacy, Intimidate, Sense Motive, Know (history) | Item that provides protection   | Influence   | +½  | Rank, DC 26    |
| 13-25  | Spy            | Rogue              | Stealthy, Deceitful            | Disguise, Gather Info, Hide, Move Silently, Forgery               | Item with illusion aura         | Information | +0  | —              |
| 26-37  | Diplomat       | Bard               | Negotiator, Persuasive         | Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Bluff, Intimidate, Know (local)          | Item that aids interaction      | Influence   | +½  | Rank, DC 28    |
| 38-50  | City watch     | Fighter            | Alertness, Power Attack        | Know (local), Sense Motive, Jump                                  | Weapon                          | Influence   | +½  | Rank, DC 28    |
| 51-63  | Arcane advisor | Wizard or sorcerer | Any item creation              | Know (arcana), Spellcraft, Know (local)                           | Scrolls and spells in spellbook | Information | +0  | Society, DC 26 |
| 64-75  | Honor guard    | Fighter or paladin | Combat Expertise, Weapon Focus | Know (history), Intimidate, Ride                                  | Armor                           | Skill       | +1  | Rank, DC 26    |
| 76-88  | Sheriff        | Ranger             | Alertness, Weapon Focus        | Know (local), Ride, Sense Motive, Survival, Intimidate            | Weapon                          | Influence   | +½  | Rank, DC 30    |
| 89-100 | Theocrat       | Cleric             | Persuasive, Investigator       | Know (local), Spellcraft, Know (religion)                         | Wand or staff                   | Influence   | +½  | Rank, DC 28    |

Know = Knowledge; Gather Info = Gather Information.

## Maritime Background

Characters with maritime backgrounds indulge in the same passions as everyone else—war, trade, and larceny—but they do it with a ship's deck beneath their feet (unless they've been shipwrecked, which is one possible activity in this background).

A character's time spent on the high seas provides a bonus on recognition checks; each time the maritime background is selected for this character, the bonus increases by 1.

### Example Maritime Ranks

Every navy has its own system of ranks, and few ships are at exactly their full complement of crew. The following system of ranks is a good starting point for most campaigns.

#### Maritime Ranks (Lowest to Highest)

Ordinary hand, able hand, leading hand, petty officer, chief petty officer, sublieutenant, lieutenant, lieutenant commander, commander, captain, commodore, admiral, grand admiral.



|        |               |                   |                                   |  |                                     |             |    |             |
|--------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------|----|-------------|
| 13-24  | Military navy | Fighter           | Leadership, Weapon Focus          | Prof (sailor), Swim, Use Rope                                      | Weapon                              | Influence   | +½ | Rank, DC 24 |
| 25-34  | Sea trader    | Rogue or bard     | Negotiator, Deft Hands            | Appraise, Sense Motive, Diplomacy, Swim, Prof (sailor)             | Wondrous item that aids interaction | Skill       | +0 | Rank, DC 26 |
| 35-44  | Ship's marine | Fighter           | Power Attack, Improved Sunder     | Swim, Climb, Jump  | Light armor                         | Skill       | +0 | Rank, DC 26 |
| 45-52  | Stowaway      | Rogue             | Stealthy, Deceitful               | Swim, Hide, Move Silently, Disguise, Bluff                         | Item that aids stealth              | Influence   | +0 | —           |
| 53-62  | Shipwrecked   | Barbarian         | Track, Self-Sufficient            | Swim, Survival, Craft (any), Spot, Listen                          | Simple weapon or hand-crafted item  | Skill       | +0 | —           |
| 63-72  | Deckhand      | Rogue or fighter  | Dodge, Weapon Focus               | Swim, Use Rope, Prof (sailor), Climb, Jump                         | Weapon                              | Information | +0 | Rank, DC 26 |
| 73-82  | Navigator     | Bard or wizard    | Scribe Scroll, Sp Focus (Trans)   | Prof (sailor), Decipher Script, Know (geography), Spellcraft, Swim | Scrolls                             | Skill       | +0 | Rank, DC 24 |
| 83-90  | Wind-bringer  | Druid or sorcerer | Sp Focus (Trans), Sp Focus (Conj) | Spellcraft, Concentration, Know (geography), Swim, Prof (sailor)   | Item that affects weather or wind   | Information | +0 | Rank, DC 24 |
| 91-100 | Chaplain      | Cleric            | Any metamagic                     | Heal, Swim, Prof (sailor)  | Item that heals or cures            | Information | +0 | Rank, DC 24 |

Prof = Profession; Sp Focus = Spell Focus; Know = Knowledge.

## Mercantile Background

Characters with a mercantile background work in the organized business of making money, buying low and selling high. While this characterization describes most jobs in the modern world, in feudal and semifeudal societies the average person has much less connection to commerce. The typical peasant turns over his crops to the local feudal lord, keeping enough to feed his family, and other family members make most of the finished goods (clothes, furniture, and other necessities) they require themselves. Accordingly, characters with the mercantile background are much more common in cities and in societies where money is the most common medium of exchange (rather than communal hunter-gatherer living or a feudal relationship).

The only recognition available in this background category is among caravan guards and guild officials, both of whom can earn promotions to higher ranks (as described for the military background, below). A caravan guard applies his base attack bonus as a modifier on recognition checks, while a guild official applies his ranks in Diplomacy.

### Example Guild Ranks

The guilds in medieval European society usually had a simple set of ranks: apprentice, journeyman, and master. Attaining higher rank meant spending years on the job and passing some sort of examination, or in the case of the master, creating a "master piece" that peers judged worthy. In a system with only three ranks, the recognition check DC for advancing from apprentice to journeyman is 26, and DC for advancing from journeyman to master is 30.

If you want more frequent recognition (and thus more guild ranks), set the recognition check DC at a constant value of 24 and split each rank into three smaller ranks. Characters begin as apprentices in the third degree, then ascend to second-degree apprentices and first-degree apprentices. Then they become journeymen in the third degree.

Because the game is set in a fantasy world, you may wish to develop more fanciful titles for the guilds you create, especially those that are part of nonhuman or otherwise exotic cultures.

### Mercantile Background Activities

| d%    | Activity           | Class             | Feats                                   | Skills  | Gear                                 | Contacts    | Rep | Recognition |
|-------|--------------------|-------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----|-------------|
| 01-14 | Caravan guard      | Fighter           | Alertness, Point Blank Shot             | Ride, Spot, Listen  | Armor                                | Information | +0  | Rank, DC 24 |
| 15-27 | Broker             | Rogue or bard     | Investigator, Persuasive                | Gather Info, Sense Motive, Diplomacy, Know (local)        | Wondrous item that helps carry loads | Information | +½  | —           |
| 28-40 | Negotiator         | Rogue or bard     | Negotiator, Skill Focus (Diplomacy)     | Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Bluff, Intimidate, Know (local)  | Wondrous item that aids interaction  | Influence   | +½  | —           |
| 41-53 | Buyer              | Rogue or bard     | Diligent, Skill Focus (Appraise)        | Appraise, Bluff, Sense Motive, Craft (any), Diplomacy     | Wondrous item with divination aura   | Influence   | +0  | —           |
| 54-69 | Traveling merchant | Rogue or sorcerer | Dodge, Mobility                         | Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Appraise, Bluff, Sleight of Hand | Wondrous item with illusion aura     | Information | +½  | —           |
| 70-83 | Magic-shop owner   | Wizard            | Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and Armor | Spellcraft, Know (arcana), Craft (any)                    | Staff or wand                        | Skill       | +½  | —           |

Gather Info = Gather Information; Know = Knowledge.



Gather Info = Gather Information; Know = Knowledge.

## Military Background

The activities associated with this background include broadly defined military missions. The raid activity, for example, covers everything from young Vikings on their first pillage to elite commandos striking behind enemy lines. Except for all-out war, none of the activities implies continuous assignment. Most soldiers spend much of their time training, guarding, and hanging out in the barracks.

Military recognition takes two forms: decorations (medals, fancy uniforms, tattoos, and the like) and rank (encompassing traditional military ranks and sometimes noble or honorific titles). In each case, the recognition check DC is modified by the character's base attack bonus. Rolling a natural 20 on a recognition check gives the character a double promotion or a more prestigious decoration.

### Example Ranks and Decorations

The following military ranks are typical of a national army in a fantasy kingdom. Designing your own command structure and unique decorations is a good way to make your game world seem more real.

#### Ranks (Lowest to Highest)

Armsman, Sergeant, Sergeant Major, Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Colonel, General.

#### Decorations

Three-Star Cluster (for valor), Ivy-Oak Medallion (for service to the realm), Ribbon of Scarla (for bravery under fire), iron Gauntlet (for unsurpassed heroism).

#### Military Background Activities

| d%     | Activity      | Class                                    | Feats                             | Skills   | Gear  | Contacts    | Rep | Recogniti               |
|--------|---------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|-------------|-----|-------------------------|
| 01-11  | Raid          | Barbarian or fighter                     | Weapon Focus, Weapon Spec         | Climb, Jump, Intimidate, Search, Swim  | Melee weapon  | Information | +0  | Decoratio<br>DC 20      |
| 12-19  | Trainer       | Fighter                                  | Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm | Intimidate, Diplomacy, Know (local)  | Wondrous item for morale/interaction                    | Influence   | +1  | Rank, DC 2              |
| 20-27  | Cavalry scout | Ranger                                   | Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery   | Ride, Spot, Listen, Survival, Search, Move Silently, Hide  | Ranged weapon   | Information | +0  | Rank, DC 2              |
| 28-35  | Heavy cavalry | Fighter or paladin                       | Mounted Combat, Spirited Charge   | Ride, Intimidate, Jump   | Barding   | Information | +½  | Decoratio<br>rank, DC 2 |
| 36-44  | Defense       | Fighter or dwarven defender <sup>1</sup> | Dodge, Mobility                   | Prof (siege engineer), Climb, Jump   | Armor or shield   | Skill       | +½  | Rank, DC 2              |
| 45-52  | Scout         | Ranger or arcane archer <sup>1</sup>     | Alertness, Stealthy               | Spot, Listen, Move Silently, Hide, Survival  | Wondrous item for stealth, perception, or communication | Information | +0  | Rank, DC 2              |
| 53-63  | Shock trooper | Fighter                                  | Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush  | Climb, Intimidate, Jump  | Armor or shield   | Information | +½  | Decoratio<br>DC 24      |
| 64-74  | Siege         | Fighter                                  | Power Attack, Improved Sunder     | Climb, Jump, Prof (siege engineer)   | Melee weapon  | Information | +½  | Decoratio<br>DC 22      |
| 75-80  | War           | Fighter                                  | Any fighter bonus feat            | Climb, Intimidate, Jump  | Melee weapon  | Influence   | +1  | Rank, DC 2              |
| 81-86  | Diplomacy     | Fighter or paladin                       | Leadership, Persuasive            | Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Know (nobility and royalty)   | Wondrous item for morale/interaction                    | Influence   | +1  | Rank, DC 2              |
| 87-94  | Border patrol | Ranger                                   | Point Blank Shot, Far Shot        | Survival, Spot, Listen, Hide, Move Silently  | Ranged weapon   | Information | +0  | Rank, DC 2              |
| 95-100 | Herald        | Bard or fighter                          | Negotiator, Weapon Focus          | Know (nobility and royalty), Diplomacy, Know (local), Sense Motive, Spot, Listen, Know (history) | Armor or shield   | Influence   | +1  | Rank, DC 2              |

Weapon Spec = Weapon Specialization; Prof = Profession; Know = Knowledge.

1. Indicates a prestige class. Only available if the class is allowed in the campaign.

## Religious Background

Obviously, clerics dominate this background category. In a larger sense, it represents all activities that have a strong religious element, and in the generally pious societies that dominate most campaigns, that's a pretty wide spread.

Recognition is by ascension in rank, with a character's ranks in Knowledge (religion) providing a bonus on his recognition check.

### Example Religious Ranks

The following ranks are loosely drawn from the Christian church as it existed in the Middle Ages. Accordingly, they won't be appropriate for all the



| d%     | Activity           | Class  | Feats                             | Skills   | Gear                                    | Contacts    | Rep | Recognition |
|--------|--------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|-------------|-----|-------------|
| 01-12  | Temple leader      | Cleric                                       | Leadership, Sp Focus (Ench)       | Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Know (religion)                         | Item that employs divine magic          | Influence   | +½  | Rank, DC 26 |
| 13-24  | Evangelist         | Cleric                                       | Negotiator, Sp Focus (Conj)       | Diplomacy, Know (religion), Spellcraft                           | Item that aids interaction              | Influence   | +1  | Rank, DC 28 |
| 25-33  | Sacred librarian   | Bard or cleric                               | Diligent, Investigator            | Gather Info, Know (religion), Know (history), Spellcraft, Search | Item with divination aura               | Information | +0  | Rank, DC 30 |
| 34-42  | Keeper of the dead | Cleric                                       | Extra Turning, Sp Focus (Necro)   | Know (religion), Spellcraft, Concentration                       | Item with necromancy aura               | Skill       | +0  | Rank, DC 30 |
| 43-51  | Cultist            | Cleric                                       | Sp Focus (Conj), Sp Focus (Necro) | Disguise, Concentration, Spellcraft                              | Item that aids disguise or secrecy      | Information | +0  | Rank, DC 26 |
| 52-64  | Inquisitor         | Cleric                                       | Sp Focus (Dlv), Investigator      | Sense Motive, Intimidate, Spellcraft                             | Item with divination aura               | Information | +½  | Rank, DC 28 |
| 65-77  | Exorcist           | Cleric                                       | Sp Focus (Abj), Spell Penetration | Spellcraft, Concentration, Know (the planes)                     | Item that affects extraplanar creatures | Influence   | +½  | Rank, DC 30 |
| 78-88  | Temple guardian    | Paladin, fighter, or blackguard <sup>1</sup> | Power Attack, Cleave              | Know (religion), Spot, Climb                                     | Armor                                   | Skill       | +0  | Rank, DC 28 |
| 89-100 | Cloistered         | Monk   | Dodge, Mobility                   | Tumble, Jump, Balance, Hide, Move Silently                       | Item that provides protection           | Skill       | +0  | Rank, DC 28 |

Sp Focus = Spell Focus; Know = Knowledge; Gather Info = Gather Information.

1. Indicates a prestige class. Only available if the class is allowed in the campaign.

## Skilled Background

This background is similar to the academic magic background, except that it represents learning and instruction in subjects not related to magic. Nevertheless, a spellcaster may well select this background if he is interested in studying other topics.

Recognition for skilled background activities is similar to recognition in an academic magic background: degrees and memberships in honorary societies. (Athletes get trophies, functionally similar to military decorations, instead.)

Each activity in this background is associated with a particular skill—the one mentioned first in the entry's Skills column. A character's ranks in that skill provide a bonus on recognition checks.

### Skilled Background Activities

| d%     | Activity          | Class          | Feats                                | Skills  | Gear                                       | Contacts    | Rep | Recognition           |
|--------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|-------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 01-16  | Religious scholar | Cleric         | Scribe Scroll, Diligent              | Decipher Script, Know (religion), Spellcraft                              | Robe or cloak                              | Information | +0  | Degree or society, DC |
| 17-32  | Music theorist    | Bard           | Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Perform) | Perform (any), Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Decipher Script, Speak Language   | Instrument                                 | Information | +½  | Degree or society, DC |
| 33-44  | Barrister         | Rogue          | Persuasive, Negotiator               | Intimidate, Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Bluff, Know (nobility and royalty)   | Wondrous item that protects against spells | Information | +0  | Degree or society, DC |
| 45-60  | Scribe            | Wizard         | Any metamagic                        | Decipher Script, Speak Language, Know (arcana)                            | Extra spells in spellbook                  | Information | +0  | Degree or society, DC |
| 61-74  | Naturalist        | Druid          | Track, Natural Spell                 | Know (nature), Prof (herbalist), Handle Animal, Spellcraft, Concentration | Scrolls, wand, or staff                    | Information | +0  | Degree or society, DC |
| 75-90  | Scientist         | Wizard         | Any item creation                    | Know (architecture and engineering), Craft (any), Spellcraft              | Wondrous item that moves by itself         | Information | +0  | Degree or society, DC |
| 91-100 | Athlete           | Monk or ranger | Athletic, Dodge                      | Balance, Climb, Jump, Tumble, Swim  | Item that boosts physical stats            | Information | +1  | Degree or society, DC |

Know = Knowledge; Prof = Profession.

## Underworld Background

The teeming cities of the game world provide opportunities for countless adventures. The activities associated with this background represent moneymaking efforts on the wrong side of the law. A character may operate solo, as part of a small gang, or as part of a large thieves' guild or organized crime family. Some characters with underworld backgrounds use a false name to attain the benefits of their reputation while avoiding entanglements with law enforcement.

The underworld offers few chances for formal recognition (reflected by the relatively high recognition check DCs in this background), although some criminal syndicates have ranks and titles. The notion of underworld recognition may not be appropriate for every setting.

Each activity in this background is associated with a particular skill—the one mentioned first in the entry's Skills column. A character's ranks in that skill provide a bonus on recognition checks.



| d%     | Activity          | Class                          | Feats                            | Skills   | Gear                                | Contacts    | Rep  | Recognition |
|--------|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|
| 13-23  | Protection racket | Rogue                          | Combat Expertise, Improved Feint | Intimidate, Sense Motive, Bluff, Diplomacy, Search       | Weapon                              | Influence   | +½   | Rank, DC 30 |
| 24-32  | Gambling          | Rogue                          | Negotiator, Persuasive           | Bluff, Sense Motive, Intimidate, Gather Info, Forgery    | Magic item based on gem or jewelry  | Influence   | +1   | Rank, DC 30 |
| 33-44  | Assassination     | Rogue or assassin <sup>1</sup> | Improved Critical, Stealthy      | Hide, Move Silently, Tumble, Climb, jump                 | Weapon                              | Skill       | +1   | Rank, DC 30 |
| 45-57  | Burglary          | Rogue or assassin <sup>1</sup> | Nimble Fingers, Acrobatic        | Climb, Open Lock, Hide, Move Silently, Search, Balance   | Wondrous item that aids stealth     | Skill       | +0   | Rank, DC 30 |
| 58-70  | Robbery           | Rogue                          | Weapon Finesse, Quick Draw       | Intimidate, Disguise, Bluff, Use Rope, Hide              | Weapon                              | Information | +½   | Rank, DC 28 |
| 71-81  | Con games         | Rogue or bard                  | Deceitful, Persuasive            | Bluff, Sense Motive, Diplomacy, Forgery, Disguise        | Wondrous item that creates illusion | Influence   | +1f2 | Rank, DC 28 |
| 82-90  | Fence             | Rogue                          | Diligent, Negotiator             | Appraise, Sense Motive, Bluff, Know (local), Gather Info | Any                                 | Influence   | +1   | Rank, DC 30 |
| 91-100 | Street fighting   | Fighter or rogue               | Quick Draw, Combat Reflexes      | Intimidate, Sleight of Hand, Bluff, Tumble, Spot         | Armor                               | Skill       | +0   | Rank, DC 32 |

Gather Info = Gather Information; Know = Knowledge.

1. Indicates a prestige class. Only available if the class is allowed in the campaign.

## Wilderness Background

This background is a feature of characters who spend most of their time in the forbidding wilds, far from the comforts of civilization. Because such a character often leads a solitary existence, there's almost no opportunity for recognition. Only a character who undertakes the hunter-gatherer activity has a chance to attain a higher rank (that of chieftain, and it's only attainable once), with ranks in Survival providing a bonus on the recognition check.

### Wilderness Background Activities

| d%     | Activity            | Class                                 | Feats                             | Skills  | Gear                             | Contacts    | Rep | Recognition      |
|--------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------|-----|------------------|
| 01-12  | Hunter-gatherer     | Barbarian                             | Track, Self-Sufficient            | Survival, Spot, Listen, Climb, Swim                                 | Weapon                           | Skill       | +0  | Chieftain, DC 28 |
| 13-25  | Nature guardian     | Druid                                 | Natural Spell, Combat Casting     | Concentration, Spot, Survival, Spellcraft, Know (nature)            | Armor                            | Information | +½  | —                |
| 26-36  | Game hunter         | Ranger                                | Weapon Focus, Improved Critical   | Survival, Spot, Listen, Hide, Move Silently                         | Weapon                           | Skill       | +0  | —                |
| 37-47  | Explorer            | Ranger or horizon walker <sup>1</sup> | Alertness, Endurance              | Survival, Know (nature), Spot, Listen, Know (geography)             | Wondrous item that aids movement | Information | +1  | —                |
| 48-56  | Hermit              | Druid or sorcerer                     | Sp Focus (Illus), Sp Focus (Ench) | Survival, Concentration, Spellcraft                                 | Staff or wand                    | Skill       | +0  | —                |
| 56-66  | Wandering minstrel  | Bard                                  | Alertness, Endurance              | Perform, Survival, Know (geography), Know (nature), Spot            | Weapon                           | Influence   | +½  | —                |
| 67-79  | Nature worshiper    | Druid                                 | Sp Focus (Trans), Sp Focus (Conj) | Know (nature), Know (religion), Survival, Spellcraft, Concentration | Staff or wand                    | Information | +0  | —                |
| 80-90  | Highwayman          | Rogue                                 | Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm | Survival, Intimidate, Hide, Move Silently, Bluff                    | Armor                            | Information | +½  | —                |
| 91-100 | "I walk the earth." | Barbarian or monk                     | Endurance, Combat Reflexes        | Survival, Climb, Hide, Move Silently, Swim                          | Wondrous item that protects      | —           | +0  | —                |

Sp Focus = Spell Focus; Know = Knowledge.

1. Indicates a prestige class. Only available if the class is allowed in the campaign.

## Customizing Backgrounds

Background selections are like prestige classes: They function best when the game master integrates them tightly into the campaign world. You have a lot of room to modify the background activities described in this section to suit the needs of your campaign and inject the rules with the flavor of your game world. For example, perhaps the city-state of Harleph has elite flail-wielding commandos called the Crimson Guard. The shock trooper activity in the military background could offer a decoration called the Red Braid in the Recognition column, a dire flail in the Gear column, and a +1 in the Reputation column (they are elite, after all).





'd20 System' and the 'd20 System' logo are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and are used according to the terms of the d20 System License version 6.0. A copy of this License can be found at [www.wizards.com/d20](http://www.wizards.com/d20).

Section 508

WAI-AAA

Valid XHTML

Valid CSS