

Worldbuilding: Questions for Your World

A world feels believable when it runs on consistent rules, when those rules have consequences for everyday life, and when the world generates conflicts that spark the plot.

How to build a world in six steps

1. The question your world asks

What is different here from our world, and why does that matter for your story?

2. The rules of the extraordinary

What can the magic or special technology do, what can't it do, and what price does it demand?

3. One defining event from the past

An upheaval, a disaster, a founding.

4. Power structures and groups

Who profited from the event, who lost? Which groups have interests of their own and clash because of them?

5. The places your characters enter

The opening location, then the stations of the plot. For each place: what does it look like, who lives there, and what does it mean for the story?

6. Consequences and contradictions

If there's magic, why doesn't everyone use it? If a city is rich, where does the money come from?

What worldbuilding covers

1. Geography and places

Landscapes, cities, roads and distances. How long does a journey take, and what lies in between?

2. History

Which past events still have an effect? Wars, upheavals, disasters, foundings.

3. Society and power

Who rules, who works, who has no say? Which groups, orders, guilds or parties exist?

4. Daily life and culture

What do people eat, how do they talk, what counts as polite, what is taboo? Language, religion, customs.

5. Rules of the extraordinary

Magic, technology, supernatural forces. What is possible, what isn't, and what does it cost?
