



Backgrounds

Foreign Exchange Student

In a planar school like Sigil Prep, pretty much everyone is from somewhere else, but there are a few who come from a different enough place, or a place with so much less diversity, that the “foreignness” is obvious. These students are trying to figure out the world around them as much as they are the lessons they’re learning in class.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: one of your choice

Languages: one of your choice; you may also have another proficiency of any sort if you sacrifice speaking Common

Equipment: a translation dictionary, small trinkets or jewelry worth 10 gp in your homeland’s craftsmanship, a set of traveler’s clothes, a map of your homeland, a belt pouch containing 5 gp in your homeland’s currency

CULTURE CLASH

There are commonalities from home that just seem weird where you are now. Something you do all the time is going to draw stares, even from the most open-minded.

(d6)

- 1- elaborate prayer (or cultural) ritual (before meals, bedtime, a certain time of day)
- 2- favorite food that locals don’t think of as food
- 3- figure of speech you use all the time that doesn’t make a bit of sense
- 4- style of dress that is overly modest or immodest
- 5- greeting that is way too familiar for most people’s comfort
- 6- the dance of joy

FEATURE: WELCOME STRANGER

Your behavior is out of place, but this can often work to your advantage. People may assume a broader range of knowledge and experiences than you actually have, and others are in awe of your ways. You can often parley yourself into any social club, party, or event, because someone wants your presence or input. And you never have to pay for your own beer when you go out.

Homeschooled Kid

Before you got to college, you were schooled at home by a parent or local tutor. Probably for religious reasons, but possibly because your parents just don't trust the gu'ment. Regardless, you learned the world from a point of view that your peers probably didn't, and you haven't gained quite the social advantages they probably have. Knowing people that didn't live in your house, by example.

Skill Proficiencies: Religion, Insight

Tool proficiencies: one game of your choice

Equipment: holy book, a plush animal or other memento from home, a set of standard clothes, a belt pouch with 10 gp and a letter from your mom telling you not to let them corrupt you

SOCIAL DIFFICULTY

You never had a wide social circle, but now that you're out in the world(s), there's one social difficulty that is especially hard for you.

(d6)

- 1- Interacting with other (particularly unusual) races
- 2- People with religious beliefs different than yours
- 3- People with political beliefs different than yours
- 4- Groups of more than four to six people.
- 5- Talking to members of the gender(s) you are attracted to
- 6- Panic when confronted with unfamiliar cultural norms (ex: entertainment that wasn't approved in your household, casual swearing, skirts above the ankle)

FEATURE: STUDY GROUP

You may not know much about the world, but you know how to find out about it. And the best way to do that is through a study group. Much like the Researcher feature for the Sage background, you tend to know how to get the information you need. But instead of knowing the location, you know the six to eight people you need to study with, and the table you need to sit around, for one of you to find just that exact tidbit of lore. You have no trouble forming a study group at the drop of a hat, although great secrets of the universe will probably not be uncoverable during one late night cram session.

(use the Hermit background from the Player's Handbook for Suggested Characteristics for this background)



Jock

Athletics is the basis for civilization. Before communities started coming together in contests of athletic excellence, all we had was philosophy, social structure, and the beginnings of a system of criminal justice. But now, we have a whole group of people who think they're better than you because they can throw a ball.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Intimidation, one sport of your choice

Equipment: gear appropriate to your chosen sport, one set of athlete's clothes, a belt pouch with 10 gp.

SPORT

I mean, that's the whole point of this, right? You probably want to choose your own sport, but just in case...

(d10)

- 1- Football (gridiron)
- 2- Wrestling
- 3- Track
- 4- Baseball
- 5- Soccer
- 6- Jai Alai
- 7- Basketball
- 8- Swimming
- 9- hockey
- 0- tennis

FEATURE: FREE RIDE

So long as you maintain a D average and remain on your team, skipping classes, missing tests, and failing to turn in papers will not adversely effect your standing in the school. Saying "I had practice" is usually enough to get by, and even if your professor is being a stickler, whining to your coach about how unfairly you're being treated just because you're an athlete will usually get you off the hook.

(use the Soldier background from the Player's Handbook for Suggested Characteristics for this background)



Nerd/Geek

A nerd is someone who has an obsessive level of interest in their hobbies; a geek is the same, but with better AstralNet skills. Or is that the other way around? Actually, a nerd is good at math; a geek is good at comic book trivia. Except... whatever, I'm not getting into this argument. You like playing collectible card games and arguing with strangers about Cheese Wars movies.

It's likely that your friends are going to seek you out for Tech Support, even if you have no idea how to code AstralNet magicks.

Skill proficiencies: any two Intelligence-based skills; you may also add your proficiency bonus to recall trivia about your Fandom (see below)

Tool proficiencies: any two types of Game or Artisan's tools

Languages: one of your choice, or two fictional languages from pop culture franchises you like

Equipment: your choice of comic book or RPG books, a deck of *Magic: the Gathering* or *BukoYugiPokeGon* cards, a game set (your choice), a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10gp

FANDOM

There are a lot of things you obsess over, but there's one that you're particularly passionate about. And you'll argue about it all day; it's your hill to die on. You may even disagree with other people sharing this fandom. Are the new stories coming from the Plane of Dairy just as good as the original ones, or have they curdled the franchise beyond freshness? Opinions vary, but only yours are right.

(d10)

- 1- Cheese Wars
- 2- My Little Ki-Rin
- 3- Magic: the Gathering
- 4- Legend of the Five Rings
- 5- Trek Jammer
- 6- Planegate
- 7- Professor Why
- 8- classic Baatoran animation (Horace Hellhound)
- 9- Rokugani animation
- 0- Tunnels & Trolls

FEATURE: COLLECTIBLE HOARDING

Even if you're looking for something unusual, when shopping for equipment, you have a general idea where you can find the item you want. Regardless of what the item is, there is a 1 in 6 chance you can find it with a logo of a pop culture franchise you like on it.

(use the Scholar background from the Player's Handbook for Suggested Characteristics for this background)

Theatre Geek

Theater Majors. They're a breed apart. Overly dramatic, center of attention, and often cripplingly shy at the same time. They're not all Bards, but they all have Bard friends. You guys all love each other, but you deserved that role way more than the person who got it. They aren't right for it at all, and anyway, you wrote that monologue yourself!

Skill proficiencies: Deception, Perform

Languages: any one

Equipment: a dagger you see before you, disguise kit, a monologue book, several changes of clothes, including an all-black outfit, jazz shoes, a belt pouch with no gold pieces

STAND-BYS

You may not always be ready to perform on demand when some jackass says "You do musicals? Sing me something." But there's something you're ready to do at the drop of a hat, regardless of the situation.

(d6)

- 1- the first few lines of a favorite monologue
- 2- the bit from your favorite song with the impressive high note or key change (although non-singers don't really realize how impressive that is)
- 3- first few bars of "Everything's Coming Up Roses" in an Ethel Merman impression
- 4- "Slowly I turn, step-by-step" in the creepiest voice possible
- 5- (while singing along with a group) doing some ridiculous, improvised harmony or vocal riff that drowns out everyone else
- 6- the first few lines and accompanying choreography to "The Time Warp" before dying off when you realize everyone isn't joining you

FEATURE: BUMMING COMPS

You know where all the live entertainment in the area is, and more than that, you know how to score free tickets, whether you know the director, or the theater owner, or it's by volunteering as an usher (or box office) or by playing on the sympathy of the theater geek whom, themselves, are working at the box office to get into the show free. Regardless, you never end up paying to see a live show.

And then you complain about how theaters can't make enough money to stay open and blame your friends because they never go see anything.

(use the Entertainer background from the Player's Handbook for Suggested Characteristics for this background)

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