

INADVISABLE BACKGROUNDS FOR 5E



efore they picked up a sword or staff, every adventurer started somewhere. While there are a variety of backgrounds common to adventurers, your character may have come from a... less traditional background. Here are some options for your character to make your DM groan and repeatedly bang their head on a

Player's Handbook.

Inspired by [prokopetz's inadvisable D&D backgrounds](#).

TIME TRAVELER

You come from another time. Perhaps you've traveled here from the distant past, or traveled back from the unknown future. Through some magic or miracle, you are able to communicate with the people of this time and generally understand the world, but besides this you are quite literally a person out of time, and out of your depth more often than not.

Choose whether you come from the future or the past and how distantly in either direction. Work with your DM to determine the differences and similarities between your time and the one you're in now. How did you get to this time? Are you here for a reason? Are you open about your displacement, or doing your best to blend in with your now-contemporaries? Perhaps your skills and abilities come from the different technologies and knowledge in your time period.

Skill Proficiencies: Choose two from Arcana, Deception, History, or Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: One type of tool appropriate to your time period

Language Proficiencies: One of your choice

Equipment: A set of clothes appropriate to your original time, a token from your original time, a watch or other timekeeping device, a belt pouch containing the equivalent of 20 gp of your time's money

FEATURE: A LIVING EXAMPLE

You have intimate knowledge of everyday life in a time period unknown to most scholars. You and your adventuring party can earn a favor (such as information, lodging, or equipment) in exchange for you agreeing to be interviewed in detail by an interested party such as a historian, wizard, or scholar.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Your background is defined by your experience traveling through time and how you're trying to adjust to the present. A time traveler's mannerisms could be shaped by what was considered appropriate in their time and how much they're trying to fit in to the present. Their ideals and bonds might relate to the people they left behind or who brought them here, and whether or not they're trying to get back to their time. Their flaws might relate to a concept that their actions in this time don't matter; or in the opposite direction, anxiety about the butterfly effect.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I use a mode of speech or slang specific to my time that sounds wildly out of place in the present.
- 2 Out of place myself, I am especially sympathetic towards other misfits of current society.
- 3 I'm not sure how social norms work now, so I am very awkward in most social situations.
- 4 I frequently refer to events that haven't happened yet.
- 5 I have a hard time understanding other people due to changing vocabulary and references.
- 6 I'm always asking questions about the present, to the point of annoyance.
- 7 I tell jokes that don't make much sense in the present.
- 8 I namedrop famous people and inevitably include one who doesn't exist yet or has been lost to history.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Power.** Knowledge of the past and future is the ultimate advantage to gain power. (Evil)
- 2 **Freedom.** Time travel is already breaking the rules. Who cares if you break a few more? (Chaotic)
- 3 **The Good Timeline.** It is one's responsibility to do good even if it changes the timeline. (Good)
- 4 **Mindfulness.** It is impossible to control the past or the future, so you might as well enjoy the present. (Any)
- 5 **Control.** Time is meant to flow in a certain way, and you are here to make sure that happens. (Lawful)
- 6 **Stability.** It is your responsibility to have as little an impact on the timeline as possible, to make sure there is still a time for you to come back to. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 I will do anything to return to my own time and the people I care about.
- 2 I was brought to this time for a purpose and cannot leave until I complete it.
- 3 I have fallen in love with someone in the present and refuse to leave them behind.
- 4 I must find the person or creature that sent me here.
- 5 I can only be here for a limited time before the timeline becomes too unstable.
- 6 I traveled with someone but we were separated. I have to find them.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am unknowingly rude or offensive to most people due to different social norms.
- 2 I am hyper-paranoid about my smallest action potentially changing the timeline.
- 3 I assume that all the fiction from my time about the current time period is true.
- 4 I have no idea what money is worth in the present day and make terrible business deals.
- 5 I am careless about the long-term consequences of my actions.
- 6 I am subject to bouts of existential depression. If time travel is real, does anything matter in the present?

VARIANT TIME TRAVELER: TIME HOPPER

This background assumes that you have traveled a great distance—years to millenia. But you might only have time traveled a week or month.

You can use your Living Example feature by giving details on the near future or how you came to the present time. You might also be more concerned with running into your present-day self or otherwise creating a paradox of being in more than one place at the same time. Instead of the starting equipment, you can buy gear as described in Chapter 5 of the PHB.

TAX COLLECTOR

Before you became an adventurer, you worked for the government—or what passed for government—collecting taxes from citizens. Some tax collectors are meticulous and good at math, some are thugs who shake down those who haven't paid enough. Almost all are universally hated.

Why did you become an adventurer? Did you receive a call to a greater purpose? Or did murdering goblins just seem like more honest work with fewer people trying to kill you? Work with your DM to determine what kind of tax collector you were and where you operated, as well as your reputation.

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Insight

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit

Language Proficiencies: One of your choice

Equipment: An abacus, a secure container for collecting taxes such as a safe or chest, and a pouch containing 20 gp

FEATURE: SHAKEDOWN

You can get a favor from an ordinary citizen in a place where you are familiar with local tax practices, either by intimidating them or by helping them get an advantage in a future taxation (i.e. by helping them with their 1040 or W-4). The favor might take the form of lodging, supplies, or information that an ordinary citizen can provide. You can assume that you are free from any potential consequences from the local government (if you are committing tax fraud or something similar) as the citizen in question will not report your involvement.

FORMER SKELETON

Until recently, you were an animated skeleton. Some event has put flesh on your bones and breath in your lungs and granted you full, mortal life again. What you do with your newfound fleshy freedom is up to you.

Work with your DM to determine what brought you back to life. Is there a condition to your restoration that you must fulfill, such as completing a deadly mission? Do you owe the person who brought you back? What did you do when you were a skeleton, if you remember that time at all? Perhaps you guarded a dungeon from the kind of adventurers you are now one of, or were the servant of a necromancer you've now sworn to destroy.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine, Religion

Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set

Language Proficiencies: One of your choice

Equipment: An ancient sword (now useless), the skull of another skeleton, and a pouch containing 10 gp

FEATURE: DUNGEON GUARDIAN

When you enter a ruin or dungeon, you can correctly ascertain what it is currently being used for and make a likely guess at the creatures and traps within. After some time in the dungeon, you can also generally figure out its owner (i.e. a lich, a mad wizard, etc.) if you don't already know it. Roll a d100; on a 10 or below you are personally familiar with the owner.

OBSTREPEROUS PEASANT

Before becoming an adventurer, you were an ordinary commoner who occupied your time by being as loud and obnoxious as possible. It's not as easy as it sounds—on top of being ceaselessly annoying, you also need resist all attempts to make you stop, whether those attempts take the form of gentle persuasion or more forceful means. Through years of practice, you have become experienced at identifying what most annoys someone and at continuing to do so no matter what.

What drove you to such obnoxious and loud heights? How have you avoided those who would control or stop your noise: by guile, force, speed, or other means? Have you made any significant enemies from this? Work with your DM to determine exactly what being obstreperous means to your character, and why they consider that to define their background.

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Insight

Tool Proficiencies: One incredibly loud musical instrument

Language Proficiencies: One of your choice

Equipment: A megaphone, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

FEATURE: FOR 800 PLATINUM A MONTH, I WILL STOP

You can annoy people into doing what you want. If you spend at least a week being obstreperous to a specific person or in a specific area, that person or the residents of that area will do whatever you want (at the DM's discretion) to make you stop. Your DM may say you have to plan around certain obstacles to your continuing annoyance (i.e. avoiding law enforcement) in order for this feature to take full effect.