

How to make a Planet

Easy to do good stuff if you follow the processes.

First, draw tectonic plates however the fuck you want, and keep in mind which way they move with big fuck-off arrows. Do the arrows and fault lines in pencil.

Then, continents. Bang that shit down wherever you want, the big ones don't matter. Continental outlines in pencil for now.

Look at where the bits of continent touch fault lines. Bits ramming face-first will have huge fuck-off mountains. Bits pulling apart will have fucktonnes of lava, or at the least bits of hot earthen interest like volcanoes. Bits rubbing sideways will have smaller mountains, a handful of volcanoes, and tectonic activity like a motherfucker.

Where these lines are in the ocean, similar. Face-on, big mountains, archipelagos and such. Apart, huge-arse trenches and volcanic islands. Across, a few volcanic islands.

Then consider your continental movement. Where plates move together bits rammed each other a long time ago, so make the continents look a little awkward. Where they pull apart there'll be continental drift, so make it look like an eroded puzzle piece pulled off and stick a heap of islands in the middle.

From there, change the pencilled bits to look more aesthetically pleasing and utilitarian, then pen them on.

Now for climates and shit.

The middle of the map is going to be hot and wet and have monsoonal rain. The edges of the map will be colder and possibly drier and have more regular rain.

Now figure out how wet things are. Pick a direction for the wind to generally blow from the water to the land in each continent, or more than one if that's how you want it. Watch it go all the way to the nearest lot of mountains. Bits ocean ward of the mountains get regular rain. Bits ocean ward of mountains and on the edge of the mountains get lots of rain. Bits inland of the mountains get little rain. The bigger the mountains the more significant this is, so if you've got molehills it won't do a damn, but if you've got the Andes just sitting there one side will be lush and the other a damned desert. Also, the further inland you are, even if there's no mountains, the drier it gets.

Once you've got this down, put your general greenery in place. Wetter in no-equatorial areas means more dense forestry e.g. English woods. A little dry means less dense e.g. Australian bush. Proper dry means African-style scrub plains all over the joint. Very dry means desert. **DO NOT USE ENGLISH PLAINS AS AN EXAMPLE THEY ARE HUMAN-MADE.**

Then, for equatorial areas, wet means ridiculously rainforests, drier means jungley areas, properly dry means flat but with still more trees and super dry means scrub deserts.

Once you've got these down change them for aesthetics and utility then bang them in in pen.

Keep in mind not to mention this to proper geographers or climatologists since this is simplified to the point of being offensive.

Now for hydrology and that wet crap.

Rivers go from mountains to the ocean. That's it. The more rain on your mountain, I.E. the closer to the coast and the higher the mountain, the bigger the river will be. It should have tributaries from that mountain and other mountains on the path flowing into the main river, which meanders however you want it to but generally away from high ground to low, to the ocean, where just before the ocean if it's really big it forms a delta. Bits along that river can have canyons and such for geographical points of interest. Bang lakes and shit of whatever size you want down on the way, so long as you don't have the Comically Tiny River as the main source of water for Lake Fucking Huge. If the river doesn't make it all the way to the ocean because it's too far or it goes inland into the deepest part of the place without escape, it forms either a big salt lake, and the lake will be properly salty, or a marsh, depending on your climate or more realistically your preference. If shit's really dry, you can have huge river paths and vast salt lakes with no or nearly no water for interest.

Now, your civilisations.

Work out your capitals first, because most historic civilisations were based on one capital with a fuckton of small towns around it.

Civilisations are based on people in groups. Groups of people like nice things. Nice things like resources. Critical resources include:

Water. Bitches love water. You will never ever see a city without water. Most or all of your major cities should be on major water sources that are NOT the ocean which is BAD because unlike river or lake water which is DELICIOUS seawater is NOT DELICIOUS. You can have non-riverine towns supplied by wells, but because water's so critical in the 'make town/don't' civilizational paradigm, it'd better have shitloads of good stuff like ten trading routes over a goldmine or something.

Food. You need at least two supplies of food, preferably more. Food from water comes from fishing. Get food from forests and shit by hunting. Get food from anywhere with rain by farming, which if you do will lead to flat farmed plains fucking everywhere.

Good stuff includes:

Good forests, because timber makes good things like houses. Timber comes from forests.

Good quarries, because stone makes very nice houses for rich people. Quarries will be in mountains.

Good mining, because gold fucking rocks and so does iron once you can smelt that motherfucker. Mining, for the most simple example possible, comes from mountains.

Once you've stuck your major cities where the most of these combine, stick towns in the next best areas and villages in the next. Remember your rule of travel. Farmers, which is practically everybody in pre-industrialised times, have to cart their shit places. There will be a village, formed around a market, at most twelve hours from any one point of the populated part of your territory. There will be towns every

three days' travel, for major trading excursions. Cities will be rare and only where there's a fuckload of useful shit. Keep in mind it's okay to have national areas that have no villages in them, because no nation ever uses all the ground because some of it just isn't that useful.

And now, TRADING. Trading fucking rocks for civilisations. Remember those towns and cities and shit? Trace paths from all your towns to their main cities. This will be where villages are often located since trade rocks. Trace paths from all your major cities to each other, put lots of towns on them. Make the paths wander if you have to, because people would rather spend an extra day or two travelling to know they've got a safe night's rest as often as possible. Whenever there is a city to city path on a national border, put a small trading town there. Whenever three or more city to city paths go near each other make them converge and put a city there, a trading city. More paths, bigger city. A 4/5-plus-path trading city will rival your capitals, and depending on what you want plot wise, will be a capital itself.

And now for the moment you've all been waiting for, the civilisations themselves.

Except not. I'm not going to get into the geographical and sociological shit behind culture because holy fucking shit is it complex. If I were to take the most basic shit there is in the most simple language I could it'd take at least ten posts to get done and because I'm a geographer and sociologist I have no self-control over these matters and would probably write a fucking thesis by accident which happened before.

Just remember three things when designing a culture. Their culture will be influenced by, above all else;

**ECONOMICS** - The resources available and even more significantly unavailable will have a huge effect on the path and the speed of cultural development. **DON'T FORGET TRADE GOODS AND SHIT HERE.**

**GEOGRAPHY** - The physical home of a people will be fucking crucial in determining what their nature is, and how they develop, especially technologically. It's probably the most important technological influence on people until they learn to change the geography itself. Climate, too, is critical here.

**HISTORY** - the history of the people is fucking massive in determining what they are, and is an area in which you have more freedom than the others. Just remember that when making history the neighbouring civilisations are fucking crucial.

And when doing all this shit, just think **THESE PEOPLE ARE LIKE 'X' BECAUSE OF HISTORIC/ECONOMIC/GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCE 'Y'**, and see if it makes sense or not.

And remember, when you're making a map this loosely, you can pretty much change anything you want to make a place more aesthetic or utilitarian so long as it doesn't make it fucking retarded. Need a lake with no river tributaries? Huge underground river comes up there. Need one mountain by itself? Volcano, now extinct. Need a people nowhere near useful resources? They settled there for social or cultural reasons, like religion, and the hard living has made them backwards but tough as all fuck off.

Study some geography and sociology, learn the shit behind environmental and civilizational development, and this shit will take off with no user input. If you gave me right now a piece of paper with rough tectonics outlined and some continents, using just the real-world theory, I could turn that into a realistic place without ever having to stop and think because every single factor in this development is nearly completely determined by the factors before it, all the way back to the only

independent things, the continents and the tectonics. It makes it ridiculously easy and damned fast to come up with planet-scale maps that make sense.

#### IMPORTANT SHIT I SKIPPED

#### NAUTICAL TRADE ROUTES

This I ignored because HOLY FUCK IS IT COMPLEX. You have to determine the atmospheric climactic variations determining heatflows from planetary convection currents to find out the paths aquatic currents make which plus climate and prevailing winds and climate and the sociology and the technology and the economics will determine which direction boats go what where they stop. Just do whatever you want with these because the sort of person who will understand enough to see that your idea is stupid and understand easy enough to get angry is rare as fuck. I know all the shit, it's in my field, and it still gives me massive fucking headaches. Just make that shit up and follow common sense.

#### INDIVIDUAL UNIVERSE VARIATIONS

The things I've told you are based off our planet and its inherent shit, which is a fair base for anything you'll do because in any fantasy world you can assume that unless it is specifically mentioned otherwise things work like they do here. IF THEY DO, you have to figure that shit out for yourself because the imagination has infinite variation and I don't have infinite space or time to get specific. Figure it out, use common sense, and if I'm on 4chan at the time you can ask me for the civilizational and sociological impacts of dragons existing and being ten kilometres long. Or if you're near a university, take it up with a professor of human geography or sociology because they fucking love this complex shit so long as you don't make it too obvious it's for a game.