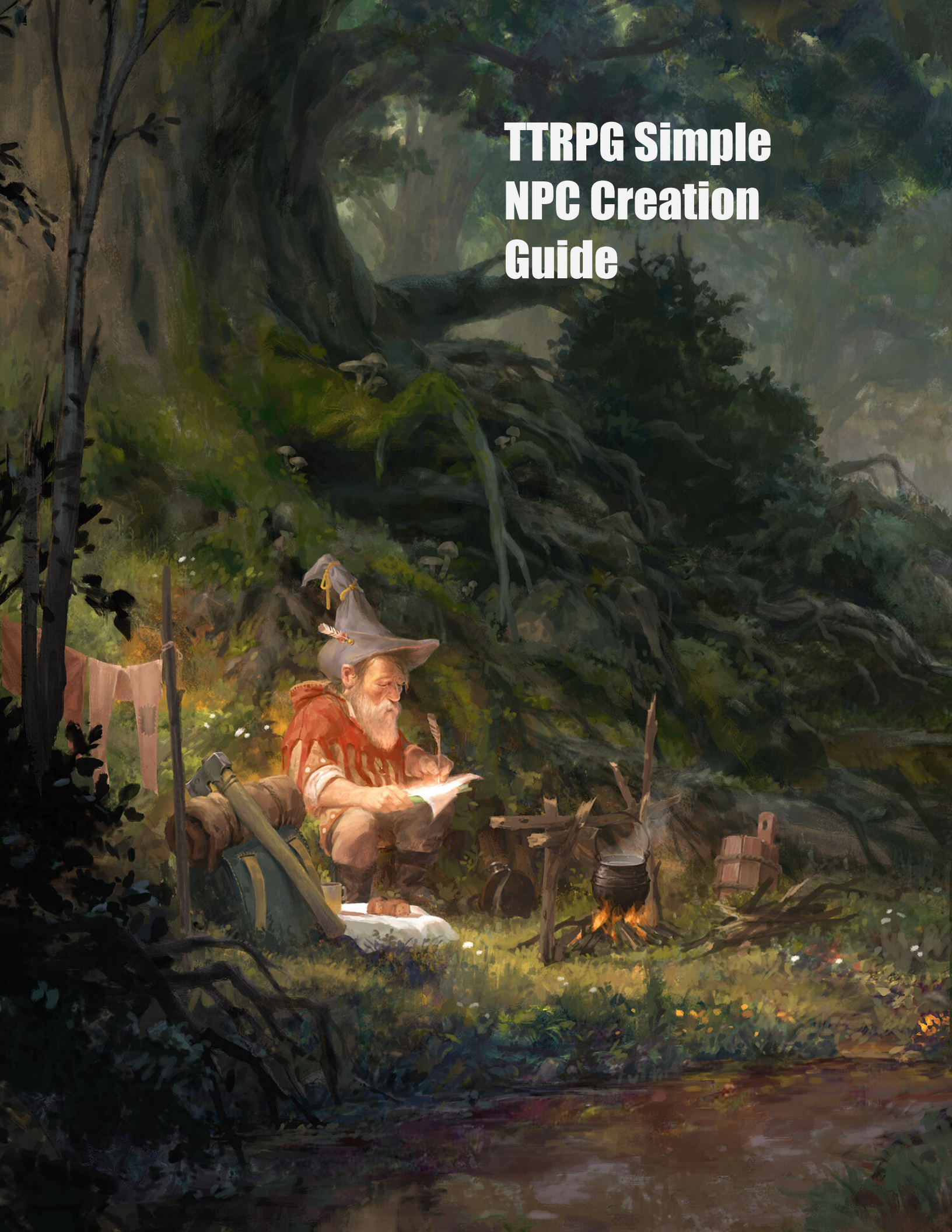


TTRPG Simple NPC Creation Guide



The Foundation of NPCs

Every world needs people or creatures to fill it. These individuals that we create are an expression of different ideas and concepts that exist in the world. An effective non player character for this reason needs only to fulfill a simple set of requirements to come to life. Here are the four foundational requirements for any NPC.

Weakness:

This is the most forthcoming element of any simple non-player character. A weakness is often something the NPC is not aware of yet is well embraced by the character.

Need:

A need is most commonly related to their weakness. This element is often not something that is not mentally attainable by the character but would ultimately fix their weakness or general living. This however does not mean that a need has to be connected to a weakness, just that it most commonly is.

Desire:

Different from a need, a desire is an element which is at the forefront of the character's mind. It is something that can be simple or complex and frequently influences their lifestyle and or decision making. A desire for this reason often introduces the possibility for conflict in the character's life.

Enemy:

Most commonly connected to the desire or need, an enemy can be a person, place or thing (or all three). Basic characters need only one enemy but can have numerous. The enemy is not something that has to be at the forefront of the character's interactions, but can assist with world-building and creating additional NPCs.

Categorizing NPCs

Non-player characters (or NPCs) can be categorized into six secondary categories. These categories create specialization and emphasize contrast between occupations. This is accomplished by adding additional factors/aspects specific to each respective category. The six categories of characters are: Commoners, Merchants, Local Villains, Local Heroes, Kings & Lords, and Scholars. Below is a detailed list of what specific elements separate each of these character types.



Merchants

To make a merchant, in addition to the primary four elements of a character, three additional elements must be introduced. Doing so will enable you to separate the personalities, living spaces, and interaction tropes between each and every merchant you make. The three outlining aspects of a merchant character are: Rumors, Secrets, and Their favorite part of the job.

The Rumor:

A rumor is something that has been spreading around locally. It doesn't need to be integral to a bigger plot point, but can assist with worldbuilding and side content. It is important to make note of the confirmation of this rumor when it comes to the merchant. Rumors are either confirmed or unconfirmed. Whether or not they believe the rumor is entirely separate.

A Secret:

Unlike a rumor, a secret is something that is absolutely known by the merchant. If you are struggling to devise a secret for a merchant character, try connecting a secret they might know to their rumor or enemy. Lastly, it is important to make note of why they keep this knowledge a secret. Consider what it might take for them to reveal this secret. For more inspiration, look to connect 'what it might take' to their desire or enemy.

Favorite part of the Job:

This is the last and arguably most important element of a merchant character. Their favorite part of the job is something that can easily be communicated through their work-space or demeanor. Finally, this opens up the opportunity for unique interaction should any Player Character disrupt their favorite part of the job.



Local Villains

The creation of Villains incorporates two secondary characteristics/traits. No matter the villain, these characteristics follow second to the foundation(s) of the NPC's creation. Introducing these secondary elements of villains enables you to have both more diverse and relatable villains. Their distinguishing traits are found below.

Criminal Specialty:

Crime and villainy is not without reason or purpose. Moreover, they aren't without organization. Giving your villains a criminal specialty really assists in establishing the organization of their unlawful actions. Look to connect their criminal specialty around their weakness, try answering the question "how do they cover their weaknesses?".

Redeemable Quality:

Much like any person in the world, a villain is a person first and foremost. They should have some 'good-side'. Look to connect whatever their redeemable quality is to their 'Need'. Some examples of what redeemable qualities might look like in a simple villain can be found further down. Remember, a villain's redeemable quality is what makes them human, this should be something which is exploitable.

Now your villains no matter how small or large should have some three-dimensional elements of themselves. Do they learn more about themselves, do they find further vindication for their villainy? These are questions which can be answered due to this initial foundation and secondary elements.

Kings/Queens and Lords and Barons/Baronesses

Worlds cannot exist without Lords and local Rulers. In fact, most times these places reflect the ambition and nature of their rulers. Because of this, the secondary characteristics for a ruler revolve around how they perceive their own power. When determining the specifics of their secondary characteristics, try to consider where the ruler wishes to lead the land. Learn how they wish to sculpt their kingdom. Rulers have three distinguishing traits.

Are they happy?:

People can fall into power in many different ways. Because of this, there is often a divide in interest. The interest of the people, secondary politicians, nobles, and the interests of the lord themselves. With all of this pressure an imperative question to ask and consider when making a lord is, 'Are they happy being a ruler?' If you struggle to answer this, try referencing the character's 'Weakness' for inspiration.

Lordly Desire:

People in power have responsibility, secondly they have a home. This home is shared in the people and land that their rule encompasses. What do they wish to do to this home? Answering this question will provide a lordly desire. This desire is what the lord currently strives for, and can open opportunities for side content in a world. Perhaps their weakness or enemy prevents them from acquiring this desire.

Local Problems:

In anyone's life, encountering adversity at some point is destined to occur. For most, small problems happen day to day without fail. The same is true for leaders and large problems. With so much responsibility there has to be something nagging them from the top of the conscious. Try to find this issue and allow it to be explored for side content. If you are struggling to make a local problem, try relating it to the ruler's 'Enemy' for inspiration.

This character archetype is extremely diverse. Following these steps should solidify the expression of these NPCs as unique Lords and Rulers.

Local Heroes

This NPC archetype is often neglected even though worlds which would be much more balanced with them. These figures are meant to represent the strength and ambitions of the residents of the world. Reflecting both the existing player characters and their calls to action. This NPC archetype has three secondary characteristics which establish them as heroes.

Thoughts on other heroes:

Being a hero comes with a lot of social influence. Wealth, fame, prestige, and influence all come to local heroes. As multiple heroes become introduced in a society it is only natural for either competition or cooperation to brew. Because of this, each hero should have some sort of opinion on how they feel about working with others. To do this, try connecting their thoughts to their 'Weakness' or 'Desire'.

Accomplishment:

One does not become a hero by giving themselves the title. It is something that is earned by trial and triumph. When making a local hero it is important to fully establish an accomplishment of the individual which denotes them as a hero.

A Magic Item:

A magic item really enables them to do so much more both mechanically and narratively. Magical items are mysterious and powerful, what better way to communicate someone as exceptional than by giving them something exceptional. If you're struggling to determine which item is best, try referencing the character's 'Weakness', 'Desire' or 'Enemy' for inspiration.

These characters make for easy allies and enemies for the party to make along their journey.



Commoners

The common folk more than often make up the bulk of residents that exist in a world. Despite this, there is an abundance of diversity and personalities that exist between commoners. They share similar lifestyles, but exist in this shared space in very different ways. Here are two secondary characteristics which you can add to your commoners to really make them interesting.

An Occupation:

It may be obvious and assumed, but it is important that you do not neglect a commoner's occupation. Key details about their stature can be communicated solely based on their observation. If you're ever struggling to determine an occupation for a commoner, try referencing their 'Enemy' or 'Desire' for inspiration.

The Better life:

Life as a commoner is hard. Everyone wishes for a better life, especially those in the mud. When making any commoner it is important to give them this dream. This dream should be different from their 'Desire', it is something which is unattainable. If you're struggling to make a 'Better Life' try referencing their 'Desire', 'Need' or 'Enemy' for inspiration.

Commoners deserve so much love in a world. Yes they are small characters, but introducing a handful of very compelling commoner NPCs sways the hearts of those who interact with the world. This NPC archetype can single-handedly designate what the tone of the setting will be.

The Scholar

Education, technological progression, and scientific advancement are all topics integral to the continued progress of the world. These are also topics which human ambition loves to explore. Those who practice furthering fields of study are designated the title of 'Scholar'. Building a scholar includes two secondary characteristics.

Passion of Study:

Scholars vary wildly when it comes to fields of specialization. For this reason it's important to find one. This passion is what fuels the specialization, and is the catalyst for the character's motivations. If you are struggling to come up with a passion for studying, try referencing the character's 'Desire' for inspiration.

Professional Secret:

Regardless of the field of study, each scholar should have information solely belonging to their own person. For mages this might be a new spell or item. For mathematicians this may be a new technology or theory. Try adding this to your scholars to create more depth to what information exists in the world.

Scholars are the backbone of world progress, show their importance and prove that their efforts matter when making them. Creating good scholars will assist in the continual progression of technology and magic of your world.

Streamlining the Process

The creation of NPC's can be difficult and overwhelming, in a pinch it can be useful to utilize tables to help with the process. If you find yourself struggling to construct your foundational elements of an NPC, try using the tables below as a source of inspiration.

Weakness

d10 Potential Weakness(es)

- 1 The character is very kind and struggles to hold a fist to those opposing them
- 2 The character is closed minded and struggles to adapt their lifestyle to whatever changes come in front of them.
- 3 The character is very dense and is not fond of newcomers to the town.
- 4 The character is often blunt and cold. Choosing to speak very few but meaningful words.
- 5 The character is aloft in their own head. They struggle to stay down to earth.
- 6 The character has a strong dislike for those who are poor. They regard most as beneath them.
- 7 The character has a strong dislike for those with more wealth than themselves. And frequently finds ways to believe everyone does.
- 8 The character cares only about their family and home and turns a blind eye to anything that doesn't interfere with those.
- 9 The character loves money. Regarding it as the most important element in their life.
- 10 This character is very cowardly, frequently opting to run away from anything that causes it adversity.



Need

d10 Potential Need(s)

- 1 The character needs a new job. Their current one holds them hostage to most misfortune they experience in their life.
- 2 The character needs someone to call family. They are missing genuine comradery in their life.
- 3 This character needs field-work experience. Their occupation has them kept up in an office or enclosed workspace, disabling them from progress.
- 4 The character needs to leave their relationship. Yey they are committed irrefutably.
- 5 This character needs to learn to adapt to a changing climate. They are slowly or have slowly been left in the past.
- 6 The character needs to leave town. The lifestyle of the environment is not beneficial to them.
- 7 The character needs a change in faith. Their devotion is bringing them great harm.
- 8 The character needs to build a new home. Their current one is a source of great stress.
- 9 The character needs to become more tolerant religiously or socially.
- 10 The character needs to destroy someone or something. A source of misfortune in its life.

Desire

d10 Potential Desire(s)

- 1 The character wants to gain more money. It would be very convenient to have right now.
- 2 The character wants to have a family. They may have a spouse and want kids– or any order of things.
- 3 The character wants some new cattle. Horses and sheep are particularly useful and meaningful to them.
- 4 The character wants to find love. Their love is far off in the distance, either metaphorically or literally. Despite this they yearn for them.
- 5 The character wishes to find a breakthrough in whatever their professional business is. They want to ‘make it big’ from the advancement.
- 6 The character wants to either become a political leader or make their own town.
- 7 The character wishes to become skilled in a form of combat. For either noble or mischievous means.
- 8 The character wishes to befriend a mysterious monster that lurks nearby. They have either encountered the beast or solely heard of it.
- 9 The character wishes to further their education. A dream of becoming a teacher for somewhere either elite or casual.
- 10 The character wishes to kill someone or something that causes great misfortune. They are willing to do whatever it takes.



Enemy

d10 Potential Enemy(/s)

- 1 A local occupational rival which contests them in the business market.
- 2 A bully who frequently blackmails the character for money or favors.
- 3 The town or city guard.
- 4 Local nobility who flaunt their higher wealth. Constantly reminding the character of their supposed 'shortcomings'.
- 5 A previous business partner who has recently found success through unlawful means.
- 6 A local hero who spreads bad word about the character wherever they travel.
- 7 A group of nearby bandits which have either recently or in the past causes strife for the character.
- 8 The character has a doppel-ganger who frequently impersonates them. The imposter causes great trouble whenever they do so.
- 9 A nearby monster who frequently takes a ransom from the character.
- 10 A sibling or family member who has either recently or previously committed great atrocity to the character or their close relations.

