

WORLDBUILDING SIMPLIFIED

Maps & Geography for Worldbuilders

Read more at Enter the Arcverse: www.enterthearcverse.com/worldbuilding

Sketch landscapes that inspire adventure.

Simple methods and creative ideas to map continents, cities, and secret places.

Introduction: Why Maps Matter

A map doesn't just show places — it **invites exploration**.

It whispers: *“What’s beyond this border? Who lives there? Why does this ruin sit at the edge of the desert?”*

Great maps don't need to be perfect or detailed.

They need to **spark ideas**.

They're tools for stories, not atlases for scholars.

This guide gives you **5 simple steps** to sketch a world that feels big, wild, and full of adventure — whether you're drawing by hand, digitally, or just imagining aloud.


Step 1: The Anchor Landmarks

 Ask:

“What are the 3-5 most important places in this world?”

Start small. Choose **a few key locations** that matter for stories:

- A capital city
- A forbidden mountain
- A lost ruin
- A sacred forest
- A pirate-controlled bay

 These anchors give your map structure and purpose.

Example:

In the Isles of Darre, the map begins with three landmarks: **the Skyspire city, the Moonshadow**

Forest, and the Sunken Temple of Khaz.

Step 2: The Terrain That Connects (or Divides)

👉 Ask:

“What natural features connect or block travel between these places?”

Draw what’s **between the landmarks**:

- Rivers
- Mountain ranges
- Deserts
- Swamps
- Canyons
- Storm seas

✅ Geography **shapes politics, trade, danger, and exploration.**

Example:

Between the Skyspire and Moonshadow lies **the Rift of Ash** — a volcanic canyon travelers must go around or brave crossing.

Step 3: The Dangerous or Mysterious Zones

👉 Ask:

“Where are the unknown, feared, or forbidden places?”

Great maps have **blank spaces and warning signs.**

- “Here be dragons”
- Ghost lands no one returns from
- Wild magic zones
- Collapsing kingdoms
- Untamed jungle
- A place erased from records

✅ This adds **mystery and hooks.** Not everything should be charted.

Example:

On Darre’s map, a shadowed area marked “**The Silence**” lies unexplored — no messenger ever returned.

Step 4: The Human (or Non-Human) Imprint

👉 Ask:

“Where do people live, trade, fight, or gather?”

Even a simple mark — a circle for towns, a triangle for forts — can show:

- Major cities
- Minor villages
- Ports
- Market hubs
- Holy sites
- Battlefields

✅ These details **turn a wild world into a lived-in one.**

Example:

The map of Darre shows small ports along the western coast, hinting at scattered fishing villages beyond the central empire's reach.

Step 5: The Travel Paths

👉 Ask:

“How do people move between places?”

Consider paths that shape journeys:

- Trade routes
- Pilgrimage roads
- Secret tunnels
- Skyship routes
- Caravan trails
- Bridges across canyons

✅ Routes add **adventure opportunities and practical logic.**

Example:

A winding trail called **“The Serpent’s Spine”** crosses the southern mountains — a risky but fastest way between the capital and the frontier.

✅ You’ve Sketched a World!

In 5 steps, you’ve shaped:

- 🎯 Anchor landmarks
- 🎯 Connecting (or dividing) terrain
- 🎯 Dangerous unknown zones
- 🎯 Settlements and human presence
- 🎯 Travel paths

👉 Together, these create a world **that feels explorable, knowable — but still mysterious.**

**A map is never just a picture. It’s a promise:
There’s something worth discovering here.
Enter the Arcverse.**

Explore more worldbuilding tools at www.enterthearcverse.com/worldbuilding

