

# THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE

**D**ungeons & Dragons 5th edition doesn't have an official Manual of the Planes and probably never will. This document is my attempt to define the D&D cosmology in an interesting way suited for 5e. I also attempt to introduce techniques to make the planes *feel* like different worlds, ideally in a way that DMs can use for their own campaigns.

Most of this document is my personal thoughts about how to run the planes. Like *Planescape*, it's best if you pick and choose what you see fit to use, ignore the rest, and fill the gaps with a bit of your own flavor.

## THE OUTER PLANES

Also known as outer, spiritual, divine, planes of thought, or, in academic circles, the metaphysical planes. There are many models that envision the "real" structure of the planes (most famously the Great Wheel and World Tree). All of these are correct and yet incorrect; the outer planes are places of contradiction. However they really work is beyond mortal knowledge.

The Astral Plane contains the outer planes "within" and yet outside itself. Think of these planes as unseen bubbles of stability in the void. The Astral and the outer planes are collectively known as the Astral Sea.

## MEMORY AND IDEAL

An outer plane epitomizes an ideal. After death, souls of the dead (known as petitioners) arrive at the plane best representing the ideal they held dearest in life. The memories these petitioners bring with them become part of the plane, giving form to it and the powers that live on it.

When a being held a specific object or place dear in life, it might manifest physically on the plane it reaches after death. A petitioner might bring with them the memory of a house where they lived, a building where they worked, or an item of personal significance.

The planes warp these things to reflect their nature. The recreation of a place may be adorned with beautiful sculpture in Celestia, overgrown with vibrant flowers in Arborea, warped and desecrated in the Abyss, or appear with spikes and chains bolted to it in the Nine Hells.

Memories need not be specific, nor detailed. The planes can create a forest, for instance, based on nothing but the memories of what a forest *should be like*. Blank spots in memories are filled in a similar fashion.

When the petitioners of a specific place (like a town or castle) held similar ideals in life, their memories might combine to form a recreation of this place. This isn't common, usually the memory recreations will be scattered about the planes alongside their petitioners. If this goes on for a long time, the petitioners bring with them memories of different times, and the recreation of this place becomes a bizarre combination of itself during many different points in time.

## LIVING ANOMALIES

In ancient times, there were barriers separating the outer planes, inner planes, and Prime Material. Old tales claim it was an ancient wizard, the illithid empire, or an old, forgotten god who eventually breached them. Whatever happened, the planes were laid bare for all to see.

The outer planes are welcoming towards those who conform to their nature and hostile towards those who do not. Sapient creatures find themselves at ease in planes of thought similar to theirs, and the planes morph and influence things in their favor in subtle ways. Naturally, they also make things very difficult for creatures with ideals opposing their nature. A plane can alter a creature's thoughts and even body to reflect itself, if they live on it for too long.

The closer a creature's ideal aligns with that of a plane, the closer they approach "becoming one" with the aforementioned plane. A creature in tune with a plane can manipulate the fabric of that plane with a thought.

It's possible for a concentration of living creatures, whose

### POWER OF BELIEF

Sapient creatures other than petitioners and (most) outsiders have plane-shaping powers on the outer plane that best matches their ideals.

When on your aligned plane, touching a nonliving object that isn't being worn or carried grants you the ability to move it or alter its shape within a 15-foot cube centered on yourself.

### TELEKINESIS

As an action, an object can be telekinetically moved with fine control, as long as it remains completely within the cube.

Objects of medium size or smaller in the cube can also be hurled with great force in a straight line up to 120 feet. If hurled at a creature, that creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw with a DC of 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your proficiency bonus, or be hit. The object deals 3d8 bludgeoning damage to whatever it hits.

### OBJECT SHAPING

With 1 minute of concentration, the shape of any nonmagical object within the cube can be altered down to a fine detail. It can be broken into pieces or merged with another object, but otherwise must maintain the same density, volume, and composition. If the object does not fully fit within the cube, then only the part inside the cube can be altered.

Concentrating on the cube for 1 hour causes the alterations to become permanent, and prevents any other creature from altering anything within the cube. Otherwise, it returns to its normal form after 1 day. Casting *dispel magic* makes material in 15-foot cube alterable again.

ideals don't match that of the plane, to cause a part of it to warp or break off entirely. When this happens, that part of the plane and anything on it is sucked into the Astral Plane, where it remains adrift or merges with another plane. This is a persistent problem for settlers.

## THE DEAD: PETITIONERS

Petitioners most often show up looking like idealized, neutral, or un-idealized versions of their mortal bodies. But like all things in the planes, there are exceptions. For instance, Arborean petitioners sometimes become elves, and Acheron's petitioners may arrive as goblinoids or orcs.

Evil souls bound to the fiendish planes may arrive in the River Styx, where they become lesser fiends instead of petitioners. The Styx also erases the memories of these souls, reducing them to a fine silt found in the river's depths. While the memory still exists as silt, the creature can still be resurrected, but doing so is much more difficult.

When a soul held a strong faith in life, the power they worship highest claims them for their home plane, or rejects them if it sees fit. In the same vein, when a soul held an especially strong bond with another in life, the powers of good or neutral planes might arrange for them to be reunited.

The dead gradually lose their memories of life. After 200 years, a soul no longer recalls any of their former life, and consequently cannot be resurrected through any known means. After this point, petitioners live out their afterlives for thousands of years before fading away and becoming a part of the plane itself.

When a petitioner is slain on its native plane, it disappears in a puff of mist and immediately reforms elsewhere on the plane. When slain outside its plane, however, a petitioner ceases to exist entirely and cannot be restored by any means except a *wish* spell. Petitioners cannot be involuntarily removed from their native planes.

## OTHER PLANES

Other planes aren't quite as complex as the outer planes. Except for the Prime Material, but you already know all about that one.

## THE INNER PLANES

Also known as the elemental planes, or, in academic circles, the fundamental planes. The inner planes contain the elemental building blocks of the universe.

The inner planes can be conceptualized as a sphere, with the Positive Energy Plane at the top, the Negative Energy Plane at the bottom, and the base elemental planes around the center. Between these planes are the para-elemental (between two elemental planes) and quasi-elemental (between one element and the Positive or Negative Energy Plane) planes. Any natural and inorganic state of matter can be found on the inner planes, expressed as a combination of energy and the four elements.

Inner planes resemble lands with an abundance of one specific element. The Plane of Water is a boundless ocean, the Plane of Air is a vast sky of floating islands, etc.

## PLANES OF PURE SUBSTANCE

The inner planes are simple places that reject the complexities of magic.

Unless the caster has magical protection, spells cast with a spell slot of 3rd level or lower (including cantrips) fizzle out, and the spell slots used to cast them are wasted.

The para-elemental planes are as follows:

- **Smoke**, the para-elemental plane of air and fire.
- **Mist**, the para-elemental plane of air and water.
- **Magma**, the para-elemental plane of earth and fire.
- **Ooze** (or **Mud**), the para-elemental plane of earth and water.

The quasi-elemental planes are as follows:

- **Lightning**, the positive quasi-elemental plane of air.
- **Crystal**, the positive quasi-elemental plane of earth.
- **Light** (or **Heat**), the positive quasi-elemental plane of fire.
- **Ice** (or **Cold**), the positive quasi-elemental plane of water.
- **Vacuum**, the negative quasi-elemental plane of air.
- **Sand** (or **Dust**), the negative quasi-elemental plane of earth.
- **Ash**, the negative quasi-elemental plane of fire.
- **Acid**, the negative quasi-elemental plane of water.

The Positive Energy plane is a place of energy and chaos, where enormous, violent storms of pure, colorful energy crash against all things. Don't be fooled by "Positive", the sheer energy of this place can quicken an unprotected creature's heartbeat until its heart explodes, make it burst into a mass of tumors, or cause any other manner of horrible death.

As you'd expect, the Negative Energy plane is the opposite of the Positive. It is a place of stillness and stagnation, where all things are gray and rotting. The Negative Energy plane can make an unprotected creature starve to death in less than a minute, or rot the flesh off its bones.

Because the inner planes are built of pure element, one can think of them as more "physical" than the prime material. In these planes, magic is difficult to cast without special tools.

## THE PRIME MATERIAL

Scholars debate whether there are multiple Prime Material planes, or if all worlds are part of the same Prime Material. No spells can take one directly from one Prime Material plane to another; a different plane must be used as a medium between them, unless a traveler finds a rare portal or travels through the phlogiston. For this reason, denizens of the primes are often ignorant of other material planes.

The material planes are built from the elements of the inner planes, but none maintain a perfect balance of all elements. A material plane with more inclination towards the plane of water, for instance, would have stronger rain and greater oceans.

Events of significance tend to reoccur in multiple material planes. The ancient war between giants and dragons has been observed in at least thirty-three planes, and the corruption of the clan Duergar has been observed in fourteen. Nobody really knows why this is.

## THE TRANSITIVE

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There are two transitive planes: The Ethereal, which joins the inner and material, and the Astral, which joins the material and outer.

In the Astral, travelers can reach other planes through color pools, one-way natural portals to any plane except the inner planes.

The Ethereal has two parts: the Border Ethereal and the Deep Ethereal. The Border Ethereal is where the Ethereal overlaps another plane. From here, travelers can reach the Deep Ethereal simply by willing it and walking forwards for a brief time.

The Deep Ethereal is a place where colorful proto-matter swirls and churns. From here, travelers can reach demiplanes or the Border Ethereal of other planes through the curtains of vaporous color. Getting from the Border to the plane itself is another matter.

Demiplanes originate from the Deep Ethereal, and are most often found there. Sages speculate that every plane began as a demiplane in the Deep Ethereal.

## BUILDING THE OUTER PLANES

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The Outer Planes are planes of thought, of ideals, of gods, and of the dead. Three types of being are native to the Outer Planes: *powers* (gods and other divines), *petitioners* (spirits of the dead), and *outsiders* (creatures native to the planes). Many creatures from the Prime Material planes make their homes here, as well.

Each outer plane is based on a specific ideal, and each has a unique trait that affects all creatures and petitioners within it. This is the main feature that sets them apart. No matter where you go on an outer plane, its ideal pervades all things.

## OTHER WORLDS

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A plane is like a dungeon: it shouldn't be a place where only one type of monster lives, sitting around and waiting to be murdered. Even the lower planes have ecosystems, climates, settlements, and factions of their own.

That being said, if you're visiting a forest on an outer plane, it ought to feel different than visiting any ordinary forest. The outer planes have some differences from the material:

- **Unfathomable.** Things like "physics" and "making sense" are more like suggestions in the outer planes (so are the rules of D&D, for that matter). There are no maps of the outer planes, because geography changes on a whim, and traveling is more a matter of using the right magic, appeasing the right powers, and knowing the right secrets.
- **Limitless.** Incomprehensible magic, impossible twists of space and time, and living things that shouldn't be alive are but a sampling of the weirdness one can expect on a journey through the outer planes.

- **Larger than Life.** Things in the outer planes are bigger and grander than those in the mortal world. A tower in the outer planes might rise far above the clouds. A field might be full of supernaturally vibrant flowers.
- **Mythic.** These are places where the gods walk. Slaying a powerful demon might imbue your sword with holy might. Drinking from a certain stream might cause you to age ten years. If it can happen in a real-world myth, it can happen in the outer planes.

## LAYERS OF THE OUTER PLANES

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Traditionally, the non-neutral planes have multiple layers. If you've ever read about them, you might wonder why- the layers seem like an unnecessary afterthought to most planes. Most of the planes have unremarkable layers that can easily be combined into a single layer without losing anything.

That isn't to say you shouldn't use them in your campaign, just that making use of the layers is a matter of preference. In a campaign about a long journey through the planes, for instance, it makes sense to use layers.

On the other hand, the layers tend to be single-climate worlds, like bad sci-fi planets. This never sat right with me. Worlds should have different parts. If you use the layers, consider creating homebrew layers.

## CHANGES

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The Feywild and Shadowfell are traditionally "echo planes", but in a *Planescape*-esque campaign, DMs might want to change them to outer planes.

The Feywild makes a good chaotic plane, and the Shadowfell, being a place souls pass through after death, already has a link to the outer planes.

Also, Limbo is virtually identical to the Elemental Chaos. In my own cosmologies, I've merged them together. If you're using the Great Wheel, Limbo's spot can be replaced with the Feywild or a homebrew plane.

## ALIGNMENT

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Law vs. Chaos was always kind of a silly thing. Nobody can agree on what makes a being lawful or chaotic, and the struggle of law and chaos comes off as very forced in *Planescape* material. With more nuanced characters coming into focus in modern D&D, it seems silly to use the traditional alignment system as the foundation of the planes or anything else. Perhaps I'll get some flak for this, but I feel it's best to just throw the whole thing out.

## INFINITY

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Common knowledge holds that the outer planes are infinite. This is true from the perspective of a person on them, who could walk forward for a million years and never reach the "edge" of a plane, because the morphic nature of the plane ensures there is no such edge.

The planes are unfathomably large, but not infinite. Nobody ever taught D&D writers the difference between "infinite" and "very big".

Is this just a pet peeve of mine that has no practical importance? Yes.

# INDEX OF THE OUTER PLANES

## UPPER PLANES

Planes of good. These planes are paradises compared to anywhere else in the universe, but they're not without their dark spots. Adventurers usually end up in said dark spots- after all, that's where the problems are.

Travel between the upper planes is *relatively* safe and easy, but even on the upper planes, the wilderness is not always kind. The River Oceanus flows from Elysium to Arborea, a useful passage across the enormous and unpredictable Beastlands. Any being (such as an angel) native to any of the upper planes can often be found traveling or living in any of the others.

The people of the upper planes are wary of mistakenly aiding evil causes. These planes rarely use any kind of currency, instead, inhabitants only lend aid and resources (beyond food, water, and shelter) to those who can prove themselves to be good.

Creatures born on these planes often gain the celestial type. Theoretically, you could summon normal beasts or common folk from the upper planes with spells like *conjure celestial*. Why you would *want* that is up to your imagination.

## NEUTRAL PLANES

Aside from beyond being neither good nor evil, the neutral planes have little in common with each other. In fact, the constructs of Mechanus and the slaadi of Limbo will attack each other on sight. Things that people of the Primes care little about can be matters of life and death on the neutral planes.

There are very few paths between any two neutral planes, as they tend to be distant from each other- except for the Outlands, of course.

I've included the Feywild and Shadowfell as neutral planes because that's how I use them. Feel free to ignore them.

## LOWER PLANES

Planes of evil. The lower planes are miserable places that few would dare set foot on. Any place of respite here is likely to be a trap or illusion. The Blood War has been raging for so long that nearly everything on the lower planes has been affected by it.

The River Styx connects all lower planes. Despite how it looks (disgusting and evil), it's by far the best method of navigating the lower planes, and a traveler would be wise to enlist the services of a merrenoloth to navigate it.

Devils, demons, and yugoloths are the most common of fiends, but by no means the only types. Succubi/incubi, rakshasas, demodands, night hags, cambions, and others all pose a threat to anyone visiting the lower planes.

In general, yugoloths and devils respect bargains and contracts, so a shrewd negotiator who has something they want might be able to make it through the lower planes relatively unscathed. Demons, on the other hand, can only be coerced with force.

Creatures born on these planes often gain the fiend type, so don't come to the lower planes if you're expecting.

## SIGIL

Atop the spire in the very center of the Outlands is the torus-city of Sigil, a place supposedly at the center of the universe.

There are untold thousands of portals to other planes in Sigil, all requiring gate keys to open, and a gate key can be a thought, an object, an action, or nearly anything else. Most of these gate keys are unknown to most citizens of Sigil- this city trades in gate keys, and to give away the secret of it is to devalue it.

Sigil is kept safe by the Lady of Pain, an extremely powerful and enigmatic figure. Anyone who crosses her or starts trouble in her city is quickly sent to a nigh-inescapable labyrinthine demiplane. Unfortunately, that includes good creatures who try to fix the poor conditions in Sigil (such as its pollution and many slums). She also controls the dabus, strange psychic goat-like creatures who keep the city in order.

Most of Sigil's denizens believe the Lady of Pain creates the portals, but there is no proof of this. If she does, it raises the questions of how and why.

Sigil is what defines a *Planescape* campaign. You can use it in any campaign, but the city is so complex that it feels like a whole campaign is needed to do it justice.

In previous editions, Sigil was located inside the torus, which was invincible and impenetrable and only accessible via portal. 5e seems to move it to the inner rim of the torus, making it accessible by flying upwards from the Outlands below. Which version you use is up to personal preference.

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## THE ASTRAL PLANE

The plane of thought. Here, the stone corpses of forgotten gods float through the void. The Astral is home to Githyanki conquerors and monstrous Astral Dreadnoughts. Magical anomalies and wizardry mistakes tend to send all manner of strange things here, too.

In the Astral, travelers can reach other planes through the color pools, one-way portals that can take a creature to any plane, except the inner planes. Color pools are almost always one-way, so be cautious before you enter one.

**Ideal:** N/A

**Trait:** While on the Astral Plane, a creature does not require food or drink and does not age. Its walking speed (in feet) is equal to 3 x its Intelligence score, and any other speeds it has cannot exceed this number.

### ASTRAL PROJECTION

According to real world myths, the Astral Plane is a realm of thought and spirit, encompassing the space between Heaven and Earth. The living use Astral Projection to visit this place in dreams, their souls connected to their bodies with silver cords.

In 5th edition D&D, the spell *astral projection* is, well, crap. With better means available for traveling the planes, it's unlikely that your PCs have much reason to visit. If your campaign makes use of the Astral or outer planes, consider changing the spell to a more reasonable level, or otherwise strengthening it (perhaps by making the cord extend into the outer planes?).



## ARBOREA

A plane of enormous, awe-inspiring nature, where trees grow to the height of mountains, mountains peak above the clouds, and auroras are always visible in the night sky. Arborea is a beautiful plane, but also an intense one, where emotions run high and everything seems to be infused with magic of one kind or another.

Arborea could be called a plane where civilization and nature co-exist, but it would be more accurate to say that nature is clearly in control. Settlements are built into the natural world, in the branches of great trees or in enormous natural caves. Most of Arborea is temperate forest and mountains, but rocks and dirt and trees come in different shapes and colors in each and every part of the plane. Narrow dirt paths are all that link one village to another.

Arborea is a land of abundance, where streams of fresh water and trees bearing delicious fruit can be found nearly everywhere. So abundant are food, drink, and pleasures, that celebrations and festivals are an almost daily occurrence for Arborea's inhabitants- but be careful, because non-natives often become so enraptured with the festivities that they pass

out or even die of exhaustion.

Virtually every square inch of the Arborean wilderness is claimed by some nature spirit or fey. Such beings are at best unpredictable, but generally reward those who appease them and punish those who do not.

Arborea is the home plane of the elves. The plane is still home to celestial eladrin, and is thought to have hidden paths into the Feywild. Also, petitioners to Arborea often find themselves transformed into elves or half-elves. Travelers beware, the natives of Arborea are dangerous when provoked.

Also on Arborea are the mysterious and elusive celestials known as asuras. They're said to know ancient magic, and might lend you their services... if you can find them.

**Ideal:** Freedom, self-determination for oneself and others.

**Trait:** Once per day, a creature can make a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check to appease the spirits of Arborea. On a success, it can add 1d4 to all ability checks and saving throws it makes within the next 8 hours. If it fails the check by 5 or more, it instead subtracts 1d4 from all ability checks and saving throws it makes within the next 8 hours, as the spirits take offense.



## ARCADIA

As the plane of common good, the petitioners of Arcadia are individuals who lived for the sake of their communities. The plane runs like a well-oiled machine. Everyone on Arcadia has a job to do that keeps the towns and cities in tip-top shape, and they're efficient enough at it that they quickly run out of things to improve and spend most of their time pursuing other interests.

Nature in Arcadia is subdued. The plane is made of mostly hilly terrain, flatlands, and ocean. Much of Arcadia's "natural" world is in fact imported from other planes- such as forests of enormous Arborean trees, meticulously organized. The river Alfeios flows through the entire plane, dividing the land into countless millions of hexagonal regions, each on average 5-6 square miles in size.

Arcadia's many towns are unions of function and strange form, most excessively ornamented or constructed with strange architecture by inhabitants with all too much time on their hands. The Arcadian winds and the flow of the river Alfeios provide enough power to automate anything that can

be automated.

While towns and villages tend to spring up naturally, the enormous cities of Arcadia are painstakingly planned out. Arcadian city-states are among the most impressive man-made wonders of the universe.

The plane has a bit of a dark side: Arcadia has a much higher tolerance for those with incompatible ideals than any other upper plane. The task of removing problem characters falls squarely on the shoulders of the Arcadians, who are often overzealous in their policing.

Arcadia is the native plane of the Formians, a race of ant-centaur people who live in enormous underground colonies. Formians have a strict caste system, and unlike Arcadian petitioners, they aren't strictly good-aligned.

**Ideal:** Common Good, community working together for the sake of each other.

**Trait:** On Arcadia, any creature that can already speak at least one language is fluent in Arcadian, a spoken and written language.



## THE BEASTLANDS

The Beastlands is the plane of endless wilderness, where one can walk for a thousand years and never encounter another living person. Any settlements here are temporary places built by beings from other planes, and the Beastlands does not take kindly to such places.

Every species of non-magical beast or plant that has ever existed on any Prime Material- including the giant ones- can be found somewhere in the Beastlands, along with the biomes they live in. What's more, they're all about twice the size of their non-celestial counterparts, and far tougher.

Petitioners to the Beastlands lose their humanoid forms, but retain their intelligence and ability to speak, and gain the

ability to polymorph into any beast at will. The Beastlands are also home to the rare celestial beasts: giant, intelligent, good-aligned beasts (sometimes called guardinals), identifiable by their bright white and gold coloration. The most powerful of the celestial beasts are half-animal, half-humanoid beings called the animal lords.

Petitioners and celestial beasts know their way through the Beastlands by instinct. To anyone who ends up lost in the Beastlands, the guidance of these beings may be the only way out- and finding one of them could take months.

**Ideal:** Nature, reverence for the natural world.

**Trait:** *Hunter's Paradise* and *Beast Transformation*, as described on page 60 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## BYTOPIA

Bytopia is a world in two parts: Dothion and Shurrock. These two lands are opposite each other: one can see the surface of Shurrock by looking up while on Dothion and vice versa.

Gravity reverses at the exact midpoint between the two lands of Bytopia, which is about three miles above ground level on either side. Both lands are connected by massive spires of rock, which can be climbed to get from one side to the other.

Dothion is the "lower" part of the plane. It is an idyllic land, where the weather is mild and the wilderness is kind. Inhabitants of Dothion live rural lives/afterlives, simple and pleasant. Many are farmers, and the harvest is always bountiful. Most of the rest live in cities.

The "upper" part of the plane, Shurrock, stands in stark contrast to Dothion. The wilds of Shurrock are hostile, and the climate harsh. Taking a trip to Shurrock unprepared is a good way to die. Petitioners who die on Shurrock will reform on Dothion, but others who die there will not.

Not only that, but Shurrock is regularly battered by intense storms. These great storms cover all of Shurrock in storm clouds, tearing the land apart with winds and hail and earthquakes and all manner of destructive weather. To

survive during these storms is nearly impossible.

Shurrock's great storms last for 80 days without fail, and a new storm begins 80 days after the end of the previous one. When the storm clears, Shurrock reappears almost completely untarnished.

Shurrock is, however, brimming with treasures of all kinds. Game, wood, ores, gemstones, useful plants, and even rare monsters can all be found in large quantities. Every time the storm clears, excursions of hardy Bytopians make their way to Shurrock in search of its many bounties. So lucrative are these excursions that Bytopia is known to produce more magic items than any other plane.

Dothion is unaffected by the dangers of Shurrock, which most Bytopians rarely if ever visit. Those who would venture to Shurrock spend the storms using the materials their previous excursion to prepare for the next.

Bytopia is the home plane of the gnomes, and petitioners to Bytopia often find themselves transformed into gnomes.

**Ideal:** Diligence, in pursuit of good.

**Trait:** On Bytopia, creatures have advantage on saving throws against exhaustion, unless caused by magical means.



## MOUNT CELESTIA

When most people think of the upper planes, they think of Celestia. While Elysium is the plane of ultimate good, Celestia is the plane of all that is holy. There is no greater monument to goodness in the universe than the glory of Mount Celestia.

Celestia is often envisioned as having seven plateaus. In fact, it has only one plateau, wide as a continent at the base of the mountain, rising upwards ever so slightly and spiraling around the mountain seven times before reaching the top. Pilgrims to Celestia spend many years walking up the mountain, everyone else flies or uses portals.

At the bottom of the mountain lies the Silver Sea, an ocean of holy water that holds more life than the actual mountain. It's an effective deterrent against unholy fiends and undead, who find themselves waist-deep in deadly holy water the instant they step onto the plane.

At nearly every place in Celestia, enormous monuments of one kind or another can be seen in the distance. Structures of all kinds are adorned with sculpture and art, built of the white marble-like rock that the mountain is comprised of.

Celestia is home of the Angels, the universe's champions of good. Devas, planetars, and solars are the most well-known of the angels, but there are many other types, most of them bizarre and terrifying. The angels are immensely powerful

but few in number. They prefer to act in secret, nudging events into motion in order to destroy evil wherever it rears its ugly head. Many adventuring parties never discover that they've been guided by an angel in secret.

The 7 layers of Celestia, from bottom to top, are: Lunia (the Silver Heaven), Mercuria (the Golden Heaven), Venya (the Pearly Heaven), Solania (the Crystal Heaven), Mertion (the Platinum Heaven), Jovar (the Glittering Heaven), and Chronias (the Illuminated Heaven). Lunia contains the Silver Sea and the base of the mountain.

Chronias, at the very top, is a beacon of light for the rest of the plane. Nobody knows what Chronias is like, because only the worthiest are permitted entry, and they never return. Anyone else who enters is forever destroyed, body and soul, which occasionally proves to be a useful way of permanently destroying fiends.

Celestia is the home plane of dwarves and halflings. It's uncommon for petitioners to be transformed into dwarves or halflings, but it does happen.

**Ideal:** Virtue, righteousness, adherence to a code of morals.

**Trait:** Illusion magic does not work on Celestia. If a creature attempts to tell a lie, it must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or suffer mental anguish and become unable to speak for the next hour.



## ELYSIUM

The ultimate plane of joy and goodness. Merely being on this tranquil plane is enough to make a person happy.

Elysium is an idyllic landscape of flowery fields and gentle, rolling hills. Except for some oceans, there aren't other biomes like there are in other planes. Creatures in this plane simply find themselves comfortable in the environment of Elysium. Also, all creatures on the plane can breathe both air and water.

Petitioners to Elysium tend to be good-hearted individuals who had a poor lot in life. Those who ascend to Elysium when they die include the unfortunate who remained selfless in the face of their own suffering, and those who gave everything they had for the cause of good.

The whole plane feels like a massive garden, or perhaps a painting of an idealized world. Petitioners have no homes, and few if any material possessions. Instead, they simply go where they please, and the land provides for them. Elysium is

like a vision of a world where all evil and selfishness has been wiped out, and only goodness remains.

Oddly enough, this plane can be dangerous for adventurers. Elysium uses its morphic nature to put fiends and other intruders in the same place as the heroes and celestials capable of destroying them. The more powerful a visitor is, the more Elysium seems like it's become infested with evil— but it's actually just using them to take out its trash.

Celestial beasts from the Beastlands are more often found in Elysium, a welcome refuge from the loneliness of their home plane. They return to the Beastlands every so often to breed and raise their young.

**Ideal:** Goodness, in its purest form, and the desire to spread joy to others.

**Trait:** On Elysium, any creature can expend up to half its hit dice as an action, and is automatically stabilized when knocked unconscious.



## YSGARD

Ysgard, the plane of courage and glory. Despite its title of "the Heroic Domains", Ysgard is among the least good of the upper planes. Still, it's ultimately a plane of good, so one can expect the inhabitants to be reasonable.

Well, kind of. On Ysgard, all sapient creatures slain on the plane the previous day return to life in a safe place at dawn (except for constructs, fiends, undead, and creatures who died of natural causes). The only way to prevent this is by banishing their souls from the plane, and doing this to a non-evil creature is a good way to get the same thing done to you.

Ysgardians know this, and they love nothing more than a challenge. Ordinary, nonthreatening folk are usually safe, but when a Ysgardian sees a target that looks like a challenge, expect a fight to the death unless you can convince them to back off. At least they usually leave you with your things.

Settlements are considered no-kill zones, where inhabitants feast and drink and celebrate. Anyone who tries to start trouble in these places is swiftly dealt with.

The plane itself is a land of enormous islands floating through the sky. Ysgard contains the crown of Yggdrasil,

where all the branches of the World Tree converge. Also on Ysgard is the Gates of the Moon, a large and watery island that contains the base of the infinite staircase in its center.

Some of the floating islands of Ysgard are uninhabitable places teeming with monstrosities, providing a challenge for those warriors who would rather test their mettle against great beasts and mindless hordes. These islands repopulate themselves every night through unknown means—some say that the islands of Ysgard have minds of their own.

There is solid land below the clouds, but it is a dark, rocky, and sparsely populated place with dark caves and rivers of molten lava. Still, there's valuable minerals to be found there, and races that live underground find it nice.

Ysgard is home to many flying creatures useful for getting around, including pegasi. Airships are also common. Bariaurs, a race of goat-centaurs (though they resent the comparison) live on the plane, and have little patience for Ysgardians looking for kills.

**Ideal:** Courage, bravery, glory.

**Trait:** *Immortal Wrath*, as described on page 61 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## THE FEYWILD

More than any other plane, the Feywild is a place of extremes. Every inch of the plane teems with life of all kinds, nearly all of it magical in nature. Anyone who casts a *detect magic* spell on the Feywild will most likely sense around two hundred different sources of magic just by standing still. There's no such thing as "mild" in the Feywild.

Powerful fey will toy with others however they see fit, and how they see fit is completely arbitrary and changes all the time. Travelers can be rewarded with a great feast for flattering them, turned into frogs for looking at them funny, or really have anything done to them for any reason.

Many have theorized that the Feywild is the source of all

magic. There's no proof of this, so as far as anyone can tell, the plane just has an impossible amount of magic in it.

As its name implies, the Feywild is the home plane of the fey. The elves lived here for many thousands of years after their exile from Arborea, and eladrin can still be found in the Feywild.

**Ideal:** No limits. Freedom from all constraints, whether good or ill.

**Trait:** In the Feywild, spells are treated as if cast two levels higher than the spell slot expended to cast them. Optionally, *Memory Loss*, as described on page 50 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## LIMBO

Limbo is certainly the strangest of the planes. It's nothing more than a chaotic jumble of elements and proto-matter. Anything that exists here was created out of chaos by someone or something, and will one day return to chaos.

Scholars debate if Limbo is a true outer plane. It has its share of strange creatures, but if any of them are petitioners, nobody's been able to prove it. Some go as far as to say that Limbo was the first plane, from which the multiverse was created. Most scholars don't put much stock in that theory, though.

Modrons and other creatures from Mechanus often experiment in Limbo in an attempt to introduce order to it, attempts which usually fail. The slaadi are a strange

byproduct one such attempt by Primus, lord of all Modrons, to introduce order to the plane. Most say it was a failure, but the slaadi are certainly more organized than the pure chaos they were made of.

Githzerai are much more successful at creating order from the chaos of Limbo. There's settlements from other creatures in Limbo, but they lack the abilities of the githzerai. These places often require at least one person keeping them stable at all times, and are often drastically rearranged when that person forgets where things go, or simply gets bored.

**Ideal:** Disorder, lawlessness, chaos in its purest form.

**Trait:** *Power of the Mind*, as described on pages 61-62 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## MECHANUS

Each and every gear of Mechanus has two surfaces, and each surface has its own gravity, climate, and native life. Gears reach a minimum size of about 100 feet, and a maximum of about 500 miles. Anyone traveling from one surface to the other has to be careful to avoid being crushed.

It's gears as far as the eye can see in Mechanus. Light comes from seemingly nowhere and touches all things on the plane from all directions. This can be quite disorienting to visitors, but not as disorienting as looking up and seeing thousands of moving parts instead of a sky. Each day, the plane experiences 6 hours of dawn, 6 of daylight, 6 of dusk, and 6 of dark, despite the absence of a sun.

Traveling across moving gears is a dangerous and difficult task. Most travel is done either by flight or through a labyrinthine maze of portals connecting the major gears.

The modrons are native to Mechanus, where their job is to keep all things running. Above the pentadrones in rank are the modron hierarchs, powerful and super-intelligent beings who control the Modron race and much of Mechanus, each rank more powerful and more humanoid than the last. They possess free will but rarely turn against their nature.

Mechanus is the origin plane of construct magic. If one takes apart any of the clockwork wonders of the plane, they'll find construct magic keeping it running, rather than any feat

of engineering. That isn't to say construct magic doesn't require some complex math on its own, because it very much does.

In fact, sects of monks and scholars on Mechanus study the mathematics that keep the plane running in order to achieve an enlightened state of being.

On Mechanus, a visitor can find mechanical weapons, tools, and even replacement limbs. Modron hierarchs have been known to, on occasion, award small squads of Modrons to those who aid their cause of order.

Just make sure you understand the many, *many* laws of the plane, or you'll be quickly arrested for some reason or another. Mechanus may be the only plane in the universe where lawyers double as tour guides.

**Ideal:** Order, rules and logic above all.

**Trait:** Once per short rest, a creature can use its action to make a DC 18 Intelligence check to discern the elaborate mathematical patterns of the plane. On a success, it (assuming a PC) can ask the DM a question about something nearby on Mechanus it wouldn't otherwise know (ex. "is the key to this door nearby?"). The DM should not be deliberately misleading, but they may give an incomplete answer or no answer at all if the scope of the question is too broad. Non-PCs just know things when they succeed on the check.



## THE OUTLANDS

Petitioners to the Outlands are unremarkable common folk who didn't believe strongly in anything. The plane looks like your average Prime Material, with only a few significant differences (aside from the usual traits of outer planes).

Firstly, the plane still has a morphic nature, making maps impossible and travel a crapshoot if you don't know what you're doing. That said, you'll usually run into a town or village within a week or so of travel, and they can point you in the right direction.

Secondly, because it represents no ideal, portals to other planes (outside of Sigil) warp their immediate area in the Outlands to reflect the plane that they lead to. Anyone can identify a portal and the plane it goes to from miles away.

Thirdly, the Outlands rejects no creature. Angels, devils, elementals, fey, modrons, slaadi, and even yugoloths can be found here, albeit in small numbers. That isn't to say that the people of the Outlands feel the same as their plane. Violence is always looked upon poorly, and Outlanders will kill or imprison anything that gets violent for unjustifiable reasons. Demons are generally kill-on-sight, because their destructive natures are uncontrollable.

And lastly, Sigil sits in the center of the plane. Sigil may be part of the Outlands, but it's a whole different beast, and it plays by its own rules.

**Ideal:** Lack of an ideal altogether.

**Trait:** Excessive time spent on the outlands does not warp a creature's mind or body in the way other outer planes do.



## THE SHADOWFELL

The Shadowfell is an anomaly among the planes, because all mortal souls pass through it in some way upon death. Those who stay are those who resist or refuse to accept death, or cling to some unfinished business in life.

If these trapped souls learn to accept their fate, they leave the Shadowfell to become petitioners on their proper planes. Those who continue to reject death are warped, body and soul, into terrible monsters.

Well, that or the Raven Queen takes them, and nobody really knows why. Souls she takes still make their way to their proper planes eventually. Her servants, the Shadar-Kai,

are cold and emotionless, but not evil, which makes them the nicest of the races that live here.

The Shadowfell is technically a neutral plane- not evil in nature, but it certainly attracts evil. Regardless, it's a miserable place to be, and anyone who would here live either has a very good reason, or is completely mad.

**Ideal:** Death.

**Trait:** In the Shadowfell, creatures have disadvantage on death saving throws. Anything that dies here rises as an undead (usually a zombie) within 1 minute, unless it was already undead or otherwise incapable of becoming undead.



## THE ABYSS

Nobody knows how many layers the Abyss really has, but at least 663 have been discovered. The demons of the Abyss outnumber all other fiends combined, and only their constant infighting and the devils of the Nine Hells prevent them from overrunning and destroying the universe.

In the Abyss, everything is warped, rotted, decayed, or corroded. Even the palaces of demon lords look like ancient ruins. A visitor would be *lucky* to end up on a layer infested with demons, because any layer that even demons avoid is likely to kill a person the instant they set foot on it.

Without a demon lord to keep them in line, demons slaughter each other. The plane has developed its own horrifying ecosystem, complete with evil beasts, demons who hunt other demons, and even fiendish flora.

Petitioners to the Abyss always arrive as lesser demons,

but the Abyss cranks out demons even without mortal souls. One must imagine that becoming a demon is a merciful afterlife for a sinner, as they are most often quickly destroyed, sparing their souls the torments of the lower planes. Perhaps the whole plane is a cosmic trash heap, for souls better disposed of than punished.

According to the devils, the Abyss was once a simpler plane, like Hades or Carceri. By some cosmic mistake (some say an incursion from another universe by beings known as Obyriths), reality was torn asunder in that plane, and the Abyss came to be. Of course, that's if you believe the devils, and they aren't exactly known for telling the truth.

**Ideal:** Depravity, debauchery, rage, giving in to one's worst impulses and temptations.

**Trait:** Any non-undead corpse or severed body part in the Abyss rapidly decomposes, turning to ash after one round.



## ACHERON

A plane of great cubes and other massive solids, floating through the void and crashing into each other again and again. Acheron is a plane forever at war, where petitioners die and return only to die again. The sounds of battle and the loud clang of cubes crashing into each other can be heard everywhere on the plane.

This plane is what awaits most orcs and goblinoids after death. The two races are locked in perpetual conflict, like a microcosm of the Blood War. Petitioners may be turned into orcs or goblinoids on arrival- depending on which side has fewer troops at the moment. Duergar are also common.

The cubes aren't hell-worlds like one would expect from a lower plane. Their surfaces look like normal worlds, albeit devastated by war. Some of the cubes are secretly hollow.

Travel between the cubes is difficult and often requires portals. Said portals are of extreme strategic value, and usually have fortresses built around them by the orcs, goblinoids, or any kind of third party looking to profiteer.

The frozen Ocanthus is thought to be the final destination of the River Styx and the memories of the dead that it holds. Atop this unfathomably large ice block is the city of Zoronor, home to the bladelings- a dangerous race of assassins and mercenaries. Many yugoloths sell their services on Acheron, and devils sometimes use it as a training ground.

**Ideal:** War, nationalism, asserting superiority through battle.

**Trait:** *Bloodlust*, as described on page 66 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## CARCERI

Carceri, the prison plane. It is not full of prisons, but rather it *is* a prison. While it's actually the least dangerous of the lower planes to live in (except maybe Acheron), travelers fear it above any other plane, and for good reason- Carceri blocks all attempts to escape it, except for a few very specific portals (all secret and heavily guarded), or the River Styx, either of which is very likely to kill anyone who tries to use them. A *wish* spell also works.

The plane itself is enormous, being made of long strings of planets, each as big as a Prime Material planet, and each with its own deadly biome, be it a swamp, jungle, desert, tundra, or wasteland. Planets are close enough for a flying creature to fly from one to the next, but there's few if any portals between them. Anyone who can't fly is out of luck- and petitioners are stripped of any such abilities.

Fiendish beasts are common on some of the planets of Carceri, but sapient beings are not. The souls trapped here are ceaselessly tormented by the horrible environments. They rarely encounter other inhabitants, and when they *do*, they tend to stab them in the back. It is the plane of treachery, after all.

Carceri is home to the demodands (also known as

gehreleths), disgusting and misshapen fiends. The demodands act like prison guards- working to stop any escape attempts, and sometimes violently beating prisoners just for kicks. Apart from that, demodands don't really care about Carceri's inhabitants. They can be reasoned with, but it's their nature to betray you after making a promise even if they have nothing to gain from doing so. They're also a cowardly lot who are easily intimidated.

Also on Carceri are the stone titans, enormous beings of rock, each of which stands *at least* 1000 feet tall and comes in a bizarre form unique to itself. They don't seem to be intelligent, spending their days causing random destruction out of what looks to be little more than boredom. They also predate recorded history, and nobody knows where they come from.

Fortunately for travelers, stone titans are very rare, and usually attack each other on sight. Some titan corpses have been hollowed out by various creatures and used as settlements or fortresses.

**Ideal:** Treachery, betrayal, manipulation, and abuse of the trust of others.

**Trait:** *Prison Plane*, as described on page 63 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## GEHENNA

Gehenna is a rocky land of unfathomably large volcanoes, some active and constantly erupting, and some frigid and dead. Gehenna periodically rains acid (or snows acid in colder areas). There's few places on the plane that won't kill a person within a matter of minutes.

There's also no flat surfaces on the entire plane, save for artificially created ones. For that matter, slopes gentler than 45 degrees are very rare. The "flat" land at the base of the volcanoes is always either molten lava, lakes of acid, or covered in deadly obsidian spikes, any of which a traveler could end up in if they can't stop themselves after they slip and fall.

Yugoloths are native to Gehenna, but they prefer to work out of Hades, in part because that's where the action is and in part because a yugoloth slain on Gehenna dies permanently. Still, because getting from any given location in Gehenna to Hades is no easy task, they have settlements built and waypoints set up all over the plane, pointing the way to the

river Styx. Of course, they don't work out of Hades exclusively- yugoloths will sell their services to anyone who pays them enough.

Wandering the plane is the Crawling City, a massive city with thousands of legs grafted to it. The city is home to the General of Gehenna, the most powerful of the yugoloth race, and it sells the most powerful weapons and mercenary services money can buy.

Were the Blood War to ever end, the yugoloths would be enslaved and slaughtered, either for double-dealing or just for existing. As long as the Blood War continues, however, the yugoloths prosper. It's not difficult to imagine that they've been balancing the scales the whole time.

**Ideal:** Want, insatiable desire to the detriment of all else.

**Trait:** When a creature other than a fiend regains hit points via a spell on Gehenna, a willing creature within 60 feet must take damage equal to the amount healed. Resurrected creatures return to life at 0 hit points and unstable.



## HADES

The plane of ultimate evil. Hades is a place of misery and ruin, with very little color. Most of the plane is covered in gray ash which, when inhaled, causes many different diseases, all of them excruciatingly painful and deadly. To say nothing of the mental stress- even being on the plane causes severe depression.

If that weren't bad enough, Hades is also the main stage of the Blood War. Nearly any combatant involved in it will attempt to kill a traveler on sight, and they don't fear death, knowing that they'll simply regenerate on their home plane if slain. The only way to reason with them is promising them something valuable they can't simply take off your corpse, and they will make absolutely sure you hold up your end of the bargain.

Hades is the polar opposite of Elysium, and like Elysium, it uses its morphic nature to its advantage. Anything good or even neutral on the plane quickly finds itself face to face with fiends and dangers capable of destroying it.

The Blood War can't do any damage to the plane itself, because being a horrible wasteland is its natural state. The entire plane feels like a world after the apocalypse, after all light and life has been forever extinguished. Hades is not a plane ruled by evil, but a plane that represents the natural and final conclusion of all evil.

On Hades can be found the remains of forests that never lived, and the ruins of cities that were never built. The only living things on this plane other than unfortunate travelers are fiends, including the helpless larvae that its petitioners are often transformed into.

Hades is home to the night hags, the cruelest of all the hags. Yugoloths live in Gehenna, but are more common on Hades.

**Ideal:** Evil, in its purest form, and the desire to spread misery to others.

**Trait:** *Vile Transformation*, as described on page 63 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Fiends and undead are immune to this trait.



## THE NINE HELLS

The Nine Hells, plane of tyranny. The devils' existence is one part Blood War, one part internal affairs as they navigate their own politics and bureaucracy.

Asmodeous runs the hells in a bizarrely randian fashion. Competition is encouraged, rather than strict obedience to one's superiors. Said competition usually involves backstabbing and sabotage rather than any kind of efficiency, but for whatever reason, Asmodeous doesn't seem bothered by this. Perhaps the possibility of promotion keeps the rank and file from revolting.

Of course, it's still mostly fascism. Dissent is suppressed, punishments are severe, and every populated part of the plane is riddled with monuments to the devils' power.

Unlike the Abyss, many petitioners arrive in the Nine Hells without becoming fiends, and are subsequently enslaved alongside any living creatures the devils can get their hands on. These petitioners are usually transformed into tieflings.

Devils see the Abyss as unnatural blight on reality. From their point of view, they are the true fiends, and the lower planes rightfully belong to them just as the upper planes "belong" to the angels. The Abyss, they reason, is an

unnatural blight on the perfect order of the universe, and it's their duty to correct that error. And then take over the universe after they've done that.

The war effort is what keeps the plane running. If the demons were destroyed, the war machine of the Hells would turn on the celestials, and so on until they controlled all things and then turned on themselves in a bloody civil war. The Nine Hells needs war.

Fortunately for everyone else, the devils are no closer to defeating the Abyss than they were 10,000 years ago. If anything, they're on the defensive side more often than not—but who knows what tricks Asmodeous has up his sleeve.

**Ideal:** Wickedness, premeditated cruelty and corruption.

**Trait:** At the end of each long rest on this plane, a visitor must make a DC 10 Wisdom save or sprout horns and a tail. While in this cursed state, any other creature can use its action to force the victim to make a Wisdom (Insight) check contested by its own Charisma (Intimidation) check. If it wins, the victim must follow its orders to the letter until the end of its next turn, unless such orders are obviously harmful to itself. A *dispel evil and good* spell removes this effect.



## PANDEMONIUM

The plane of madness and obsession. Serial killers, demented grudge-holders, and mad wizards are the types of people who end up in Pandemonium when they die.

Pandemonium is an impossibly large labyrinth of cavernous tunnels. Exits exist, but serve only to give the souls trapped here the false hope they need to continue wandering the maddening caverns. The maze even changes behind a person's back. Finding a way out is a matter of extreme luck.

Gravity in Pandemonium always points to the nearest cavern wall, allowing people to walk on any surface and ensuring that nobody knows which way "up" is. If that doesn't drive an unfortunate visitor mad, the intense winds that

batter every part of the plane probably will. Wandering around the maze, a person has very little chance of encountering another living being, except for the native howlers, who will tear them apart on sight.

The river Styx forms here out of many tributaries, all localized to a small part of the plane which is impossible to find without a guide. The small amount of civilization that exists on Pandemonium is found in this part of the plane.

Pandemonium is used as a prison for unspeakable horrors that can't be contained anywhere else.

**Ideal:** Madness, brought about by obsession.

**Trait:** *Mad Winds*, as described on page 62 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

