

# PATHFINDER® CHARACTER TRAITS WEB ENHANCEMENT

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# PATHFINDER CHARACTER TRAITS

## CHARACTER TRAITS

Playing an Adventure Path is a different experience than playing in a one-shot adventure. An Adventure Path presents a long, ongoing campaign, but unlike a custom-created campaign built by a specific GM for a group of players whose tastes and proclivities in character creation are known quantities, we don't know what kinds of choices your players prefer when building their characters. As a result, one of the driving philosophies of crafting an Adventure Path is to include sections for all 11 of the core classes, so that no one feels "left out" by the game.

But what about the less tangible elements of game play? If you're rolling up a new character for a homebrew campaign, you can (hopefully) trust your GM to tailor the campaign to include your character and his history and personality. For an Adventure Path, though, how is a player to know what choices and what backgrounds might dovetail into the predetermined story arc of the campaign he's about to spend several months playing, without spoiling key components of the adventure's plotline?

That's the question that the Adventure Path Player's Guides have attempted to address. In all of the Player's Guides we attempt to provide not only a gazetteer of the region in which the campaign begins, but also a spoiler-free discussion on what choices might be best to make when creating a dwarf, an elf, a sorcerer, a ranger, and so on. Yet there's another tool that's been evolving as well: the character trait.

The first incarnation of this new element to your character appeared in the *Rise of the Runelords* Player's Guide, disguised as six new feats that your new character could take (we recommended that GMs allow players to pick one of these six as a bonus feat). These new feats were more than just additional tricks and powers, though; they were crafted to infuse newly created characters with built-in links to the then brand-new realm of Varisia.

In the *Curse of the Crimson Throne* Player's Guide, we abandoned the bonus feat model and instead came up with several traits from which new players could pick and choose. Each trait granted one of two relatively minor bonuses, but the majority of each trait consisted of flavor and background information intended to prime your new character for the start of the campaign.

And that brings us here, to the official Pathfinder character traits PDF. This document contains all the rules you need to use character traits in your campaign, be they Pathfinder Adventure Paths or campaigns of your own design.

## Character Trait Design Philosophy

At its core, a character trait is approximately equal in power to half a feat—in fact, at one point, we considered calling them "Half Feats" but abandoned that idea when we realized it implied a point-based system that didn't really exist (there's no such thing, for example, as a "Double Feat"). Yet a character trait isn't just another kind of power you can add on to your character—it's a way to quantify (and encourage) building a character background that fits into the world of Golarion. Think of character traits as "story seeds" for your background; after you pick your two traits, you'll have a point of inspiration from which to build your character's personality and history. Alternatively, if you've already got a background in your head or written down for your character, you can view picking his traits as a way to quantify that background, just as picking race and class and ability scores quantifies his other strengths and weaknesses.

One more thing: character traits are for PCs. If you want an NPC to have traits, that NPC will need to "buy" them with the Additional Traits feat. Player characters are special; they're the stars of the game, after all, and if they have an advantage over the NPCs of the world in this way, that kind of makes sense. The pregenerated characters presented in Pathfinder and the modules will not have bonus traits selected for them—we're leaving those choices to you if you wish to use one of them as a PC.

Many traits grant a new type of bonus: a "trait" bonus. Trait bonuses do not stack—they're intended to give you a slight edge over the non-PCs of the world, not a secret backdoor way to focus all your traits on one type of bonus to gain an unseemly advantage over the rules. It's certainly possible, for example, that somewhere down the line, a "Courageous" trait might be on the list of dwarf race traits, but just because this trait's on the dwarf race traits list and the basic combat traits list doesn't mean you're any more brave if you choose both than if you choose only one.

## Gaining Traits

When you create your character for a campaign, ask your GM how many traits you can select. In most cases, a new PC should gain two traits, effectively gaining a bonus feat at character creation. Some GMs may wish to limit this somewhat, depending upon their style of play; you may only be able to pick one trait, or your GM might allow three or more. Even if your GM doesn't allow bonus traits, you should still be able to pick up some with the





Additional Traits feat (see the sidebar on page 6). For Pathfinder Adventure Paths, there are two categories of traits to choose from. One of your traits must be a campaign trait chosen from the list given in that Adventure Path's Player's Guide—this trait ties your character into the campaign's storyline and gives you a built-in reason to begin the first adventure. Your other trait can be chosen from one of the other types of traits: basic traits, region traits, race traits, or religion traits.

## Types of Traits

There are five types of character traits to choose from. This document presents only one category—the basic trait. The other four types of traits can all be found in Pathfinder Companions.

**Basic Traits:** There are a total of 40 basic traits—ten each, split among the categories of Combat, Faith, Magic, and Social. Note that each of these four categories roughly equates to the four modes of adventuring, but aren't tied to specific classes. It's perfectly possible to have a religious rogue, for example, or a magic-obsessed fighter. Basic traits are “generic,” and should be able to fit into any campaign setting with a minimum of customization.

**Campaign Traits:** These traits are specifically tailored to give new characters an instant hook into a new Adventure Path. Campaign traits tailored to a specific Adventure Path can always be found in that Adventure Path's Player's Guide.

**Race Traits:** Race traits are keyed to specific races or ethnicities. In order to select a race trait, your character must be of the trait's race or ethnicity. If your race or ethnicity changes at some later point (as could be possible due to the result of polymorph magic or a *reincarnation* spell), the benefits gained by your racial trait persist—only if your mind and memories change as well do you lose the benefits of a race trait. Of course, in such an event, you're also likely to lose skills, feats, and a whole lot more!

**Regional Traits:** Regional traits are keyed to specific regions, be they large (such as a nation or geographic region) or small (such as a city or a specific mountain). In order to select a regional trait, your PC must have spent at least a year living in that region. At first level, you can only select one regional trait (typically the one tied to your character's place of birth or homeland), despite the number of regions you might wish to write into your character's background.

**Religion Traits:** Religion traits indicate that your character has an established faith in a specific deity; you need not be a member of a class that can wield divine magic to pick a religion trait, but you do have to have a patron deity and have some amount of religion in your background to justify this trait. Unlike the other categories of traits,

religion traits can go away if you abandon your religion, as detailed below under Restrictions.

## Restrictions on Trait Selection

There are a few rules governing trait selections. To begin with, your GM controls how many bonus traits a PC begins with; the default assumption is two traits. When selecting traits, you may not select more than one from the same list of traits. Certain types of traits may have additional requirements, as detailed in the section above.

Remember also that traits are intended to model events that were formative in your character's development, either before he became an adventurer, or (in the case of additional traits gained via the Additional Traits feat) events that happened while adventuring. Even if you become a hermit and abandon society, you'll still retain your legacy of growing up an aristocrat if you took a social trait. The one exception to this is religion traits—since these traits require continued faith in a specific deity, you can indeed lose the benefits of these traits if you switch religions. In this case, consult your GM for your options. He may simply rule that you lose that trait, or he might allow you to pick a new religion trait tied to your new deity. Another option is that if you abandon a religion, you lose the associated religion traits until you gain an experience level, at which point you may replace lost religion traits with basic faith traits.

## BASIC TRAITS

These traits are broken down into four categories. Combat traits focus on martial and physical aspects of your character's background. Faith traits focus on his religious and philosophical leanings. Magic traits focus on any magical events or training he may have had in his past. And Social traits is both a catch-all category and one that indicates what social class or upbringing your PC had.

## Combat Traits

These traits are associated with combat, battle, and physical prowess; they give characters minor bonuses in battle and represent conflicts and physical struggles in the character's backstory.

**1 Anatomist:** You have studied the workings of anatomy, either as a student at university or as an apprentice mortician or necromancer. You know where to aim your blows to strike vital organs and you gain a +1 trait bonus on all rolls made to confirm critical hits.

**2 Armor Expert:** You have worn armor as long as you can remember, either as part of your training to become a knight's squire or simply because you were seeking to emulate a hero. Your childhood armor wasn't the real thing as far as protection, but it did encumber you as much as real armor would have, and you've grown used to



moving in such suits with relative grace. When you wear armor of any sort, reduce that suit's armor check penalty by 1, to a minimum check penalty of 0.

**3 Bullied:** You were bullied often as a child, and you are now constantly ready to defend yourself with your fists when an enemy comes near. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attacks of opportunity attack rolls made with unarmed strikes. Note that this trait does not grant the ability to make attacks of opportunity with your unarmed strikes—you'll need to take a level of monk, the Improved Unarmed Strike feat, or some other similar power to gain the use of this character trait. However, that doesn't prevent you from selecting this trait. You'll simply not be able to make use of it until a later point if you do.

**4 Courageous:** Your childhood was brutal, yet you persevered primarily through force of will and the hope that no matter how hard things might get, as long as you kept a level head you'd make it through. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

**5 Deft Dodger:** Growing up in a rough neighborhood or a dangerous environment has honed your senses. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Reflex saves.

**6 Dirty Fighter:** You wouldn't have lived to make it out of childhood without the aid of a sibling, friend, or companion on whom you could always count to distract your enemies long enough to do a little bit more damage than normal. That companion may be another PC or an NPC (who may even be recently departed from your side). When you hit a foe you are flanking, you deal an additional 1 point of damage (this damage is added to your base damage, and is multiplied on a critical hit). This additional damage is a trait bonus.

**7 Fencer:** You trained long hours as a youth with blades, either taking lessons in the genteel art of fencing from tutors paid for by your parents or by being taken under the wing of a disenfranchised fencer who may have turned to a life of crime. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attacks of opportunity made with daggers, swords, and similar bladed weapons.

**8 Killer:** You made your first kill at a very young age and found the task of war or murder to your liking. You either take particular pride in a well-placed blow, or vile pleasure in such a strike as you twist the blade to maximize the pain. You deal additional damage equal to your weapon's critical hit modifier when you score a successful critical hit with a weapon; this additional damage is added to the final total, and is not multiplied by the critical hit multiple itself. This extra damage is a trait bonus.

**9 Reactionary:** You were bullied often as a child, but never quite developed an offensive response. Instead, you became adept at anticipating sudden attacks and reacting to danger quickly. You gain a +2 trait bonus to Initiative checks.

**10 Resilient:** Growing up in a violent neighborhood or in the unforgiving wilds often forced you to subsist on food and water from doubtful sources. You've built up your mettle as a result, and gain a +1 trait bonus on Fortitude saves.

## Faith Traits

These traits rely upon conviction of spirit, perception, and religion, but are not directly tied to the worship of a specific deity. You do not need a patron deity to gain a Faith Trait, as these traits can represent conviction in one's self or philosophy just as easily as they can represent dedication to a deity.

**1 Birthmark:** You were born with a strange birthmark that looks very similar to the holy symbol of the god you chose to worship later in life. This birthmark can serve you as a divine focus for casting spells, and, as a physical manifestation of your faith, increases your devotion to your god—you gain a +2 trait bonus on all saving throws against charm and compulsion effects as a result.

**2 Caretaker:** As the child of an herbalist or an assistant in a temple infirmary, you often had to assist in tending to the sick and wounded. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Heal checks, and Heal is always a class skill for you.

**3 Child of the Temple:** You have long served at a temple in a city, and not only did you pick up on many of the nobility's customs, you spent much time in the temple libraries studying your faith. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (nobility and royalty) and Knowledge (religion) checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

**4 Devotee of the Green:** Your faith in the natural world or one of the gods of nature makes it easy for you to pick up on related concepts. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (geography) and Knowledge (nature) checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

**5 Ease of Faith:** Your mentor, the person who invested your faith in you from an early age, took steps to ensure that you understood that what powers your divine magic is no different than that which powers the magic of other religions. This philosophy makes it easier for you to interact with others who may not share your views. You gain a +1 bonus on Diplomacy checks, and Diplomacy is always a class skill for you.

**6 History of Heresy:** You were raised with heretical views that have made it not only difficult for you to accept most religious beliefs, but you also have had to live with the fact that you or those you love were often treated as pariahs. As a result, you have turned your back on religious teachings, and as long as you do not possess any levels in a class that grants divine spellcasting power, you gain a +1 trait bonus on all saving throws made against divine spells.





**7 Indomitable Faith:** You were born in a region where your faith was not popular, yet you never abandoned it. Your constant struggle to maintain your own faith has bolstered your drive; you gain a +1 trait bonus on Will saves as a result.

**8 Sacred Conduit:** Your birth was particularly painful and difficult for your mother, who needed potent divine magic to ensure you survived; your mother may or may not have survived. In any event, the magic infused you from an early age, and you now channel divine energy with greater ease than most. Whenever you channel divine energy to turn or rebuke undead, you gain a +2 trait bonus on the Turn/Rebuke Undead check.

**9 Sacred Touch:** You were exposed to a potent source of positive energy as a child, perhaps by being born under the right cosmic sign, or maybe because one of your parents was a gifted healer. As a standard action, you may automatically stabilize a dying creature merely by touching it.

**10 Scholar of the Great Beyond:** Your great interests as a child did not lie with current events or the mundane—you have always felt out of place, as if you were born in the wrong era. You take to philosophical discussions of the Great Beyond and of historical events with ease. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (the planes) checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

## Magic Traits

These traits are associated with magic, and focus on spellcasting and manipulating magic. You need not be a spellcaster to take a Magic Trait (although several of these traits aren't as useful to non-spellcasters). Magic Traits can represent a character's early exposure to magical effects or childhood studies of magic.

**1 Classically Schooled:** Your apprenticeship or early education was particularly focused on the direct application of magic. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Spellcraft checks, and Spellcraft is always a class skill for you.

**2 Dangerously Curious:** You have always been intrigued by magic, possibly because you were the child of a magician or priest. You often snuck into your parent's laboratory or shrine to tinker with spell components and magic devices, and often caused quite a bit of damage and headaches for your parent as a result. You gain a +1 bonus on Use Magic Device checks, and Use Magic Device is always a class skill for you.

**3 Focused Mind:** Your childhood was either dominated by lessons of some sort (be they musical or academic) or by a horrible home life that encouraged your ability to block out distractions to focus on the immediate task at hand. You gain a +1 bonus on Concentration checks, and Concentration is always a class skill for you.

**4 Gifted Adept:** Your interest in magic was inspired by witnessing a spell being cast in a particularly dramatic method, perhaps even one that affected you physically or spiritually. This early exposure to magic has made it easier for you to work similar magic on your own. Pick one spell when you choose this trait—from this point on, whenever you cast that spell, its effects manifest at +1 caster level.

**5 Hedge Magician:** You apprenticed for a time to a craftsman who often built magic items, and he taught you many handy shortcuts and cost-saving techniques. Whenever you craft a magic item, you reduce the cost of gp and XP required to make the item by 5%.

**6 Magical Knack:** You were raised, either wholly or in part, by a magical creature, either after it found you abandoned in the woods or because your parents often left you in the care of a magical minion. This constant exposure to magic has made its mysteries easy for you to understand, even when you turn your mind to other devotions and tasks. Pick a class when you gain this trait—your caster level in that class gains a +2 trait bonus as long as this bonus doesn't increase your caster level higher than your current Hit Dice.

**7 Magical Lineage:** One of your parents was a gifted spellcaster who not only used metamagic often, but developed many magical items and perhaps even a new spell or two—and you have inherited a fragment of this greatness. Pick one spell when you choose this trait. When you apply metamagic feats to this spell, treat its actual level as 1 lower for determining the spell's final adjusted level.

**8 Magical Talent:** Either from inborn talent, whimsy of the gods, or obsessive study of strange tomes, you have mastered the use of a cantrip. Choose a 0-level spell. You may cast that spell once per day as a spell-like ability. This spell-like ability is cast at your highest caster level gained; if you have no caster level, it functions at CL 1st. The spell-like ability's Save DC is Charisma-based.

**9 Mathematical Prodigy:** Mathematics has always come easily for you, and you have always been able to “see the math” in the physical and magical world. You gain a +1 bonus on Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (architecture and engineering) checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

**10 Skeptic:** Growing up, you were always around magical effects to the extent that you realized that much of it was smoke and mirrors. You gain a +2 trait bonus on all saving throws against illusions.

## Social Traits

Social Traits are a sort of catch-all category—these traits reflect the social upbringing of your character, your background with high society or lack thereof, and your





history with parents, siblings, friends, competitors, and enemies.

**1 Adopted:** You were adopted and raised by someone not of your actual race, and raised in a society not your own. As a result, you picked up a race trait from your adoptive parents and society, and may immediately select a race trait from your adoptive parents' race. Race traits can be found in Pathfinder Companion products—if you don't have access to a selection of race traits, it's best to simply pick a different social feat.

**2 Bully:** You grew up in an environment where the meek were ignored and you often had to resort to threats or violence to be heard. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Intimidate checks, and Intimidate is always a class skill for you.

**3 Canter:** You grew up among thieves and scoundrels, and their unusual speech patterns and turns of phrase don't phase you in the slightest today as a result. Anyone who attempts to use Bluff to deliver a secret message to you gains a +5 bonus on his Bluff check. When you attempt to intercept a secret message using Sense Motive, you gain a +5 trait bonus on the attempt.

**4 Charming:** Blessed with good looks, you've come to depend on the fact that others find you attractive. You gain a +1 trait bonus when you use Bluff or Diplomacy on a character that is (or could be) sexually attracted to you, and a +1 trait bonus to the save DC of any language-dependent spell you cast on such characters or creatures.

**5 Child of the Streets:** You grew up on the streets of a large city, and as a result you have developed a knack of knowing where to go and who to talk to when you're looking for some information. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Gather Information checks, and Gather Information is always a class skill for you.

**6 Fast-Talker:** You had a knack at getting yourself into trouble as a child, and as a result developed a silver tongue at an early age. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff checks, and Bluff is always a class skill for you.

**7 Natural-Born Leader:** You've always found yourself in positions where others look up to you as a leader, and you can distinctly remember an event from your early childhood where you led several other children to accomplish a goal that each of you individually could not. All cohorts, followers, or summoned creatures under your leadership gain a +1 morale bonus on Will saves to avoid mind-affecting effects. If you ever take the Leadership feat, you gain a +1 trait bonus to your Leadership score.

**8 Poverty-Stricken:** Your childhood was tough, and your parents had to make every copper piece count. Hunger was your constant companion, and you often had to live off the land or sleep in the wild. You gain a +1 bonus to Survival checks, and Survival is always a class skill for you.

**9 Rich Parents:** You were born into a rich family, perhaps even the nobility, and even though you turned to a life of adventure anyway, you enjoyed a one-time benefit to your initial finances and your starting cash increases to 900 gp.

**10 Suspicious:** You discovered at an early age that someone you trusted, perhaps an older sibling or a parent, had lied to you, and often, about something you had taken for granted, leaving you quick to question the claims of others. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Sense Motive checks, and Sense Motive is always a class skill for you.

## NEW FEAT: ADDITIONAL TRAITS

You have more traits than normal.

**Benefit:** You gain two character traits of your choice. These traits must be chosen from different lists, and cannot be chosen from lists from which you have already selected a character trait. You must meet any additional qualifications for the character traits you choose—this feat cannot enable you to select a dwarf character trait if you are an elf, for example.

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