

Empire Builder

Thieves Guild Details

The Thieves Guild. The name conjures up a myriad of images. From dashing charming rogues to devilish and evil thieves who take what they want, when they want.

Some call them trouble makers, others see them as a valuable if contradictory dangerous, resources.

Whatever their reason for being, wherever you find people gathered together in large towns and cities, you will often find a guild and this publication is here to help give you some starting points to build from.

If you need a name for your Thieves' guild, Ennead games have a Quick Generator that can give you some ideas.

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Created by

Chris Kentlea

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Artwork**

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Empire Builder – Thieves Guild Details

Introduction

Setting up a guild or any organisation for your story or game can be a struggle, especially if you have no idea where to start. This publication is made to help you create a starting point for your TG, to help give you a core around which you can build something amazing for your world.

You probably won't need to use all the tables in this publication, but, if you do, be warned some result may at first glance appear to contradict each other.

For example, the [age] aspect may give you the "1d4 weeks" but the [numbers] aspect tells you that there are several thousand members. Normally that would not be possible, but one possible explanation would be that the guild was once another organisation that decided to become the guild – The guild itself would then still be quite young, but legitimately have thousands of members.

If you are still stuck with what the random rolls give you, don't forget you can pick from the tables instead, or even come up with your own. Think of what is presented here as a starting point for your own ideas and don't be afraid to change, tweak or alter them for your world and story.

Aspects

There are 20 aspects found in this generator. They range from telling you the age of the guild to the favoured weapon, their operating rules and more.

Each table is a d20 table. Some of the entries are duplicated to increase the chances of a particular result being rolled on.

D20	Aspect
1	Age
2	Current Goal
3	Fee
4	Leader
5	Leadership Style
6	Location of HQ
7	Major Event
8	Members
9	Numbers
10	Preferred Crime
11	Primary Rule(s)
12	Security
13	Services
14	Standing
15	Symbol
16	Targets
17	Training/Skill Quality
18	Typical Gear
19	Wealth
20	Weapon of Choice

Age

This tells you the age of the guild. It can be used to determine the time for other factors as well, such as how long ago the leadership style changed or a major event occurred, in which case using a smaller dice like a d10 can produce a more realistic time frame.

Current Goal

Thieves guilds have many goals that are ongoing, but there is normally one or two that is their primary focus.

Fee

The guild has to have their cut. This pay for services, bribes, materials and so on. This can either be a % fee of any guild-sanctioned income or a flat amount, normally per month. The higher the rank the more you pay, but the more chances for incomes and services you have access to.

Leader

Very few organisations can survive for long without a leader of some kind. It might be one person, two, a small council of the most senior staff or a form of democracy where “everyone is equal...but some are more equal than others”

Leadership Style

This gives you a good overview of the style of leadership. Strictly speaking, they would not be like this 100% of the time, but if you had to use one word to describe the leaders, this would be it.

Location of HQ

Where is the headquarters of the guild? Whilst they may have secondary offices or locations around the city or country, where is their leadership located?

Major Event

What was the last major event that occurred related to the guild? Was one of the leaders or other prominent members arrested or was something stolen...from them!

Members

Where, primarily, does the guild draw its membership from? Some guilds have a “recruit anyone who passes checks” policy, whilst others restrict themselves to a more particular group.

Numbers

This gives you a vague idea of how many active fee-paying members are currently in the guild right now. This number will change over time of course, but it gives you a rough idea.

Preferred Crime

Some guilds specialise in theft, others in illegal gambling. Most guilds dabble in all of the possible crimes, but seem to prefer one over another as it's their main source of income,

Primary Rule(s)

Every guild has rules that they expect their member to follow. Some rules are much more important to them than others, for various reasons. One guild might wish to not physically harm anyone, whilst another might want their thieves to never take everything from a mark.

Security

The guild HQ, or it's branch offices, will have some form of security, even if it's just a locked door and a password.

Services

Guilds offer many services to their members, from alibis, to help fencing goods. This aspect tells you the ones that the guild will always have on offer, with the others being situational.

Standing

The guild is not the only group in town. For the various other factions or groups, this will tell you their standing. This aspect is a little different as with the others you would generally roll once or twice, but this one could be different for each group or faction. The authorities may hate the guild, but the merchant's guild might love them, for some odd reason...

Symbol

A simple symbol that represents the guild. A few guilds don't have a symbol, but having some covert way of identifying themselves is always helpful

Targets

This aspect you would roll twice. Once to signify their primary choice of marks, the second to say who they will prefer to not target.

Training/Skill Quality

Just how good is the skill level of the typical member of the guild or the quality of any training they offer?

Typical Gear

What is the typical gear a member of this guild uses?

Wealth

How wealthy is the guild? Do they have enough money to fill a vault or are their destitute and in desperate need of income?

Weapon of Choice

Most thieves are in it for the acquisition of wealth, but they know that a weapon of some kind is essential, even if it just for bluff or intimidation purposes. This aspect tells you what they typically use as a weapon, either to attack or defend themselves.

As mentioned before, use these aspects as a starting point for your own guild. Expand on them, add to them, come up with your own and make your guild unique to your world.

Age

D20	Age
1	1d4 weeks
2	2d4 weeks
3	1d12 months
4	1 year
5	1d4 years
6	2d4 years
7	2d6 years
8	2d10 years
9	4d10 years
10	6d10 years
11	8d10 years
12	10d10 years
13	1d4 centuries
14	2d4 centuries
15	4d4 centuries
16	6d4 centuries
17	8d4 centuries
18	1,000 + years ago
19	Since before recorded history
20	Unknown

For this aspect, you can roll twice.
Once for actual age, a second time for the age they tell people, to throw them off the scent or to improve their reputation.

Younger Guilds

Roll a d10 or d12 instead of a d20 to determine what bracket the guild falls into.

Older guilds

Roll a d10 again, but add +5 or +10 to the result, to a max of 20.

Current Goal

D20	Current Goal
1	Chaos
2	Equality
3	Freedom
4	Growth
5	Harassment
6	Liberation
7	Major Heist
8	Named Item
9	Named Target
10	Rebellion
11	Recon
12	Revenge
13	Sabotage
14	Scouting for targets
15	Trade domination
16	Trade sabotage
17	Wealth (any)
18	Wealth (careful acquisition)
19	Wealth (rapid acquisition)
20	Wealth (slow acquisition)

Once the current goal is met or fails, then this aspect can be rolled for again. The default is normally [Wealth (careful acquisition)].

If you need a time period for the current plan, roll a d6 on the [Age] table and use the time period suggested there.

Fee

D20	Fee
1	1%
2	2%
3	3%
4	4%
5	5%
6	6%
7	7%
8	8%
9	9%
10	10%
11	10
12	20
13	30
14	40
15	50
16	60
17	70
18	80
19	90
20	100

The fee structure listed above is divided into two possible types: percentage (%) and per month.

For %, this is the amount the guild takes from any guild sanctioned or supplied activity, plus their fee for fencing, mark up for goods etc. Use a d10 and roll on this table to determine just the fee % they add to services, goods etc.

The second block is a monthly fee based on the most appropriate currency (gold, silver etc). The higher the rank, the more this amount goes up. E.G If the fee is 20 coins a month and you are the second rank, your fee would be 40 coins.

Leader

D20	Leader
1	Time spent in TG
2	Pseudo-Democracy
3	Meritocracy
4	Secret patron
5	Rotating
6	Auction
7	Lottery
8	Competition/Event
9	Pseudo-Democracy
10	Family
11	Hidden/Mystery
12	Small council (3 -5)
13	Small council (3 -5)
14	Small council (3 -5)
15	2 Joint-leaders
16	2 Joint-leaders
17	2 Joint-leaders
18	Single Leader
19	Single Leader
20	Single Leader

Most of these entries are self-explanatory. A few might require further explanation.

Auction

Whoever can offer up the most funds, via an auction/bidding session is the leader for the next time period. This can be done as an individual or a group.

Hidden/mystery

No-one really knows who the true leader is, or the leader is a weird/exotic monster, or something unusual. Use this option to be really creative and unique, but if you can't think of one, go with a single leader as it is the default.

Leadership Style

D20	Leadership style
1	Brutish
2	Careless
3	Caring
4	Cautious
5	Chaotic
6	Charming
7	Cryptic
8	Dangerous
9	Focused
10	Generous
11	Gentle
12	Insane
13	Laissez-faire
14	Megalomaniac
15	Open
16	Optimistic
17	Paternal
18	Pessimistic
19	Ruthless
20	Strict

Once you have a leader, you need to know what their style of leadership is. As mentioned in the introduction this will not be their behaviour every day, but the one-word description that would best describe them. No-one would be brutish every day, but over the length of their leadership you could say “Yes, old Burt was a bit of a brute, but they got things done...”

It’s best to roll on this table when a major event has occurred, such as a change in leadership or something else.

Location of HQ

D20	HQ Location
1	Bank/Vault
2	Barn
3	Barracks
4	Brothel
5	Cave
6	Docks
7	Farm
8	Forest hideout
9	Natural Cave
10	No fixed abode
11	Orphanage
12	Prison
13	Private club
14	Private Mansion
15	Restaurant
16	School
17	Sewer Complex
18	Slaughterhouse
19	Tavern/Inn
20	Zoo/menagerie

The list above is just some possible examples of where a guild could be located. Like their members, the HQ of a guild would be unique and different. Even “branch offices” of the same guild would be different, with, for example, the main might be in a mansion, with another in the neighbouring town in a school.

One possible way around things is that the location above is not always the location of the guild, but where the main entrance to it is located.

Major Event

D20	Major Event
1	Arrest
2	Beaten to it
3	Betrayed
4	Blamed for something
5	Heist of the century
6	Helped the authorities
7	In over their heads
8	Infiltrated
9	Leader Changed
10	Leader Killed
11	Major crime failure
12	Major crime success
13	Moved HQ
14	Popularity Change
15	Promotion of member
16	Scam did to them
17	Take over another group
18	Taken over
19	Theft
20	Turf war

Major events do not occur all the time unless the guild is cursed/blessed by some deity or powerful spellcaster.

Each of these events can be expanded and used for an adventure hook.

If you need to determine the time between events, roll a d6 on the [Age] aspect table and use the result given there.

Something else to consider is that minor versions of these events can occur as well. The Turf war might just be two gangs having a rumble, the leader killed might turn into an injury and so on.

Members

D20	Members
1	Conscripted
2	Convicted criminals
3	Escaped slaves
4	Ex-military
5	Invited
6	Invited
7	Invited
8	Lower class
9	Lower class
10	Merchants
11	Middle class
12	Named race/species
13	Nobles
14	Non-nobles
15	Non-nobles
16	Only a certain gender
17	Refuges
18	Servants
19	Trade
20	Upper class

This is one of those aspects where you would want to roll twice. The first time to determine the primary targets for members are.

The second time would be those whom the guild does not want to recruit, for various reasons.

If you get the same result for both, either pick or roll again, or alternatively, come up with a way of saying why this contradiction exists. For example, if you get “non-nobles” for both options, they might recruit non-nobles based on political allegiances and refuse non-nobles who are known to support the “wrong” people.

Numbers

D20	Numbers
1	unknown
2	less than 10
3	1d10
4	2d10
5	3d10
6	4d10
7	5d10
8	6d10
9	7d10
10	8d10
11	9d10
12	1d10 x 10
13	2d10 x 10
14	3d10 x 10
15	4d10 x 10
16	6d10 x 10
17	8d10 x 10
18	10d10 x 10
19	1d4 thousand
20	2d4 thousand

If you have a rough idea of the size of the guild already, roll a different dice to determine the rough numbers of the guild.

Small Sized guilds

Roll a d6

Medium Sized Guilds

Roll 2d10

Large Sized Guilds

Roll a d20 but add +5 to the result, up to a maximum value of 20.

Preferred Crime

D20	Preferred Crime
1	Blackmailing
2	Burglary
3	Character Assassination
4	Con-tricks
5	Counterfeiting
6	Embezzlement
7	Extortion
8	Fencing
9	Forgery
10	Framing
11	Gambling
12	Illegal Goods
13	Impersonation
14	Money Laundering
15	Mugging
16	Pickpocket
17	Protection Racket
18	Shoplifting
19	Smuggling
20	Scams

As mentioned before, a successful guild will have their fingers in many pies, but often prefer to do one or two above all else. This could be that it is easier for them, it makes them the most money or any other reason.

For this aspect, you may wish to roll two or three times, for secondary or tertiary preferences. If their primary choice is not possible right now, they would focus on the secondary and so on.

Primary Rule(s)

D20	Primary Rules
1	Always alone
2	Always in pairs
3	No witnesses
4	No-one killed
5	No-one harmed
6	Wear a disguise
7	Leave no mess
8	Never harm pets
9	Leave nothing valuable
10	Never take everything
11	Minimal damage
12	No-one killed
13	If caught, you get no help
14	Always alone
15	Wear a disguise
16	Leave no evidence
17	Take no more than half
18	Take no personal items
19	Do nothing to harm guild rep
20	Do what you will as long as the guild gets it cut

As with some other aspects, this is one you would probably roll multiple times on, re-rolling duplicates.

The first one, the primary rule, is the most important and breaking this would result in the harshest punishments, such as expulsion from the guild as a minimum or having a bounty put on your head. Ironically, in the thief's guild, the price of breaking the rules is sometimes harsher than when the laws of the land are broken.

Security

D20	Security
1	A lock on the door
2	Animals
3	Arcane wards
4	Background checks
5	Challenge/Response
6	Frisk/Body searching
7	Guards
8	Illusions
9	Lookouts
10	None to speak of
11	Passwords
12	Psionics
13	Recommendations
14	Secret Entrance
15	Secret Handshakes
16	Secrets Knocks
17	Tamed/Controlled Monsters
18	Thieves Cant/Language
19	Threats
20	Token/Item required

As with any secret organisation, the guild would often have more than one form of security. For this, you can roll 1d4 times. Normally it would be suggested to re-roll duplicates, but in this case, having multiple of the same security type would sometimes make sense, such as multiple handshakes, or many guards and so on.

The only exception being [none to speak of]. If you get that as one of the rolls it might apply to only one area of the guild, rather than the guild as a whole, a weak link in the security measures.

Services

D20	Services
1	Alibis
2	Apparel/Clothing
3	Appraisal
4	Assistance
5	Bribes
6	Contacts
7	Disguises
8	Emergency Financial Assistance
9	Fencing
10	Food/Drink
11	Identification
12	Job Assistance
13	Leads
14	Legal Assistance
15	Loans
16	Lodging
17	Medical
18	Repairs
19	Tools
20	Training/Mentoring

This table you would typically roll 1d4 times. Larger and/or more wealthy guilds would have more services on offer.

For smaller guilds, this could represent the services they have available right now for a reasonable rate. They might be able to offer the others, but it could take longer or the price is much higher.

Some services may even be rank/standing within the guild related, with lowly scrubs getting the bare minimum and those at the top having access to all.

Standing

D20	Standing
1	Arrested/Attacked on sight
2	Hated by all
3	Hated by all
4	Despised by most
5	Despised by most
6	More disliked
7	More disliked
8	Tolerated (reluctantly)
9	Equal like/dislike
10	Equal like/dislike
11	Equal like/dislike
12	Tolerated
13	More liked
14	More liked
15	Liked by most
16	Liked by most
17	Only a few dislikes them
18	Often Ignored
19	Can do no wrong
20	In charge of things

This is one of the aspects that you would roll on multiple times, generally once for each group that interacts with or has knowledge of the guild. The default is [equal like/dislike] if in any doubt.

As well as the targets of the guild, other examples of who they might interact with or have standing with can also include:

Assassins, merchants, police/watch, explorers, cleaners, doctors etc.

Symbol

D20	Symbol
1	Amulet
2	Arrow
3	Boot/Shoe
4	Broken Lock
5	Coin purse
6	Crow/Raven
7	Dagger
8	Eye
9	Fish
10	Flame
11	Gemstone
12	Humanoid skull.
13	Key
14	Lockpick
15	Mask
16	Rat
17	Spider
18	Treasure Chest
19	Two coins
20	Two daggers crossed

This aspect tells you the basis of the guild symbol. Something to bear in mind is that two guilds who have the same base symbol would still have variations between them.

For example, two competing guilds in the same city have the Mask element as their symbol. One might be simple and crude, the other complex and elegant, yet both are still using a mask as the design.

If you wish, you can combine two symbols to make a more complex one and of course, don't forget you can use your own symbols. In doing so, remember the design should be something most people can recognise at a glance and be connected in some way to the guild of thievery in general.

Targets

D20	Targets
1	Adventurers
2	Any local
3	Artisans
4	Artists
5	Clerics/Priests
6	Guards/Police
7	Merchants
8	Named profession
9	Named race
10	Nobles
11	Non-guild Thieves
12	Old people
13	Politicians
14	Poor
15	Rich
16	Sailors/Fishers etc
17	Soldiers/Military
18	Tourists
19	Young people
20	Other not listed/Roll twice and combine

This aspect you would roll twice on. The first roll determines the primary targets, the ones that, all other options being equal, are the preferred targets of the guild.

The second roll tells you who they prefer not to target.

If there is a duplication of results then either reroll/pick another one or try to come up with a reason why the conflict exists. It might be, that, if for example politicians were rolled twice, they only target those with a political leaning/party membership and leave those alone who might help their cause.

Training/Skill Quality

D20	Training/skill
1	Practically non-existent
2	An hour at most
3	Very bad
4	Bad
5	Sub-par
6	Below average
7	Below average
8	Below average
9	Average
10	Average
11	Average
12	Average
13	Above average
14	Above average
15	Above average
16	Good
17	Very good
18	Excellent
19	Hard to be better
20	World class

The training/skill quality of the guild can be important. It gives you an idea of how good the guild is regarded as a whole.

You might wish to roll multiple times on this aspect. The first would indicate the guild as a whole, with the subsequent rolls reflecting individual members.

Generally speaking, when rolling for individuals, you would add a bonus to the roll for the higher ranked members, reflecting the fact that those who are skilled rise to the top.

But what if the guild leader had very bad skills? How are they the leader?

Typical Gear

D20	Typical gear
1	Acid Vial
2	Caltrops
3	Chalk
4	Climbing gear
5	Cloak
6	Crowbar
7	Dust
8	Emergency currency
9	File
10	Glass cutter
11	Gloves
12	Key making set
13	Lantern
14	Lockpick
15	Mask
16	Mirror
17	Shuttered lamp
18	Silenced armor
19	Wax
20	Wire cutters

The typical gear aspect is one you would roll 1d4 times on, rerolling duplicates.

The gear they have is normally of decent quality, but a down on its luck member or guild would often have sub-par equipment, especially in the lower ranks.

This can also be used to determine what an individual might have on them if encountered. Keep in mind that they would normally have any gear appropriate for the current job, this would be in addition to that, a part of their standard equipment.

Wealth

D20	Wealth
1	Practically nothing
2	Only a few coins
3	Enough to fill a purse
4	Enough to fill several purses
5	Can fill a small chest
6	Can fill a small chest
7	Can fill a medium chest
8	Can fill a medium chest
9	Can fill a large chest
10	Can fill a large chest
11	Can fill 2 larges chests
12	Can fill 2 larges chests
13	Can fill several large chests
14	Can fill several large chests
15	Can fill several large chests
16	We need a vault now
17	Vault is half filled
18	Vault filled 3/4
19	A filled vault is a happy one
20	Effectively unlimited

Some say the measure of success for the guild is in their coffers. A full vault is a happy vault, as the saying goes.

Older and more successful guilds tend to have more wealth. If they weren't successful, they wouldn't still be around, now would they?

What the vault is filled with is another matter, as not all valuables are coins, but gemstones, artwork and other collectables are often stored securely.

Weapon of Choice

D20	Weapon of choice
1	Axe
2	Axe (throwing)
3	Blackjack
4	Blackjack
5	Blow-darts
6	Brass knuckles
7	Brass knuckles
8	Clubs
9	Clubs
10	Crossbows
11	Dagger (serrated)
12	Daggers (standard)
13	Daggers (standard)
14	Daggers (Throwing)
15	Garrotte
16	Hammer
17	Mace
18	Rapiers
19	Shorts swords
20	Staff

Whilst most thieves don't subscribe to killing their marks (after all if you do kill them, you can't rob them again and security tends to be stricter next time), they all know that having at least one weapon on them at all times is a prudent measure. It can be used to defend, to distract, or even as a makeshift tool in certain circumstances.

Some guilds though prefer their members to use certain types of weapons when on the job. Most of the time they are permitted to use others, but the weapon rolled on the table above is the one they prefer you to use.