

Chapter 2: Character Creation and Races

The world of Dust to Dust is one of consensual reality. Players and staffers work together in order to create a solid, consistent, and intriguing world in which the stories are told. When creating a character players should first consider the questions below before looking at creation points or how to allocate them. After the questions are answered, character ideas should be submitted to d2d@redbuttonproductions.net so that the staff is able to address any possible issues before the game begins. New characters may join the game without being previously submitted to the staff for review, but the submission will allow the character to be woven into any appropriate ongoing stories, as well as allow for concept approval before the start of game.

The Dust to Dust staff strongly encourages that players submit a full character history for their characters before the beginning of play. A character history helps to establish several basic fundamentals of any new character, be it for new or experienced players. Knowing why a character has come to the game location, whom they might possibly know, and their past experiences helps to establish a deep and rich sense of the character before play begins, easing integration into the game's on-going story. Players that submit a character history before their first event receive three (3) additional character points with which to build their character and will be allowed to purchase Disadvantages, if desired.

Dust to Dust is a skill-driven system, rather than a class-driven system. This system type means that restrictions placed upon characters are smaller than they might be in other styles of play. Ideally, characters will be created with an idea of the things at which they excel or struggle. The player may also be able to identify areas in which the character hopes to advance in the future. The lists of abilities, talents, advantages and disadvantages should not be used as a checklist, but instead as a way to match existing skills to concepts that have been created. Restrictions on races, skills, and abilities are possible to be circumvented, though any exceptions must be approved through the Dust to Dust staff. Major exceptions are not likely to be granted, such as one race using another race's specific abilities.

Players have forty (40) starting character points, for purposes of "at creation" skill costs, with three (3) additional character points if the player has turned in a character history. Character histories may be submitted up to thirty (30) days after the first event that the player attends as that character, and must be approved by Dust to Dust staff in order for these character history points to be applied. The character history and staff approval are also required for Disadvantages. Disadvantages may be taken before the submission of a character history, provided that the player submit the character history within thirty (30) days of the player's first event as that character. Players are allowed to take up to ten (10) points of Disadvantages at creation, and these ten (10) points are counted as "at creation" points. Players have twelve (12) additional "experience" character points that do not count as starting or "at creation" character points for the purposes of building the character. The build available to a new character is summarized in the following table.

At Creation Character Points			Experience Points	Minimum Build Points	Maximum Build Points
Basic Character	Character History (Optional)	Disadvantages (Optional)			
40	3	10	12	52	65

Character points may be spent in any way that the player desires, though players are encouraged to build characters that “make sense” rather than “min-maxing” or “powergaming” for a perceived best build. Some abilities have a different cost, or are even unobtainable, once a character is created. This is the case for all Advantages and Disadvantages (Chapter 3: Advantages and Disadvantages) and many Talents (Chapter 4: Magical Talents and Chapter 5: Talents). New players are allowed to re-spend their characters after the first event that they attend, if desired.

For many skills and Talents, you may purchase additional levels of ability after the most basic level. If a player buys only one level of a Talent, they have only the most basic of skills in that Talent. Information on leveling Talents may be found in Chapter 5: Talents. Magic Talents often require a test before advancing to the next level, or circle, of ability. At creation, Celestial Magic may not be purchased past first circle and Totemic Power may not be purchased past second circle. More information on these magical talents may be found in Chapter 4: Magical Talents.

Writing a Character History

The following questions can be used to create a basic character history. Not every possible question is listed, but these questions are provided as a solid framework to begin creating a character history. Expansion on this outline is encouraged before submitting a character history. After a character history is mailed to Dust to Dust staff, a culture packet will be provided to assist with further character history creation and information. Dust to Dust staff may continue a dialogue concerning character submissions in order to fit a concept into the game world. Again, not all of the following questions must be answered, but a framework should be in place before contacting the staff.

As a reminder, if a player does not end up playing a character from a given culture, the culture packet information is NOT to be carried over as common knowledge to a different character. Culture packets do not represent common knowledge to the entire world. Players are encouraged to submit character histories a full thirty (30) days prior to attending an event as that character. This makes things much easier for the staff, and it provides an additional three (3) character points! However, early submission of a character history is not required for a new character to join the game.

Character History Questions

Where do you come from?

Where were you born and where did you live before coming to the game location? The cultures from these areas will have a significant impact on how you view the world and how you interact with others.

What was your childhood and youth like?

Your early years can have a significant influence on forming your personality. What were your parents like? Were you a bastard or of legitimate birth? Did you have any siblings? How did you get along with your family? Did you have any formal education or training? How wealthy was your family? Were there any important or traumatic events in your youth that helped shape who you are today? Did you have a best friend? Was there a group that you joined? When did you leave home?

Have you had any Romantic Encounters?

Romance can have a long-lasting effect on a character. Who was your first love? Has a lover ever betrayed you? Have you ever betrayed a lover? Have you ever lost a love? Are you currently in love? If a player is not interested in romantic stories, answering this question is an excellent way to let us know ahead of time.

Do you have any enemies?

Long-term enemies can add a lot to a character's history—besides the chance settle the score with them during a game. Do you have any long-term rivals? If you have an enemy, how did it happen? Enemies are rarely born from pure happenstance. Did you insult him in some manner? Did you best him in a fight? Was there a dramatic twist in a romantic entanglement? Is he an enemy of the family? Is a theft at the crux of the complaint? Does he just hate the way you look, and his friends don't like you either?

What single event has affected you the most?

Was your family murdered by bandits? Was your true love executed for treason? Were they then reassembled by an evil cabalist and forced to spend eternity as their servitor? Did a noble spit on you as a child? Have you been imprisoned wrongly? How about rightly? Have you participated in a war? Were you captured and taken as a slave? Did a noble show you kindness? Was your country conquered by strange lizard people from across the southern sea? Was your mentor eaten by a ghul? Did trolls use the entrails of your sister to perform a Working and summon a spirit to feast on blood?

Please note that the Returned recall nothing of how they died, so this should not be included in answering this question. However, all Returned characters died at some point in the fifty-year span of the Great War of Shadow at the end of the First Age, approximately 4,200 years before the start of game.

What adventures have you had?

What have you done since leaving home? Are you a farm boy, off seeking adventure? Did you grow up in a society that praised warriors and begin raiding for plunder and glory at an early age? Are you a seasoned veteran of many of the wars that have dotted the land? Are you a member of a Guild who is hired out regularly as extra muscle? Are you a ritualist looking for a safe spot to practice the art? Are you an alchemist who has had to flee? Do you belong to one of the Mystery Cults that have been hounded by the Throne? Are you seeking something? Are you part of an adventuring company? Were you sponsored by any government?

Were you involved in any Historical Events?

Historical Events are a new feature of Dust to Dust that encourages and builds the game's consensual reality. Historical Events are posted on the Dust to Dust website, <http://www.redbuttonproductions.net/d2d>. On a first come, first served basis, players may insert themselves into any one (1) Historical Event for no cost. Players must first check with the Dust to Dust staff in order to ensure that the positions are still open before finalizing them in their character history. Historical Events span the Known World, and are important events from the world's recent history. Players might have been aiding in a rebellion in Athral Isle, or helping to suppress a rebellion in the lands of Tarsikka. Historical Events represent widely known information, and are ways to participate actively in the written, existing history of the game world. If players do not wish their names to be listed, but wish to claim an event, that is possible. In this case, the Historical Event will convey that the role is filled, but the information is not known. Players must confirm this with the Dust to Dust staff first, as some roles may not be obscured. Players may pay five (5) Buttons for a role in a second Historical Event, and ten (10) buttons for a role in a third Historical Event, but the events must be non-conflicting, and no one else may have claimed the event. Players may appear in a maximum of three (3) Historical Events.

Historical Events are meant to provide extra depth for a character, but they are not intended to substitute for a full character history. A historical event is a single occurrence in the life of the character. Historical events are as defining or as insignificant as the player chooses them to be. Events chosen should fit the demeanor and persona of the character. Many options are available should be given careful deliberation before selection.

As of the start of the campaign, there are no Historical Events available to Returned characters. Historical Events for Celestial characters are available in the Celestial culture packet, but are not listed on the website, as they are not widely known. After the start of play, new Historical Events are introduced that take place in the advancing timeline will be open to all races.

Creating a Persona

These additional questions are provided to help players form a distinct personality for their characters.

What are your best qualities?

What do people admire about you? Is it your honor, courage, friendliness, or honesty? Do people respect the way in which you keep a tight rein on your homunculus, Bootstrap? Are you a philanthropist and a gift to your community? Do you defend your compatriots with a zealotry usually reserved for the clergy?

What are your worst qualities?

What are your bad habits? What are your vices? The ways in which you continually disappoint people might range from being a habitual gambler to being a wine-soaked drunkard, or perhaps a petty thief, or fumbling the embellishment of the simplest of tales. Are you incapable of letting even the smallest insult go unanswered? Flaws are great ways to have a chance to improve a character in an emotionally tangible way over the course of play

Do you have mannerisms or quirks?

Adding something that makes you, the player, have to perform something outside of your normal routine is an excellent way to get more in tune with a character. Does your character stroke his chin when in thought? Does she tilt her head to the side when angry? Does he tap his foot incessantly? Does she always scream a battle cry before engaging in combat? Does he refuse to look people in the eye when talking to them? Does she have an accent or unusual speech pattern? Does he have a phrase which he repeats in conversation?

What will you risk your life for?

What are your core principles and values? What friends or loved ones would you put yourself in a life-threatening situation in order to protect? If not a person, is it instead a possession? Is it the chance to earn fortune and fame? Is everyone equal, and open to your protection? Is it your country that invokes these feelings? Or will you risk your life for nothing at all?

What action do you regret most?

Did you participate in a war? Commit a crime? Leave your homeland? End a friendship? Slay a man for the first time? Report your love to the Left Hand of the Throne for being a deviant and a user of secret magic? Perhaps you have no regrets.

What are your goals?

What your character wishes to accomplish in life can have a significant impact on his actions. Do you wish to become a noble? Do you want fame and glory? Do you seek to understand the innermost

workings of the very world? Do you desire great wealth? Do you want to ascend in your organization to the upper echelon? Do you wish to spread the word of the glorious Redwood Throne?

Additional Questions

- How old are you?
- What is your fondest memory?
- What is your most frightening memory?
- How do you feel about magic?
- How do you feel about the other nations?
- What is your moral code?
- What are your political views?
- How much of the world have you traveled?
- What are your hopes and dreams?
- Why have you come to the game location?

Steps of Character Creation

Step One: Character Race

Are you a Human, Homunculus, Returned, or Celestial? There are four races in the world of Dust to Dust: Returned, Celestials, Homunculi and Humans. Further description of the races follows:

Returned

Celestials and the Returned are unheard-of in the world prior to the start of the campaign. Legends did exist about Celestials, but the Returned are unlike anything the world has seen. Before the Returned, nothing and no one has been known to escape the Grim Prison that holds the spirits of those that have passed on to the lands of the dead. Individual Returned do exist from their living lives in the stories and legends of the modern nations as heroes and champions of a bygone age. While skeptical, many modern nations welcome the Returned with open arms. Still, many people have trouble overlooking the fact they have crawled out of the dread gates of the Grim Prison and view the Returned heroes with distrust and skepticism.

Rules

Returned characters may purchase the following special abilities: Heroic Codes (ten (10) character points). Additional heroic Codes may be adopted when the character reaches the following character point totals:

- fifty (50) character points
- one hundred (100) character points
- one hundred and fifty (150) character points

- two hundred (200) character points
- three hundred (300) character points
- four hundred (400) character points

Characters are not required to adopt a code, but doing so allows them to select one Ancient Art and helps restore the character to life. Returned that are closer to life have reduced makeup requirements. Some codes directly contradict each other and may not be selected concurrently. For more information on Ancient Arts can be found in Chapter 13: Magic of the Returned. Please read the FAQ on the Returned message board in addition to this information.

All Returned characters have Diminished Healing: Celestial Light Magic and Totemic Light Magic at character creation. The characters receive no character points for this Disadvantage.

Returned characters start with Lore: (Ancient Culture) (Level 1) at no cost. The Ancient Culture is the culture from which the character previously came. In addition, Returned characters enjoy the following build reductions afforded to them by their culture.

Returned hailing from Druma pay two fewer points for Animal Empathy, Pain Resistance, or Rapid Healing. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Returned hailing from Endeiras pay two fewer points for Medium, the first level of Weaponsmith, or the first level of Armorsmith. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Returned hailing from Mazhan pay two fewer points for Short Sword, Longsword, or Bastard Sword. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase. This cost reduction also applies to the Blademaster style.

Returned hailing from Ophira pay two fewer points for Spear, Glaive, or Halberd. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase. This cost reduction also applies to the Haftmaster style.

Returned hailing from Tharcia receive the first level of Fortune for free, or pay two fewer points for any other level of Fortune. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Returned hailing from Ton Isiq pay two fewer points for Ritualism Initiation at Character Creation.

Makeup

At the start of play, Returned appear with white skin, black around the eyes, and sunken cheekbones. For every two codes adopted, the Returned may remove one of these requirements.

Celestials

Celestials have only existed in the libraries of the most learned scholars before the start of game, and no one is quite able to get an immediate grasp on them. None can deny their power, and many seek to use it, for both good and ill. Rumors do tell of a long line of human servants of the Celestials. According to

rumor these families have passed their secrets down from father to son about the previous appearance of the Celestials and the eager awaiting of their return.

Rules

Celestial characters may purchase the following special abilities:

- Novice Celestial Ways –Single Realm (ten (10) character points)
- Novice Celestial Ways – Dual Realm (fifteen (15) character points)
- Initiate Celestial Ways – Single Realm (twenty (20) character points),
- Initiate Celestial Ways – Dual Realm (twenty-five (25) character points)

Realms must be selected at character creation, though it is possible to change realms in-play. Novice (single or dual) may be selected after character creation for an additional ten (10) character points. Initiate (single or dual) may not be selected after character creation. However, adding a second Realm is possible after Character Creation. To do this, characters purchase Novice Celestial Ways – Realm at the Post-Creation price. Characters are then unable to advance their primary Realm until the Dual Realm circling costs have been paid. For more information on Single and Dual Realm circling, refer to Chapter 11: Magic of the Celestials.

Celestial characters start with Lore: Host of Heaven (Level 1) at no cost.

All Celestials must select one of the following types of damage: Acid, Fire, Ice, Shadow, or Storm. When wounded by damage of this type, the Celestial is under the effects of an Intolerance. Defenses against those damage types work normally for the Celestial. Celestials may wear protectives of that type, and may be hit by non-damaging spells without suffering the effects of the Intolerance. The character does not receive Character Points for this Disadvantage.

Celestials may choose to begin play as a member of a Celestial Sphere. Celestial Spheres are very akin to mortal military regiments, and they define the Celestial's time spent as a member of the Host of Heaven and the activities they performed.

Celestials belonging to the Sphere of Power pay two fewer points for Magic Sense or Medium. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Celestials belonging to the Sphere of Guardianship may begin play with Wear Light Armor for no cost, or receive a two point price reduction on Wear Medium Armor or Wear Heavy Armor. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Celestials belonging to the Sphere of Healing pay two fewer points for Healing Ways or Chirurgery. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Celestials belonging to the Sphere of Thought pay two fewer points for Pain Resistance, Strong Will, or any Acute Sense. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Celestials belonging to the Sphere of Art pay two fewer points for any Craft or Lore skill for one single level. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Makeup

A Celestial's face must be significantly covered with marks resembling text. Unusual alphabets are encouraged. The text is entirely capable of shifting from day to day; only the colors remain the same. Players may use any colors they like for this text, as long as it is clearly visible.

Homunculi

Homunculi are creatures created by human ritualists and are built to serve their masters. Some homunculi rebel against this idea of servitude, where others form a bond with their ritualist that is unmatched by any other race

Rules

Homunculus characters may purchase the following special ability: Grafts (ten (10) character points). Grafts are made from parts of various creatures and directly modify the abilities of the homunculus. No homunculus may incorporate more than one Graft at a time, and a Graft must be completely removed to incorporate a new one. Doing so destroys the old graft.

The spark of life in a homunculus is surprisingly easy to re-ignite. If a mostly-intact homunculus has been dead less than five (5) minutes (seven minutes with Increased Stamina), and the attending surgeon has at least one other natural creature within reach that has been dead for less than five (5) minutes, the surgeon may resurrect the homunculus with five (5) minutes of surgery by using parts of the other natural creature. The homunculus suffers no weakening of the spirit or loss of memory as a result, but cannot walk, fight, cast spells, or speak louder than a whisper for the next fifteen (15) minutes; they are otherwise cured of all injuries and conditions, as per a Restore effect. The other dead creature is no longer "intact" afterward for purposes of resurrection.

Homunculi begin play with Lore: Homunculi (Level One).

Homunculi may never initiate a ritual. A homunculus who buys ritual bones, however, may contribute them to a ritual as normal. As such, homunculi may ignore the initiation cost for Ritualism and buy from the one-bone cost, which is otherwise unavailable.

All homunculi must start with one Disadvantage, for which they receive no additional character points. They gain points for other Disadvantages as normal, and this racial drawback does not count against the normal limit of 10 points of Disadvantages.

Makeup

At the very least, a single line of stitches should be marked on the player's face. Most homunculi have sharply contrasting skin tones making up their "complexion," as they are composed of several people, in varying stages of decay.

Humans

Humans make up the majority of the population of the world and vary from each other by culture, talent and skill.

Rules

Human characters may purchase Totemic Power 1 for ten (10) character points. If purchased after Character Creation, the cost increases to twenty (20) character points. Players may select a Totem for their character to belong to at the start of play, but their characters may not use their abilities until they bind themselves to the Totem during the game. The selection of a Totem before the start of play represents the character belonging to a Mystery Cult and knowing their rites and practices, but the character will not have access to the source of magical power until visiting the Totem. Additional mana and subsequent levels may be purchased before start of play, though no character may begin play with higher than Totemic Power 2.

Humans hailing from Athral Isle pay two fewer points for Healing Ways, Thrown Weapon, Bow or Crossbow. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase. If applied to bow, Crossbow, or Thrown Weapon, the cost reduction also applies to the Missilemaster style.

Humans hailing from the Caliphate of Dusk pay two fewer points for Glaive, Spear or Halberd. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase. This cost reduction also applies to the Haftmaster style.

Humans hailing from Gaunt pay two fewer points for Rapid Healing or Pain Resistance. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Humans hailing from Oresund pay two fewer points for Ritualism Initiation.

Humans hailing from the Principalities of Verdien receive a unique Advantage. Humans from the Principalities gain one additional In Between Game Action (IBGA) for the purposes of information-gathering. This IBGA can be the use of a Lore skill, social actions, political actions, or research of any kind. If the IBGA does not meet the requirements, Plot will request that another IBGA be submitted.

Humans hailing from Tarsikka pay two fewer points for Shortsword, Longsword, Bastard Sword, or Greatsword. This build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase. This cost reduction also applies to the Blademaster style.

Humans hailing from any of the many Tharici caravans pay two fewer points for Medium, Magic Sense or Animal Empathy. They may buy any one of these Advantages after Character Creation without Plot intervention. The build cost reduction only applies to one skill purchase.

Humans begin play with Lore: (Culture) (Level 1), of the character's home culture.

Makeup Requirements

Humans have no makeup requirements.

Half Races

There are no half-breeds in the world of Dust to Dust. Homunculi are incapable of reproduction. Returned were human and mortal in their past life, and as such bear human children. Decended Celestials bear human children as well, and immortal Celestials do not rely on reproduction in order to sustain their race.

Average Life Spans

The average life spans of mortals are all the same, whether Returned, Celestials and or Human. However, Celestials might have existed for time immemorial while part of the Host of Heaven. Returned were mortals in their first life and lived a mortal's span, dying a hero's death in their prime. None of the Returned remember how they died. The Returned reappear in their prime and continue to live a mortal life span from that point forward.

Homunculus life spans are the exception. Homunculi are created, not born. A well-preserved homunculus might function for eternity. However, the secret to creating homunculi has just recently spread to the entirety of the Known World, and it is almost unheard-of to find a homunculus more than one hundred (100) years old. Playing a homunculus older than one hundred (100) years of age is not allowed without Dust to Dust staff approval. Regardless of age, the homunculus only retains the base starting character points.

Step Two: Character Culture

What in-game culture do you come from? If you are a Celestial, to which Sphere do you belong?

Step Three: Character Concept

This step is where the above questions help to create a rich character concept. Is your character a homunculus from the Hulder that was won by his current master in a Deck game and has vowed to always serve his master after being shown a great mercy early on in his servitude? Perhaps your character is the daughter of a merchant in Tarsikka, with aspirations of joining the nobility and becoming one of the fabled Silver Swordsmen that patrol the land and keep it safe. Characters have many paths and options to explore. Don't feel tied to what has already been done. Experimentation and expansion are the lifeblood of any world.

Step Four: Choose Advantages and Disadvantages

Any Disadvantage you choose adds to your starting forty (40) “at creation” character points total. Any Advantage chosen costs points from your starting “at creation” character points. Many Advantages and all Disadvantages may only be selected at character creation. Be careful, as your choices here will remain with your character for the rest of his or her career. Remember that Disadvantages require a character history on file with the Dust to Dust committee. Additionally, make sure you are able to effectively roleplay any Disadvantages you choose. You may only take a maximum of ten (10) points of Disadvantages, increasing the “at creation” build to a total of fifty (50) from base and Disadvantages.

Step Five: Assign Character Points

You must now assign your character points wherever you feel is appropriate for your character. Make sure that the Talents and Abilities chosen are appropriate to the character concept you have chosen. You have a total of fifty-two (52) character points to spend at creation, forty (40) of which are “at creation” points and are used to purchase Advantages. The other twelve (12) points are experience points, and may not be used to purchase Advantages. An approved character history garners an additional three (3) “at creation” points, and Disadvantages may be taken for up to an additional ten (10), for a possible maximum of fifty-three (53) “at creation” points, and a maximum of sixty-five (65) total character points.

Racial Abilities and Cost

Specific Racial Abilities are covered in Chapter 11: Magic of the Celestials, Chapter 12: Magic of the Humans, and Chapter 14: Grafts.

Race	Ability	At-Creation Cost	Post-Creation Cost
Celestial	Novice Celestial Ways – Single Realm	10	20
Celestial	Novice Celestial Ways – Dual Realm	15	25
Celestial	Initiate Celestial Ways – Single Realm	20	N/A
Celestial	Initiate Celestial Ways – Dual Realm	25	N/A
Homunculus	Grafts	10	10
Human	Totemic Power 1	10	20
Returned	Heroic Code	10	10

Step Six: Starting Equipment

Each character receives twenty (20) Crowns or Riyals worth of money to spend on starting equipment. All goods are purchased at their production cost. Note that any character may simply choose to keep any part of the initial allotment as actual money. The player may purchase:

- Only items that the character can use.
- No items above Standard quality without prior Plot approval.
- No items requiring special ingredients to create.
- No items that require more than ten (10) Production Points to create.
- No more than ten (10) of any specific item.

The Fortune and Increased Wealth Advantages can alter the amount of starting money a character possesses (see Chapter 3: Advantages and Disadvantages). Such Advantages do not change the above rules for what they may buy with that money.