

5e Character Conversion Guide

Welcome to the Fifth Edition Character Creation Guide for the Helkara Roleplaying Game. This guide will provide you with the necessary steps to create a character for your adventures in the world of Helkara. You will choose a race, class, background, and abilities to define your character's traits, skills, and attributes. It is important to understand that the choices you make during character creation will shape your experience in the game, so it is advisable to consider each option carefully.

To create a character, follow these steps.

1. Choose or roll for a class.
2. Determine ability scores.
3. Come up with your character's background.
4. Pick a feat.
5. Choose or roll for your starting equipment.

Note that Helkara typically does not offer a choice of heritages/races. Humans are the only playable humanoids in the Fifth Edition version of Helkara. Elves, dwarves, tieflings, etc., are not part of this world. Of course, you are free to do as you wish and allow your players to pick whatever options they like.

Choose or Roll for a Class

Helkara is a sword and sorcery setting, meaning that certain class options normally available in other Fifth Edition worlds are absent in Helkara. The list below shows the classes and subclasses available, as well as the rarity of each one. A player who wish to randomize their class or subclass may roll 2d6 and reference the table below.

2d6	Class
2	Warlock
3	Ranger
4–6	Rogue
7–9	Fighter
10–11	Barbarian
12	Wizard

Artificer (Not Available)

Although there are alchemists in Helkara, they are much less magically proficient than Alchemist Specialist artificers and are a subclass of wizards instead. The other forms of artificers are non-existent.

Barbarians (Uncommon)

The barbarian class is one way that players may represent scavengers, the rough-and-tumble humans that live among the ruins at Nothing's Edge. Barbarian characters may become berserkers. The other sub-classes are not available.

Bard (Not Available)

While there are plenty of minstrels, fools, and other entertainers in Helkara, none of them possess the same level of magic that the traditional bards of Fifth Edition do.

Cleric (Not Available)

While cultists and priests are common in Helkara, they are represented by warlocks instead of the cleric class.

Druid (Not Available)

Shifters can transform into animals; however, that is typically the extent of their magical capabilities. As such, their shifting ability is derived from a special feat

Fighter (Common)

Along with rogues, fighters are the most common class in Helkara, as it represents mercenaries, warriors, soldiers, inquisitors, and so forth.

When designing a fighter character, keep in mind the choice of weapons and armor, as there is a limited selection due to the technological constraints of the setting. The martial archetypes available to characters include Bannaret, Battle Master, Cavalier, Champion, and Samurai.

Monk (Not Available)

While it's possible to have a character who is an expert at fighting with their hands, feet, and simple weapons, the magical, ki-powered monks from Fifth Edition are not available, as their abilities are much too fantastic for the setting.

Paladin (Not Available)

The paladin's magical nature and close connection to divine powers make them unavailable for play in the Helkara campaign setting.

Ranger (Rare)

The ranger class usually represents either outlanders, scavengers, or shifters. Despite having a presence in the Helkara campaign setting, the typical Fifth Edition ranger is heavily altered.

Helkaran rangers do not normally have the ability to cast spells. Instead of gaining spells at 2nd level, the ranger may take an additional feat. The ranger continues to gain extra feats at levels 5, 9, 13, and 17.

You may take the following subclasses: Beast Master, Hunter, or Monster Hunter.

Rogue (Common)

Rogues are common in Helkara and represent assassins, bandits, mercenaries, scavengers, etc.

Because so many rogue sub-classes are nonmagical, they have a more diverse selection than the other classes. The Arcane Trickster, Phantom, and Soulnife subclasses are not available.

Sorcerer (Not Available)

Although the spellcasters of Helkara call themselves sorcerers, they actually have more in common with warlocks or wizards than they do with Fifth Edition sorcerers.

Warlock (Very Rare)

The cultists and priests of Helkara—at least those capable of casting spells—are represented by the Fifth Edition warlock class.

All warlocks in Helkara are warlocks of the Great Old One, as the gods of Helkara are strange and otherworldly entities. And all warlock pacts must be Pact of the Tome.

Whenever a warlock casts a spell of 1st-level or higher, they must check for an arcane catastrophe. See below for details.

Wizard (Very Rare)

The Fifth Edition wizard class represents Helkaran sorcerers, who must cast from scrolls or spellbooks to make their magic function correctly. A wizard may choose from the following subclasses: Abjuration, Chronurgy, Conjuraction, Divination, Enchantment, Evocation, Graviturgy, Illusion, Necromancy, Transmutation, and War Magic.

Whenever a wizard casts a spell of 1st-level or higher, they must check for an arcane catastrophe. See below for details.

Determine Ability Scores

The process for determining ability scores in the Helkara campaign setting is the same as it is in traditional Fifth Edition games, except that the player may increase two ability scores of their choice by 1.

Background

All of the Fifth Edition backgrounds are available during character creation. However, some of the backgrounds have different implications in a world like Helkara, as noted below.

Acolytes typically serve in temples dedicated to the sorcerer-kings themselves. There are also many acolytes that serve the Blood Cult of Azathoth. Typically, these servants have a fierce cult-like mentality and brand all who disagree with their patron's methods as a heretic, especially members of the blood cult.

Charlatans, criminals, entertainers, and urchins are found in every corner of Helkara, serving the same sort of role as they would in any other Fifth Edition fantasy world. The Brotherhood of the Blackened Chain is the single largest group of criminals in Helkara, with members in every city, including Kisurra.

While life is difficult for most Helkarans, there are still **folk heroes**. However, these heroes don't always have the best interests of the people who sing their praise at heart. Many folk heroes serve as enforcers or inquisitors for the sorcerer-kings and are cherished for the acts they perform on behalf of their cruel masters.

Most of Helkara's cities rely on the merchant guilds to control the quality and quantity of mercantile goods created by **guild artisans**. The guilds themselves nearly resemble organized criminal organizations. They extort smaller merchants and welcome bribes from larger merchants to look the other way. Simultaneously, they lie and cheat their way around the sorcerer-kings' laws.

Hermits and outlanders are common across Helkara, with some even living outside of the sorcerer-kings' domains. Some even live beyond Nothing's Edge, where the long days and nights create treacherous conditions.

Second only to the priesthoods of the sorcerer-kings, **nobles** represent the upper classes of Helkara's citizens. Many act as governors and mayors in the non-capital cities and are expected to collect taxes on behalf of the sorcerer-kings. They also serve as warlords.

Sages are rare in Helkara, even among the priesthood. The sorcerer-kings do not wish ordinary citizens to learn the secrets of the greater cosmos and magic, and enforce illiteracy nearly everywhere. Characters who take the sage background might serve a sorcerer-king directly or read and study illegally.

Sailors of Helkara traverse the thawed portions of the Evernight, transporting goods and fishing along the coast. Even land-locked Norgoth has sailors who ply Entana Crater.

All of the sorcerer-kings have standing armies, so **soldiers** are a common sight. Even the Free State of Kisurra has its own class of soldiers who fight to keep the city safe.

Pick a Feat

Because all Helkarans are human, all Helkaran characters start with one feat plus one bonus skill proficiency of their choice.

Equipment Limitations

Helkara's technology level is on par with the late-Bronze Age/early-Iron Age. As such, there is a limitation on the types of equipment that character can take.

The following types of armor are available: padded, leather, and studded leather; hide and scale mail; and splint. Shields are also commonly used.

All simple weapons are available, and all martial weapons except for the flail, halberd, morningstar, rapier, war pick, warhammer, hand crossbow, and heavy crossbow.

Most adventuring gear is available, although some items, such as books, writing utensils, paper, and parchment, maybe be viewed as contraband by the sorcerer-kings and their inquisitors.

Currency

Helkara has three major types of currency: barley, gaur (a yak), and silver pieces. Barley and cattle are mostly used for bartering. One pound of barley is worth 1 sp and one healthy adult gaur is worth 100 sp (or one pentine).

Although there is gold in Helkara, Helkarans don't actively mine for it. Instead of gold and platinum they use a larger silver coin representing the price of a gaur calf called a gaurling iecce (gp). Eirpieces are gaurling pieces cut into halves (ep). It's rare that currency ever goes beyond gaurlings, but a one pound silver bar is worth 50 sp.

New Feats

The feats below are feats specific to the Helkaran setting, but can be used in any campaign.

Alchemist

Prerequisite: Intelligence 13 or higher

You are skilled in the scientific field of alchemy, which allows you to combine reagents into potent potables. You gain proficiency in alchemist's tools.

You can spend 1 hour to produce a concoction in an empty flask with reach. You must have 5 gp worth of materials on hand to produce the concoction and access to alchemist's tools, and you cannot perform any other actions while crafting

the potion. At the end of the hour, make a DC 10 Intelligence check using proficiency in alchemist's tools. If you succeed, you create a potion that imparts one of the following effects:

- **Cold Resistance.** A creature can use its action to drink this potion. The drinker gains resistance to cold damage for 1 hour after drinking this potion.
- **Explosive.** As an action, a user can throw this flask up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. Make a ranged attack against a creature or object, treating the explosive flask as an improvised weapon. On a hit, the target takes fire damage equal to 1d4 + your Intelligence modifier at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.
- **Healing.** A creature that drinks this potion regains hit points equal to 2d4 + your Intelligence modifier.
- **Invisibility.** A creature can use its action to drink this potion. The drinker becomes invisible for 10 minutes or until the drinker attacks or casts a spell.
- **Poison.** A creature that drinks this poison must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC of 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier. The creature takes poison damage equal to 1d4 + your Intelligence modifier. The poison may also be applied to a slashing or piercing weapon or up to three pieces of ammunition. Once applied, the poison retains potency for 1 minute before drying.
- **Water Breathing.** A creature can use its action to drink this potion. The drinker can breathe underwater for 1 hour after drinking this potion.

Shifter

You have an innate ability to magically transform into a beast. Choose a beast with a maximum CR of 1/2. You must use your action to transform. You can stay in your beast shape for a number of hours equal to half your character level (rounded down, minimum of 1). You then revert to your normal form. You can revert to your normal form earlier by using a bonus action on your turn. You automatically revert if you fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or die. Once you use the benefit of this feat, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

While you are transformed, the following rules apply:

- Your game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the beast, but you retain your alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. You also retain all of your skill and saving throw proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the creature. If the creature has the same proficiency as you and the bonus in its stat block is higher than yours, use the creature's bonus instead of yours. If the creature has any legendary or lair actions, you can't use them.

- When you transform, you assume the beast's hit points and Hit Dice. When you revert to your normal form, you return to the number of hit points you had before you transformed. However, if you revert as a result of dropping to 0 hit points, any excess damage carries over to your normal form. For example, if you take 10 damage in animal form and have only 1 hit point left, you revert and take 9 damage. As long as the excess damage doesn't reduce your normal form to 0 hit points, you aren't knocked unconscious.
- You can't cast spells, and your ability to speak or take any action that requires hands is limited to the capabilities of your beast form. Transforming doesn't break your concentration on a spell you've already cast, however, or prevent you from taking actions that are part of a spell, such as Call Lightning, that you've already cast.
- You retain the benefit of any features from your class, race, or other source and can use them if the new form is physically capable of doing so. However, you can't use any of your special senses, such as darkvision, unless your new form also has that sense.
- You choose whether your equipment falls to the ground in your space, merges into your new form, or is worn by it. Worn equipment functions as normal, but the DM decides whether it is practical for the new form to wear a piece of equipment, based on the creature's shape and size. Your equipment doesn't change size or shape to match the new form, and any equipment that the new form can't wear must either fall to the ground or merge with it. Equipment that merges with the form has no effect until you leave the form.

If you are a druid that takes this feat, the benefits of this feat function separately from your Wild Shape feat. You may choose to use this feat or your Wild Shape when you transform.

Arcane Catastrophes

Any time a spellcaster casts a spell of 1st-level or higher in Helkara, they must roll a d20. If the result is equal to or lower than the level of the spell, an arcane catastrophe occurs. Roll a d20 to determine what happens. If you ever roll the same result twice, you explode, dying instantly. Additionally, each creature within 5 feet of you must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed saving throw or half as much on a successful one.

1. The magic backfires and causes your hand to wither and die. You can no longer hold objects in that hand or hold two-handed objects.
2. Your hair turns white and falls out.
3. You are wracked with terrible pain and fall unconscious for 1 minute.
4. Your skin becomes covered in painful sores and blisters. You have disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity checks and attack rolls until you complete a long rest.
5. Your eyesight is permanently damaged. You have disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) tests that require sight.
6. You become paralyzed. Each day, after completing a long rest, make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. You gain a +1 bonus for each day that you've been paralyzed. On a success, the paralyzed condition ends.
7. You are aged 2d4 x 10 years in an instant.

8. You are struck with a terrible illness and will suffer for weeks. Until this disease is cured, you can't regain hit points, and you have disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws.
9. You are cursed and will suffer terrible luck for a year and a day. You may never benefit from advantage.
10. A powerful demon appears and demands a terrible sacrifice. If you do not give the demon what they ask for in 24 hours, it drags you to hell.
11. A powerful curse is placed on you, causing you to suffer terrible nightmares. Until you find magic to remove the curse, you can't gain the benefits of a long or short rest.
12. Your soul is bound to an object or place, trapping you in that location. You can never go more than $d6 \times 100$ feet from that location.
13. Your body is wracked with terrible mutations, making you an outcast. You have disadvantage on all Charisma checks made to interact with others, excluding intimidation.
14. Your mind is consumed by madness, and you become a danger to yourself and others. You gain one form of indefinite madness.
15. You are consumed by a terrible hunger that can never be satisfied. You gain the following flaw, which lasts until cured:
"I am always hungry, and will even kill and eat other humans to satisfy this feeling."
16. Your body is taken over by a powerful evil spirit. Treat the spirit as a ghost that possesses you.
17. Your body is wracked by terrible pain, and you die a slow, agonizing death.
18. Your loved ones are cursed and suffer terrible fates.
19. You are dragged to another dimension and forced to serve a powerful Great Old One.
20. Your soul is consumed by the darkness. You become a wraith.