

5 - Using D&D Backgrounds

How v4.0 works with the campaign's native D&D 5e and existing Hiraeth backgrounds.

- [5.1 - Background Rules](#)
- [5.2 - Background Catalog](#)

5.1 - Background Rules

Background answers what your character did before adventuring. **V4.0 does not create or replace backgrounds.** Use the background rules already selected for the campaign.

Choose One Native Background System

Campaign Rules	What You Gain
2014-style D&D 5e	The background's listed skills, tools or languages, equipment, and narrative feature. Use the campaign's normal ability-score generation.
2024-style D&D 5e	The background's listed ability-score options, Origin feat, skills, tool, and equipment.
Existing Hiraeth background	Exactly the benefits on that background's live BookStack page, interpreted through the campaign's selected edition.
Campaign custom background	The benefits allowed by the campaign's normal background-building rule.

No Double-Dipping

- Do not take both a 2014 background feature and a 2024 Origin feat unless the campaign gives both to every character.
- Do not take ability-score increases from v4.0; it grants none.
- Do not take a second set of skills, tools, languages, or equipment from this chapter.
- Heritage and Ancestral Details remain separate because they grant narrow language, story access, or physical expression—not another profession package.

Ability Scores

Your ability-score increases come from whichever character-creation method the campaign uses. If a 2014-style background does not assign ability scores, that does not cause v4.0 to assign them. Use the same rule used by every other character in that campaign.

Customizing a Background

If the campaign permits custom backgrounds, follow that edition's or campaign's native customization procedure. Heritage can inspire the background's story, but never supplies extra mechanical selections.

5.2 - Background Catalog

This book intentionally does not duplicate a background catalog.

Hiraeth Backgrounds

Use the existing live chapter:

[Hiraeth's Heritages and Feats — Backgrounds](#)

That chapter already contains general and setting-specific backgrounds. Examples include ordinary professions and stations alongside Hiraeth-specific choices such as Auroran Refugee, Mooncrest Acolyte, Northern Minstrel, Port Native, Reindeer Herder, Rune Carver, Ship's Surgeon, and Winter Druid of Frostmaple Grove.

The examples above are not a replacement list. Consult the live chapter for the current complete catalog and exact mechanics.

Official D&D Backgrounds

Official backgrounds remain available when the campaign permits their source. Use the version matching the campaign's rules. Do not silently combine a similarly named 2014 and 2024 background.

Connecting Heritage and Background

Heritage describes the regional people and community that raised you. Background describes what you did. They can reinforce each other or contrast deliberately:

- A Casgate Domefolk Courtier understands northern climate boundaries and formal politics.
- A BI? Factory-District Acolyte was raised around industry but served a religious institution.
- A Ravine Chasmfolk Sailor may have worked aboard flying gondolas rather than sea vessels.
- An Ossurian Old Guard Criminal may know ancestral forms while living outside their law.

When a background feature mentions an organization, settlement, vessel, or profession, reskin its presentation for Hiraeth without expanding its mechanical scope.