

Name of Your Guide

Potential/Optional Subtitle

Last updated date (Oct 2022 for this guide)

Note to writers of existing guides: If you like a lot of what this document says, but really don't like the idea of going through your entire guide to update it with these changes, let me know! I'd be happy to make a copy of your guide and implement what you want to take away from this, then send that copy back to you. I'm VestOfHolding on Discord, Reddit, and the Paizo forums.

Forward/Introduction

Start off with an introduction to your guide, simple as that. Maybe you have the blatant "Introduction" heading, or maybe you just have a couple paragraphs directly under your title. Either way, this is the place where you should talk about your overall approach you're taking with writing the guide, and any potential specific perspectives or biases you're bringing.

Of course, I need an introduction to this guide!

This document is meant to be a sample template for PF2e guides, though it can easily be extended to other systems. Generally it will show good practices for formatting/colors/etc for the different sections of your guide, and other things to keep in mind to make your guide as readable as possible. This doesn't mean that what you see here is the absolute best, but can hopefully provide more direct guidance than just looking at existing guides.

While I work as a backend software engineer, I do my best to always have a mind towards a good UI/UX (User Interface/User Experience). Plus, with my autism, I tend to lean towards very clear and organized formatting of information as much as possible (a challenge I was constantly faced with in a job that involved communicating complicated American health insurance information on a web page accessible to all ages). I want to take advantage of anything I can in the specific medium of communication that's being used, in this case a Google Doc.

In general I do my best to have a mind towards designing for readability and accessibility. I love [this page by the UK government](#) on designing for accessibility for general principles to think about. Notice that I'm splitting things into different paragraphs way more than necessary. My goal is to prevent any part from becoming too much of a wall of text.

Page Setup Recommendations

To start, the way I created this full page view of the document was two-fold: First, go to "File" → "Page setup". Select the "Pageless" tab. This is a new feature of Google Docs towards the start of 2022. [More details here](#) about its options. I recommend this option because these are online guide documents, where the normal page settings are meant for safely printing the document. We don't care about how printable the page is, so let's take advantage of our full screen space.

One downside I see so far is that if you like to use images in your guide, and want to have some text directly to the left or right of the images, that doesn't currently work.

If you want to stay on the standard paged setup, I would at least recommend going to "File" → "Page setup", and reducing the four side margins to 0.2 for the same reason about using more of the space we have without being concerned about printing.

Table of Contents Recommendation

Do you want to start with a table of contents (TOC)? It depends. If you plan to share your guide via the publish link (such as [one of Gortle's guides](#)) then yes, a clickable TOC can help massively with navigation. If not, then no. Take full advantage of the auto-TOC generation that Google Docs does with the different headings, and users can use the resulting TOC on the left side of the screen (If you don't see it, "View" → "Show outline").

Other General Recommendations

1. Don't use a fancy font. It can look very decorative, but it just makes things harder to read.
2. Use a reasonably sized font. Notice this entire document doesn't go smaller than size 12.
 - a. Since size 11 is the default, and that can be annoying, you can change your default by highlighting a line of size 12 text, then go to "Normal Text" → "Update Normal text to match", then go to "Format" → "Paragraphs styles" → "Options" → "Save as my default styles". As you can guess from looking at that menu, you'll need to go here and select "Use my default styles" for future new docs.
3. Don't have a TOC that just links to other documents. The modern TOC on the left especially makes this pointless. It's fine if you have a single, long document.

Rating Key/Color Ratings/Glossary

Here's where you define what kind of rating system you're using for your guides. You might be used to one that looks something like this:

- **Blue** - Great
- **Green** - Good
- **Orange** - Bad
- **Red** - Terrible

Maybe they'll throw in a fifth rating that's either sky blue, gold, or purple for being an absolutely amazing must-pick option, or in general maybe they use a 5-point scale instead of 4. Maybe they'll also have another option for "it depends".

However, while these can all be fine enough ratings in general, they're missing one extremely important thing: **Keep this readable for as many potential readers as possible!**

How do we do that? By remembering things such as **sky blue text is actually awful to read**, and in general stay away from the brighter color options as much as possible. We are on a white background already, and the name of the game for readability is higher-contrasting colors. But more importantly: **Remember our color-blind friends!**

Color blindness can come in a variety of flavors. If you want to learn more about finding color-blind friendly color palettes, and reference images of what different types of color blindness can look like, I highly recommend [this page here](#).

However, there's a much easier way to accommodate color blindness for these guides: **Use something in addition to the colors, such as shapes or symbols.**

You've likely seen many guides use asterisks (*) to do this, essentially as a 4 or 5 star rating system. However, I have another idea that I think is much better. Looking at [Old Man Robot's Principia Arcana guide](#) for 2e wizards, and notice that he uses something much bigger and clearer in these star symbols: ★. You can either copy paste these from here, or find them naturally in Google Docs under "Insert" → "Special Characters", and search for "star".

Small tangent: While we're on the subject of colors, I want to shout-out [Mnemonic's Support Bard Guide](#) for the great use of non-eye-gouging colors, and my autistic brain is absolutely in love with the clear, organized tables. The one downside of feat tables like in this guide that I can see is that if you have a lot more to say about each feat, the "Overview" column may not be enough space. I also am still looking into how colorblind-friendly that particular setup is.

Given all of that, here is my recommendation on a rating system, and notice a couple things:

- 1. I bold the color names, just as I suggest bolding the name of the feat/feature/etc that you're rating. Specifically avoid italics or underlining. It's harder on dyslexic readers.
- 2. More often than not, I'm using a darker version of the color than default. When you've clicked on the colored text, you can go up to the "Text Color" and see what shade I'm using.

- ❖ **Purple (★★★★★)** - Absolutely must-take option (Optional)
- ❖ **Blue (★★★★)** - Great option
- ❖ **Green (★★★)** - Good option
- ❖ **Orange (★★)** - Bad option
- ❖ **Red (★)** - Terrible option, stay away.
- ❖ **Black (??)** - Either not sure, not rated yet, or too situational for one rating. (Optional)

Keep in mind that this color scheme is still an absolutely awful choice for colorblind friendliness, but it's the symbols that are meant to sidestep that problem. Always use the symbols you end up going with!

Other Symbol Options

- **X/5**
 - 1/5, 2/5, 3/5, 4/5, 5/5
 - Downside was discovered as soon as I typed the previous line: Google Docs will autocorrect to harder-to-read fractional format.
- **Letter Grading**
 - **S, A, B, C, D, F** (Maybe **X** could be the not sure/situational category)
- **Pluses** (this allows for the rating to be searchable in the doc)
 - **+, ++, +++, +++++, ++++++**



Class Overview/Roles

Here you talk about an overview of what the class is about, and what kinds of different roles can be fulfilled with different builds. No doubt that this section can be much longer than it seems with just these couple of sentences.

Class Features

Maybe a table like this would be good for a quick visual reference of what kind of proficiency progression the class has? Not sure, I'm still playing with this. Either way, something like this enables you to immediately skip over the need to mention every single class feature that's just a proficiency boost, so you can focus on the remaining features.

Proficiency	Rating	Trained Level	Expert Level	Master Level	Legendary Level
Perception	★★★★★		1	7	13
Weapon (Advanced)	★★★	1	5	13	
Armor (Unarmored)	★	1	13		
Class/Spell DC	★★	1	11	19	
Fortitude	★★	1	9		
Reflex	★★★★		1	7	13

Will	★★★		1	17	
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Subclasses

What subclasses does this class have? How does each one affect what kinds of roles the class can fulfill? Are you going to need to provide multiple ratings for future feats and other things based on subclass?

Abilities

Of the six ability scores in Pathfinder, and other similar systems: Which ones are best to focus on, and which are worth dumping? Here are a couple of sample templates to think about:

Template 1

- ❖ **Strength** (★★★★★) - Explanation of how this ability is or isn't used by the class.
- ❖ **Dexterity** (★★★★★) - Explanation of how this ability is or isn't used by the class.
- ❖ **Constitution** (★★★) - Explanation of how this ability is or isn't used by the class.
- ❖ **Intelligence** (★★) - Explanation of how this ability is or isn't used by the class.
- ❖ **Wisdom** (★★) - Explanation of how this ability is or isn't used by the class.
- ❖ **Charisma** (★) - Explanation of how this ability is or isn't used by the class.

Template 2

Ability	Priority	Explanation
Strength	★★★★★	
Dexterity	★★★★★	
Constitution	★★★	
Intelligence	★★	
Wisdom	★★	
Charisma	★	

Ancestries

For recommended ancestries, I would recommend splitting the ancestries by rarity, since many campaigns are likely limited in their ancestry choices by that. Similar to the abilities section, I want to provide a couple different template options for you to use if you like. **Also don't forget the versatile heritages!**

Template 1

Common

Ancestry 1 (★★★★★)

Much simpler overview and explanation for rating. Noting some of the more recommended heritages, such as **Heritage 1** (★★★) and **Heritage 2** (★★★★), and feats, such as **Feat 1** (★★★★★), but stay especially away from **Feat 2** (★).

Ancestry 2 (★★)

Much simpler overview and explanation for rating. Noting some of the more recommended heritages, such as **Heritage 1** (★★★) and **Heritage 2** (★★★★), and feats, such as **Feat 1** (★★★★★), but stay especially away from **Feat 2** (★).

Uncommon

Ancestry 3 (★★★)

Much simpler overview and explanation for rating. Noting some of the more recommended heritages, such as **Heritage 1** (★★★) and **Heritage 2** (★★★★), and feats, such as **Feat 1** (★★★★★), but stay especially away from **Feat 2** (★).

Ancestry 4 (★)

Much simpler overview and explanation for rating. Noting some of the more recommended heritages, such as **Heritage 1** (★★★) and **Heritage 2** (★★★★), and feats, such as **Feat 1** (★★★★★), but stay especially away from **Feat 2** (★).

Template 2

Common

Ancestry 1 (★★★★★)

Overview and explanation for rating.

Heritages

- ❖ **Heritage 1 (★★★)** - Explanation
- ❖ **Heritage 2 (★★★★)** - Explanation
- ❖ **Heritage 3 (★★)** - Explanation

Feats

- ❖ **1st Level**
 - **Feat 1 (★★★)** - Explanation
 - **Feat 2 (★★★★)** - Explanation
 - **Feat 3 (★★)** - Explanation
- ❖ **5th Level**
 - **Feat 1 (★★★)** - Explanation
 - **Feat 2 (★★★★)** - Explanation
 - **Feat 3 (★★)** - Explanation

Template 3

Common

Ancestry 1 (★★★★)

Overview and explanation for rating.

Heritage	Rating	Explanation
Heritage 1	★★★★★	
Heritage 2	★★★★	
Heritage 3	★★★	
Heritage 4	★★	

Level	Feat	Rating	Explanation
1st	Feat 1	★★★★★	
	Feat 2	★★★★	
	Feat 3	★★★	
5th	Feat 4	★★	
	Feat 5	★★	
	Feat 6	★	

Backgrounds

Definitely not worth rating every single background, but there are a couple easy ways you could point out some that synergize well with the best abilities for a given class. Use the column filtering on either of these places, depending on which one is more intuitive for you:

- [Archive of Nethys backgrounds page](#)
- [PF2e Easy Tools backgrounds page](#)

It could also be worth talking about some of the rare backgrounds that do more different things.

I've seen many guides skip this section entirely. I would recommend against this, as newer players may not understand why. At least include a stock couple sentences about picking a background that supports their primary ability score.

Template 1

- ❖ **Background 1 (★★★)** - Explanation
- ❖ **Background 2 (★★★★)** - Explanation
- ❖ **Background 3 (★★)** - Explanation

Class Feats

Template 1

1st Level

Feat 1 (★★★★): Explanation

Feat 2 (★★★): Explanation

2nd Level

Feat 3 (★★★): Explanation

Feat 4 (★★): Explanation

Template 2

❖ 1st Level

- Feat 1 (★★★) - Explanation
- Feat 2 (★★★★) - Explanation
- Feat 3 (★★) - Explanation

❖ 2nd Level

- Feat 1 (★★★) - Explanation
- Feat 2 (★★★★) - Explanation
- Feat 3 (★★) - Explanation

Template 3

Level	Feat	Rating	Explanation
1st	Feat 1	★★★★★ ★	
	Feat 2	★★★★★	
	Feat 3	★★★	
2nd	Feat 4	★★	
	Feat 5	★★	
	Feat 6	★	

Skills (WIP)

Template 1

- ❖ Skill 1 (★★★) - Explanation
- ❖ Skill 2 (★★★★) - Explanation
- ❖ Skill 3 (★★) - Explanation

Template 2

Skill	Rating	Explanation
Acrobatics	★★★★★	
Intimidation	★★★★★	
Occultism	★★★	
Performance	★★	

General and Skill Feats (WIP)

See the Class Feats sections for most templates, though here are some ideas for the skill feats especially:

Template 1

Skill 1

Level	Feat	Rating	Proficiency	Explanation
1st	Feat 1	★★★★★ ★	Trained	
	Feat 2	★★★★★	Trained	
2nd	Feat 3	★★★	Expert	
	Feat 4	★	Legendary	

Skill 2

Level	Feat	Rating	Proficiency	Explanation
1st	Feat 1	★★★★★ ★	Trained	
	Feat 2	★★★★★	Trained	
2nd	Feat 3	★★★	Expert	
	Feat 4	★	Legendary	

Multiclass & Archetypes (WIP)

Spell Choices (WIP)

This section, of course, is only needed if the guide you're writing is actually for a spellcasting class.

Equipment/Items (WIP)

Sample Builds (WIP)

How to Share Your Guide

There are a few great places you can post your guide to help get feedback and have more people see it. These include:

- ❖ The Pathfinder 2e subreddit
 - <https://www.reddit.com/r/Pathfinder2e/>
- ❖ The Paizo forums in the Advice subforum
 - <https://paizo.com/community/forums/pathfinder/second/advice>
- ❖ The Discord server for the PF2e subreddit
 - <https://discord.gg/A4Umj8EZ>
- ❖ And don't forget to post in this thread for the 2e Guide to the Guides!
 - <https://paizo.com/threads/rzs42rkx&page=last?2nd-Edition-Guide-to-the-Guides>
 - That will get your guide posted here: <http://zenithgames.blogspot.com/2019/09/pathfinder-2nd-edition-guide-to-guides.html>

Changelog

While not required, a changelog can help give readers who are interested an idea of not only the date of your latest change that you already have at the top, but also specifically what was updated.

To that end, here's the real changelog for this very document!

❖ **1 Oct 2022**

- Added a couple simple templates for the Skills section.

❖ **24 Sep 2022**

- Added a section at the end for "How to Share Your Guide".
- Added an initial "General and Skill Feats" section.
- Added a very initial "Spell Choices" section.
- Finalized the Backgrounds section for now.

❖ **18 Sep 2022**

- Re-read the accessibility posters that I link to for my own refresher, and realized I was doing some not recommended things. So I removed italics and all-caps words for our dyslexic friends. The template headings are still underlined, but I need to think more on a good format from those that set them apart from the actual formatting those sections should have.

❖ **17 Sep 2022**

- Added initial sections for backgrounds and class feats, and empty sections for everything else not written yet.
- Added info to Other General Recommendations on how to change default font settings.

❖ **16 Sep 2022**

- Initial document creation, writing up through the Ancestry section. Going ahead and releasing this initial version since it'll take me a while to get through the rest, and what's written so far can already be very useful formatting guidance that can be used on someone's guide as a whole.