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Fantasy L.A.N.D.

Natural Environment text version of video

Hey storyteller, it's Alexis from purpleshelfclub.com and welcome to Fantasy L.A.N.D. This is part 3, Section 2, your world's terrain.

We're going to figure out what land and water formation changes and additions we want to make based on the logic of the real world. Remember, if you want to defy logic, it must be explained in your novel when you come to it so that it becomes the new logic for your reader.

This section requires you making some changes to your map, so that's all you'll need.

Ready? Let's begin.

Changing your map.

In section 1, we looked at our world broadly and chose where in the world our story would take place climate-wise. Now it's time to zoom in and start making some changes to your map, starting with the land formations.

There are all kinds of land formations, but overall, I want you to know that tectonic plate movements, glaciers, and erosion are largely responsible for mountains, hills, valleys, volcanoes, and on and on.

Now, some world building advice out there will tell you to line up your tectonic plates in your world to figure out the placement of your land formations. I don't see this as being necessary. You don't have to do that and even I didn't do that. Instead, you can go

based on the logic of the land formations to inform you where to place them on your map.

One thing I will note is that if your world has multiple land masses make sure the outlines would connect like a puzzle piece if you were to put them together into one giant land mass.

First, we'll go over mountains and hills, then valleys and volcanoes.

Interestingly, the height of hills and mountains aren't scientifically agreed upon. You'd think this would be easy since hills are smaller than mountains, but alas, there is no defined measurement.

In general, though, mountains are typically greater than 2000 feet while hills are less than 2000 feet high.

To further define the differences, hills are usually unnamed while mountains are. This isn't always the case and, in the directory, you'll find a list of hills in our world that do have names. So, if you want to name your hills, go for it. Mountains are steeper, harder to climb, and have a well-defined summit which is the highest point of a mountain.

Hills are more rounded, easier to climb, and do not have a summit.

These two formations have a couple of things in common though. For instance, mountains can turn into hills and hills into mountains. However, this occurs over a long period of time, so if your world is fairly new, this most likely wouldn't have happened.

Secondly, valleys, which are depressions in the land, are typically found between mountains and between hills.

Now to help you with placement, I thought showing you real-world examples would be most helpful, so let's go through some of those.

Mountains can be placed pretty much anywhere. As you can see on this map, they could be between countries, submerged in the ocean, or along the edges of a landmass. There are several types of mountains as well, and with the resources in the directory, this can help you get a sense of things like the shape and lay of the range.

Here is a zoomed in image of the Grand Canyon, which is a deep valley. Here are the depressions in the land and as you can see there is the Colorado river flowing through it which is common in valleys since erosion usually forms valleys. Another example is the Yosemite Valley, which is less complex than the Grand Canyon but again has water flowing through it.

To be honest, I almost forgot about volcanoes because I don't have them in my story. But you can think of them much like mountains because tectonic plates also formed them. There are several resources for you in the directory, so you can choose the right type of volcano for your story. When making a choice, think how long they take to form, height and appearance, and level of activity.

There are other types of landforms like plateaus, dunes, and so and so forth but we won't be covering those in this video.

Next is water formations found on land.

Lakes can form from tectonic plate movement, volcanic activity, or glacial activity. Though glacial activity usually occurs more to the north, so keep that in mind for your story world. They can also be formed from rivers, sinkholes and of course being man made.

Here you see an example of the great lakes which were formed by glacial activity. These are large and your lakes can be too. Sometimes lakes and ponds are used synonymously, but the size of a lake varies quite a bit.

Rivers are a bit more complex, so let's take this step by step. First, rivers begin at high elevation in the mountains or hills. They start as streams and then turn into rivers. Here you see a cartoon version of that transition and then on the right is the start of a river in a mountain.

As rivers leave high elevation, they grow larger by themselves or by meeting with more water. One instance is with a Tributary, as you see on the left where a bunch of streams came together and then leave as one larger river. Another instance can be where one river meets another, just like on the right where the Ohio River meets the Mississippi.

Now rivers and valleys are often together because, as I mentioned before, erosion causes valleys. Water high in the mountains forms these valleys, but once it leaves high elevation, and the river slows down, the valley becomes flatter as you see on the left. Rivers also meander, meaning they create s-shaped curves like you see on the right.

Lastly, all water leads to large bodies of water like lakes and bays and oceans, but they do all end up at the ocean. Here on the right, I wanted to show you a close up of a lake. Here you see two rivers leaving that lake, but rivers also go into lakes, so make sure that occurs on your map if you decide to have a lake.

When rivers meet the ocean, they first split off several times and these separations going into the ocean are known as deltas as you can see in these images.

Now, go back to your map and make changes where more detail and accuracy can be added. From my map you can see I made

huge improvements by adding deltas, rivers starting in the mountains, rivers coming into and out of the lakes, and adding hills by the mountains. I couldn't give the impression of valleys in my map, but I know where'd they be, which is important if it ever comes up in my story.

Once you've made these changes, consider going back to your climate worksheet and adding information on distance. The easiest way to do this would be to create a scale and if you need help with this, there is a map scale calculator in your Natural Environment section of the directory.

Okay, in this lesson, we looked at where your story takes place, how your world was created, and where you can find inspiration from the real world to craft your story world.

Okay, in this section, we zoomed further into our world and determined what land and water formation changes we would make to our map.

In the next section, we're going to explore the biomes of our world so we can then use that information to come up with our flora and fauna. But before you move on to the next part of Fantasy L.A.N.D. I strongly encourage you to make those changes to your map and add any resources relevant from the directory to your storyteller binder or wherever you want to keep your world building materials. If you have any questions or requests, let me know in the chat.

When you're ready, I'll see you in section 3, Biomes.