

How Newbies Spend their Time

How much time and energy you want the PCs to spend getting accustomed to Valhalla before embarking on an adventure is entirely up to the GM and players. Many people don't want to waste too much time on this, while others really enjoy the richness of the role-playing experience. Below are some ideas on how Newbies can spend their time. This is used to determine how much the character learns about the world he has entered.

The following information is directly linked to characters starting off in the island of Ada-Kar. Since this is where most Newbies arrive in Valhalla, special emphasis has been given to it. Even so, much of this information can be used throughout Valhalla with a few twists. The INSL is present in virtually every city in Valhalla and many of the options listed here are sponsored by them. As such, many of these items (or variations of them) are available worldwide.

Classes

The INSL provides free classes that are open to the public. Characters do not need to officially join the INSL to visit these classes, though many of the attendees are members.

The majority of these classes are taught by laymen, professors from Ada-Kar University, or other interested professionals from the Merchant and Adventurer Guilds. As such there is opportunity for the instructors to have their own agenda should the GM determine this worthwhile.

Some of these classes can be used to enhance special skills that a character may have, or give them the experience to gain these special skills. Some applicable special skills are noted next to class names. If desired, the GM can allow PCs to use future Skill Points to gain abilities in these skills. Please note, however, that some of these classes are very basic. Characters should be encouraged to take advantage of additional learning opportunities to have enough experience to gain a Skill.

Here is a short list of some of the most popular classes:

- History of Valhalla (History): A short history of world events that made the current social and political situations as they are. The primary thing the class focuses on is the time before the Great War, the Great War itself, and the advent of Technology Zones.
- History and Cultures in Valhalla (Etiquette, Heraldry, History): This primarily details the history of the character's birth worlds. Many newbies question the events of the times in which they lived and died. They want to know who won the war that they died fighting in, or what happened next. This class gives broad overviews of this information. There are also additional classes that detail specific times, cultures and areas, such as aliens, mythical beings, ancient cultures, the future of mankind, etc.
- English as a Second Language (Linguistics): Over time, modern English has become the world language. Many people speak it and it is the primary language of the INSL council. Classes in teaching English to newbies are among the most popular of classes. These classes are only starter classes. More advanced classes are available through private institutions.
- The Newbie Experience (History): This class details the trials and keys for success for Newbies who have just come to Valhalla. This class serves as a primer for what the newbie can expect in Valhalla, as well as give hints for interacting with their new environment.
- Don't be Fooled (Bluff, Detect Traps/Alarms): Newbies are often targeted by devious tricksters and thieves. Some are robbed, others abducted. Some conmen sell "magical potions" that are really nothing more than glass vials filled with castor oil. This class helps newbies to be aware of these hazards and avoid becoming a victim.
- Traveling in Valhalla (Driving, Etiquette, History, Horsemanship): This class gives a number of pointers on traveling throughout Valhalla. It gives tips on what types of travel to trust and which to avoid. (Beware of the Press Gang!) It also gives general warnings on nations that are not known for their friendliness to visitors.
- Laws of the Lands (Etiquette): Gives an overview of some of the laws and customs that an explorer might encounter when traveling to foreign lands. Such information could be very useful when planning a trip to a remote country. There are separate classes available for each nation.
- The Guilds and You (N/A): There are series of these classes put on by the various guilds in Valhalla (i.e. Adventurer's Guild, Merchant's Guild, etc.) These classes give an overview of what the guilds are and how they could benefit the characters. This is really little more than a sales pitch disguised as information. Even so, most Newbies do end up joining one of these two guilds.
- The World of Magic (History, Magic Lore): Gives general descriptions of the types of magic found in Valhalla and where it is prevalent. It gives examples of what Magic is often used for and how to find trustworthy magic stores.
- The World of Technology (Computers, Mechanics): Gives information on what technology is and how it is used. This class is very popular with characters who hail from the pre-industrial age in particular. It is designed to make technology look more like science than magic.

Exploring Their Surroundings

Most characters will want to explore the city that they arrived in. They will want to know the lay of the land and where they can find things. This could include stores, pubs, restaurants, places of worship, guild houses, or the INSL headquarters. Much of this is done through role-playing and the characters moving to any given area. The extent of the exploration and details are up to the GM. Suffice to say that there are ample opportunities in any city for such exploration. Some cities also have special INSL introduction programs, which enable newbies to take guided tours free of charge.

Artwork Pending

Exploring Ada-Kar

The most common city for Newbies to arrive in is Ada-Kar. There is no known reason for this, but the percentage of Newbies arriving there is significantly higher than in other locations. As such, the INSL has gone to great lengths to ensure that newbies are taken care of in that city.

Among the programs and opportunities that the INSL have created is a pass that will enable newbies to explore some of the more popular tourist attractions either free or at a reduced rate. This pass lasts for one month after the newbie registers with the INSL.

Some of the more popular tours and destinations are listed below. Many character also explore the city on their own. In these cases the GM is free to use any part of this information to create the appropriate scene.

- The INSL Pyramid: A guided tour of the INSL pyramid including information on how it was built, its many functions, the INSL police force training center, and (when sessions are out) a tour of the INSL Council Chambers.
- Bus Tour of Ada-Kar: A tour around the island. The tour lasts all day and includes drive-by sightings of most major landmarks and many historical sites. The tour shows where most of the various national sectors are located and the best way to travel to each.
- Museum of Natural History: This museum has a number of artifacts that show the culture and history of people throughout the world. There are also historical items that have been brought to Valhalla from the previous world. Additionally, the museum houses more information and artifacts about the Great War than anywhere else in the world.
- The Ada-Kar Menagerie: The Menagerie is a huge zoo that houses all sorts of animals from throughout the world. The zoo contains everything from the mundane animals of our own time, to dinosaurs, mythical creatures, and alien life forms. Many people say that the most impressive attraction is the Manticore at feeding time.
- Pub-Crawl: Enjoy an evening on the town touring the most popular and interesting bars, pubs, and night-spots in Ada-Kar. Taste the libations from around the world in only a few hours. Highlights include Elvish Wine, Babylonian Beer, Cola, Scotch Whiskey, and Synthe-water from Megalopolis. The Pirate's Gold Inn is one of the more popular destinations on the Pub Crawl.
- Tasting the World: Similar to the pub-crawl, this tour takes characters on a tour of popular meals from throughout the land. Characters can enjoy youvetsi from Greece, cheeseburgers from America, blood pudding from the Celts, and dumplings from China.
- Guild Tours: Each of the Guilds offers a tour of their facilities for those interested. This is often accompanied by an informational sales pitch on what these guilds can do for their members.
- Clubs: There are a number of clubs available in Ada-Kar as well. As in the modern day there are groups that meet to talk about anything that interests them. These groups are an excellent source for information or good ways to meet others. Some of the most popular groups include any number of sports enthusiasts, gaming groups, historical societies, and weapons clubs (archery, firearms, fencing, etc.).

Earning Money

Newbies who come to Valhalla start off with very little of value. Aside from the fact that any paper currency that they have is completely worthless, they also will have very few personal possessions. Characters start off with what they had on them when they died. Even these items could prove to be of little to no value on the streets of Ada-Kar (or wherever they arrive).

Indeed, part of the fun of any adventure is getting a character from tough times to fame and fortune. Starting off with nothing can be a great way to drive urgency in the character and make him accept an adventure that he might not normally be willing to take. This could enable a GM to push the player toward a specific adventure with only the promise of a few coins, room and board.

On the other hand, the GM or player may want to spend time exploring other options before setting out on an adventure. After all Tony Montana of "Scarface" started out as a dish washer before rising to be a Crime Lord. Such humble beginnings could prove to be extremely entertaining.

The following are a number of ways that PCs can earn money before getting involved in an adventure. These can be ways of making a few quick bucks, or even a way to launch a full adventure. Also listed are a number of skills that could be used to improve the character's success in each of these areas. All rolls are at a -0% penalty/bonus. The results of the roll is determined by the GM based on the actions of the PC.

- Joining the INSL (Bluff, Etiquette, Search): As detailed in "Joining the INSL," there are many benefits to membership. One of the most immediately important is the 1000 V-bills the PC earns by joining. This is intended to help keep the Newbie out of trouble until he gets settled.
- Selling Personal Possessions (Barter/Haggle, Intimidation, Showmanship): Though the value of some personal possessions brought through to Valhalla are lamentably low (i.e. paper money), others can be very valuable indeed. Military goods like weapons, armor, gas masks, and grenades are always prized, though a PC may not want to relinquish such items. Strangely, one of the most sought after goods from newbies is mass media, such as books and music. Original copies of these items can sell at amazing sums to collectors. There is also a belief that some items that come through with Newbies are impervious to the effects of tech zones. While this does have some basis in fact, these occurrences are extremely rare. Even so, there are those that will purchase almost anything a Newbie owns simply for the chance that it could be one of these items.
- Joining the Adventurer's Guild (Barter/Haggle, Bluff, Carousing): This is the most obvious place to start. Joining the Adventurer's Guild allows a PC access to a wide variety of opportunities. While some are mercenary in essence, others allow the character to become a bodyguard, seek adventure overseas, or any other possible adventure the GM chooses. Virtually any adventure could be kicked off through the Adventure's Guild.
- Joining the Merchant's Guild (Barter/Haggle, Bluff, Carousing): While not so exciting as the Adventurer's Guild, the Merchant's Guild was created to match up the needs of legitimate businessmen with talented potential employees. There are any number of opportunities here, from becoming a deckhand on a seagoing vessel to becoming a sales clerk at a local mercantile shop. While the Merchant's Guild does not naturally promote adventure, in Valhalla adventure has a way of occurring naturally.
- Right Start Temporary Agency (Barter/Haggle, Bluff, Carousing): This is the place people go to make a quick, legal, depressing buck. The Agency pays for a day's work at the end of the day, so it could easily be a way for the character to make enough to feed himself for a few days, but is good for very little other than showing that the character is starting off at rock-bottom.
- Petty Theft (Bluff, Detect Traps/Alarms, Disarm Traps/Alarms, Disguise, Evasion, Forgery, Hiding, Lock Picking, Looting, Pick Pockets, Search, Slight of Hand): The good and the bad alike come to Valhalla. Picking pockets and shoplifting might be a way that a Newbie could start off in the world. Such activities might even draw the attention of the Thieves Guild, which could help to boost the character's criminal ways.
- Gambling (Gambling): There is a lot of gambling throughout Valhalla. Ada-Kar in particular houses a wide array of gambling dens, both legal and illegal. A character would not need to look far (though role-playing is encouraged) before finding a place where he could make a wager.
- The Arena (Combat Skills, Fast Draw, Showmanship): Alongside the gambling underworld, there is also the growing world of underground fighting. These establishments house any number of types of personal combat. A character that wants to risk it could easily find a way to become involved in this underworld. The games run from low-risk bare-knuckle boxing matches, to full gladiatorial combat where the survival of the opponent is never certain. All games pay the contenders well, but the more risk, the more reward.