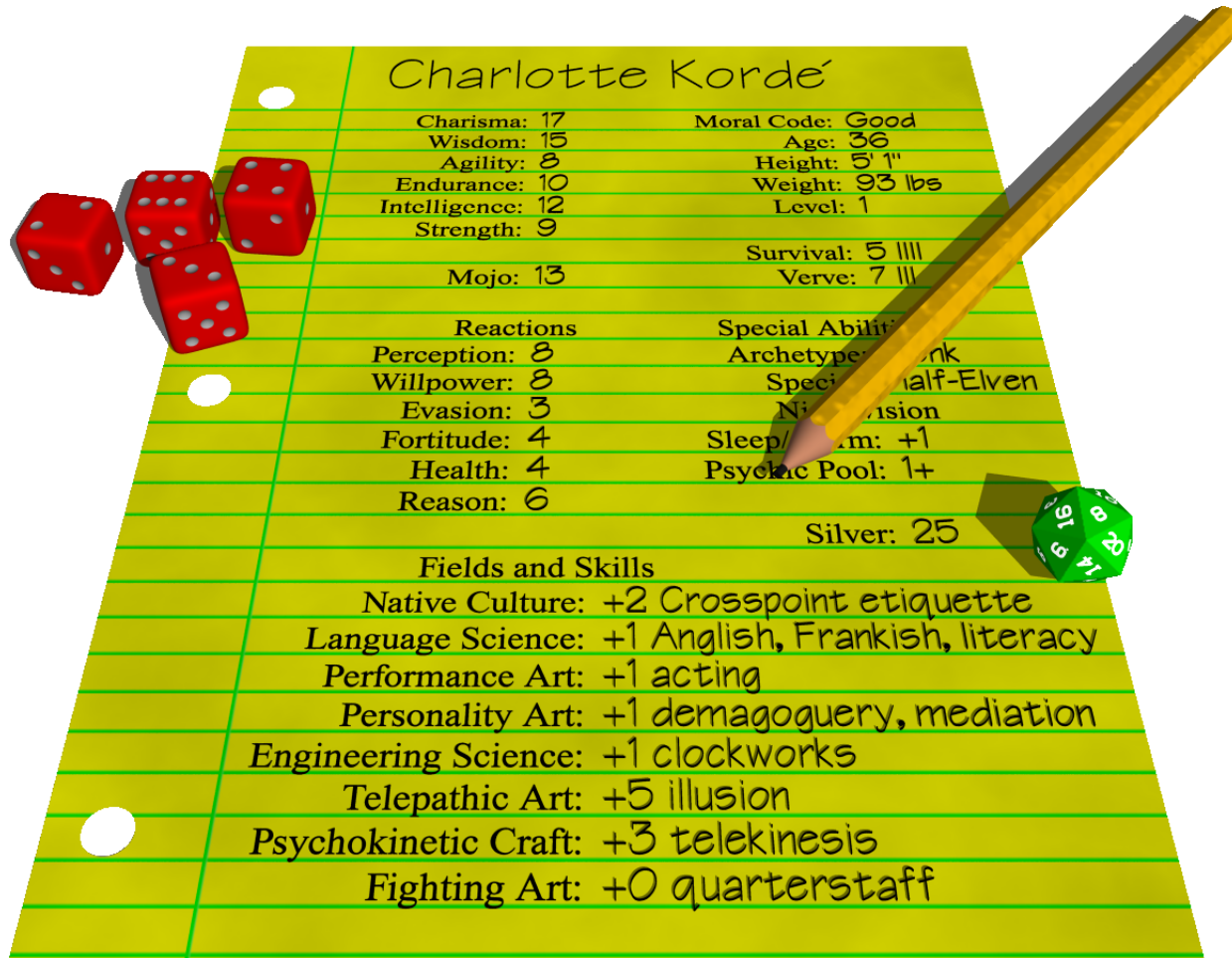


Gods & Monsters



Charlotte Korde

Charisma: 17	Moral Code: Good
Wisdom: 15	Age: 36
Agility: 8	Height: 5' 1"
Endurance: 10	Weight: 93 lbs
Intelligence: 12	Level: 1
Strength: 9	
Mojo: 13	Survival: 5 IIII
	Verve: 7 III
Reactions	Special Abilities
Perception: 8	Archetype: Monk
Willpower: 8	Specialization: Half-Elven
Evasion: 3	Non-Weapon Proficiency
Fortitude: 4	Sleep/Resistance: +1
Health: 4	Psychic Pool: 1+
Reason: 6	
	Silver: 25

Fields and Skills

- Native Culture: +2 Crosspoint etiquette
- Language Science: +1 English, Frankish, literacy
- Performance Art: +1 acting
- Personality Art: +1 demagoguery, mediation
- Engineering Science: +1 clockworks
- Telepathic Art: +5 illusion
- Psychokinetic Craft: +3 telekinesis
- Fighting Art: +0 quarterstaff

A fantasy game by Jerry Stratton

What Is This Game?

In *Gods & Monsters*, you and your friends take the role of fantasy heroes. Your heroes will meet, outsmart, and fight fantastic creatures, strange beings, and perhaps even the gods themselves. You will solve puzzles and riddles, and guide your heroes through the uncharted vistas of your imagination.

Most of the action in *Gods & Monsters* is spoken. The Guide describes what the heroes see, and the players describe what their heroes do in response.

Sometimes you will roll dice to determine how successful your hero's actions are, and you can use your hero's mojo to help ensure success.

Where the hand-scrawled sign warns "beyond here lie dragons," your stories begin.

Jerry Stratton

<http://godsmonsters.com/>

June 16, 2018



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What do I need?

Besides this rulebook, you'll want a notebook for tracking your character's abilities and for remembering details about your character's adventures. You'll want a pencil so that you can easily change what you write and a pencil sharpener to keep your pencil sharp.

You will also need a set of dice. Look for a 10-die set: it will include one each of all the dice, plus an extra ten-sided die (for rolling d100) and three extra six-sided dice (for rolling abilities). You can also buy your dice separately. You'll want four six-sided dice, one eight-sided die, one ten-sided die, and one twenty-sided die. If you're a completist, a sorcerer, or an Adventure Guide, you'll also want a four-sided die, a twelve-sided die, and a ten-sided die with tens on it. Any game store will have them.

Go to <http://godsmonsters.com/Game/Dice/> for a demonstration of what these dice look like and how to read them.

Players and Guides

There must be at least three players, four is usually best, and five is fine. Four is often best because it provides the opportunity to roleplay a narrative of three unique heroes: warrior, thief, and one of the supernatural archetypes.

One of the players will be the Adventure Guide. The Adventure Guide will present the adventures to the rest of the players, who will take the role of heroes in this fantasy world. Each player has a character; the Guide's character is the world.

If the characters enter a town, the people living in that town are the Guide's responsibility. If the characters open a trapped chest, the Guide not only knows what the trap is, but also what treasures or horrors are inside the chest. The Guide may choose to use treasures, horrors, towns, or complete adventures that were written by someone else. But the effectiveness and tenor of the adventure remain the Guide's responsibility.

This is not to say that players cannot offer input to the Guide, nor that the Guide may not request such input. Both are recommended. But in the end, the Guide is the world that the characters interact with.

The other players have full control of their hero, their character in the game. When they say "jump", their character jumps—or tries to. Whether they succeed depends on how effective their ideas are, how lucky their dice are, and what mojo they're willing to sacrifice.

Do I need to read all this?

If you're not the Adventure Guide, all you really need to read is the first section, up to *Character Archetypes*, and possibly up through *Sample Characters*. The Adventure Guide can help you with the rest of the rules when they become relevant. You do not need to read the *Adventure Guide's Handbook* or the *Encounter Guide*, and shouldn't, as they will spoil some of the surprises for you.

Narration

Gods & Monsters is a game. You roll dice to see if your character in the game is successful at doing adventurous things. Your character has resources. You will use those resources to gain more resources. Just like betting chips in poker, if you use too many resources you'll be out of the game—your character might die. Use too few and your character won't advance. You'll use strategy in Gods & Monsters to maneuver your character into situations where their resources are most effective.

One of the cool things about role-playing games is the role-playing. You tell the Adventure Guide, “my character's going to jump the fence” and then you roll the dice to find out if your character successfully jumped the fence. Or, “I'm going to try to convince the old man to tell us where the xolome went. I'll offer him a little food first, and I'll talk softly, and be very comforting.” Then you roll and see if your character is successful, or maybe your role-playing hit all the right buttons and the Adventure Guide just says “yes, you succeed” and describes what happens.

In Gods & Monsters, much of the role-playing comes from your narration of what your character does. There are three kinds of narration:

Describe what your character is trying to do. The most basic narration is when you tell everyone what your character's actions are. Whether it's attacking a demon, sermonizing to a crowd, or offering food to a beggar, it doesn't really happen unless you tell everyone it happens. Also, when you describe what your character is doing, you're really describing what your character is *trying* to do. Some things will be easy enough that when your character tries them, they will automatically succeed. Other things are more difficult, and for those you'll need to roll dice to see if your character succeeds.

When you describe what your character tries to do, you can also describe how your character tries to do it. Instead of saying “I'm going to search for a trap in this room”, you can say “I'm going to search for a trap behind the tapestry.” This kind of narration can both help and hurt your chance of success. If the trap is, in fact, behind the tapestry, you'll get a bonus to succeed. If the trap is obvious once the tapestry is moved, you won't even have to roll. If the trap is not behind the tapestry, however, you won't find one hidden under the floor.

Explain why your character is doing it. In fiction, there's only one writer, so actions lead inexorably to the “correct” consequences. But in Gods & Monsters the Adventure Guide doesn't necessarily know what consequences you're hoping for from your character's actions. If you're offering food to a beggar hoping that the beggar will tell you whether he saw anything out of the ordinary, you need to tell the Adventure Guide this. Or if you've decided that the beggar is really the prince your character has been looking for, you should explain how you or your character came to that conclusion.

Describe the success or failure of your attempt. After your character succeeds or fails, the Adventure Guide will sometimes describe how your character succeeded or failed, and sometimes will simply say that your character succeeded or failed. This gives you the opportunity to describe how your character succeeded or failed. You don't need to do this; it isn't in any way necessary. It can, however, sometimes be fun to describe how, for example, the nail snapped after your character hit their thumb with the hammer. Brevity is the soul of this stage of narration: the action has passed, and it is time to move on to the next scene. Also remember that when you only lost verve because of the failure, you still looked cool doing it.

Players and characters

You as a player will play your character in the game. Characters in Gods & Monsters advance through a series of adventures. You will begin the game by assigning abilities to your character. Throughout your character's first adventure you will add further abilities. For the rest of the game your character will use those abilities to defeat opponents, solve problems, and complete further adventures.

Your character will (if they survive their adventures) advance through a series of experience levels. At each new level, you will have the opportunity to assign new abilities to your character's repertoire. Each new level is a new chapter or book in your character's story.

As you play the game, you will describe to the other players what your character is doing. During a game session, Sandy, playing the sorceror Galen Noslen, might tell the group that "Galen casts a spell of dazed enchantment on the Orcs". Each player will likely play multiple characters over time, as one character retires, dies, or temporarily leaves the group.

There is also a difference between player characters and non-player characters. Player characters hold a special place in Gods & Monsters. They are the heroes and anti-heroes of the story. The game revolves around them. This doesn't mean that the game is necessarily going to give them any special breaks—sometimes it will, sometimes it won't. But the game exists for their players' amusement. If the players go somewhere else, the game ceases to exist.

Because the game, like a movie camera, focuses on the player characters, it gives them extra chances of survival in the form of survival points, verve, mojo, and reaction rolls.

Here are some sample characters. I'll be referring back to these characters as examples throughout the rules.

Player:	Tony Barlow	Sarah Dent	Sandy Thompson	John Greeley	Jim Turner
Character:	Toromeen	Sam Stevens	Gralen Noslen	Charlotte Kordé	Will Stratford
Archetype:	Warrior	Thief	Sorceror	Monk	Warrior
Specialty:	Dwarven	warrior skills	raven familiar	Half-Elven	weapon specialist
Moral Code:	Chaotic Good	Good	Ordered Good	Good	Good

My character wouldn't do that!

Sometimes you'll be in a situation where you know your character has no motivation to be part of the adventure. You'll need to either come up with a reason that your character does go on the adventure (whether by compulsion or desire), or play a different character. A character should never get in the way of a player's fun. Never say "my character wouldn't do that". Say "I don't want my character to do that. Can we try something else?" or "I want my character to do that, but it doesn't make sense. Let's find a way that works."

What does it mean to play a character?

Your character is the main character in a story. As a Gods & Monsters player, your part of the game is to find that story, to create it. This is not the Adventure Guide's story; it is yours. The Guide doesn't have a story, only a situation. It is up to you to create a narrative out of that situation. You need to create your character's plot thread.

In any story, what matters is what makes the main character different: their special abilities. So, look at what your character can do, and think up scenarios for how those abilities might be helpful. Some of those scenarios will not pan out; that's the life of an author. When one scenario doesn't bring results, think up slightly different scenarios and think up radically different scenarios.

For example, you might be trying to solve the riddle of what happened in an ancient, deserted manor. You look at your character's spell list and think, maybe *see whole* would be useful here. Maybe there's something broken or torn that can be put together. Where would I find such things? How would they be preserved after all this time? Perhaps some small animal took them into its lair to nest with. If that's your scenario, you look for nests. Or, perhaps they fell behind something that couldn't be moved. Is there such a thing here? Look behind it.

Take the Adventure Guide's descriptions into account. If it's an empty house and you keep hearing rats, you might make the scenario "my character finds a lost item in a rat's nest". You then keep an eye out for places that rats might build nests.

Maybe your special ability is to beat things up. Who or what, that you could beat up, would help you further your character's thread and make your character matter? Where would those persons or creatures be? What signs would indicate their presence? Start looking for those signs, and start asking the Guide about them.

Pay attention to the adventure's backstory. If your character beats things up and the backstory involves goblin ambushes in this area, you might create the scenario "my characters foils a goblin ambush while we're traveling through this area". Start paying attention to places where goblins might hold an ambush.

Sometimes your first attempt will fail. You'll look in the rafters in the first room of a four-room attic and find nothing. If it was a good narrative, don't give up. Look in the rafters in all four rooms. If it was a flawed narrative, modify it. If you think of a better narrative, use the new one instead of (or in addition to) the old one. But don't give up too easily. Characters in stories persevere. There are always false starts and slow starts. Characters become main characters because they don't give up. They ensure that their special abilities matter.

Your goal is to make your character matter in the narrative. If one scenario doesn't work, try a different one. Later, as your character gains additional abilities, keep two or three scenarios in mind at a time, looking for the things that would trigger those scenarios, occasionally modifying those scenarios according to what you hear from the Guide.

One tool that you have as a player to ensure that your scenarios make sense is that *mojo use must always matter*. You'll find out about *mojo* later, but if you are willing to spend *mojo* to be successful, the Guide must tell you if your success doesn't matter, giving you the opportunity to back out of spending the *mojo*. If you're barking up the wrong tree, chasing a red herring, or otherwise following the wrong clichéd path, the Guide must tell you this if you successfully bid *mojo* on a roll to follow that path.

Ask questions

Whenever your character enters a new place or a new situation, your Adventure Guide will describe what your character initially sees. But what you initially see isn't necessarily everything. You'll need to ask questions to find what's not obvious on a first look. Your Adventure Guide may also describe some things in relation to what your character knows, but they won't always do so. You'll need to ask questions such as "what does my character know about..."

Your character knows different things than you do, so you'll need to ask the Adventure Guide questions constantly. Sometimes the Adventure Guide will respond immediately with an answer: the very act of asking the question means your character knows the answer. Other times, the Adventure Guide will ask you to make an ability roll or a reaction roll (often, for questions, these will be either an intelligence roll, a wisdom roll, a perception roll, or a reason roll).

Ask what your character sees now. Wherever you are, you should ask "what do I see". If anything in the description interests you, hone in on it. "What do I see in the bathtub?"

Ask what your character knows. For example, you find a painting in the ruined castle. You think it's important. Ask the Adventure Guide what you know about this painting. Do you know what style it is? When it was painted? Is there anything odd about it?

Ask what your character has seen. For example, you wonder if the king is mad. Ask the Adventure Guide what you know about the king. Ask the Adventure Guide whether you have seen any other indications that the king is mad.

As you approach the gaping black maw, you smell the stench of the dead.

Inside the cavern, the stench is stronger, but not as overpowering as it might have been a few months ago. There are goblin and hobgoblin bodies scattered throughout the wide cavern, some with tatters of flesh still hanging from their bones. Insects crawl about the dead. Broken spears stick out of the bodies.

This irregular cavern is probably forty or more yards in radius.

What do you want to ask about this cave? There are two overpowering features that might be hiding something else: the smell, and the bodies. You might want to ask how quickly you can get away from the smell. On the other hand, you might want to ask what your character knows about goblins and hobgoblins. Do they often fight? What about those spears? They might deserve a closer look. What do they look like? Are they goblin spears? If you can stand it, what's here besides bodies? Did the goblins have any money? Can you tell what this cave was used for before the fight? Is there an exit from this cave other than the one you came in?

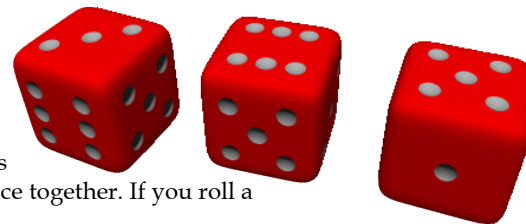
Whatever interests you, ask about it.

Rolling dice

The most common dice you'll use in Gods & Monsters are the d20 and the d6. You'll use the d20 on its own. This is a die with twenty sides, ranging from 1 to 20.

You'll usually use more than one d6 and add them together. If you see the term "3d6", this means to roll three six-sided dice. Unless the rules say otherwise, you'll add those three dice together. If you roll a 3, a 6, and a 5, this is a 14.

You will also use four-sided dice (d4), eight-sided dice (d8), ten-sided dice (d10), and twelve-sided dice (d12), usually for things like survival points and weapon damage. You might see "2d4" for rolling two four-sided dice and adding them together, or "1d8" for rolling one eight-sided die. For all dice except d4, you read the top number (just as you do on a d6). The d4 doesn't have a top number, so you read the bottom number, which is usually printed along the sides.



Adventure Guides will sometimes use a d100. It is unlikely that you have a hundred-sided die. You'll generate a number from 1 to 100 by rolling two ten-sided dice of different colors or sizes. One of the dice will be the tens die, and the other will be the ones die. If you roll a 1 and a 9, this is 19. If you roll a 4 and a 2, this is 42. If you roll two zeroes, this is 100. Most of the time when you are rolling d100, you are checking a percentage. So if something happens 65% of the time and you roll less than or equal to 65, this something has happened. If you roll 66 or greater, this something has not happened.

Go to [godsmonsters.com/Game/Dice/](https://www.godsmonsters.com/Game/Dice/) for a dice-reading demonstration.



Create Your Hero



What do I need to do?

Your Gods & Monsters character will be one of five heroic archetypes: warrior, thief, sorcerer, prophet, or monk. You will embellish that archetype using Specialties and Fields to create a unique character.

When you create your character, think about what kind of a hero you wish to play. Some things about your character you'll choose. Others, you'll roll randomly using dice.

1. As a group, decide on goals for the game and choose your character's motivation.
2. Choose a *moral code* for your character.
3. Choose an *archetype*: a warrior, thief, sorcerer, prophet, or monk. You might also choose a specialty now, but you don't have to. A specialty is some special ability that your character has, such as having a familiar or being an Elf. Some specialties have ability requirements. If yours does, remember that in the next step. You may have to settle on a different specialty for now.
4. Roll dice to find your character's six abilities: strength, agility, endurance, wisdom, intelligence, charisma.
5. Read the checklist for your character's archetype. It will help with the next few items.
6. Write down your character's first level *mojo*.
7. Apply your character's *specialty*, writing down any special abilities or restrictions it gives your character.
8. Choose your character's initial fields and skills, if any.
9. Choose your character's skills in their *native culture*.
10. Mark your character's field bonus in the *fighting art*.
11. Write down your character's *survival* and *verve*.
12. Write down your character's *movement*.
13. Apply your character's age. You may get a few extra skills if your character is older.
14. Calculate your character's *reactions*.
15. Write down your character's attack and defense bonuses (or penalties).
16. Write down your character's *carry*. This is how many items they can carry at one time.
17. Write down your character's starting money — your character's archetypal ability, in silver coins.
18. Describe your character: what does your character look like, what is their background, why are they adventuring, which other characters does your character know, and why?

If you haven't done so yet, you may wish to read *The Order of the Astronomers* for one idea of the kinds of things that can happen in a Gods & Monsters game.

Why are we playing this game?

The first thing you'll want to do is talk with your friends and decide what the game will be about. You don't need to get into details—your Adventure Guide will handle the details—but you'll need to all be on the same page. For example, you might decide that this game will be about the quest for knowledge, small-town heroes make good, black sheep redeem themselves, or military squabbling among nations.

Your game can be about a plot, such as “city resists invasion” or about a style, such as “old-style dungeon crawl”.

It should take five to fifteen minutes to talk about this. Once you've got the basic idea for the game down, there are three things you'll want to talk about as a group, and choose as a group: your motivation, your moral codes, and your archetypes.

Motivation

Take a sheet of paper. On the back, write “motivation”. Take a minute or two to think about your character's motivation for adventuring. Your motivation helps to drive your character forward into the abandoned castle, ruined mansion, or underground dungeon.

Talk about your motivation with the other players. A written motivation helps to ensure that all players are on the same page, and helps to guide you as you create your character.

Even though _____, I will explore the ruins because _____.

Something wants to keep you on the farm or in the family business. Whether it's dad, responsibility, fear, or lack of confidence, something wants to keep you from standing out, to be normal. That goes in the “even though” section.

Your motivation overcomes that. It can be an abstract idea or a specific object that your character strives to own, possess, or somehow acquire. Your motivation might, for example, be some form of knowledge, power, heroism, wealth, contentment, family, revenge, war, glory, peace, fulfillment, love, solace, redemption, or adventure.

Your motivation must drive your character to adventure with the other characters. It should in some way drive the character to action, “even though” the average person would never do something so fraught with peril.

Even though my mother wants me to stay on the farm, I will explore the ruins because I want to see the world.

Even though I want to marry my childhood sweetheart, I will explore the ruins because we need money to build a home.

Even though there are safer ways to make a fortune, I will explore the ruins because I want it all now.

You can change your motivation at any time, but it must always provide a justification for adventuring in ruins.

Adventure Guide

If you haven't yet done so, you'll need to choose one member of the group to be the Adventure Guide. The Adventure Guide will not create a hero of their own. The Guide will create the adventures that challenge the heroes. The Guide will act the part of most of the non-player characters, and the fortunes and fates that the characters meet. They will represent the world in which the heroes find adventure. The player chosen as the Guide should read the *Adventure Guide's Handbook* for more information about being an Adventure Guide.

The Guide may also wish to read the adventures that can be downloaded for Gods & Monsters at <http://godsmonsters.com/Guide/>. The other players should not read these adventures, as it spoils the surprises and contests that the adventures contain.

Moral codes

There is a lot more about moral code later in the book; it has its own section, and you'll want to read it. A character's moral code is their morality in the Gods & Monsters fantasy world. Good characters are honest, Evil characters are selfish, Chaotic characters value personal freedom, and Ordered characters value community well-being.

Player characters should almost always be Good if they have a moral code. They can be *only* good, or they can be Chaotic Good or Ordered Good. As a group, you may wish to decide whether you want Chaotic or Ordered characters, or a mix. This will depend on the goals of the game and what the game is about. Player characters can't be evil.

Archetypes and specialties

It's always a good idea to talk about the archetypes you're going to want in your group, so that you know who wants to play which archetype and you know which of the mental archetypes (sorcerer, prophet, and monk) are available.

If there are four players, one is the Adventure Guide, one will play a warrior, one will play a thief, and one will play a mental archetype.

If there are only three players, one player character must be a physical archetype, and one must be a mental archetype.

If there are five players, the fifth player can play a warrior, a thief, or one of the remaining mental archetypes (but not the same one already being played). If there are six or seven players, the extra players can choose any archetype that isn't already being played by two players.

Some archetypes won't be available in your game. The physical archetypes, warrior and thief, are always available. But of the mental archetypes, often only one or two will be available. You'll want to discuss this as a group: what kind of magic do you want to encounter?

In some fantasy worlds, only one of the magical archetypes will be available. In others, two or three will be available, but some will be extremely rare. It's up to you as a group what kind of world your characters live in.

Sometimes the world will dictate what magic is available. If you're adventuring in a Burroughsian world, you'll need monks so as to have psychic powers in the game. If you're adventuring in ancient Greece, you'll want prophets, and perhaps sorcerers.

Numbers

Throughout this game you will have scores, levels, and other numbers that describe your character's prowess and competence. The higher these numbers are, the more often your character will be successful at whatever the number describes.

The reason that higher numbers are better is that whenever your character does something at which there is a chance of failure, you roll a d20 and compare the number on that die to one of those scores. If the die comes up lower than the score or equal to the score, your character succeeds at the task.

For example, you might decide your character is going to climb a rope thirty feet into a tower. The Adventure Guide tells you it requires a strength roll. You'll roll d20 and if the die comes up less than or equal to your character's strength, your character successfully climbed the rope. If your character has a 13 strength and you roll 11, you've succeeded by 2. If you roll 18, you've failed by five.

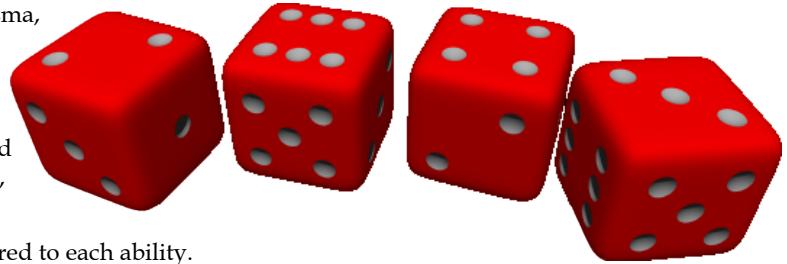
Sometimes there will be modifiers. For example, if the rope is slippery the Adventure Guide may say that this is a difficult task and give you a penalty to the roll. If you have a skill for climbing, that skill might give you a bonus for climbing the rope.

When circumstances, such as that the rope is slippery, affect your character's chance of success, you won't always know what that penalty (or bonus) is. Sometimes it will become obvious once you attempt the action. Other times it will not. If you bid mojo on a failed roll, and your bid succeeds, you will know exactly what the modifier was, because you will spend that much mojo on your success.

Ability scores

On the front of your character sheet, make a space for your charisma, intelligence, wisdom, endurance, agility, and strength. These are your six ability scores. Each score ranges from 3 to 18.

Roll 4d6 six times, throwing out the lowest die in each case, to generate six numbers from 3 to 18. For example, rolling 2, 6, 4, and 3 will result in 13: we throw out the lowest number, the 'two'. Six, four, and three added together give us thirteen.



Once you've rolled your six numbers, assign the numbers as desired to each ability.

At least one ability score must be nine or higher in order to choose an archetype. Any player can, after they roll, choose to throw out all of their rolls and instead use 15, 13, 12, 10, 8, and 7 as their rolls.

Physical abilities

Agility

Agility is the character's manual dexterity and overall speed. Running, acrobatics, and musical instruments all demand high agility. The agile character can move quickly and surely.

Endurance

Endurance is sort of a character's long term strength. It is the ability to keep going, physically, as everyone else drops out of the race. It is the ability to stand against harm, disease, and discomfort. Characters with high endurance will tend to endure adversity longer and get sick less often, and be able to withstand the rigors of battle for longer periods of time.

Strength

Strength is the character's ability to lift, to bend, and to break things. The higher their strength, the more they than can lift. Characters with higher strength will be more powerful in battle, able to defeat their foes more quickly.

Mental abilities

Charisma

Charisma measures leadership, self-confidence, and interpersonal skills (noticing how to act and react to others). Charisma is not physical appearance, although flaws that would cause ugliness in less charismatic individuals may add character to the charismatic individual.

Charisma is not popularity. It is a measure of a character's facility in interacting with others. A character with a high charisma is better able to perceive social constructs and the intricacies of interpersonal situations, and can, but does not have to, use this to be liked better. A character with a high charisma doesn't have to be popular. It's their choice, or at least more their choice than if they have a low charisma. Any character can try to be popular, hated, respected, or feared. A character with high charisma will be more successful at the attempt. A character with a low charisma who does lots of popular things might very well be liked by most people—even though the character would prefer to strike fear in the hearts of men. And their popularity will be fickle, because their popularity is not under their control.

Like the other abilities, charisma has a lot bundled up with it, and leadership is the next biggest chunk of charisma. A character with a high charisma is not only better able to get their commands obeyed, they are more competent at being in command. Some may command through fear, others through respect, but the best commanders in the field have been highly charismatic, even to the point that some are not just respected but loved by the enemy population.

Intelligence

Intelligence is a character's learning ability and ability to assimilate knowledge and remember facts. Characters with a high intelligence will tend to know more and learn new things faster. They will take all the facts at hand and rationally sift through them to find a course of action that they believe is best. A character with high intelligence is likely to be more curious than a character of low intelligence.

Wisdom

Wisdom is the ability to make moral decisions—to tell good from evil. Wisdom is also the courage of one's convictions. It not only helps your character determine the right thing to do, it also gives your character the courage to perform the right act and follow your character's moral code.

Wisdom is also common sense, especially where common sense conflicts with learned knowledge. Wisdom might also be considered intuition. A character with a high wisdom can make good decisions without necessarily thinking logically through all the facts at hand. The wise decision will be the right thing to do, but not necessarily the most efficient or advantageous.

Ability modifiers

Often, a roll or score will use abilities to modify the number associated with the roll or score. The ability can be a “major” contributor to the number or a “minor” contributor to the number.

In this table, any number with a ‘dash’ is a penalty to the action: it must always hinder. A number with a ‘+’ is a bonus to the action: it must always help. So, if Tony, playing Toromeen, needs to make a roll less than or equal to 6, modified by endurance (major) and by charisma (minor), this will be 6 with a bonus of 2 (from his endurance of 15) and a penalty of 0 (from his charisma of 8). So Tony needs to roll 8 or less for Toromeen to succeed at this particular task.

The “Special” column is used mostly for attributes which get bonuses based merely on the existence of an ability. For example, a character’s carry is modified by their endurance on the special column.

Ability	Major	Minor	Special
1	-5	-3	0
2	-4	-2	0
3	-3	-2	0
4-5	-2	-1	1
6	-1	0	1
7-8	-1	0	2
9-10	0	0	2
11	0	0	3
12-13	+1	0	3
14	+1	0	4
15-16	+2	+1	4
17	+3	+2	4
18	+4	+2	5
19	+5	+2	5
20	+6	+3	5
21	+7	+3	6
22	+8	+3	6
+1	+1	+1/3	Score/3.5

Character archetypes

An archetype is the character's role in the story. It is not the character's profession or vocation. The character might well have been a smith, miner, or scholar before becoming involved in the adventure. Their community will probably still consider them a smith, miner, or scholar. But their role in the story is warrior, thief, sorcerer, prophet, or monk.

Archetypes apply to the adventurers and to major non-player characters. Most other characters are just their jobs, and have no archetype.

There are five archetypes, each associated with one of the six ability scores and one of the six reactions.

Character Archetype	Archetypal Ability	Archetypal Reaction	Verve Contributor	Fighting Art
Warrior:	Strength	Fortitude	Intelligence	1
Thief:	Agility	Evasion	Wisdom	0
Sorcerer:	Intelligence	Reason	Charisma	0
Prophet:	Wisdom	Willpower	Strength	0
Monk:	Charisma	Perception	Endurance	0

As your character increases in level, their archetypal reaction will improve faster than their other reactions.

- The character must have an ability score of at least 9 in their archetypal ability to become that archetype.
- Warriors begin the game with *Fighting Art* at +1 to the field. Everyone else begins with *Fighting Art* at zero.
- A character's verve is affected by their archetypal ability and their verve contributor.

After you go through your archetype's checklist, you'll also gain some initial resources for your character, such as skills and money.



as attacking from higher ground or attacking an unaware opponent).

Warriors may save points across rounds, as long as the total combat points saved and moved in one round never exceed twice their level. A second level warrior might save their two points due to level in order to have four points every other round and gain an extra attack every other round. Saved points are lost when combat ends.

Warrior

Warriors fight and make war. Their *goals* may be to avoid fights and make peace, but the skills they use to do this are the fighting arts and their battlefield prowess.

Create your first level warrior

A warrior must have a strength of at least 9. Your warrior begins the game with five survival points modified by endurance as a major contributor, and five verve points modified by strength and intelligence as minor contributors.

Your warrior has the *Fighting Arts* field at +1. Within the Fighting Arts, you have the *unarmed combat* and *weapon fluency* skills.

Choose one specialty. Choose a moral code if you wish. Choose your character's motivation.

Determine any other statistics you need to know about your character, such as reactions, defense, age, height, weight, movement, and carry.

You have starting money equal to your strength.

If you have not already done so, create a backstory for your character.

Warrior combat pool

Warriors can use their attack bonuses for more than improving their attack roll. They can also use it to avoid being hit or to hit more than one target at a time. A warrior may move up to twice level attack bonuses into a general combat pool. A 3rd level warrior could move all three of their *fighting art* bonuses into their combat pool, as well as up to three other attack bonuses (such

Combat Bonus Use	Cost
(+1 to attack)	(1)
+1 to damage	1
+1 to defense	1
+1 to throw off surprise	1
+3 to combat movement	1
1 additional attack	4
+1 to quickdraw	1

Combat pool points are allocated each round, and apply to all attacks that round. If a ninth level warrior applies four points to gain an additional attack, two points to increase damage, and leaves an attack bonus of three, the damage bonus and attack bonus apply to *both* attacks that round.

The bonus to throw off surprise does not apply to the original surprise roll, since the character wasn't in combat then.

Unarmed combat damage

Combat bonus points applied to damage with unarmed combat styles (such as simple unarmed combat or martial arts combat) do not directly increase damage. They increase the size of the die used for damage. For each damage bonus, the die is increased along the damage progression chart, starting from d2 or d3 to d4, from d4 to d6, d6 to d8, d8 to d10, or d10 to d12. Beyond d12, damage bonuses are applied as normal: modifiers to the damage rolled on the dice.

Fighting Arts

Warriors begin the game with the *Fighting Art* field at +1. They have the *Fighting Art* skills *unarmed combat* and *weapon fluency*.



Sorcerer

The sorcerer is a student of the arcane sciences. Whether through intense study, bargain with strange powers, or natural aptitude, the sorcerer can control magical energies and shape these energies to the sorcerer's will. The sorcerer's spells create, control, and change the natural world. The sorcerer is always seeking new spells to advance their knowledge and power.

Create your first level sorcerer

A sorcerer must have an intelligence of at least 9. Your sorcerer begins the game with five survival points modified by endurance as a major contributor, and five verve points modified by intelligence and charisma as minor contributors.

Choose one specialty. Choose a moral code if you wish. Choose your character's motivation.

Determine any other statistics you need to know about your character, such as reactions, defense, age, height, weight, movement, and carry.

You have starting money equal to your intelligence.

If you have not already done so, create a backstory for your character.

Number of memorized spells

Sorcerers must *memorize* spells before they can use them. The sorcerer starts at level one with one spell slot. At each level advancement, they gain a number of slots equal to their new level. A second level sorcerer will have three slots (one plus two), a 3rd level sorcerer will have six slots (one, plus two, plus three).

Each spell uses *level* slots. A first level sorcerer may memorize one first level spell. A second level sorcerer could memorize three first level spells (three spell slots), or one second level spell and one first level spell.

The sorcerer gains a bonus to their total spell slots according to their intelligence as a major contributor.

For example, a first level sorcerer with a 17 intelligence gains a bonus of three to their total spell slots, for a total of four spell slots. At second level, a sorcerer with a 17 intelligence will have six spell slots, and could memorize six first level spells, four first level spells and one second level spell, two first level spells and two second level spells, or three second level spells.

Mnemonic magic

Magic in *Gods & Monsters* is mnemonic. Mnemonic sorcerers keep a spell book with all of their spells in it. In order to cast a spell, the mnemonic sorcerer must first memorize the spell by *impressing* the spell formula into their mind. Once a memorized spell is used, it is gone and cannot be used again until it is impressed again. However, a Mnemonic sorcerer may *understand* any number of spells and have as many spells in their spellbook as they can pay for, steal, or find. Mnemonic casters are limited only in the number of spells they may have *impressed* at one time.

It takes two minutes times the level of the spell to impress the spell into the sorcerer's mind. The mnemonic sorcerer must prepare for memorizing spells by first meditating ten minutes. For example, a sorcerer memorizing two first level spells and one 3rd level spell will require twenty minutes total (ten minutes preparation, and five times two minutes for the number of spell levels).

Sorcerers may not memorize spells that are higher level than the sorcerer or higher level than the sorcerer's intelligence.

During meditation, spells may be erased from memory to make room for a new spell. Memorizing spells costs one verve, plus the number of spells memorized during that meditation. Sorcerers must have their spellbooks to impress a spell in that book.

Casting a spell costs one verve, and after casting a spell it is no longer memorized.

Spellbooks

Mnemonic sorcerers always begin the game with *Inscription* in their spellbook. Mark that down now. During your first level, you will use mojo to further fill your character's spellbook.

Spellbooks have a bulk of one, plus .05 per spell level of all spells in the book.



Prophet

The prophet is one favored or chosen by a god, demigod, or pantheon. Their patron's favor comes in the form of spiritual aid. These spirits can be used to heal, aid, and protect worshippers, conquer unbelievers, and sometimes even to convince unbelievers to become believers. **Prophets must have a moral code.**

Create your first level prophet

A prophet must have a wisdom of at least 9. Your prophet begins the game with five survival points modified by endurance as a major contributor, and five verve points modified by wisdom and strength as minor contributors.

Choose one specialty. Choose a moral code. Choose your character's motivation.

Choose the pantheon, deity, or power that has favored your prophet.

Determine any other statistics, such as reactions, defense, age, height, weight, movement, and carry.

You have starting money equal to your wisdom.

If you have not already done so, create a backstory for your character.

Spirits

Prophets call upon the spirits of their Gods and hold these spirits until they need to manifest the spirit's divine power. The prophet must spend twenty minutes in prayer, plus two minutes for each spirit level, when calling spirits. Calling spirits costs one verve, plus one verve for every spirit called. The prophet must have their holy symbol. The prophet prays for the spirits they want, though their deity may provide other spirits; if their god is angered, the prophet may receive no spirits until they atone for their transgression.

The prophet may hold a number of spirits according to the spirit's calling cost and the caster's level. A spirit's calling cost is its level. A first-level prophet has one calling point. At each level advancement, the prophet gains level calling points. A second level prophet will have three calling points, a 3rd level prophet will have six, and so on. A spirit may not be dismissed without manifesting its power.

A prophet cannot call any spirit of higher level than the prophet's own level, nor of higher level than the prophet's wisdom. Prophets gain a bonus to spirit calling points according to wisdom as a major contributor.

Each spirit may create one show of divine power. It costs one verve to manifest a spirit's power.

Spirit types

Each deity and pantheon has a specific sphere of influence. Prophets of Poseidon might call on the spirits of wind and sea. Prophets of Ares the spirits of war, and so on. Spirits have levels that denote the strength of the spirit.

Every prophet can use the *prophet* spirit type, and has access to four other spirit types. The player and Guide should choose, based on the character's deity, which spirit types the prophet can access. The player should choose their four spirit types as they need them, during their first level of experience.

Within their sphere of influence, a spirit can manifest numerous powers. A first level Charm spirit, for example, could manifest the powers of Command, Animal Companion, Remove Fear, and any other first level charm manifestations. A second level Charm spirit could manifest those powers, as well as Enthrall, Hold Person, and any other second level charm manifestations. Where a spirit's manifestation varies with level, the variation is by the *spirit's* level, not the prophet's.

Burning spirits

Prophets can use spirits to protect themselves and their friends if the spirit is relevant. Relevance can be complementary or oppositional. For example, a prophet might use a water spirit to protect against fire or magical fire, or drowning or watery rebuke. After any failed reaction roll, the prophet can choose to burn one of their relevant spirits. The spirit gives the target a bonus of the spirit's level on the failed reaction roll. If the reaction still fails, the spirit's level reduces any damage taken by its level, and by the prophet's wisdom as a major contributor.

The prophet can burn a spirit to protect anyone within their combat movement as long as the prophet can in any way reach that person.

Burning a spirit costs no verve, and doesn't use up an action or movement. Prophet spirits are always relevant.

Restrictions

Prophets may be limited in armor or weapon use, depending on the requirements of their religion or order. Some prophets will have special restrictions placed on them at ordination or at their calling, or at other important points in their service to their deity or deities.

Religious symbols

Religions use icons to symbolize the power or cause of their deities. There will be one symbol which is most commonly carried. For Christians, there is the cross, symbol of Christ's sacrifice. Some Christians also carry the rosary, to remember and invoke the mother of their god. For ancient Egyptians, it might have been the ankh. For Druids, the mistletoe or holly. Prophets of Thor might carry a hammer, prophets of Ra a sun-like disc. The prophet will use this holy symbol to perform the rites of their sect. Where a spirit manifestation mentions a focus but does not describe this focus, it is the prophet's holy symbol. These symbols must always be blessed by their deity or an authorized representative of their deity, such as another prophet. If you lose yours, you'll probably have to adventure to replace it.



Monk

The monk is a master of the powers of the mind, deeply in tune with their own mental and intellectual abilities. Monks train in psychic powers by studying psychic fields and gaining psychic skills within those fields. Examples of monks in modern fiction include Valentine Michael Smith, Kwai Chang Caine, the Jedi of Star Wars, Stephen King's Charlene McGee and his Gunslinger, and Marvel Comics' Professor X. In the World of Highland, the Sentar Sentasi of the Kilir are monks. Many monks in modern fiction also have the *Multiple Archetype* speciality.

Create your first level monk

A monk requires a charisma of at least 9. Your monk begins the game with five survival points modified by endurance as a major contributor, and five verve points modified by charisma and endurance as minor contributors.

Choose one speciality. Choose a moral code if you wish. Choose your character's motivation.

Determine any other statistics you need to know about your character, such as reactions, defense, age, height, weight, movement, and carry.

You have starting money equal to your charisma.

If you have not already done so, make up a backstory for your character.

Using psychic fields

There are five psychic fields, each with a variety of available skills. Monks start the game with one psychic field at +0. They gain three field bonuses or skills within that field, modified by charisma as a major contributor.

Psychic Field	Ability Roll	Skills
Corporeal Art	Charisma	Healing, Self-Control, Morphinesis
Dimensional Science	Intelligence	Sensitive, Dimensional Shift, Temporal Shift
Psychokinetic Craft	Wisdom	Pyrokinesis, Telekinesis
Spiritual Art	Charisma	Sensitive, Spirit Host, Spirit Summons, Spirit Travel
Telepathic Art	Charisma	Catalyst, Domination, Empathy, Illusion, Telepathy

To use a psychic power, the player must make an ability roll as noted above, with their field bonus as a bonus (as normal for fields and skills, unless used as part of the character's *psychic pool*). Psychic skills also use up the character's verve. Verve costs are per round (or per use) and are listed in *Arcane Lore*.

Psychic pool

Monks have a psychic pool with level points in it. This pool can be re-allotted every round if the character has any effects that last more than a round. The monk can also transfer the field bonus of the psychic skill they're currently using into their psychic pool.

The monk's psychic pool lets them increase effects and add techniques. See the description of the psychic field and skill in *Arcane Lore* for the effects and techniques that can be applied. They can also use their pool to increase their chance of success: each point used to increase their success chance gives them a bonus of one to their ability roll.

For example, if the character has *Telepathic Art* +4 and is level 2, they have six points to play with for telepathic skills. The player might place three levels in *range*, one level in *targets*, and two levels in *penalize reaction* to attempt to read the mind of a single opponent up to six yards away. The target will have a penalty of 2 to any reaction rolls against having their mind read and the monk will need to roll against their charisma with no bonus to successfully read the target's mind.



Thief

Thieves are masters of stealth, pilfering, and misdirection. Some thieves may specialize in one area or another, but all rely on their agility and cunning. Thieves are not always criminals: they are also scouts, con men, and spies.

Create your first level thief

A thief must have an agility of at least 9. Your thief begins the game with five survival points modified by endurance as a major contributor, and five verve points modified by agility and wisdom as minor contributors.

Choose one specialty. Choose a moral code if you wish. Choose your character's motivation.

Determine any other statistics, such as reactions, defense, age, height, weight, movement, and carry.

You have starting money equal to your agility.

If you have not already done so, create a backstory for your character.

Thieving fields

The thief fields are open only to thieves. Starting thieves have three thief fields at +1, with one initial skill each. They may spend mojo as normal to improve their bonuses and add fields and skills.

Burglary Science: Locks & traps, Search

Impersonation Art: Acting, Disguise, Forgery

Memory Science: Cram, Understand languages

Misdirection Science: Camouflage, Conceal item, Prestidigitation

Murder Craft: Backstab, Poison

Thief Culture: Bribery, Criminal contacts, Thieves' cant, Underworld etiquette

Scaling Craft: Climb walls, Tightrope

Stealth Art: Hide, Silence, Pick pockets

Fighting Arts

Thieves begin the game with the *Fighting Art* skill *basic weapons*.

Moral code

Characters can choose to follow a moral code, or they can remain unaligned. Unless you are playing a prophet, you do not have to choose a moral code. Moral codes are required for certain specialties and may provide benefits (or penalties) in special situations.

There are two parts to a moral code: Order vs. Chaos, and Good vs. Evil. There are eight moral codes: Ordered Good, Ordered, Ordered Evil, Chaotic Good, Chaotic, Chaotic Evil, Good, and Evil.

The character may choose between Order and Chaos, or remain neutral to that part of the code, and the character may choose between Good and Evil, or remain neutral to that part of the code. A character who cares for neither order nor personal freedom may remain unaligned toward the order and chaos part of the code, but still be good, for example.

Unaligned characters—characters who have no moral code—don't see the world in terms of moral choices, and probably avoid them for as long as possible. Such characters simply don't pay attention to the great questions and live day to day.

Order vs. Chaos

Order vs. Chaos is the choice of following order or anarchy. Order is concerned with order, law, and community. Ordered characters promote hierarchy and establish consistent rules. Chaos is concerned with individuality, personal responsibility, and rights. Chaotic characters eschew an established hierarchy.

The Chaotic character believes that the individual is paramount. The Ordered character believes that society is paramount. An Ordered character will be willing to sacrifice individuals to save the group; a Chaotic character will be more willing to put the group in danger to save an individual. Ordered individuals believe that the common good is more important than any individual's well-being.

To an Ordered individual, authority is its own justification. Once authority is established, authority can create other authorities. To the Chaotic individual, authority must be earned, on an individual basis and according to the situation: the most appropriate person is looked to for counsel and guidance according to the needs of the situation. To an Ordered person, it may look like a Chaotic person does not follow orders. But give them an order worth following, and they will follow it.

Ordered individuals will say that when there are clear rules to be followed and a clear hierarchy, problems stand out. They are easy to see, and easier to fix than they otherwise would be in a chaotic mess. Chaotics, while they are not against freely arisen order are against imposed order, order that does not develop freely from the individual.

As an example from American history, the Constitution is Order. The Bill of Rights is Chaos. The American Constitution sets down the order of the society. The Bill of Rights says that none of that order may override individual rights. Many of the teachings of Lao-Tzu in the Tao-Te-Ching are chaotic, where Confucianism is often on the extreme end of order. It is hard to find a better description of the beliefs of the Chaotic moral code than "The more regulations, the poorer the people will become. The greater the government's power, the more unruly the nation will become. The more laws, the more frequently evil deeds will occur."

Good vs. Evil

Good vs. Evil is the choice between caring for the well-being of others for their own sake, and of pure self-interest, of caring only for one's self or a close circle of friends, whose friendship may well only last as long as it is useful. A good character is likely to keep their word to others, and value others' friendships and lives. An evil character is likely to keep their word only if there's something in it for them or they feel like it, and will value others only insofar as others are useful to them. Good is generous of their own time, wealth, and skills. Evil is selfish of their own resources, though they may be generous with the resources of others.

Good characters might be willing to die for the lives of others. Evil characters are very unlikely to do so. Evil is manipulative. Evil characters see others as tools for their own advancement. Evil characters will see their actions as pragmatic, but their pragmatism is a short-term pragmatism.

Player characters may not be evil.

Combined moral codes

Ordered Good promotes order, law, and community to enhance the well-being of everyone in the community.

Ordered Evil uses order, law, and social hierarchies to enhance one's own well-being, standing, power, and wealth at the expense of others.

Chaotic Good promotes personal responsibility and civil rights to enhance the freedom and well-being of all individuals.

Chaotic Evil uses the self-centered manipulation of others to fulfill the character's own immediate desires.

Moral code examples

Order and Good are usually easier to understand than Chaos and Evil. A good example of Chaotic (or possibly Chaotic Good) in fiction is Alan Moore's hero "V" in "V for Vendetta", a character who believes that anarchy is the best thing for the well-being of others. Such a character might well hold, with Rousseau, that people are inherently pure but become corrupted by civilization.

Good examples of evil moral codes may be found in Eddison's "The Worm Ouroboros". Lord Corund of Witchland is Ordered Evil. He works strictly within the confines of Order, and will not deviate from that order. He has a sense of hierarchy that he will not break merely to win battles against a hated enemy, even when his most trusted advisor recommends doing so. When he is assigned a lesser overlordship in Pixyland because the government believes him most suited to govern the newly-vanquished country, he accepts. He does not jockey for the overlordship of more desired lands as others within the court of Witchland do.

Lord Gro, his most trusted advisor, is an example of Chaotic Evil. He cares only for what will bring him and his close circle of friends greater reward. When Corund calls the lords of Demonland to parley, Gro recommends ambushing them; when Corund refuses because one does not do that to royalty, Gro encourages a lesser warrior to do so.

The Kingdoms of Witchland and Demonland are Ordered Evil and Chaotic, respectively. Witchland fosters a strict hierarchy within which advancement is possible. Personal power is gained only insofar as the individual advances the cause of the state, and only insofar as that individual's promotion also advances the cause of the state. Demonland fosters a state wherein individual glory rules. Individuals who perform well on their own will gain power, regardless of whether such is good for Demonland and its peoples as a whole.

The classic example of an Ordered character is the bureaucrat who cares nothing for whether their actions are good or evil, but merely whether the paperwork is filled out and the schedule met. However, a good example of a person devoted solely to Order, regardless of Good or Evil is d'Artagnan in "The Man in the Iron Mask" by Alexander Dumas. In that book, d'Artagnan is devoted to the preservation of the monarchy, and much of the book is about the conflict between that devotion and d'Artagnan's own friends. In that book, Athos would tend toward Ordered Good and Aramis toward Ordered Evil. Both promote Order, but Athos for a greater good and Aramis for personal gain at the expense even of his friends. Athos is an honorable man. Aramis will do anything to establish an Ordered society—with himself in control. He is always trying to twist his words so that listeners hear something other than what he is saying, and is willing to outright lie if it will further the cause of Order. Porthos is neither Ordered nor Chaotic, but simply Good. He tries to keep his word, and he tries to do the right thing, regardless of royalty or personal freedoms.

Conflicting codes

Occasionally the two moral sides will conflict. An Ordered Good character might have to make the choice between something that is more Order or more Good. Different characters will come to different decisions. Different characters will have different commitments to their moral codes and to each part of their moral code.

A character may align themselves to a moral code, but fail to live up to the ideals of that code. The Guide will decide the implications of that failure (and the implications of success) in following a moral code. In some games, a moral code will be a divine choice. In other games, Order and Chaos, Good and Evil will be part of the unseen structure—or lack thereof—of reality. Your first level character is likely to be completely unaware of this when you make their choice to follow or not follow a moral code.

Persons of opposing moral codes may have trouble getting along under some circumstances. Those following Order and those following Chaos are more likely to put their philosophical differences aside than those following Good vs. those following Evil. Organizational enmities, however, are more likely to be built across the abyss of Order and Chaos. Even in the early days of the United States, with its multiple-personality constitution, the followers of Order and the followers of Chaos fought bitterly in public. The Chaotics called the Ordered "monarchists" and the Ordered called the Chaotics "guillotiners".

Sometimes, people with the same moral code will also find themselves in conflict. Moral codes are neither secret societies nor guilds. Lower-level characters will not even know that their choice means anything more than basic morals. In general, characters who are good will find it difficult to battle other characters who are good without significant moral quandaries. This also applies to war. Evil characters and unaligned characters will generally not care about the morality of who they make war with. Evil characters might use moral conflicts as a tactical advantage; unaligned characters don't think in terms of morality.

First level mojo

Starting characters have 12 mojo, modified by their archetypal ability as a major contributor.

Players can trade mojo for resources throughout their first level. Mojo are resource points within the game. Players may use mojo for any purpose listed in the rest of the rules, such as affecting archetypal die rolls. But when their character is first level they can also use mojo for things that non-starting characters can't, and in some cases can use it for things that non-starting characters can but at a lower cost.

Once your character reaches their second level, you may no longer use mojo to acquire equipment and money, nor may you use the discounted mojo rates for resources.

When a player uses mojo to gain something for their character, it is assumed that the character always had the resource in question; it only became relevant at the time the mojo was spent. If the course of play has made it impossible to assume this, then the resource cannot be acquired in this manner.

The same rules for gaining bonuses to die rolls when spending mojo to gain skills apply to discounted first level mojo. This means that it can be advantageous to wait until they're needed to choose fields and skills. If you buy the skill or improve the field at the same time that you make the skill roll, you gain the mojo spent as a bonus to that roll. Also, if you bid mojo on a skill roll, and that mojo is enough to improve the field bonus you used (or to buy the field or a skill within it), then you do.

Money

Whether farmer's son or princess of the kingdom, player characters have no income. They have no money beyond what the game gives them. Some specialties, such as nobility, allot characters more money, and characters will find hidden treasure during their adventures.

Beginning characters can decide during an adventure that they had acquired equipment, as long as they have the money to spend on it. They can also trade mojo for money, to purchase or have purchased equipment. Each mojo is worth thirty silver coins.

Fields and skills

Players can trade two mojo for one field at +1; this includes one initial skill within that field. They can use mojo to gain extra skills within a field or to increase a field bonus: one mojo gives one additional skill or one field bonus.

Players may spend mojo to gain Fighting Art skills but not to increase their Fighting Art field bonus. The Fighting Art field bonus is tied to their archetype level. Players may not use mojo to gain the restricted Fighting Art skills of the warrior or thief archetype.

Psychic fields

Monks may purchase new fields, field bonuses, and skills at discounted rates as normal. Psychic techniques cost 1 mojo during the character's first level. The technique applies to all skills within their field.

Spells

Sorcerers must use their beginning mojo to purchase first-level spells. Each spell costs one mojo. For these spells, the player need only pay mojo. The spells are assumed to have already been in their spellbook, and no ink costs are necessary.

On paying mojo for a spell, the player may choose to have their sorcerer have already memorized the spell, if the memorization slots were left available at the last meditation or by replacing unused spells as if this spell had been memorized to begin with.



Skills and specialties

Specialties

The basic fantasy archetypes can be modified and enhanced through specialties. A specialty can turn a thief into an assassin, or a sorcerer into a wu jen. Look in *Arcane Lore* for a list of pre-created specialties.

At first level, the character has one specialty.

Some specialties have requirements: the character must have a minimum ability score, or must follow a specific moral code, or must not follow a specific moral code. Some specialties also have prerequisites: earlier specialties that must be taken first.

Fields and skills

When a player wants their character to perform a dangerous or difficult task, they'll roll against one of their character's abilities or reactions. To help them succeed, characters can learn skills. When a character is skilled at a task, their player gains a bonus on any rolls to perform that task.

Each skill must be part of a field of knowledge. Fields are major areas, such as War Craft, Language Science, or Gambling Art. The character gains the field's bonus when using any skill within that field. For example, a character with *Gambling Art* at +3 might have the skills *Carousing* and *Poker*. Whenever the player makes a roll where *Carousing* or *Poker* skills are applicable, they get a bonus of 3 on that roll.

In a way, having *Gambling Art* +3 is like being a 3rd level gambler.

Characters who have high mental abilities begin the game with a number of fields equal to intelligence as a major contributor and wisdom and charisma as minor contributors. The fields are at +1 and have one skill within them.

If the character has low mental abilities, a negative total can be ignored *unless* the character is old enough to have extra skills. Older characters will need to first overcome this negative number before gaining extra skills.

The *Arcane Lore* Lorebook contains a detailed list of fields, and skills within those fields, which you can choose from or roll randomly from, but you can also come up with your own fields and skills, subject to the approval of the Adventure Guide.

Native Culture

Your character automatically has the field *Native Culture* at +2, with the skills *Native Language* and one *Etiquette* from local subcultures. For example, a nobleman might choose *Court Etiquette*; a farmer *Backwoods Etiquette*, or a thief *Underworld Etiquette*.

You may move your character's *Native Language* skill into the *Languages* field if you have it. Your *Native Culture* field bonus remains +2.

The Fighting Art

Warriors begin the game with *Fighting Art* at +1. Monks, prophets, sorcerors, and thieves begin the game with *Fighting Art* at +0.

Non-warrior archetypes are limited in the weapon skills they may choose. Thieves may choose any simple or basic weapon as a skill; and the others any simple weapon.

Simple weapons are small hand-held weapons such as the dagger, knife, or sling. Basic weapons are weapons such as spears, short swords, crossbows, and martial arts. Exactly what constitutes a basic weapon or a simple weapon will depend on the game world, but suggestions are given on the weapons table.

Prophets may have other restrictions according to their religion or sect.

When in combat, your character will get their *Fighting Art* field bonus as long as they are using a weapon they're skilled with. If they are using a weapon they're not skilled with, and if it's a weapon they can never learn they'll have an additional penalty of two to attack.

Players may not use *mojo* to increase their character's *Fighting Art* field bonus. Their bonus goes up as their character increases in level.

The *weapon fluency* skill is only available to warriors, and all warriors have it. *Weapon fluency* allows warriors to learn any weapon skill, and to use their full *Fighting Art* bonus with weapons they aren't skilled in, at a penalty of two to attack.

The skill *basic weapons* is only available to thieves (who automatically have it) and those with the appropriate specialty. This skill allows thieves to learn basic weapon skills—more weapons than prophets, sorcerors, and monks, but fewer than warriors.

A few good numbers

Survival

Survival is the ability of your character to survive damaging events. A sword hit, a fall from a large height, a punch in the face, all reduce your character's survival points. If your character's survival drops to zero or below, your character risks unconsciousness and death.

At first level, player characters have five survival points. Survival points are modified by endurance as a major contributor.

Verve

Warrior	Thief	Sorcerer	Prophet	Monk
Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma	Strength	Endurance

Verve is the ability of your character to look cool in the face of harm that results from archetypal actions. Whenever a character loses survival for an archetypal activity, the player may instead choose to have some or all of the damage come from verve. For example, warriors use verve in combat, thieves use it after failing to climb a wall, and monks after a failed perception roll.

At first level, player characters have five verve, modified by their archetypal ability and their verve ability as minor contributors.

When the chance of success is governed by the character's archetypal ability or archetypal reaction or by one of the character's specialties, damage resulting from that action comes from verve first, then from survival. Some characters will also use verve when they perform archetypal actions such as casting spells.

Movement

The character's Movement rating is 10, with agility as a major contributor and strength as a minor contributor.

A character's movement determines their reach in combat, and how fast they can travel on foot.

Age

Older Than:	20	30	50	80	120	170	230	300	380	470
Bonus	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Your character's starting age may be rolled as 15 plus d6 or chosen by you. If your character begins the game at age 20 or older, they will receive a greater number of skills or field bonuses in one or more of their fields. If the character has low mental abilities, such that their starting field count is negative, their bonus is reduced by that number. For example, a character with a 4 intelligence, a 15 charisma, and a 10 wisdom has negative 1 starting fields. The character would have to start at 30 years or older to gain age-related skills and field bonuses.

Reactions

When your character takes the initiative to act, you'll make an ability roll. When your character reacts to something or might sense something, you'll make a reaction roll. For example, when characters are faced with imminent danger, players will often have the opportunity to react and avoid or mitigate that danger.

Reactions start at 4, modified by the character's scores in the major and minor contributors to that reaction. They gain a bonus of one to their archetypal reaction.

Reaction	Major Ability	Minor Ability	Archetype	Psychic Power	Uses
Health	Endurance	Strength	None	Corporeal	Health dangers, poisons, diseases
Fortitude	Strength	Endurance	Warriors	Psychokinetic	Wide-effect attacks, standing firm
Willpower	Wisdom	Charisma	Prophets	Spiritual	Mind control, temptations, faith
Evasion	Agility	Intelligence	Thieves	Dimensional	Dodging or avoiding individual attacks
Reason	Intelligence	Wisdom	Sorcerors		Recalling events, learning new things
Perception	Charisma	Agility	Monks	Telepathic	Seeing hidden things

Reactions improve as the character becomes more experienced.

Reaction	Thief 1	Thief 2/Warrior 3
Health	5	7
Fortitude	4	8
Willpower	4	6
Evasion	6	8
Reason	4	6
Perception	5	7

Here, for example, are Sam Stevens' reactions, both as a first level thief, and later at fifth level, with two levels in thief and three levels in warrior (she has the Multiple Archetypes specialty). You'll see that at fifth level her reactions are higher. Her fortitude has improved most, because she has three levels as a warrior.

If a wizard attempts to take control of Sam's mind, and Sam needs to make a *willpower* roll to avoid it, a d20 roll of 4 or less will let Sam avoid the spell when she is first level; and a d20 roll of 6 or less will let her avoid it when she is fifth level.

Defense and attack bonuses

Defense is the character's agility as a major contributor.

Close combat attack bonus is the character's strength as a minor contributor. Damage bonus is strength as a major contributor.

Missile combat attack bonus is the character's agility as a minor contributor. Damage bonus for thrown weapons is the character's strength as a minor contributor. Thrown weapon range penalties are reduced by the character's strength as a minor contributor.

Propelled weapons do not gain a damage or range bonus unless the weapon is specially designed for the character's strength. Penalties, however, will apply.

Carry

Your character's carry measures how many items they can carry during an adventure. Your character can carry up to half strength items, modified by endurance as a special contributor. Each item your character carries must have a bulk less than or equal to their strength.

An item's bulk combines weight in pounds with the difficulty of carrying that weight. A bulky, light item may have the same bulk as a compact, heavy item. An item meant for swinging (such as a weapon) will almost certainly have a greater bulk than a similarly-shaped item meant solely for carrying. Items meant for wear will have a far greater bulk carried than worn. An item's bulk is rarely less than its weight, but can be more than its weight if the item is unwieldy.

If your character needs to carry an item with too much bulk, you can use extra carry points to do so, but each extra carry point gives your character a penalty of one to movement, to attack rolls, and to any agility-based rolls.

Characters can use containers, such as pouches, sacks, sheaths, and backpacks, to reduce the number of items they carry. Normal clothing does not count against the number of carried items when worn.

For example, Sam Stevens has a fourteen endurance and an eleven strength. She can carry up to ten items; each item must have a bulk of eleven or less. If she carries a tent (bulk 40) her movement and rolls are reduced by 3, because she will need to use four of her carry points just on that one item.

Items meant to be worn well, such as armor and backpacks, can use two carry points instead of one with no penalty. Weapons or other items used two-handed (such as sacks) can also use two Carry points with no penalty.

Sam Stevens could use a battleaxe (bulk 20) with no penalty by using it with both hands. If she tried to use a great sword, however, its bulk 24 would give her a penalty of one while using it two-handed.

Height and weight

In a game of poking and prodding, height and weight can be important numbers. Players choose their character's height and weight or roll them randomly. If random, characters have a base height of 54 inches and a base weight of 48 pounds.

Vary the base by rolling 5d6. Add the 5d6 roll to the character's height, and add endurance as a minor contributor and strength as a major contributor.

Modify the dice total by endurance as a major contributor and strength as a minor contributor. Then multiply by seven and add this to the character's weight. But if you already know your character's height and weight, there is no need to roll randomly.

Money and equipment

Characters begin the game with silver coins equal to their archetypal ability.

Players may have their characters keep this initial money or spend it to have acquired starting equipment. They may also “have spent it” in the adventure during their first level: at any point during the character’s first level, if the player wants their character to have already acquired an item, they can spend some of this starting money and have the item. Either the money was spent back when it was most reasonable to have spent it, or the character always had the item, perhaps as an inheritance or gift. As long as it makes sense for them to now have it, it can be assumed that they’ve been carrying it all along.

The equipment that the character “purchases” does not have to have been *actually* purchased by the character. It might have been inherited, given as a gift, or found in the ruins of a destroyed farmhouse in the midst of the woods. The character’s starting money is a measure of how much money and equipment the character starts with; it is not necessarily how much actual money the character has to purchase things. Because of this, characters can often start the game with items that are not for sale in their home town, as long as it is for sale somewhere where they or some member of their family might travel.

General equipment

Characters will wish to equip themselves with many odd and normal items: lanterns, rope, walking staves, blankets, horses, horse equipment, and more. Prices for such equipment can vary depending on the area, the time period, and the time of year.

Some items, such as torches, have an activation time. If the character attempting to activate the item is in combat, an evasion roll is required to successfully activate the item.

Some items, such as picks, can double as weapons. Such items are not designed for combat and will have a penalty to attack of from 1 to 3.

Characters are not limited to the items listed on these tables, nor are items on these tables guaranteed to be available. It will be up to the Adventure Guide to gauge the availability and cost of all items. In many games, for example, gunpowder and firearms will be unavailable.

Food & Lodging

Item	Cost	Bulk	Notes
Beer, pint	.2	3	This is a glass or mug of beer, as you might purchase in a tavern.
Beer, half-gallon	.4	5	A half-gallon is 4 pints, which fits in a waterskin.
Beer, three gallons	2	26	Three gallons is 24 pints; this is a small keg's worth of beer.
Room, common	.4		Room costs are per night.
Room, private	1		Cost is usually increased by .5 to 1 per extra person.
Dry food	5	10	Lasts 1 week eaten carefully; spoils if stored in prolonged humidity.
Meal, simple	.3	2	A simple meal does not last more than two days without spoiling.
Meal, fancy	2	2	A fancy meal does not last more than a day without spoiling.
Wine, pint	.5	3	This is a glass or mug of wine, as you might purchase in a tavern.
Wine, half gallon	1	5	A half-gallon is 4 pints, which fits in a waterskin.
Wine, three gallons	5	26	Three gallons is 24 pints; this is a small keg's worth of wine.

More than other equipment, food and lodging costs will vary widely according to quality and scarcity. Liquid pint bulks assume an open container. Liquid gallon bulks do not include the container. Liquids weigh approximately one pound per pint or eight pounds per gallon.

Ingredients

Item	Cost	Bulk	Notes
Animal part, common	.3	.3	small animal parts such as the beak of a crow
Animal part, uncommon	1.	.3	small animal parts such as the claw of a wolf
		5	
Animal part, rare	4	.3	small animal parts such as the feather of an eagle
Carving, simple	.5	.1	small wooden carvings, such as tiny arrows
Carving, complex	2	.5	small wooden carvings, such as faces, intricate designs
Herb, common	.1	.1	
Herb uncommon	.5	.1	
Herb, rare	1	.3	rare herbs have bulk .3 to keep them extra safe

Bone and metal carvings cost twice as much as wood. Stone carvings cost four times as much, and have four times the bulk. Special materials, such as rare metals and gemstones, will cost even more.

Extremely rare animal parts (such as the parts of Fantastic creatures) will usually be much more expensive due both to their rarity and to the difficulty of acquiring them. Normally these must be supplied by the player characters.

Animals & containers

Item	Cost	Bulk	Notes
Backpack	2	2	Difficult to get into quickly; requires one round to pull something out
Donkey	7		Movement 9 carrying 225 bulk
Horse bit & bridle	1.5	3	
Horse saddle	10	28	
Horse saddle bags	3	5	
Horse saddle blanket	.3	4	
Horse shoe	.4	2	Horses and donkeys already have shoes when purchased
Horse, pack	30		Movement 10 carrying 200 bulk
Horse, riding	75		Movement 14 carrying 250 bulk
Horse, war	200		Movement 14 carrying 300 bulk
Keg, small	3	6	Will hold three gallons of liquid
Mule	20		Movement 10 carrying 400 bulk
Ox	12		Movement 5 carrying 400 bulk
Pony	30		Movement 12 carrying 180 bulk
Pouch, belt	.5	.5	
Pouch, shoulder	1	1	
Sack	.2	.5	
Scroll case	.8	.5	
Trunk, Wooden	8	25	Cost and bulk can vary widely according to size and ornamentation
Wineskin/Waterskin	1.5	1	A skin holds four pints of liquid

To assist them in carrying their equipment, characters will want to purchase sacks, backpacks, quivers, and pouches. (Quivers are listed under ammunition.) A container allows the character to carry multiple items in as if they were one item in their *carry* list.

For animals, the bulk carry listed assumes that the animal's load has been packed reasonably, using saddle bags and saddles or other standard pack devices. Generally, reduce an animal's movement by 1 for each 10% increase in bulk carried. Horses, ponies, mules, and donkeys may jog, run, and sprint at twice the speed listed for their movement on the movement chart.

Riding a horse requires a saddle. Saddles include a saddle blanket, or you can ride with just a saddle blanket at a penalty of 2 to rolls while riding and a penalty of one to the horse's daily movement. Riding bareback reduces the horse's daily movement by 3, and riding rolls are at a penalty of 3.

Miscellaneous

Item	Cost	Bulk	Notes
Axe	1	8	Does d6 damage as a hand weapon, -1 to attack, bulk 16
Blanket	.2	5	
Book, handwritten	5+	.5+	Add .03 to bulk and .1 to cost per ten pages
Book, printed	1+	.5+	Add .03 to bulk and .15 to cost per ten pages (content also affects cost)
Journal, blank	1+	.5+	Add .03 to bulk and .1 to cost per ten pages
Candle	.01	1	6 yard radius, -1 to actions outside of 1 yard, candles last 6 hours
Canvas	.25	.5	Per square yard
Chain, large	1	3	Made from iron links, cost is per yard
Chain, small	2	1	Made from iron links, cost is per yard
Flint, steel, tinderbox	.5	1	It requires two rounds to start a fire using flint, steel, tinder, and kindling
Hunting horn	25	6	A simple coiled horn of the type used in a hunt
Ink	8	.5	Enough for writing 100 letters or pages.
Lantern	8	3	20 yard radius, 6 hours per flask, 1 round activation
Lock and key	8	1	Better locks can cost double, quadruple, or more, penalizing lock-pick attempts by -1 for each doubling of the cost
Mirror	10	.1	
Oil	.05	1	Cost is per flask
Paper	.1	.03	Per ten pages
Parchment	1	.01	Per square foot
Pick	1	10	Does d8 damage as a hand weapon, -2 to attack, bulk 20
Pole	.02	7	3 yards long, wooden. Does d4 damage as a hand weapon, -2 to attack, bulk 14
Quill	.2	.05	
Rope	.2	3	Usually made from hemp, cost is per 3 yards
Rope, light	2	1	Usually made from silk, cost is per 3 yards
Shovel	5	9	Does d6 damage as a hand weapon, -3 to attack, bulk 18
Spike (iron)	.3	1.5	About seven inches long
Tent, enclosed	15	32	3 by 3 yard area
Thieves' tools	5	1	
Torch	.01	1	10 yard radius, 3 hour duration, 2 rounds activation
Tent, canopy	10	24	4 by 4 yard area

Weapons

Anyone can attack with their hands for d3 points damage (d2 for Halflings, Goblins, and Gnomes). Most adventurers will prefer using a weapon, however.

Damage is the amount of survival points lost by the target of a successful attack with the specified weapon.

Range applies to thrown or propelled weapons, is in yards. Within *range* yards, there is no penalty to attack. There is a penalty of 1 after that, and another penalty of 1 for every *range* yards beyond. For example, an attempt to throw a spear at a target thirteen yards away will be at a penalty of 2: a penalty of one for being greater than six yards, and another penalty of one for being greater than 12 yards. A sling at thirteen yards will only have a penalty of 1, and a bow will have no penalty at all at 13 yards.

Hands is how many hands are required to use the weapon *for mechanical reasons*. A two-handed weapon requires two hands to manipulate and leaves no free hand for a shield or other item. Note that a weapon's bulk may also require that two hands be used to wield it with no Carry penalty, depending on the wielder's strength.

Space is how much space, in yards, the character needs on either side of them to use the weapon.

Bulk is the weight and bulkiness of the weapon. If the character will never use the weapon, the Guide may allow it to count as half the listed bulk. Staffs, for example, have a six bulk if only used as a walking staff but the listed twelve bulk if sometimes used as a weapon.

Fire Actions is the number of actions required to throw or fire the weapon *if it is thrown or is a missile weapon*. Some missile weapons require loading, lighting, or other preparatory actions. Weapons used to beat on opponents directly require but one action.

Thrown weapons

For thrown weapons, strength negates range penalties as a minor contributor. A character with a minor strength contributor of two can throw an object up to two ranges away without a penalty to attack.

Propelled weapons

Specially constructed versions of weapons such as bows may, at the Guide's discretion, take advantage of higher strengths. Such weapons will usually cost twice as much, three times as much, four times as much, or more, depending on how much strength must be built in to the weapon (as a major contributor).

Damage can be increased by up to the character's strength as a minor contributor, and range is increased by 25% according to strength as a major contributor. A character with a 16 strength, for example, might pay 50 silver coins for a bow with a range of 25 yards (strength 12-14, +25% to range), or 75 silver coins for a bow that gets +1 to damage and has a range of 30 yards (strength 15-16, +50% to range, +1 damage).

Anyone without the requisite strength bonus will be at a penalty to attack of the difference in strength bonuses and cannot make use of the increased range or increased damage, if any.

Simple weapons

Simple weapons can be used by anyone.

Weapon	Damage	Fire Actions	Range	Hands	Space	Bulk	Cost
Club	d4	2	2		1	10	0.1
Dagger	d4	1	3		0	2	2
Dart	d3	1	4		0	2	.4
Hand Gun	d6	4	8	2	0	9	45
Knife	d3	1	3		0	2	1
Quarterstaff	d6	2	1		2	12	0.5
Sling	d4	1	10	2	2	4	2
Wheel Lock	d8	2	10	2	0	14	150
Wheel Lock Pistol	d6	2	5	2	0	8	100

Basic weapons

Basic weapons can only be used by warriors or those with the Fighting Art skill *basic weapons*.

Weapon	Damage	Fire Actions	Range	Hands	Space	Bulk	Cost
Arquebus	d8	3	10	2	0	13	55
Brass Knuckles	d3				0	1	1
Crossbow	d6	2	15	2	0	11	35
Hand Axe	d6	1	3		1	8	2
Matchlock Pistol	d6	3	5	2	0	10	50
Metal Glove	d4				0	1	4
Short sword	d6	2	2		1	6	8
Spear	d6	1	6		0	8	0.8

Warrior weapons

These weapons may only be used by warriors.

Weapon	Damage	Fire Actions	Range	Hands	Space	Bulk	Cost
Battleaxe	d10	2	2		2	18	7
Bow	d6	1	20	2	0	8	25
Great sword	2d6	2	2		2	22	40
Heavy Crossbow	d8	3	25	2	0	17	75
Javelin	d4	1	5		0	4	0.6
Lance (may only be used while mounted)	d12	2	2		0	16	14
Longbow	d6	1	25	2	0	12	50
Long sword	d8	2	3		1	8	20
Mace	d6	2	1		1	12	3
Morning Star	d8	2	4		2	17	6
Rapier	d6	2	3		1	7	20
Scimitar	d8	2	2		1	8	15
War hammer	d8	2	4		2	16	5

Ammunition

All ammunition costs and bulk are for single units of ammunition. Gun powder is enough for one use, for example. Sellers will usually only sell in larger quantities, such as ten, twelve, sixteen, or twenty.

Item	Cost	Bulk	Notes
Arrow	.1	.2	d3 damage as a hand weapon, -2 to attack
Crossbow Bolt	.1	.2	1 point damage as a hand weapon, -2 to attack
Crossbow Bolt, heavy	.2	.3	d2 damage as a hand weapon, -2 to attack
Gun bullets	.05	.05	
Gun powder (1 use)	.3	.05	Gun powder must be kept dry
Powder bag	1	.2	Holds 6 uses of gun powder
Powder horn	4	.5	Holds 20 uses of gun powder
Quiver	1	1	Holds 20 arrows or crossbow bolts
Sling Bullets	.01	.05	

Armor

Armor makes it harder to hit the character in a manner that hurts the character—that takes away survival points. The character may wear one type of armor at a time, and may also wear a full helmet. If the character has a free hand, the character may also carry a shield.

Warriors may learn to use any armor: that's part of their archetype. Thieves, prophets, and monks may learn to use basic armor: shield, cloth armor, leather armor, banded leather armor, or magically light chain mail. Sorcerers may learn to use no armor.

Some armors are harder to use than others. A character must attain a level in at least one archetype that is high enough to use that armor (assuming they can use it at all).

Armor	Defense Bonus	Cost	Bulk	Warrior Level	Thief, Prophet, Monk Level
Cloth	1	3	8	0	0
Leather	2	8	5	1	1
Banded Leather	3	15	8	1	1
Scale Mail	4	45	20	1	
Chain Mail	5	80	15	1	2
Splint Mail	6	70	25	2	
Plate Mail	7	300	25	3	
Full Plate	8	1000	30	4	
Ceremonial Plate	9	2000	40	5	
Shield	1	5	6	1	2
Large Shield	2	15	12	2	
Small Shield	1 vs. one	5	2	3	
Full Helmet	1	10 or 10%	4	1	

The Bulk given is while worn. If carried, bulk should be doubled for cloth, leather, shields, or chain, and tripled for splint and plate.

Small shields may only be used against a single opponent in any round. The warrior will need to choose which opponent at the beginning of the round. By default it will be the opponent they last chose, or the opponent they are attacking first in the current round, whichever makes more sense.

While wearing a full helmet, perception rolls and attack rolls are at a penalty of one due to lack of visibility. Full helmets cost a minimum of 10 silver coins, or 10% of the cost of the other armor the character is wearing, whichever is greater.

The Guide may impose extra time for armored characters to perform actions requiring shields adjustments or the removal of helmets, gloves, or other parts of armor.

Equipment for different-sized creatures

The bulk of an item is relative to the size of the creature it was meant for. If a creature of different size attempts to use or carry the item, its bulk will change.

For each increase of one in size of the creature that the item is intended for compared to the size of the creature actually carrying it, item bulk is multiplied by two. For each decrease of one in size, item bulk is halved. For example, a *medium* creature using a *huge*-sized weapon that is bulk 20 for huge creatures will find it has a bulk of 80. But a *huge*-sized creature using a *medium*-sized weapon that is bulk 20 for medium creatures will find that it has a bulk of 5.

Costs are also relative. For example, a *tiny* Pixie sword will cost 20 Pixie silver coins just like a human-sized sword costs 20 human silver coins. But when made in differently-sized cultures, cost changes. For every *difference* in size, the cost of the item is doubled. Both *tiny* and *huge* swords will cost 80 silver coins to buy in a *medium* culture.

Weapons

Weapons designed for a non-medium creature size will do different damage.

Weapon *range* is doubled or halved for each size difference. Minimum range is 1, and ranges cannot have fractions, so round normally.

The damage progression is:

1	d2	d4	d6	d8	d10	d12	2d8	3d6	4d6	+d6
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A large creature using a large long sword will do d10 points instead of d8. The weapon will have a range (should they decide to throw it) of 6 and a cost of 40. Here are other sizes of long swords as an example:

Size	Damage	Range	Cost
Fine	d2	1	160
Tiny	d4	1	80
Small	d6	2	40
Medium	d8	3	20
Large	d10	6	40
Huge	d12	12	80
Gigantic	2d8	24	160
Titanic	3d6	48	320

Creatures using a weapon designed for a size different from theirs have a penalty of one to attack for each difference in size. The weapon was designed and balanced for a different-sized creature.

Backstory

You might have gone into separate corners to calculate your numbers. Now it's time to bring everyone together and create a backstory that will drive your characters toward adventure.

Your character's backstory should be approximately three sentences. It should include a sentence about the character's home, a sentence about the character's family, and a sentence about the character's community or culture.

You don't need to use names yet. Your Adventure Guide can help you with that later. But you should know the kind of places and persons you're describing: use "the city", "the mayor", and so on.

As you answer these questions, think about your character's motivation, archetype, specialty, and skills. Interpret your character's motivation in a manner that will drive your character to adventure. What in your character's backstory drives them to the unknown?

Who raised you?

What kind of person or persons raised your character? A farmer? A scholar? A rich merchant or evil landlord? A thief or an ex-con? Or even wolves if it's that kind of game. Was your character's home nearby or far away? What kind of a place was it? Was it rural? A village? A city? A port city? A lawless frontier town? A religious community? If your character's background includes wealth, why has your character lost access to this wealth? Has the wealth itself disappeared, or do the rules of inheritance keep them from any chance of receiving it? Sudden poverty is often an impetus to adventure.

How do you know the other characters?

How does your character know the other characters? Unless the group has decided to bring the characters together in some other way, your character's backstory should include at least one other player character, and preferably two or more.

Your character must know each of the other characters enough that they would hang with you and you with them.

How did you get here?

Where is your character starting the game, and how did your character get there? The Adventure Guide may tell you where your character is, depending on the first adventure. Or your group can choose a place to start.

You may already know where your character started based on your answer to the first two questions. How did your character get here from there, and why? What happened on the journey? What does your character hope to accomplish by being here?

Tony Barlow creates Toromeen

Motivation

Tony and the rest of the group get together, and the first thing they do is write their characters' motivations. Tony's is "Even though I am an architect, I will explore the ruins because I believe that the gods have a greater plan for me."

Moral code

Tony sees his character as individualistic, valuing personal freedom and the rights of others. He chooses the moral code Chaotic Good.

Archetype and specialty

Tony offers to play a Dwarven warrior who might become a prophet. This determines his archetype (warrior) and his Specialty (Species).

Ability scores

Tony rolls four six sided dice for each ability, and adds the three highest dice together.

Roll 1	Roll 2	Roll 3	Roll 4	Total
2	5	3	6	14
1	1	4	5	10
6	5	2	4	15
2	1	5	2	9
6	3	6	6	18
4	5	3	3	12

Since he wants his character to be a warrior and a prophet, Tony puts high scores in wisdom, endurance, and strength. Because his specialty is Dwarf, he gets a bonus of one to endurance, and a penalty of one to charisma. He decides on:

Original	Ability	Final (as Dwarf)
9	Charisma	8
12	Intelligence	12
15	Wisdom	15
14	Endurance	15
10	Agility	10
18	Strength	18

48 – Tony Barlow creates Toromeen

First level mojo

Toromeen's 18 strength means that he starts the game with 16 mojo: the twelve that every first-level character receives, and then +4 for his strength as a major contributor.

Survival and verve

His survival is 5 plus 2 (his endurance of 15 is a major contributor to survival) for a total of 7. His verve is 5 plus 2 (his strength of 18 is a minor contributor to verve; his intelligence of 12 is not high enough to contribute) for a total of 7. He has 7 survival and 7 verve.

Fighting Art

As a warrior, Toromeen gains the *Fighting Art* field at +1, along with the skills *unarmed combat* and *weapon fluency*.

Native Culture

Toromeen's native culture is *Dwarven Culture*. Toromeen gains that field at +2, along with the skills *Dwarven Language* and an etiquette. Tony chooses *Mountain Dwarf Etiquette*.

Toromeen's specialty (species: dwarf) gives him the skill *Spelunking* in his Native Culture.

Fields and skills

With a 12 intelligence, a 15 wisdom, and an 8 charisma, Toromeen begins the game with two initial Fields, each with one skill.

Tony sees Toromeen as a traveling builder of defensive structures. He chooses the field *Engineering Science* with the skill *Defenses*. He also chooses the field *War Craft* with the skill *Weaponsmith*.

Movement and carry

Toromeen's movement is 8 (as a dwarf), plus 2 (for his 18 strength), or 10.

Toromeen's Carry is 9 (strength) plus 4 (endurance), or 13. Each item Toromeen carries must have a bulk of 18 (strength) or less.

Reactions

At first level, Toromeen's reactions will be:

Reaction	Base	Major Contributor	Minor Contributor	Special	Total
Health	4	Endurance (+2)	Strength (+2)	Dwarf (+2)	10
Fortitude	4	Strength (+4)	Endurance (+1)	Warrior (+1)	10
Willpower	4	Wisdom (+2)	Charisma (0)		6
Evasion	4	Agility (0)	Intelligence (0)		4
Reason	4	Intelligence (+1)	Wisdom (+1)		6
Perception	4	Charisma (-1)	Agility (0)		3

Toromeen also has a bonus of four (as a Dwarf with a 15 endurance) on any reactions against magical attacks or effects.

Defense and attack

Toromeen's Defense is 0. His agility of 10 is completely average.

Toromeen's Close Combat Attack is 2. His damage bonus in close combat is 4. Those both come from his 18 strength.

Toromeen's Thrown Weapons Attack is 0. Due to his 18 strength, his damage bonus in thrown combat is 2 and his range penalties will be reduced by up to 2.

Toromeen's Propelled Weapons Attack is 0, because of his average agility.

Age, height, and weight

Dwarves are 8 times as old as humans. This makes his base age 120. Tony rolls 31 on 8d6 for age, so Toromeen is 151 years old. This gives Toromeen five extra skills or field bonuses. He can use them when he needs them. Tony knows that Toromeen will use a battleaxe, so he spends one to acquire that skill under the *Fighting Arts* field.

As a Dwarf, Toromeen has a base height of 41 inches. He has 2d6 height dice, plus 5 for his endurance (+1) and strength (+4). He rolls 10 on 2d6 and is 56 inches: 4 feet, 8 inches tall. He has a base weight of 80 pounds. His weight will be modified by ten times the 10 he rolled for height plus 4 for his endurance (2) and strength (2). Ten times 14 is 140; eighty plus 140 is 220 pounds.

Tony could have chosen any of these numbers, instead of rolling — even choosing a higher age if he desired.

Money and equipment

Toromeen has an 18 strength, so he starts with eighteen silver coins.

Tony already knows that Toromeen will use “his grandfather’s traditional battleaxe” and wear banded leather and use a shield. (Toromeen’s strength of 18 means that he can use a battleaxe one-handed.)

Since Toromeen is small, his items cause less damage and have shorter ranges. He chooses to buy some armor and a weapon using mojo:

Weapon	Cost	Bulk	Small reductions
Battleaxe:	7	18	d8 damage, 1 range
Banded Leather:	15	8	3 defense (not affected by size)
Shield:	5	6	1 defense (not affected by size)
Total:	27		

This “costs” 27 silver coins. He only has 18 coins, so he trades one mojo for thirty more coins. This leaves him with 15 mojo and 21 coins.

The banded leather and shield will give him a defense bonus of 4.

Backstory

Toromeen was born in the southern mountains, where his people must continually fight goblins, orcs, and trolls for the best parts of the mountains and forests. His grandfather, whom he knew briefly, died in battle far from home.

The southern Dwarves trade with humans in the towns north of the Leather Road and east of the High Divide. He is an engineer, and builds devices for castles. He worked with Charlotte Kordé near High Town on a castle overlooking the River Valley.

Toromeen is returning to Biblyon to offer routine maintenance on some work they did in Illustrious Castle. He also wishes to visit a Dwarven Shrine in the northern mountains where, hundreds of years ago, Dwarves and Giants fought a great battle. His grandfather and many of his people are buried there. Toromeen wishes to visit this shrine for guidance from his ancestors.

The Adventure Guide tells Tony that there is a battlefield in the mountains of the Celtic Lands that fits this description, called *Fomhor Achadh*. Tony changes his backstory to mention the battlefield by name, and he changes his motivation to be “I will explore the ruins because I want someday to see the ancient battlefield, Fomhor Achadh.” This is the motivation that will lead Toromeen to adventure.

When Toromeen reaches Fomhor Achadh, Tony will need to retire Toromeen or write a new motivation. Toromeen’s new motivation will involve his becoming a prophet, if Tony continues that path.

Sample Characters



Charlotte Kordé

Charlotte Kordé	
Level 1 Monk, Good	
Charisma: 17 (+3/+2)	Home: Crosspoint
Agility: 8 (-1)	Age: 36
Endurance: 10	Height: 5 foot 1 inch
Intelligence: 12 (+1)	Weight: 93 pounds
Strength: 9	Experience: 0
Wisdom: 15 (+2/+1)	Mojo: 11
Movement: 9	Reactions
Defense: -1	Perception: 8
Survival: 5	Evasion: 3
Verve: 7	Fortitude: 4
	Health: 4
	Reason: 6
Fields	Willpower: 8
Fighting Art +0: Quarterstaff	
Native Culture +2: Crosspoint etiquette	
Language Science +1: English, Frankish, Literacy	
Performance Art +1: Acting	
Personality Art +1: Demagoguery, Mediation	
Engineering Science +1: Clockworks	
Specialties	
Half-elf species, night vision (-2), move quietly alone (-3), +4 against mind control and sleep, age at one-sixth normal	

Psychic pool: 1	
Telepathic Art +5	
Illusion: senses (1, +1); damage (1); independent items (1); targets (1); range (3 yards)	
Psychokinetic Craft: +3	
Telekinesis: mass (1 pound); motion (1 yd/rnd); targets (1); range (3 yards)	
Equipment (carry: 6)	
1. 16 shillings, 6 pennies in pocket	
2-3. quarterstaff (de damage, bulk 12)	
Even though I have a good life, I will explore the ruins because I want to meet the Elves.	
Charlotte was born in the mountains southeast of Crosspoint to a human mother. She has never met her father, and has only recently begun to realize what her ancestry means—at 36 years of age, she is the youngest-looking of all her friends.	
Charlotte believes her psychic powers are from her father's side. She is self-trained. She has been a mentor to Sam Stevens since Sam left the thieves' ring in Crosspoint.	

Gralen Noslen

Gralen Noslen	
Ordered Good Sorcerer	
Level 1	
● Intelligence: 15 (+2/+1)	Home: Crosspoint
Agility: 12 (+1)	Age: 16
Charisma: 12 (+1)	Height: 6' 6"
Endurance: 12 (+1)	Weight: 217 lbs
Strength: 11	Experience: 0
Wisdom: 9	Mojo: 13
Reactions	Movement: 11
Reason: 7	Defense: 1
Evasion: 6	Survival: 6
Fortitude: 4	Verve: 6
● Health: 5	
Perception: 5	
Willpower: 4	
Fields	
Fighting Art +0	
Native Culture +2: Sorcerer's Etiquette	
Language Science +1: English, Latin, Literacy	
Historical Science +1: Ancient History	
Specialties	
● Raven familiar: 5 survival, 4 intelligence, 4 charisma, 4 wisdom	

Spells							
3 spell slots							
Spell	Range	Formula	Duration	Cast	Effect	area	Reaction
Farseeing	touch	WG	10 min	1 md	1 creature		none
Mage bolt	20+10yd/lvl	WGI (arrow)	1 md/lvl	1	3 yd radius		none
Light/	20yd/lvl	WGI (spark)	1hr+	1	10+lvl yds		evasion
darkness			10 min/lvl				
Understand	touch	WGI	5 min/lvl	1 md	1 creature/item		willpower
languages			(mandrake)				
Equipment (carry: 8)							
1. 15 shillings in pouch							
2. spellbook (1,2 bulk)							
Even though I prefer libraries, I will explore the ruins because I want knowledge no one else has.							
Gralen knew he was a sorcerer from a young age. Poe, his raven familiar, has been his friend and confidante since he was eight. Gralen is self-taught. He left home at twelve to study at Illustrious Library across the mountains from Crosspoint. He stumbled, almost literally, across the magical research of a sorcerer who once lived in the now abandoned Illustrious Castle outside of town. He's been daring Will Stratford into going to Illustrious Castle, where he believes more magic can be found.							

Sam Stevens

Sam Stevens			
		Thief 1, WARRIOR 0	
●	Agility: 14 (+1)		
	Strength: 11	Home: Crosspoint	
	Charisma: 14 (+1)	Moral code: Good	
	Endurance: 14 (+1)	Age: 20	
	Intelligence: 11	Height: 5'9"	
	Wisdom: 10	Weight: 154 lbs	
		Experience: 0	
	Reactions	Mojo: 8	
	Evasion 6		
	Fortitude 4	Movement 11	
	Health 5	Defense +1	
●	Perception 5	Max combat pool 2	
	Reason 4	Survival 6	
	Willpower 4	Verve 5	
	Fighting Art +1, weapon fluency, basic weapons, unarmed combat, crossbow, short sword		
	Native Culture +2, angfish, underworld etiquette		
	Scaling Craft +1, climb walls		
	Stealth Art +1, hide, silence		
	Burglary Science +2, locks & traps		
		damage	fire actions range
●	short sword	d6	2 2
	crossbow	d6	2 15

		Specialty: multiple archetypes (next: WARRIOR)	
		Carrying (carry ?)	
		1. 1 shilling	
		2. short sword, bulk 6	
		3. crossbow, bulk 14	
		4.	
		5.	
		6.	
		7.	
		8.	
		9.	
		Even though I'm a sneak, I will explore the ruins because I am on the run from the mob.	
		Sam was born on the waterfront in Crosspoint and lived on the streets until she was taken "under the wing" of a burglary and child-fighting ring run by the infamous Will Rife (hanged two years ago for the murder of councilman Jim Myers). Charlotte helped Sam quit the ring and get work as a guard for travelers. She met Will through his father's guard company. She avoids the Crosspoint mob.	

Play the Game



Level advancement

As characters gain experience, they increase in ability, competence, and power.

Character Archetype	Archetypal Ability	Archetypal Reaction	Verve Contributor	Fighting Art Bonus
Warrior:	Strength	Fortitude	Intelligence	Every level
Thief:	Agility	Evasion	Wisdom	Every even level
Sorcerer:	Intelligence	Reason	Charisma	Every third level
Prophet:	Wisdom	Willpower	Strength	Every even level
Monk:	Charisma	Perception	Endurance	Every even level

Characters start at first level with zero experience points. It takes 1,000 experience to go from first to second level, and another 2,000 to go from second to third level. Level advancement requires current level times 1,000 experience beyond the previous requirements.

Level	Total Experience	Specialty	Normal Reactions	Survival	Verve	Mojo	Fighting (Thief, Monk, Prophet)	Fighting (Sorcerer)
1	0	1		5	5	12+		
2	1,000		+1		+d10	+12	+1	
3	3,000	+1		+d10		+13		+1
4	6,000		+1		+d10	+14	+1	
5	10,000	+1		+d10		+15		
6	15,000		+1		+d10	+16	+1	+1
7	21,000	+1		+d10		+17		
8	28,000		+1		+d10	+18	+1	
9	36,000	+1		+d10		+19		+1
10	45,000		+1		+d10	+20	+1	

If the character has multiple archetypes through a specialty, use their overall level for everything except Reactions and the Fighting Arts. Fighting Arts field bonuses and reaction bonuses increase according to archetype level.

What does advancement mean?

When characters advance in level, they can do more things, and some of the things they used to be able to do, they can now do better. What does this mean? In some cases, it means that they learned something new they didn't know before. In other cases, it means the character could always have done these things, it just wasn't relevant. It may mean that the character has gained new knowledge, or that knowledge once secret has been made public.

How do I gain experience points?

Your character gains experience for using mojo on archetypal die rolls, for engaging creatures and people within the adventure, for defeating opponents in conflicts, and for donating or losing treasure acquired as part of the adventure.

Experience points for engaging encounters and for defeating opponents will be handled by the Adventure Guide. The more encounters you take part in, and the more opponents you defeat in conflicts, the more experience you will gain from those sources.

Experience points from engagements, conflicts, and loot are shared among every member of the group, and are awarded only after your characters complete the adventure. Loot experience is gained between adventures: at the end of an adventure or the beginning of one.

Experience from mojo is under your control. When you use mojo to affect an archetypal die roll, your character will gain fifty experience points per mojo used, immediately.

Loot experience is also under your control once your group acquires loot. Things looted during the adventure can be donated or lost with no expectation of tangible benefit after the adventure is completed. One silver coin of loot is worth two experience points.

For example, donating to a village will give the group experience even though this increases the goodwill toward the characters. “Good will” is not a tangible benefit. On the other hand, a donation that is really a bribe to get something from a church official is not experience-worthy. A loss in a gambling casino is not experience-worthy: there was an expectation—or hope—of an immediate benefit.

However, if you stipulate that your character will lose, and the Adventure Guide agrees, this then counts as a loss worthy of experience. For example, you might decide to lose your previous adventure’s loot at the beginning of the next adventure to provide your character an incentive for adventuring.

If you choose to have your characters lose loot, this is an opportunity for you to exercise more control over the narration than normal. You might decide, for example, that your characters were forced to jettison some of their loot in order to escape pursuers, or leave a dungeon, or cross a bridge. If the Adventure Guide agrees, you can (and should) role-play or jointly describe your characters’ loss.

Survival and verve

At second level and every even level, your character gains another d10 verve, modified by your character’s archetypal ability and verve contributor as minor contributors. At third level and every odd level, the character gains another d10 survival, modified by endurance as a major contributor.

Fighting Art field bonus

Warriors gain a bonus of one to their *Fighting Art* field bonus every level. Thieves, prophets, and monks gain a bonus of 1 at second level, and every two levels thereafter. Sorcerors gain a bonus of 1 at third level and every three levels thereafter.

Reactions

Characters receive a bonus of one each level to their archetypal reaction. Thus, their archetypal reaction is at a bonus of level. For other reactions there is a bonus of one each even level.

Specialties

The character gains one new specialty at the third level and every odd level thereafter.

Mojo

For everything else, the character gains or can acquire *mojo*. Mojo may be applied to learning skills, researching spells, increasing abilities, or gaining new weapon skills. Multiple characters can join to apply mojo to the same project as long as each character has applicable mojo. In this way, several sorcerers can pool their mojo to research a spell. If different characters in the group have different mojo costs for the task, the most expensive mojo cost is used.

At each new level, the character gains ten plus level mojo. For example, at second level, a character gains twelve mojo.

Moral codes

Players must play their characters according to their moral code if the character has one. If they end up playing a different moral code, they should change it to a more appropriate one at their next level advancement. At each level advancement, the player and Adventure Guide should consider whether the character's moral code has changed. If it has, then mark the change. A good question to ask is "do you think your character has made or avoided any moral questions during this level?"

This also applies to characters who do not have a moral code. If they start making moral choices, they have chosen their code.

Player characters who become evil become non-player characters. Prophets who change their moral code without assistance from their deity or pantheon can no longer call spirits, nor use any specialty that has the requirement of "prophet".

Depending on the character's prominence and the nature of the change, the world may impose other consequences as well.

Multiple archetypes

If your character has a specialty that allows multiple archetypes, use their archetype levels rather than character level to determine reaction bonuses and the fighting arts field bonus. Use character level for determining whether to roll survival or verve. For the character's verve modifiers, use the archetype that the character has the highest level in after advancement (or the new level's archetype if the character's archetype levels are tied).

Archetype advancement

Prophets

Prophets can call more spirits as they advance. At each level, a prophet gains *level* new calling points.

Once during each level after the character's first level, the player can change one of their character's available spirit types. From then on, the character can call spirits of the new spirit type, and not of the old one.

Sorcerers

Sorcerers gain new spell slots for memorization. At each level, the sorcerer gains that many new slots. A 3rd level sorcerer gains three new slots, for example. Sorcerers can acquire spells by looting them from dungeons, stealing them from other sorcerers, trading formulas with other sorcerers, or by spending mojo.

Acquiring spells with mojo

Acquiring new spells costs three mojo per spell level.

The character must also have ten times the basic spell components on hand for experimentation. Experimentation costs aren't necessary if the character spent at least *spell level* archetypal mojo, though the sorcerer will need to acquire components for current or future castings.

Inscribing mnemonic Spells

However a sorcerer acquires a spell formula, the spell must be inscribed into the sorcerer's spell book using the *inscription* spell.

If at least *spell level* archetypal mojo was used to acquire it, the spell is assumed to already be inscribed in the sorcerer's spell book at no cost to the character. If the character has any uncast spells of the appropriate level memorized, they can choose to have memorized their new spell instead of one of the uncast spells, if appropriate.

Spell compatibility

Before inscribing or learning any new spell that is not paid for with at least *spell level* archetypal mojo, the sorcerer must make a reason roll at a bonus of six and a penalty equal to the level of the spell. On a successful roll, that spell is compatible with the sorcerer and the roll need not be made again. If the roll fails, the spell is not compatible with the sorcerer and the sorcerer cannot impress or learn that spell.

If the character and spell are not compatible, any practical mojo and experimentation moneys are spent. However, the character may try again at a later level at a cost of only two mojo and five times the spell components on hand.

Thieves

At each level after first, the thief gains a bonus of 1 to one thief field or an extra skill in one of their existing thief fields.

Time

Game time and playing time

In Gods & Monsters, there is a difference between game time and playing time akin to the difference between players and characters. As Galen, your character, retires to bed in an inn, you might say “Galen sets an alarm spell and goes to sleep.” Your Guide then says, “Galen wakes up the next morning. Nothing seems to have happened.” This exchange takes about five seconds. But in the game, it probably took about eight hours. Your character spent an entire night in the inn, but you covered that part of the game in a few seconds. Game rules almost always cover game time. When the rules say that a round is approximately ten seconds, this means that a round is ten seconds *in the game*. Determining what happened in that round might take anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes of playing time.

Rounds

In game terms, a round is approximately ten seconds and is used mostly for conflicts. Over the course of one round, each character gets their chance to attack, defend, do something else, or do nothing. There are six rounds in a minute.

Sessions, adventures, and campaigns

Where rounds, minutes, hours, days, and so on are relatively specific units of time, there are other units of time that have no specific duration. A game session lasts one evening or afternoon, depending on when you play. A game adventure may last multiple sessions, until the adventure is completed. And a campaign is usually a narrative arc that consists of multiple adventures.

Your game sessions will usually end when someone has to leave. Often, you’ll have a specific time that the game session will end, such as 11 PM or 1 AM. Game sessions can easily stop in the middle of an adventure or even in the middle of a conflict.

Adventures usually have a specific short-term goal, such as searching some ruins or solving some mystery. Finishing that adventure means reaching that goal. Often, that goal will move the characters along toward solving a greater mystery or reaching a greater goal. When your character finishes one adventure, they’ll soon find themselves embroiled in another adventure.

Not all games have campaigns, but when they do the adventures will lead, perhaps with some side-treks, toward the fulfillment of the greater goal of that campaign. When the goal is reached, the campaign ends. Often, your character’s adventures will end when the campaign ends. You’ll put that character away and create a new one, or make a new character in a completely different role-playing game. Other times, your group may decide to take these characters on to further and greater adventures.

Survival

Regaining survival and healing injuries

When a character gets hit by a weapon or otherwise takes damage, they lose survival or verve, and possibly gain injuries. They may restore survival, up to their normal amount, by resting. Each night (eight hours) of rest restores level survival points or removes one injury point on a successful health roll. Otherwise, only one survival point is regained. Each full day of rest restores level survival points or removes one injury point with no reaction roll necessary.

For example, Toromeen, a 2nd level warrior, fights an Orc. The Orc has +1 to damage and uses a short sword, which does d6 damage. Toromeen has 7 survival and 17 verve. In the first round, the Orc hits Toromeen and the Guide rolls 4 on d6. This means five points damage. Because fighting is archetypal for warriors, Toromeen loses 5 verve, and drops to 12 verve. The next round, the Orc misses. Toromeen loses no verve or survival. In the third round, the Orc again hits Toromeen. The Guide rolls 5 so Toromeen loses six verve. Toromeen is now at six verve. In the fourth round, the Orc hits for seven points. Toromeen is at zero verve and also loses one survival. In the next round, the Orc hits for four points. Toromeen loses four survival and has only two survival. Finally, Toromeen kills the Orc.

Toromeen ends the encounter with 2 survival and no verve. He will have 2 survival points in any future encounters that day. Toromeen's verve will fully restore to 17 tomorrow. If Toromeen rests tonight, Tony will roll Toromeen's health. If the roll is successful, Toromeen's survival will increase by two, to 4. Toromeen might also receive healing aid through magical, divine, or psychic means.

No matter how much Toromeen rests or how much healing aid he receives, his survival will not increase above its maximum of 7, nor will his verve increase above its maximum of 17.

Using verve

Because verve returns more quickly than survival, players will want to use verve rather than survival for their characters when possible. Verve can only be used for damage due to archetypal actions. What kind of a survival point loss counts as from an archetypal activity?

1. Loss from a source or action that requires a roll against the character's archetypal reaction.
2. Loss from a source or action that requires a roll against the character's archetypal ability.
3. Loss that is the direct physical or rule consequence of an archetypal action, including specialties.
4. Loss to a warrior when the warrior is in combat.

When you are being your archetype, you get to use verve. So, for example, warriors use verve in combat. Thieves use verve if they fall after failing to climb walls. Monks use verve for survival point losses incurred because of a failed perception roll. On the other hand, warriors cannot use verve for damage unrelated to being a warrior. A warrior in combat can use verve to defend against spells cast into the combat. (Almost any damage in combat is relevant for a warrior, because damage is what combat is for.) A warrior playing poker with a mage cannot use verve against spells that mage casts unless one of the other criteria comes into play.

A thief tossed off of a thirty-foot wall cannot use verve points to defend against that damage, even though they could use it if they'd been climbing that wall and failed their Climb Walls roll. Climbing walls is an archetypal activity for a thief. Being tossed off a wall is not.

Being ambushed is probably not archetypal for a warrior. Triggering a trap accidentally isn't archetypal for a thief—unless they set it off while using their thief fields. Nor is being hit by a spear from that trap archetypal for a warrior.

For all purposes verve points *are* survival points if the survival point loss meets the criteria. For example, characters run the risk of death if they receive injury points in excess of their survival point total. Under rare circumstances characters can gain injury points even when they still have survival points. If the injury points were the result of archetypal damage, verve points count toward the survival point total that is compared against the injury point total.

Verve is fully restored at the beginning of each game day, the moment the character awakens to begin the day's planning and adventuring. Verve is partially restored when characters engage encounters outside of conflict within the adventure. Each character (regardless of whether they take part in the encounter) will regain up to their own level in verve once the encounter has definitely begun. An encounter must have been part of the adventure and must involve non-conflict engagement. An encounter can only be engaged once per adventure for the purpose of restoring verve.

When your damage comes from verve, you can look cool doing it even when you fail. Yes, the rope you were trying to swing from snapped, but you made a perfect land-and-roll and came up ready to fight.

Injury points (zero survival points)

Once survival reaches zero, further damage adds to the character's *injury points*. There are also times when a character will take injury points before survival reaches zero. Whenever a character gains injuries, the character runs the risk of unconsciousness and death.

When a character has injuries, those points are a penalty on any attack rolls, reaction rolls, and ability rolls. Sorcerors can't use spells of higher level than their level minus their injuries. A fifth-level sorcerer with two injuries could continue to cast first through third level spells normally, but is unable to cast—or memorize—fourth and fifth level spells.

Unconsciousness

A character who drops to zero survival or who gains injuries must make an immediate fortitude or willpower roll at a penalty of the character's current injury total, as normal. If failed, the character goes unconscious at the end of the round for a number of minutes equal to their injuries. If successful, the character may continue acting as normal, with their injury point penalty. (You may also choose to have your character lose consciousness.)

An unconscious character may awaken or be awoken as normal after unconsciousness ends, except that any rolls to awaken an injured character are at a penalty of the character's injury point total.

A player whose character is unconscious may choose to spend one mojo to bring their character to *semi-consciousness*.

A time to die

At the end of any round where a character gained injury points and their injury total exceeds their *current* survival (and verve, if the latest injuries were gained as the result of archetypal activity), the character runs the risk of dying. Player characters must overcome their injuries in a contested endurance roll against their total injuries. Their injuries are the acting side of the contest: the Guide rolls less than or equal to their injuries, and the player rolls less than or equal to their endurance (with normal penalties, including injury point penalties). If the player's roll fails and the injuries' roll succeeds, it is time for the character to die.

Death normally takes place after endurance minus total injuries minutes. If the character goes unconscious, the remaining minutes become hours. If the character's injury total drops to zero before the character dies, death is canceled.

Death rolls are archetypal for all player characters. Death rolls while unconscious are at a bonus of two. Characters can go unconscious while making the roll in order to gain that bonus. Field bonuses also apply if the field includes an appropriate skill, such as *falling*.

After a player character's time runs out, they will die by the end of the current scene, and even healing cannot help them. At any time before the end of the scene, the character can make one heroic last effort to do anything other than stay alive. The player can have the character try to attack the enemy one last time, try to assist their comrades in some way, make a stirring speech to influence the senate—or stir the mob to riot.

The player will gain a bonus of their level on that roll; the character's injuries will not apply. They may bid any remaining mojo on that roll. Other players may also contribute mojo to the dying character's heroic last effort if they wish to do so. For all purposes, a heroic last effort is archetypal for all player characters who contribute, and each character gains experience and possible skill/field bonuses as if they had spent the full mojo, not just what they personally contributed.

At the end of their final scene or at the end of their heroic last effort if they choose to perform one, the character dies.

Non-player characters

Non-player characters often do not have a known endurance score. If the endurance of a creature or other encounter isn't known, use 10 plus half level as an estimate. If they have a per-die survival bonus on their level number, that bonus will also apply.

Non-player characters do not have verve. NPCs with archetypes gain d6 survival per level, unless they're warriors, in which case they gain d10 survival per level. NPCs regain level survival each night without rolling.

Example

Toromeen, after fighting an Orc and a few of the Orc's friends, has four survival points. One more sword-thrust from the remaining Orc does six points damage to Toromeen. Toromeen is now at zero survival points and he has two injury points. Toromeen has to make an immediate fortitude roll to stay conscious.

Toromeen is a second level warrior. His fortitude is 11. Tony (his player) must roll 9 or less (fortitude 11, -2 for his two injuries) to stay conscious. Tony rolls 6, and Toromeen is still conscious. He has, however, a penalty of two to his attack rolls (and most other rolls).

Toromeen also might die: two (his injury points) is greater than zero (his current survival and verve). The Guide rolls a 1; this meets Toromeen's injury total, so Tony needs to make an endurance roll for Toromeen. Toromeen's endurance is 15 and he is at 2 injury points (-2), so Tony needs to roll 13 or less. Tony rolls 20; Toromeen is dying. He will die in 13 minutes: his endurance of 15 minus his 2 injuries.

Fortunately, Toromeen successfully hits and kills the Orc on his next action. He crawls underneath a tree and goes unconscious. While he is still dying, the remaining time for his death increases from 12 minutes to 12 hours. If someone can heal his injuries before 12 hours are up, he will live; otherwise, he will die.

Temporary bonus pools

Some spells, specialties, and spirits can grant their targets a *temporary bonus pool* of survival points. This temporary pool is separate from the character's normal survival points. Eligible damage is removed from the temporary pool first; only when the pool is exhausted (or the spell or spirit's effect ends) does the character begin to count damage against their real survival points.

For example, Gralen casts *Fighting Prowess* on Toromeen, and Toromeen gains a temporary bonus pool of seven survival points. Six rounds later, Toromeen enters combat. In the next round, a goblin hits Toromeen for three points of damage; the temporary bonus pool is reduced to four. In the eighth and ninth rounds, the goblin misses. In the tenth round, the goblin hits for three points again. The bonus pool is reduced to one. At the end of the tenth round, the spell's duration ends, and the bonus pool disappears. Toromeen has taken no real damage; if the goblin(s) had done more than seven points over those ten rounds, he would have taken real damage.

Your character is dead; now what?

Take a deep breath. Don't disengage until the end of the current scene. You can offer advice and moral support to the other players for as long as you wish. When you are ready to create a new character, wait until whatever scene they're currently in plays out and roll the dice. Work with the rest of the group to choose your character's archetype. Ask the Guide how many experience points your new character has and how many mojo your new character has. Then follow the instructions for creating a new character.

Contests

For most non-combat activities, players will use simple die rolls to determine an action's success. Characters either fail or succeed based on that roll.

Abilities and reactions

When a character acts, or when the world acts against a character, that character's player will often have to make an ability roll or a reaction roll. In each case, the player must roll d20 less than or equal to that number. For example, if goblins are sneaking up on Toromeen, Tony Barlow will have to roll d20 less than or equal to Toromeen's perception. Since Toromeen's perception is 4, Tony will have to roll less than or equal to 4 on d20.

Situations will often call for modifiers to these rolls. For example, if the goblins are being noisy, the Guide will give Toromeen a bonus to the roll, making it more likely that Toromeen will notice the goblins before they surprise him.

Failure

What does it mean to fail an ability roll? It means that your character's action was unsuccessful and further attempts are discouraged. The rules do not say why they didn't succeed. The reason can be anything you want, as long as it means that your character's attempt was unsuccessful. The obvious reason is that your character failed. But it could also be that your character was in too much of a rush, or that something (or someone) got in your character's way.



The default explanation is that your character failed, but if you wish to narrate the unsuccessful attempt differently, you may. Keep your narration to one or two sentences, and do not create an argument. If any of the other players raise an objection to your narration, your character simply failed.

When a contest involves weapons, a failure also means that the loser takes damage and might be injured. Weapons do their normal damage to the loser, and for every die of damage one of the lost points will be an injury point. If the potential damage is one or two dice, a successful evasion roll negates the injury point requirement. If all damage can be and is applied to verve, no injuries result either.

The Adventure Guide may also rule that some contests which don't involve weapons are dangerous enough to merit damage.

Each action is a single roll

No matter how long an obstacle is, overcoming it is a single roll. Whether a player's thief scales a 20-foot wall or a 200-foot wall, only one roll is required to complete the climb. If, for example, the character climbs a hundred feet, has an encounter, and then climbs another hundred feet, their first climbing roll suffices for the second hundred feet. Similarly, a character making a roll to find information about an event in the underworld doesn't make that roll every night. They make it once, and the contacts start flowing in (or not, depending on the success of the roll). They don't need to roll again for that event.

A failed roll cannot be re-rolled, not even by another character, unless the task is reframed as a different task. The only exception is that if an individual player character has attempted a task once, a group of player characters can also attempt the task once. If a group effort has been attempted once, then an individual can also try once.

Difficulty adjustments

The size of the obstacle may affect the difficulty of the roll. Climbing a 200-foot wall will have more penalties than climbing a 20-foot wall, for example.

Obstacle size

If an obstacle's size affects the difficulty of an action, apply penalties for larger obstacles. Usually, penalties increase as size doubles:

Size:	1	2	4	8	16	32	64	128	256	512	1024
Penalty:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Sometimes, the obstacle and penalty will increase together: an obstacle size of three will mean a penalty of three. Rarely, the penalty will double rather than the obstacle size, so that you'll read up rather than down. See *Jumping* for an example.

Sizes will be multiples of a reasonable no-penalty size. Distances will often be based on 10 foot sizes. Climbing a 20- to 39-foot wall is a penalty of 1. Climbing a 40- to 79-foot wall is a penalty of 2. If the wall is 80 but less than 160 feet, the penalty is 3, and so on.

Similarly, searches of a 20 by 20 foot area or 20-foot diameter circle incur a penalty of 1 on the perception roll. Searching a 40 by 40 foot area incurs a penalty of 2.

When confronting obstacle sizes greater than normal, where and when failure occurs often matters. If an ability or reaction roll failure will directly result in damage, and the damage depends on where the failure occurs (for example, when climbing a wall, the height of the fall determines the damage), then the amount of the obstacle overcome must be determined randomly. For example, if a thief fails to climb an 80-foot wall, a d8 might be used to determine in which ten feet the fall occurred.

If the failure does not directly result in damage or the damage does not depend on where the failure occurs, it may still be determined randomly; however, the Adventure Guide also has the option of placing the failure near an adventure other than the one the character had been trying to reach.

If the obstacle size is greater than one, the time required to overcome the obstacle will be proportionately longer.

Players can choose to divide their actions into smaller actions.

Difficulty levels

Often it will be easiest to consider difficulties using a common-sense term such as “easy” or “difficult”.

Difficulty	Bonus	Difficulty	Penalty
Difficult	0	Difficult	0
Easy	2	Very Difficult	2
Very Easy	4	Extremely Difficult	4
A Snap	8	Nearly Impossible	8
Incredibly Easy	16	Practically Impossible	16

Skills

Skills may modify ability rolls and reaction rolls, if the skill distinctly applies to the action being attempted. For example, the Guide might decide that knowing some bit of historical trivia requires a *reason* roll. If your character has a field bonus of one in *History* and a relevant skill, you gain a bonus of 1 to the roll. Most often, rolls that skills apply to will be ability rolls.

Careful attempts

Normally, attempts are assumed to be made over the course of one round or some other normal, but quick, time period. If a character chooses to spend more time — one minute instead of a round, ten minutes instead of a minute, or one hour instead of ten minutes — they can gain a bonus of 1. If they spend even longer — ten minutes, an hour, or a whole 8-hour day — carefully setting up their attempt, they can gain a bonus of 2. It is up to the Adventure Guide whether or not any particular action can benefit from *careful attempts* and what the base time period is.

Contested actions

In some cases, two or more characters will attempt to do the same thing, or keep the other from doing something. In such a case, each player makes a roll vs. the ability or reaction in question.

If both fail, the side that was trying to do something fails. If one side was resisting and one side was acting, the acting side fails. If both were trying to achieve the same goal, both fail to achieve the goal. They have battled to a draw. If both succeed, they keep trying until they give up or only one succeeds. If one succeeds and the others fail, that's the winner. If more than two sides are involved, those who lose do not get to keep trying.

Contested actions can, if both sides keep succeeding, take longer than uncontested actions, along the scale of: immediately, one round, one minute, ten minutes, one hour, one day, two days, three days, etc. Start with however long the action would take if it were uncontested.

If all sides in a contested action cannot fail, double each participant's final rolls (before any mojo are applied) and increase the time period to the next level.

Players can request a doubling of both final rolls if their opponent cannot fail. This also increases the time period to the next level.

Providing assistance

Characters can sometimes grant their field bonus to other people, in lieu of that person using their own field bonus. An herbalist can grant their field bonus to the injured; a speechwriter can grant their field bonus to someone making an oratory roll; a navigator can give their captain their navigation field bonus in place of the captain's.

The character granting the bonus makes their roll first (usually an ability roll). If successful, the people they were assisting can use the field bonus of the assistant. If the assistant tries to provide a bonus to more than one person, the number of people is the obstacle size.

For example, an herbalist with a wisdom of 15 and a field bonus of +2 in Healing Craft treats the wounds of three people who have lost survival or gained injuries in a fight. The herbalist must make a wisdom roll of 16 or less: 15 for wisdom, +2 for their field bonus, -1 for the obstacle size. If the herbalist is successful, the three patients each gain +2 (the herbalist's field bonus) to their health roll that night to regain survival and/or heal injuries.

Or, a politician who has the skill Oratory in the field Political Science, but who only has a field bonus of 1 in Political Science, might hire a speechwriter who has a +3 field bonus in Writing Craft. If the speechwriter makes their wisdom roll when writing the speech, the politician can use that +3 in place of their own +1 when making their oration roll.

A roll can only be assisted by one field bonus at a time.

If a failed attempt at assistance involves a weapon, damage results as normal for a failed contest. For example, a character under surgery risks injury if the surgeon fails their Medical Science roll.

Conflicts

Combat takes place during ten-second rounds that give each character a chance to do something, whether it be attack with a weapon, run away, cast a spell, use a spirit, or use some other ability. In a conflict, each successful attack reduces the target's survival by the amount of damage rolled by the player or Adventure Guide, according to the damage done by that weapon.

Surprise

A character may be surprised if they were unaware of an impending attack. If their characters were unaware of the attack, the players must make a perception roll. If the characters were aware of their attackers, there is a bonus of four to this roll. If the characters were sleeping, there is a penalty of six to this roll.

Surprised characters are unable to act during the first round of surprise. In subsequent rounds, they are at a penalty of two to defense and three to any success rolls. While surprised, characters may not initiate complex actions such as casting spells, calling spirits, using psychic powers, or any of the special conflict maneuvers.

Surprised combatants must make either a willpower or fortitude roll to 'snap out' of surprise. This roll is made at the beginning of each round after the first round, and applies to the round it is made in.

If surprised combatants are removed from the conflict for two or more rounds, they are no longer surprised.

Order of events

There is no order to what happens in conflict. Everything happens at once. To make things easier, however, the Adventure Guide will describe how all of the non-player characters are moving. Then the players will move their characters and perform their actions. Finally, the Adventure Guide will determine the actions of non-player characters (on both sides of the conflict). After both sides act, check for unconsciousness and death if any player or non-player characters lost all survival and/or were injured.

Note that in some cases, the Guide will need to apply non-player character actions to player character actions, such as when a non-player character casts a Sleepfall spell. In this case, resolve the non-player character's action first, as for a called shot. If multiple characters are performing actions that will affect the other's outcome, use an agility roll to determine which action(s) get resolved first. If the characters have any penalties to movement, apply those penalties to the agility roll as well.

Hitting

Each round, every character can attempt one action. Often this action is hitting an opponent with a weapon. A character can attack any target who comes within their movement, in feet, during the round. The attack roll is made against an 11: the roll must be 11 or less on d20 to successfully attack. The attacker's *Fighting Art* bonus increases and the target's defense reduces the number needed.

Close combat and ranged combat

Characters fighting within hand or extended weapon reach of their opponents are in *close combat*. If characters must fire or throw missiles to attack their opponents, they are in *ranged combat*.

Damage

Each weapon does a different amount of damage: roll the dice listed for that weapon to determine the damage the weapon causes. Damage is subtracted from the target's survival.

Firing into close combat

Firing into close combat gives the target strong cover if there are three to five combatants, and full cover if there are six or more.

If the target is in close combat with an individual or individuals, and if the attack would have hit one or more of those individuals, those individuals it would have hit must make an evasion roll or take the same amount of damage the target did. The attacker may choose to make a called shot to avoid this. On a successful called shot, only the target takes damage.

On a miss, a random adjacent opponent of the target must make an evasion roll, with their Defense as a bonus, to avoid being hit.

Number of actions

Some weapons or attacks require multiple actions. When an attack requires multiple actions, such as loading, arming, and firing an arquebus (three actions), the attack will normally require that many rounds to use. The actions need not immediately follow each other: a character might load their arquebus at the beginning of the day, fill the pan with powder when combat is imminent, and then only require one action to fire the weapon the first time. In later rounds, the character might load the weapon, use their sword to fight off a monster, then load the pan with powder and finally fire.

Attacks which require more than one action to perform gain one free action per *use* when outside of close combat. The arquebus above would require only two actions to use if the character using it were not engaged in close combat. Most of the time, if the character has no need to worry about being attacked or hit, the character is not engaged in close combat.

Number of attacks

Some creatures and archetypes may attack more than once per round. When a combatant attacks more than once per round, each attack must be rolled for.

Special conflict maneuvers

Any bonuses which a maneuver or situation gives to the attacker must be used only against the opponents the situation applies to.

Attacking unseen targets

Attackers who are aware of but unable to see their target have an attack penalty of three in close combat, and six in ranged combat.

Called shot

Called shots are made to a specific location on a target, with an attack penalty of 3 and a defense penalty of 2 for that round. The target's defense includes armor even if isn't worn on the called location. Called shots do damage as normal. A successful called shot does not mean the target is hit at the called location, it means this was the location that needed to be protected. The target may be required to make an evasion or fortitude roll to avoid special effects. For example, a called shot to the hand against a target carrying a potion will require an evasion roll or they drop the potion. Use evasion if the target tries to avoid the effect by dodging, fortitude if the target tries to avoid the effect by standing strong. The reaction against the disrupting effects of a called shot is at a penalty of the damage done by the attack. The target gains a bonus of their movement. Sorcerors and prophets use their reduced movement if casting spells and manifesting spirits.

Called shots are handled first in a round, and can affect other actions during that round. A called shot can disrupt complex actions such as casting spells, manifesting spirits, or reloading crossbows. The target must make an evasion roll to complete the action. If a spell or spirit manifestation is disrupted, verve is not lost, nor is the spell or spirit used up.

Called shots can distract an attacker using thrown or propelled weapons. The arrow or other missile automatically misses (as normal) unless the target of the called shot makes an evasion or fortitude roll, in which case it proceeds as normal.

A successful called shot also allows carried attacks, such as poisons, to take effect. Unless otherwise specified, all carried attacks require a called shot. Carried attacks have their own reaction roll instead of the above, usually an evasion roll or a health roll.

Cover

In ranged combat, combatants will often try to hide behind obstacles to avoid being hit by their opponents' missiles. Cover can be weak, strong, and full. Weak cover protects a significant portion of the character but also leaves a significant portion open to attack. Strong cover protects most of the character, and full cover blocks all of the character from attack. Behind full cover, a non-combatant can usually hide with no possibility of getting hit, but if a character is trying to attack (especially with missile weapons of their own), or trying to move in a way that brings them partially in the open, even full cover will afford opponents the possibility of hitting.

Cover	Warriors	Non-Warriors
Weak Cover	+1 Defense	No bonus
Strong Cover	+2 Defense	+1 Defense
Full Cover	+3 Defense	+2 Defense

Warriors use cover better than non-warriors. However, if a warrior does not engage in the conflict, but instead leads their comrades, they may grant the warrior cover bonus to up to *level* companions. The warrior's player must make a perception roll to successfully do so.

High ground

If a character is attacking from the higher end of a reasonable slope, stairway, or while mounted on a horse-like animal (and fighting medium-sized opponents), or while attacking from above, the character gains a bonus of 1 to attack or defense.

Immobilizing an opponent

Immobilizing an opponent involves grabbing their arms and/or legs. The combatant trying to immobilize their opponent has a penalty of two to their defense.

A called shot is required to immobilize an opponent, and the opponent is allowed an evasion roll to avoid immobilization. The evasion roll is at a bonus of two for every general size level larger they are than the character trying to immobilize them. A large target would gain a bonus of 4 to the evasion roll if a small character is trying to immobilize it, for example.

If the evasion roll fails, the attacker has a hold on their target. They may attempt to hold the target immobile. Both the attacker and the target make fortitude rolls, once per round. The larger of the two gains a bonus of 4 to this roll for every general size difference.

- If both succeed or both fail, neither may do anything.
- If the target succeeds but the immobilizer fails, the target has broken the hold, and may attack their opponent once at +6.
- If the target fails and the immobilizer succeeds, the target is immobilized and may not attack with the immobilized limbs; the target is immobilized and can no longer break free. All physical actions and reactions by the target are now at a penalty of six.

Allies of the immobilizer may tie up or attack an immobilized target. The immobilizer may also attack, as attacking an immobilized target (although this removes the penalty of three for breaking the hold if the immobilizer attacks with a weapon).

Quickdraw

Normally, it takes one action to draw a weapon. A character can also attempt to draw and use an available weapon in the same round. An evasion roll is required to do so successfully. On a successful roll, the character attacks as normal. On an unsuccessful roll, the character acts as if *surprised*, which must be thrown off as normal.

Size differences

The sizes used for rules such as immobilizing an opponent are fine, tiny, small, medium, large, huge, gigantic, and titanic.

Unaware and non-defending opponents

There are three kinds of non-defending opponents: covered, unaware, and immobilized. These bonuses do not combine with each other.

Covered

If an attacker can take aim at a target or targets, and the target(s) are unprepared for combat, the attacker is said to have the target(s) *covered*. The attacker can get one free attack against the target or one of the targets at a bonus of four to attack and one to damage. If the target attacks before the covering combatant chooses to use their free attack, the covering combatant will still gain all bonuses. However, if the target beats the covering combatant in a Reaction contest the attack is not free. Each side can choose either perception or evasion as their reaction roll in this contest.

Only physical attacks with an attack roll can be used to cover a target. Spell, psychic, and spirit attacks cannot be used to cover a target.

Immobilized targets

There is an attack bonus of 10 against immobile targets, such as sleeping opponents, bound opponents or opponents who are otherwise unable to move.

Unaware and non-defending opponents

Opponents who are unaware of an attack are easier to hit. There is an attack bonus of four against a defender who is unaware of the attacker's general location or simply not defending against attack. Warriors can use the bonus to gain an extra attack against the unaware/non-defending opponent, assuming the target is within combat reach and the warrior has space remaining in their combat pool.

Killing blow

Only immobile targets may be subject to a killing blow. If the attacker makes a successful called shot to kill, the target takes half the damage (round up) as injury points; the rest go to survival points as normal.

Knockout blow

Unaware, surprised, covered, or immobilized opponents may be subject to a knockout blow. The attacker must make a called shot. The target is allowed an evasion roll. If the target is wearing any sort of head protection, there is a bonus of one to this roll. If the head protection provides a bonus to the target's defense (magical or non-magical), this bonus also applies to the reaction. Creatures whose defense is from tough skin will usually also gain this bonus to their roll.

If the reaction roll succeeds, the target takes damage as normal. If the reaction roll fails, the attack was a knockout blow: one point of the damage rolled goes to the target's injury point total and the rest to the target's survival points (as normal). The target runs the risk of unconsciousness and death as normal for gaining injury points.

Warriors may allot two combat bonus points to the knockout blow, so that two points of the damage rolled add to the victim's injuries.

Combat example

There are four combatants in this example. Sam Stevens, a first level thief, first level warrior, played by Sarah Dent, is wearing leather armor and bears a long sword and a shield. Charlotte Kordé, a second level monk, played by John Greeley, is wearing leather armor and bears a dagger and a staff. Toromeen, a second level warrior, played by Tony Barlow, is wearing chain mail and bears a battle axe.

Combatant	Survival	Verve	Perception	Willpower	Fortitude	Fighting Art	Attack	Defense	Player
Sam Stevens	6	15	6	5	5	+1	0	+4	Sarah Dent
Charlotte Kordé	5	14	9	9	5	+1	0	+1	John Greeley
Toromeen	7	17	4	7	11	+2	+2	+5	Tony Barlow
Yeti	20		6	6	6	0	+4	+3	

Combat begins when a Yeti, a fourth-level creature, surprises them in the snowy mountains outside Hightown in West Highland.

Surprise!

Everyone rolls surprise (d20). Surprise uses perception. Sarah rolls 2. Sam Stevens' perception is 6, so Sam is not surprised. John rolls 18. Charlotte Kordé's perception is 9. Charlotte is surprised. Tony rolls 4. Toromeen's perception is 4, so Toromeen is not surprised.

The Yeti knowingly initiated combat. The Yeti is not surprised.

Round 1

The Yeti has a defense of +3. An eight or lower (eleven minus three) is required to successfully hit it. Each of the players make their attacks.

Sam Stevens has an attack bonus of 1, so she needs a 9 or lower on d20 to hit. Sarah rolls 4. Sam is fighting with a long sword, which does d8 points of damage. Sarah rolls seven, a massive blow against the small hairy creature. The Yeti now only has 13 survival points.

Toromeen has a combined attack bonus of 4. He needs 12 or less to hit the Yeti (8 plus 4). Tony rolls 17 on d20, a pitiful score. He has no chance this round to sink his battle axe into the Yeti.

Charlotte is surprised, and unable to act.

The Yeti, pained by Sam's attack, roars and claws at her. It has an attack bonus of 4. Sam has a defense of 4 due to her leather armor, shield, and agility. If the Guide rolls 11 or less on d20, the Yeti hits Sam. The Guide rolls 9. The Yeti's claws do d6 damage and the Guide rolls 1. The Yeti roars and claws Sam but she rolls with the blow. Sam now has 14 verve. The Yeti claws a second time—Yeti get two attacks—and the Guide rolls 5. The Yeti hits Sam again, for 6 points. Sam felt that one, and now has 8 verve remaining.

Round 2

Charlotte might still be surprised. She needs to make a fortitude or willpower roll to shake off the surprise completely. John rolls 6. This is lower than Charlotte's willpower of 9. She is no longer surprised.

Tony rolls 13 on d20. Toromeen just barely fails to hit the Yeti.

Sarah rolls 14 on d20. Sam Stevens also fails to hit the Yeti.

John rolls 3 on d20. Charlotte Kordé needs a nine or lower, so Charlotte has successfully hit the Yeti with her dagger. Daggers do d4 points of damage. John rolls a 1. Charlotte Kordé pokes at the Yeti, and it now has 12 survival points.

The Guide rolls an 18 on d20. Sam Stevens successfully avoids the Yeti's claws. The Guide gives the Yeti a fifty-fifty chance of attacking Charlotte Kordé with its second attack. It continues to attack Sam. The Guide rolls a 20 on d20 for the Yeti's attack, so it fails anyway.

Round 3

The Yeti is being attacked by three creatures. The Guide decides that the Yeti will continue to attack, but it will leave next round if things don't go its way. The Yeti is a strong and fierce creature, but not stupid. It is a better fighter than any of the player characters individually, but three against one mitigates that advantage.

Tony rolls 16 on d20, and curses his dice. Toromeen fails to find an opening to hit the Yeti.

John rolls 10. Charlotte barely misses her opportunity to hurt the evil creature.

Sarah rolls 17 for Sam Stevens' attack. Sam also fails to hit.

The Yeti roars at Sam Stevens and the Guide rolls 11. That's exactly what the Yeti needs to hit Sam. The Guide rolls 4 on d6, so the Yeti claws Sam Stevens for 4 points. Sam now has 4 verve. She could be hurting soon. The Guide rolls 14 for the Yeti's second attack. The second claw attack misses Sam Stevens as she deflects it with her shield.

Round 4

The Yeti did well last round and its opponents seem unable to hit it. It continues its attack. Sam Stevens is tempted to withdraw, but doesn't want to leave Toromeen fighting the creature alone (she doesn't have faith in Charlotte's fighting skill). So Sam remains in combat.

Tony rolls 6 for Toromeen's attack. His battle axe does d8 points damage, and Tony rolls 8. The dwarf's 18 strength gives a bonus of 4, for a total of 12 points damage. The dwarf's battle axe sinks deep into the Yeti's side. The Yeti only had 12 survival left. It now has zero.

John rolls 13 for Charlotte's attack. Charlotte misses.

Sarah rolls 18 for Sam's attack. Sam also misses.

The Guide rolls a 2 and 16 for the Yeti, which is attacking Sam again. The first attack hits; it does 5 points damage to Sam, who now has no verve left and is missing one survival. She's down to 5 survival.

However, the Yeti dropped to zero survival this round, and must make a health roll to remain conscious. Both the Yeti's fortitude and willpower are 6. The Guide must roll 6 or lower for the Yeti to remain conscious. The Guide rolls 3. The Yeti is conscious and decides to run away. The player characters choose to let it go.

Mojo

Using mojo

Characters use mojo to improve skills, modify failed rolls, and increase abilities. Some specialties also use mojo for special effects.

Abilities

It costs three times the character's current ability score to increase an ability by one point. Increasing the character's archetypal ability costs only twice the current score. If the player wants a specialty, and only one point of an ability requirement stands in their way, the player can increase that ability by spending only the current score. For example, if a warrior has a 17 strength and the player wants the *Exceptional Ability* specialty, they can increase their strength when they choose that specialty by spending 17 mojo.

Fields and skills

New fields cost 11 mojo. The field comes with one skill and is at +1. Increasing a field bonus by 1 costs four mojo, plus the current bonus. For example, increasing a field from +2 to +3 will cost six mojo. Increasing from +5 to +6 will cost nine mojo.

Adding a skill to a field costs five mojo. Some fields are partially or fully restricted to specific archetypes. Archetypes other than the preferred archetype, if they are allowed to gain skills in that field, can do so for seven mojo.

If reasonable from the character's backstory, players can buy skills, fields, and field bonuses immediately before making a roll where that skill and field can help. When bought immediately before rolling, the player will gain the mojo spent as a bonus on that roll.

Monks can learn *techniques* that apply to one skill (at a cost of two mojo) or to all skills in a field (at a cost of four mojo). They can convert a one-skill technique to a field-level technique for three mojo. Converting a two-skill technique to a field-level technique costs two mojo.

Fighting Art

The Fighting Art is partially restricted to warriors. New weapon skills cost five mojo for warriors and seven mojo for non-warriors.

The Fighting Art field bonus cannot be increased using mojo; it can only be increased by increasing the character's level.

Rolls

After the failure of any d20 roll involving any of the character's archetypal abilities, the player may choose to bid a specific number of mojo to change the outcome of the roll. If that bid as a bonus would make the roll successful, the necessary mojo is lost (excess mojo is kept by the player) and the outcome is reversed. If the bonus would not alter the success of the roll, no mojo is lost.

Archetypal rolls are rolls against the character's archetypal ability, their archetypal reaction, a roll involving a specialty, or a roll involving an archetype's special abilities: combat for warriors, picking pockets for thieves, casting spells for sorcerors, etc.

Mojo use to affect rolls is always *useful*. If a player successfully affects a roll using mojo, the results of that roll must be useful. It must matter to the character's success in the adventure. For example, if a monk uses mojo to affect a surprise (perception) roll, they will receive more information than simply "you hear a noise". They will receive useful information about the nature of the danger.

If the action that the character is taking is simply not useful to the adventure, and the player uses mojo to be successful at the action, the Adventure Guide will say so and the player will have the opportunity to withdraw that bid. This is the only time that a player can withdraw a successful mojo bid.

Mojo cannot be used against other player characters.

Mojo experience

When mojo is used to affect an archetypal roll during the course of an adventure, the character gains 50 experience points per mojo used. These experience points are gained immediately.

If the character gains enough experience to go up a level, the level change occurs immediately. The character gains the new level's benefits immediately if the player doesn't need to ask about them. If they need advice or assistance, the benefits are gained only after the current scene ends.

For example, if a player bids six mojo to succeed on a failed roll, and needs to spend four mojo, their character loses four mojo and gains 200 experience points.

Mojo increases

If the amount of mojo spent to turn a failed roll into a success is as much as is needed to gain a new bonus or skill in the appropriate field (or even to gain an appropriate field), the character gains that bonus, skill, or field.

For example, a player whose character has *Language Science* at +1 is told that their roll to read an ancient manuscript has failed. The player bids seven mojo to succeed. They need six mojo. Since it would have cost only 5 mojo to increase Language Science to +2, the character's Language Science is now at +2.

Practical mojo

Characters can practice to gain and enhance fields, learn skills, and research spells. Characters study, train, or practice to acquire mojo that works like the mojo they receive for advancing in level. However, practical mojo is specific: it must be dedicated to a specific field, skill, or spell during the learning process. Specialties that create things may also allow the use of practical mojo.

Practical mojo never offers bonuses to rolls when used.

Practical mojo may only be used for fields, skills, spells, and specialties. It may not be used for other purposes, such as increasing ability scores, nor can it be used for restricted fields such as bonuses to the Fighting Art or thieving fields and skills.

Normal study

Characters may practice or study in order to gain one mojo per week. Mojo points cost one silver coin each for study or exercise materials and instruction. Training in this manner precludes adventuring or any sort of regular, full-time job.

Free-time study

Characters may gain one mojo for every month of free-time study. Training in this manner precludes excessive travel, such as long adventures, but does not preclude a normal job that allows for free time of at least two hours almost every day in the same place. Mojo points gained in this manner cost two silver coins per mojo gained.

Characters may use free-time study for up to three things at once, although this will leave no time for other things, such as a job.

Intensive study

Characters may gain zero mojo for every two days of intensive study. A mojo resource of some kind is required for intensive study. Mojo points gained in this manner cost three silver coins per mojo gained. Characters may not engage in intensive study for more than half wisdom days at a time. After intensive study, the character may not engage in intensive study for at least the same period.

Intensive study allows for no free time. Mojo points gained from intensive study must be used within intelligence days or they are lost.

Breaks

Days, weeks, and months of study may not be saved. Only mojo may be saved. Characters may take a total amount of time off of one day (for normal study), half a day (for intensive study), or six days (for free-time study) while acquiring each point of practical mojo.

Mojo resources

Resources such as books, libraries, instructors, and schools provide bonuses to practical mojo gained. Resources are rated by the field or fields that the rating covers and by their mojo level. A really good magical library might have a level of 8 for magical research. A detailed book on Roman etiquette might have a level of 10.

Mojo resources with levels or (for Tutors) field bonuses have a mojo total depending on how much higher the field bonus/level is from the student's field bonus/level.

Mojo resource types	Mojo total
General (skill) book	level/bonus difference (level 1-7)
Specialized (skill) book	level/bonus difference (level 1-12)
Immersion (language or etiquette)	student's charisma
General library (100-15,000 books)	level/bonus difference, times ten
Specialized library (100-5,000 books)	level/bonus difference, times twenty
Tutor	level/bonus difference, times ten
School	level/bonus difference, times twenty

Different mojo resources may be combined – but only one of each type. If a student uses multiple resources, add all mojo totals together and consult the mojo bonus table. Mojo resources may be mined for mojo at a rate that increases according to the mojo resource's total mojo. A mojo resource with ten mojo, for example, will grant 1 mojo per week of normal study, per month of free-time study, or every two days of intensive study.

Mojo total	Mojo bonus
1	1 per 4 time periods
2-3	1 per 3 time periods
4-7	1 per 2 time periods
8-15	1 per time period
16-31	2 per time period
32-63	3 per time period
64-127	4 per time period
128-255	5 per time period
256-511	6 per time period

For example, a student with Philosophy+2 using a level 5 philosophical library to assist in their study of philosophy will gain an extra three mojo for each period of study: five minus two is three, times twenty is sixty, and sixty mojo total means 3 mojo per time period.

If they are also studying under a tutor whose philosophy score is four, that will add twenty to the total, for a mojo total of 80. This will give them four mojo for each period of study.

Mojo resources often have usage fees. Libraries may require payments for the use of their books, and tutors may require payment for their teaching services. Such payments will generally vary from zero to ten silver coins per mojo that the resource grants in a time period.

Mojo resources may only provide up to their mojo total on any particular project.

Cultural immersion

If a student immerses themselves into a culture, this will help them learn the culture's language or etiquette. Immersion doesn't have a level, it's either all or nothing. The mojo total will be the student's charisma. The student can never gain more mojo than their charisma from cultural immersion.

Student exceeds resource

If the student's level or bonus exceeds the mojo resource's level or bonus, the resource may only be used one time as a study aid. The mojo resource will provide its level in mojo for one project by the student. For example, a sixth-level sorcerer could use a level 5 magic guide as having a mojo total of five.

Intelligence

A character's intelligence, as a major contributor, shifts the Mojo bonus up or down on the Mojo bonus chart when the character is using at least one mojo resource. A character with an intelligence of 15, for example, studying from a book with a mojo total of 5, can mine that book at 3 mojo per time period rather than 1 mojo per time period.

Actions and consequences

Most of the time, you'll use contests and conflict to resolve what the characters attempt to do unless success is guaranteed. Especially when the characters are involved in a contest of some kind you'll want to avoid real-world numbers because they bog down the game. If a character chases a monster, for example, the appropriate resolution will be an agility contest (as described under *Chases*) rather than a calculation based on the varying Movement rates and tactics of the characters involved. You can look at these rules as examples of how to handle contests.

Aging

In a long-term campaign, characters might start getting old. Some players might choose to play an older character as well.

At age 40 plus endurance, and every year afterward (modified by endurance as a special contributor), a character will gain an unhealable injury point. The player (or Guide, for NPCs) can choose to trade an injury point for a two-point loss in an ability as long as that ability remains above one.

Ailments: sickness, disease, and poison

Most ailments characters encounter are poisons, but ailments also represent sickness, or the effects of recreational drugs such as alcohol.

Ailment strength

Each ailment has a *strength*. Players must make reaction rolls at a penalty of the ailment's strength, or the ailment takes effect. Most poisons will have a strength of zero. Weak poisons can have negative strengths, generally to a -4, and strong poisons will range up to +4 strength.

If the character definitely imbibes, injects or otherwise accepts the ailment, there is a penalty of four to the reaction roll to contract the ailment, and the reaction is health. Otherwise, the reaction is perception (if the character can avoid the ailment by knowing it exists, such as drinking poisoned wine) or evasion (if someone else is attempting to do it to an unwilling victim, such as with a poisoned sword).

Ailment effects

Each ailment has an *effect*. This is what happens to a character if they succumb to the ailment. Unless the ailment is *chronic*, the effect happens once and then the ailment is gone. Poisons will usually have an effect of *injuring* the character by d2, d3, or d4 injury points, for example. The effects take place after the *action time* of the ailment. Poisons often have an action time of one round: they take effect at the end of the round in which they were contracted.

Ailments that affect concentration, abilities, or cause unconsciousness are usually temporary. Injury or other damaging effects are permanent, in that they remain even after the ailment is gone and only disappear through the normal healing process.

Some ailments are chronic. Once the character ails, the ailment continues to affect them until they can throw off the ailment. At each action time, the player makes a health roll. If they succeed, the ailment disappears as normal. If they fail, they take the effects again, adding to any previous effects of the ailment. For example, if a character has been affected by *food poisoning* and fails to throw it off three times beyond when it took effect, they'll have 4 injuries and be at -4 concentration for d4 hours. The strength of chronic ailments fades over time: chronic ailment strength is reduced by one for each action time.

Some ailments are inescapable. The character can't just succeed once, they need to keep succeeding for every action time of the ailment. Gasses in an enclosed space are often inescapable, for example. There is no roll to throw off an inescapable ailment: the roll per action time is only to see if the ailment affects the victim that round. The effects of inescapable ailments are cumulative as well. A character stuck in a sleep gas for five rounds, who fails three reaction rolls, will sleep for 6d10 minutes.

Some ailments are both chronic and inescapable. After a chronic inescapable ailment affects a character once it will affect them in all subsequent rounds, with no further roll necessary. The strength of chronic inescapable ailments increases by one for every successive action time. Once the character is removed from the area of the chronic inescapable ailment, so that it is no longer inescapable, the ailment's strength immediately returns to normal, and begins fading as normal for a chronic ailment.

Example ailments

Ailment	Type	Strength	Action Time	Effects
Alcohol	Chronic	-1	20 min	-1 agility, concentration, evasion, fortitude
Common Cold	Chronic	1	1 day	-1 concentration, evasion, fortitude
Food Poisoning	Chronic	3	1 hour	1 injury
Black Widow		0	30 min	d2 injuries
Giant Spider		4	1 round	d4 minutes paralysis
Huge Spider		2	1 round	d3 injuries
Large Spider		1	1 round	d2 injuries
Shadow Spider		1	2 rounds	d6 injuries
Sleep gas		0	1 round	sleep 2d10 minutes

Chases

When one character attempts to chase or escape another character, this is an agility contest, with appropriate skills modifying the roll. A success by one character and a failure by the other means that the chase has concluded: the escaping character has escaped, or the pursuer has caught up with their quarry.

If one character has a significantly higher movement than the other character, that player gains a bonus to their roll of one for every difference of three in their movements.

Groups chasing an individual will often use the group effort rules.

Concentration

Some spells, spirits, and psychic powers require *concentration*. While engaged in such an activity, a character may move at no more than half movement, and may not attack or initiate other actions (such as other spells) while concentrating. Their defense is at a penalty of 1.

Anyone engaged in an activity which requires concentration for more than a round, such as a sorcerer, monk, or prophet, may break concentration if they are attacked. If successfully attacked, they must make an evasion roll or their concentration is broken.

When concentration is given a penalty, as with some ailments, this penalty applies to charisma, wisdom, and intelligence rolls.

Falling

Height	Damage	Time	Evasion
0-9 feet	d6	1 second	Negates
10-19 feet	2d6	2 seconds	Halves
20-39 feet	3d6	3 seconds	No effect
40-79 feet	4d6	4 seconds	
80-159 feet	5d6	5 seconds	
160-319 feet	6d6	6 seconds	
320-450 feet	7d6	7 seconds	
+150 feet	No Increase	+1 second	

Under normal circumstances, characters lose d6 survival for the first ten feet fallen, and another d6 for each increase in the obstacle size. Maximum damage is 7d6 damage, for falling 450 feet or more.

The character takes 1 second to fall for every die of damage up to 450 feet. Under normal circumstances, the character will fall an even fifty yards per second after 450 feet (150 yards, or 7 seconds), so that each extra 150 feet adds a second to the time aloft. These numbers may vary across worlds.

For falls of less than ten feet, a successful evasion roll will negate the damage. Less than twenty feet, a successful evasion roll will half the damage.

One point of damage for each die rolled goes to injuries (unless, for falls of twenty feet or less, the character makes their evasion roll).

Illusions

Illusions cause no damage unless there is a phantasmal component to the illusion. (See *spells* and *psychic fields* in *Arcane Lore*.) Mere light shows won't cause victims to lose survival points. The illusion must dig into the victim's mind and coerce it into damaging its own body and acting as if hurt.

While phantasmal damage isn't real, it is real enough to the victim. Phantasmal damage has all the effects of real damage until the victim makes a successful reaction roll to recognize the illusion, or until the victim falls unconscious. Unconsciousness occurs as normal. On falling unconscious or on determining that the damage is illusory, the character will regain all but one tenth of the phantasmal damage (round up, so that there is a minimum of one point lost). It takes one full round to regain the lost survival or injury points.

Despite the increased survival points and decreased injury points, unconscious characters will not immediately regain consciousness; while their body is no longer actively hurting itself, it has still switched to a healing sleep, a normal deep sleep.

While phantasmal damage rarely kills, a character that fails their death roll will be in shock after being “killed” by an illusion. Their unconsciousness is severe, and cannot be cured except with a full night’s rest or magical healing.

Invisible damage, such as poison, will almost never take effect. If the character has no way of knowing such an effect is possible, there is no chance of them taking damage from it. Otherwise, a character’s reaction roll against such effects are at a bonus of 10.

Players will often want their characters to disbelieve things they think might be illusions. There are two ways of doing this. They can make a perception roll if the character is actively looking for flaws in the illusion. This is often not successful, because it is the character’s mind that is creating part of the illusion. More powerful phantasmal spells will provide penalties to the roll for this reason. Characters may not attack or concentrate on any other action while disbelieving in this way, but they may defend as normal, and are allowed any reaction rolls against possible effects. It takes one round to disbelieve an illusion in this manner.

The second way of disbelieving a possible illusion is through willpower. The character is so certain of the illusion that they are willing to stand and accept the illusion’s effects – because they believe there won’t be any. This is dangerous, because if the effect is not illusory, the character not only will take damage, but will *accept* the damage. The character is foregoing any reaction rolls to ameliorate the effects of the possible illusion, and is foregoing any attempts at dodging it. If it is an illusion, however, and the willpower roll is successful, the character not only disbelieves the illusion, but also grants a bonus of 2 to other characters’ attempts to disbelieve using their perception.

Penalties to disbelieving are usually halved for a willpower roll.

In some cases, a poorly designed illusion will allow an immediate perception roll to disbelieve. Most of the time, however, players must request a reaction roll to be allowed one. Their characters may receive a bonus to the roll to disbelieve more obvious illusions.

Item reactions

Under normal circumstances, items do not have to worry about reaction rolls: items don’t react. When the character survives an attack, items that the character carries also survived.

Material	Fire	Bludgeon	Acid	Bonus
Glass	+8	0	+16	quarter inch
Ice	0	0	+8	half inch
Metal	+6	+5	0	quarter inch
Paper	-2	+6	+8	half inch
Stone	+8	0	+10	inch
Wood	0	+3	+5	inch

If items are not carried, are carried by an unconscious individual, or are carried by an individual who gains injuries as a result of the attack, and the attack might damage the item (a *Great Ball of Fire* for iron or paper, or a fall for glass), make a reaction roll. The reaction is against four, with bonuses or penalties depending on the material and the attack form. If the reaction fails, the item takes damage. Items have survival points equal to their weight in pounds, though characters and attacks can focus on a specific area of an item so as not to have to destroy all survival points in order to, for example, break an item in half or punch a hole through an item.

Items also gain a bonus depending on their thickness. Beyond the bonus thickness, they gain a bonus of 1; for each doubling, add another +1. Glass will gain a bonus of 1 at a quarter inch, a bonus of 2 at a half inch, a bonus of 3 at an inch, a bonus of 4 at two inches thick, etc.

Jumping

to 1 foot	0
to 2 feet	-1
to 3 feet	-2
to 4 feet	-4
to 5 feet	-8
to 6 feet	-16
to 7 feet	-32

Jumping up is normally a snap: an agility roll, with strength as a major contributor, and a bonus of 8 to the roll. Each foot beyond one foot provides a penalty that doubles. Failure means that the character jumps short: they jump as high as they could have with that roll.

Large creatures jump double the distance; huge creatures jump four times the distance; gigantic eight times, and titanic sixteen times. Small creatures jump $\frac{3}{4}$ the distance; tiny creatures jump $\frac{1}{3}$; and fine creatures jump $\frac{1}{6}$.

Leaping across is just like jumping up, but feet become yards. Moving characters add their current running movement to the roll to increase how far they leap.

Movement

Characters move according to their Movement. In combat, a character can move this many feet along with attacking. A character can also *dash* up to this many yards during combat, in place of attacking or performing any other maneuver.

Inside of combat, characters may only move at combat speed or at a dash. Outside of combat (if there are no combatants within reach) characters may explore, walk, jog, run, or sprint. There are bonuses to attack such characters.

Speed	yards per minute	feet per round	time base	reactions	attack
Semi-conscious	movement	half movement	endurance rounds	-	-
Combat	twice movement	movement	endurance minutes	0	0
Dash	6 times movement	3 times movement	endurance minutes	-1	4
Explore	4 times movement	twice movement	endurance times 10 min	0	0
Walk	10 times movement	5 times movement	endurance times 30 minutes	-2	2
Jog	20 times movement	10 times movement	endurance times 5 minutes	-4	4
Run	30 times movement	15 times movement	endurance minutes	-8	8
Sprint	50 times movement	25 times movement	endurance rounds	-16	16

The *reaction* listed is the penalty the character has to reaction rolls while moving at that speed. The *attack* listed is the bonus opponents have on their attack rolls when attacking an opponent who is moving at that speed.

At normal *exploration* speed, such as in a dank cave or moving through an abandoned castle, characters walk very slowly, observing their surroundings carefully for concealed, hidden, or secret things, as well as performing simple mapping. Characters who move at normal walking speeds or faster are subject to the *reactions* penalty to avoid traps or find hidden items.

Outdoors, outside of ruins, dungeons, caves, combat, and similarly dangerous places, the penalties are shifted up one. A person can walk on a road without penalty, for example, and jog with the same penalty they would have for walking in a dungeon.

Spells and spirits

When sorcerers are casting a spell, their movement is reduced by the casting time of the spell. If the casting time is greater than their movement, or if the spell's casting time is a round or more, the sorcerer cannot move while casting the spell. When prophets are calling a spirit, their movement is reduced by the calling time of the spirit manifestation. If the calling time is greater than their movement, or if the manifestation has a calling time of one round or longer, the prophet cannot move while calling forth the manifestation.

Contests

These movement rates are used only for tactical movement (such as characters maneuvering for position in combat) or for uncontested distances. In any case where a character is trying to chase or capture another character, ability rolls or reaction rolls are more appropriate.

Rest

Characters will usually want to rest for ten minutes following the appropriate time base for their movement speed. If they wish to force themselves to continue moving with no rest, the player must make a health roll. There is a bonus of two on this roll for each reduction of their Movement (for the entire period) by 1. There is a penalty of two on this roll for each previous movement health roll since last resting. The health roll may also be penalized for not drinking enough water or salt, by up to four. (At jogging speeds, the character should be drinking about two quarts of water per hour.)

If the health roll fails, the character gains an injury point.

For reference, walking speed is approximately a third of Movement miles per hour, and characters should rest for ten minutes following half endurance hours.

Darkness

At night, if there is no full moon, movement is reduced by half unless the character has special vision or a light source. In total darkness, such as underground, movement is reduced again by half (to a quarter movement) unless the character(s) have some way of seeing.

Daily movement

Under perfect circumstances, a character can walk twice their Movement in miles per day. Forests and hills can easily halve that (to Movement in miles per day), and bogs and thick undergrowth slow it to a quarter of that (half Movement in miles per day). Characters should rest for a day following half endurance days of such walking, but may push themselves forward as above.

Characters can increase a day's movement by 50%, but this will incur a health roll. On a failure, the character gains one injury point.

Flying

Flying creatures can move more easily than walkers: long-distance movement for fliers is movement miles per hour rather than miles per day, which lets them move eight times further in a day than a walker of the same movement could go.

Searching

Searching is generally a matter of making a perception roll, with penalties appropriate to the difficulty of finding the hidden item. Searching often takes time, about two minutes for a 10-foot by 10-foot area.

Semi-consciousness

A semi-conscious character is vaguely aware of their surroundings. They may not use any agility bonus to defend against attacks (agility penalties apply as normal) but are not at any bonus to be hit as unconscious characters are. They move and think very slowly.

A semi-conscious character may not initiate any action except movement. If directed to do something, the semi-conscious character may choose to follow that direction; if asked a question, they may choose to answer. In either case, the player must make a willpower roll or take d4 rounds to react or reply.

Semi-conscious counts as unconscious for Death rolls.

Suffocation

Characters without a useful air supply will eventually suffocate. If the character is prepared (is able to take a deep breath) they have a suffocation buffer of endurance rounds. Otherwise, they have a suffocation buffer of d4 rounds, modified by endurance as a minor contributor. For characters with low endurance, it is possible to have no buffer.

During the buffer period, the character may act as normal. After the buffer period, the player must make a health roll or their character gains one injury. For each additional minute (six rounds), make another health roll with a cumulative penalty of one each time.

These times can be doubled if the character remains completely inactive and at rest.

Tracking

Tracking is much like searching, but it takes place over a space of time and distance. There is a penalty of one to the perception roll for every day that has passed since the creature or creatures passed, and usually a bonus according to the size of the group that is being tracked (use the group size on the group effort chart). The successful tracker will generally also know incidentals such as how long ago the creatures passed, how many there were, and what kind of creatures, if familiar to the tracker, they are.

Characters may also attempt to cover their own tracks. This is also a perception roll. Successfully covering their own tracks gives a penalty to the perception rolls of those trying to track them, of the amount the player made their perception roll by. Covering your own tracks also reduces the character's movement by half.

Obstacle size for tracking is a quarter mile outside in natural surroundings, and 100 yards in an urban or man-made area.

Upkeep and living expenses

General, basic living expenses can be covered by a single silver coin every day. Poorer living expenses can be covered by as little as a silver coin every week, but this is not how adventurers normally prefer to live.

More extravagant living expenses can run ten or even a hundred silver coins per day.

Weapons and armor must be maintained in good condition. Maintenance on weapons is 10% of the weapon's cost every year. Maintenance on armor is 5% of the armor's cost every month.

Animals have upkeep as well. Riding animals have an upkeep of 10% of their cost every month. Other animals have an upkeep of 5% of their cost every month.



Spells and spirit manifestations

What is the difference?

Spirits are divine power; spells are personal power. Spells come from the sorcerer's skill, and knowledge. Spirits come from the gods.

Spells tend to be flashier than spirits. Spirits are often either subtle or devastating. Where a spell will cast a lightning bolt, a spirit of nature would call lightning from the skies. A spell could engulf a few targets in a ball of fire; a retribution spirit would destroy an entire village.

What is the purpose of spirit manifestations?

Spirit manifestations are grants of divine power to a prophet. There are three basic reasons that spirit manifestations are used: to further a plot or plan of a god, to aid the worshippers of a god, and to increase the number of worshippers for a god or pantheon.

Increasing the number of worshippers can come through the conversion of non-worshippers, and the spread of current worshippers. Sometimes the two will be combined, as when the worshippers of one pantheon defeat the city or state of another pantheon's worshippers. Often, to complete the victory, the winner will tell the loser that their god or gods are really just lesser deities of the winner's pantheon, or different forms of a similar deity in the winner's pantheon. Some of the losers will believe it and convert without it being called conversion.

Researching spells

In the game world, researching spells is mostly a matter of taking the time and money to create the spell formula: the mental impression, words, gestures, and/or ingredients necessary to cast the spell. As player, however, you'll need to work with the Adventure Guide to create the spell description and requirements. All proposed spells are subject to the approval of the Guide; however, if you're willing to work with the Guide you should be able to come up with a spell description that fits the game world your character is in.

Spirit types and finding new manifestations

A spirit can do anything related to that spirit's type. The manifestations in *Divine Lore* are examples, but if you can design a new manifestation with a cool name, and your Adventure Guide allows it, your spirit can do it. Spirit manifestations must be related to the spirit type and must be religiously inspired: that is, they must be something that shows the power of your character's god.

It's easier if you can plan ahead, and work with the Guide to create the manifestation outside of the game. However, if you come up with one during a game session, the Guide will make a guess at the appropriate level and then add two for the level you'll use until the Guide has had time to think about what level it should be and what its effects and requirements should be. You'll want to make spirit manifestations as low level as you can, and then scale the effects upward, to keep the manifestation list short.

Spell types

There are six different spell types. Most spells are one of those types. A few will be more than one type.

Mental (Mentalist)

Mental magic controls and shapes a creature's mental reactions. Mental magic can make friends, influence decisions, create illusions, and link minds.

Summoning (Summoner)

Summoning magic calls on extra-normal forces to do the sorcerer's bidding. The summoner can call on the spirits of the dead or their corpses, can summon creatures and forces from other planes or places, and can ward creatures from entering a protected area or attacking a protected creature or thing.

Divination (Diviner)

Divination magic seeks out information, detects information, and discovers hidden truths and concealed secrets.

Transmutation (Transmuter)

Transmutation magic alters existing things. It can change shapes, change materials from one type to another, and can even change a creature from one kind to another. It can alter a creature's abilities or change physical aspects of creatures and things.

Metamagic (Metamagician)

Metamagic works with and alters other magics. The metamagician can control the effects of spells, work with and modify spell impressions, and even take advantage of another sorcerer's spells.

Conjuration (Conjurer)

Conjuration magic creates physical things from fire, earth, water, and air, the combination of elements that permeate the world. It can make objects or energy, though often its creations are transitory.

Psychic conflict

Only those who are psychically aware, such as those with the monk archetype, may engage in or be engaged in psychic conflict.

Attacks are made as normal on a d20, with charisma as a minor contributor. For defense, monks may use intelligence as a major contributor. Each combatant in psychic combat has two actions in each round of combat.

Initiating psychic conflict costs two verve and gives a penalty of two during the first round. During the first round of psychic conflict, each combatant has one action (engaging in conflict took the first action). If a target does not wish to engage in psychic conflict, the two sides can engage in a willpower contest, with charisma as a minor contributor.

If a combatant chooses to attempt to use a psychic power or to exit the conflict, this choice must be made at the beginning of a round, and no other actions may be performed that round.

Engaging in psychic conflict uses verve. On any action, the character may use up to their monk level points of verve for defense or attack. If a combatant chooses to *defend* on their first action in a round, they may leave this defense in place on their next action at no extra cost.

Action	Verve Cost	Notes
Attack	1+	d4 damage, with charisma as a major contributor, plus one per extra verve
Defend	1+	+2 psychic defense per verve
Use a Power	Special	Special
Exit Conflict	0	Make a reason roll, with charisma as a minor contributor, to successfully disengage from conflict
Enter Conflict	2	Target allowed willpower roll, with charisma as a minor contributor to avoid engagement

Psychic combatants are somewhat aware of their surroundings; defense and perception rolls for things going on in the real world are at a penalty of 4 while in psychic conflict. Movement is one quarter normal. Combatants may speak simply or move at half movement, but this will incur a penalty of 3 to psychic defense and attack.

Psychic damage normally comes from verve, but if verve is gone, it comes from survival points. The defender may also choose to take psychic damage from survival instead of from verve. However, any psychic damage that goes to survival also stuns the victim. They gain the damage done as a penalty to the next round's actions.

Taking injuries automatically removes a character from psychic conflict.

Group effort

Characters with similar abilities can join together to focus their efforts on a single task.

When engaging in a group effort, the group is treated as an individual, and has full access to the rules for individuals.

Group effort bonuses

Groups gain a bonus to the action they are trying to perform together. Group effort bonuses apply to ability rolls, reaction rolls, attack rolls, and defense. Look up the size of the group on the Group Effort Bonuses chart.

Count:	1	2-3	4-7	8-15	16-31	32-63	64-127	128-255	256-511	512-1023	1024-2055
Bonus:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The group will also have more than one action per round. The group gains a number of extra actions equal to the bonus.

If individuals have a range of success numbers, the median number is used. Median means taking the middle: if there are five individuals, with the numbers 9, 10, 11, 13, and 39, the median is 11. If the median is between two numbers, use the average of those two numbers.

Each participant's final number is used to determine what the group roll will be. If there are two individuals working together on a history problem, one with an intelligence of 15 and a History bonus of 2, and one with an intelligence of 17 and no bonuses, each has a final score of 17, and that's what their bonus of 1 is applied to. The historians need 18 or less to succeed.

If, on the other hand, the bonus matters, use the median of the bonus, too. For example, if the above two characters are trying to provide a History assistance bonus to a third party, the median of 0 and 2 is 1. With both of them working together, whoever makes the intelligence roll will need 18 or less to provide that +1; if the historian were working alone they would have to roll 17 or less to provide their +2.

Mojo

Player characters have mojo. Any participant can bid mojo to make an unsuccessful roll successful if the roll is archetypal for their character. All members of the group effort gain the full experience bonus from mojo use as well as the potential for field bonus increases or additional skills. Each character benefits as if they had spent all of the mojo used on the roll, not just what they personally spent.

Group effort decisions

Groups take longer to change their mind than individuals do. When changing their course of action to something that was not in their original plan, groups will take a number of extra rounds equal to their group effort bonus, to complete the change.

If the decision is not in response to the leader, but is rather a natural reaction that an individual might spontaneously make, such as a retreat, the group can make a roll to *avoid* the spontaneous reaction. This will often be a charisma roll, and the group bonus applies. If the group fails its roll, the decision time will be a number of rounds equal to the amount the roll was missed by, up to a maximum of the group's group effort bonus. This is often called a *morale check*.

Leaving a group

Individuals as part of the group have little control over their actions unless they choose to leave the group. Individuals may leave the group at any point that the group has an action. It takes a number of rounds equal to the group effort bonus to leave a group effort.

Once an individual leaves a group, the aftermath applies immediately to that individual.

Leaders

Leaders must make a charisma roll to convince the group to do something other than what it is already doing. If the leader fails the roll, the group continues to do what it is currently doing. If the leader succeeds, the group changes its actions. It takes the normal decision time for the group to change its action, but if the leader's charisma roll was under the necessary score, the amount the leader made the roll by reduces the decision delay.

Mass conflict

One common use of group effort is mass conflict. Mass conflict works pretty much just like normal conflict. Any group of individuals with the same weapon/attack form can join together to fight as a unit. Attack rolls, damage, and any other aspect of conflict are all handled as if the unit were a single combatant.

Any individuals that are not known characters can be assumed to have an average number of survival points, average attack bonuses, etc.

Combat movement

The unit's combat movement is increased by the group's median movement times the group's group effort bonus. See the *Encounter Guide* for combat movement changes for creatures of sizes other than small, medium, and large.

Survival points

The unit has additional survival points equal to the median survival points multiplied by the unit's group effort bonus. A unit of twelve goblins, with 5 survival points median, has a total of 5 survival points, plus 5 times 3 survival points (12 is three on the group effort bonuses chart), or 20 survival points.

Verve is normally ignored, however, player character participants can volunteer their verve if applicable.

Taking damage

Damage is done to the unit as a whole. While it can be assumed that individuals within the unit are dying or falling unconscious during battle, the effectiveness of the unit does not change until the battle is over.

Groups that fall unconscious are no longer a group. Groups that die have been defeated, and are also no longer a group.

Other actions

A group is an individual as far as the rules are concerned, and may perform any conflict action that an individual could perform, including special conflict maneuvers, under the control of the leader. There must be a designated leader for the group to use maneuvers.

Aftermath

After the conflict, some of the group might be wounded or dead. Divide the survival and injury damage by the group bonus for the maximum damage per character. Choose the smallest die that is still greater than or equal to that number. For example, if the maximum damage is 7, use a d8. If it is 15, use a d20. If you roll an impossible number, re-roll until you get a valid number.

Each member must make an evasion roll. If unsuccessful, the member adds that damage to their injuries. Otherwise, they subtract it from survival as normal. For large groups, you can assume an even proportion. For example, if the members need 8 or less to make their evasion roll, eight out of twenty of the group will make it and twelve out of twenty will fail.

If the group had any injury points when disbanded, those apply as a penalty to the evasion roll.

Example of mass conflict

Toromeen and his friends are escorting villagers away from a band of marauding goblins. There are a hundred goblins hot on the trail of the group and gaining. When they get to a bridge Toromeen volunteers to stay behind and hopefully slow the goblins down, giving the villagers and the rest of the characters a better chance to escape.

Toromeen is fifth level. He is a fourth level warrior and a first level prophet. He has chain mail (+4 defense) and uses a battleaxe (d8 damage, +4 for his strength). He has 25 survival points and 31 verve points. As a fourth level warrior, he has +4 to attack, and his strength gives him another +2, for a total of +6 to attack.

Goblins are normally level 1 creatures with a +1 to defense, plus whatever their armor is. The median defense for these goblins is +3 (most of them have leather armor). Their goblin-sized long swords do d6 damage. Their median survival is 5 points. Their movement is 8.

Because there are a hundred goblins, they have a group effort bonus of 6. They gain 6 actions per round, a +6 to attack, and a +6 to defense. They have a bonus of six times eight to combat movement. They gain six times five survival. The goblin army is thus:

Goblin Army: (Fantastic: 1; Survival: 35; Movement: 8; Combat Movement: 56; Attacks: 7, +6 to attack; Damage: d6; Defense: +9)

Tony is going to have to roll 8 or less for Toromeen to successfully damage the goblin army. The Guide will have to roll 13 or less to successfully damage Toromeen, and will get to do so seven times per round.

Toromeen waits at the mouth of the bridge, leaning on his axe, looking down at the army of goblins.

Toromeen has the high ground; this gives him +1 to attack, so he needs to roll 9 or less as long as he maintains high ground.

“Step aside, dwarf. We have no business with you.”

“You do. There is a toll to cross this bridge.”

“What price do you ask?”

“The price is a life. Mine—or yours.”

“We choose the former. That price is easily paid.”

As the goblin chief steps back, Toromeen calls a war spirit to manifest *Holy Weapon* upon his battleaxe.

Holy Weapon will give him an additional +1 to attack and +2 to damage, for the next five rounds. This means Tony will need to roll only 10 or less to hit the army, and will do d8+6 damage.

As the front rank of the army storms the bridge, Toromeen yells defiantly and swings his axe into them. The army swarms up the bridge, their short swords poking and thrusting and slicing at the sturdy dwarf, but Toromeen holds his ground.

Tony rolls 8 to attack, and then rolls 5 for damage, for a total of 11 points damage. The army is now at 24 survival.

The Guide rolls 4, 10, 5, 10, 17, 8, and 5 for the army's seven attacks. Six of the attacks hit. The Guide rolls d6 six times, getting 1, 5, 6, 1, 3, and 6. The army does 22 points to Toromeen. Toromeen is now at 9 verve.

Toromeen and the army clash beneath the hot sun. Toromeen's axe drips blood as it slams through the horde of goblins again and again. Swords clang against chain ring, biting into his skin but his ferocity holds the goblins back.

Tony rolls 11 to attack, and bids 3 mojo to succeed. Since he needs a 10 to succeed, he spends 1 mojo and the attack is a success. He rolls 4 for damage, for a total of 10 points. The goblin army now has 14 survival. The Guide rolls 2, 7, 18, 12, 19, 15, and 20 for the army. That's three successful attacks. The Guide rolls 1, 3, and 2, for a total of 6 damage. Toromeen now has 3 verve.

The Guide decides that it is time to see if the goblin army retreats. The army has lost half its survival fighting this dwarf. The Guide makes a morale check against a charisma of 7, at a bonus of 6, or 13. The Guide rolls 14, which means that the goblins retreat, and it takes them one round to do so.

Faced with the dwarf's tenacity and prowess, the goblins falter. They stumble backward, away from the bridge. Toromeen's axe flashes red in the sun as he pushes the advantage further. The army is in complete disarray as it falls before his axe.

Tony has Toromeen continue his attack. Tony decides to risk converting some attack bonuses to give Toromeen a combat pool. He moves two points in, and converts them to +2 damage. Tony now needs to roll 8 or less to successfully attack the army, but will do $d8+8$ points damage if he is successful. Tony rolls 10. He bids 3 mojo again, and pays 2 to turn this into a successful attack. He's burning mojo pretty heavily, but he doesn't expect to survive so why not use it now? He rolls 7 on $d8$, for a total of 15 points damage.

The army only had 14 survival left, so this gives the army one injury point. The goblin army now has no survival and one injury. The Guide must make a fortitude roll or the army falls unconscious. Their fortitude is 4. They have a bonus of 6 to the roll (group effort) and a penalty of 1 (injuries). The Guide must roll 9 or less for the army to remain conscious. The Guide rolls 2; the army remains conscious.

The army might also be dead: the Guide rolls $d20$ against their injuries of 1, and rolls 1. Since the injuries succeeded, the goblin army must make an endurance roll or the army dies. Their estimated endurance is 10, with group bonus of 6 and the injury penalty of 1. The Guide must roll 15 or less for the army to remain alive. The Guide rolls 11. The army is "alive"; they retreat in order to stay that way, and then they disband.

Toromeen has defeated the goblin army. The goblin army scatters to the wind, leaving their dead and wounded behind. Toromeen climbs back up the bridge and sits, awaiting the next wave, should the goblins return.

Aftermath

The goblin army lost 35 survival and gained one injury. Divided by their group bonus of 6, this is 6 points. If there are any individuals for whom this matters in the army, the Guide can roll a $d6$ to see how much damage they took. Each goblin will also need to make an evasion roll at a penalty of 1, or the damage injures them. Since there are a lot of goblins, the Guide can also look at their evasion score (likely a 5) and decide that since 4 out of 20 of them will make their save, 80 of them are injured for $d6$ points, and probably unconscious. The other twenty goblins lose $d6$ survival and run.

Appendix



Why write Gods & Monsters?

I wrote Gods & Monsters because I wanted a very simple role-playing game that nevertheless provides for great complexity as game play progresses. Basically, I was longing for what I had perceived incorrectly as the games of my youth.

Your own group is likely to add your own specialties, fields, spells, and creatures.

Compatibility with other games

Gods & Monsters is mostly compatible with TSR's old Advanced Dungeons and Dragons role-playing game, at least their first and second editions. You can use most any first or second edition adventure with Gods & Monsters. It is likely also compatible with original D&D and the basic/expert set adventures.

The original version of this document, as well as a link to purchase printed copies, is available at <http://godsmonsters.com/>. Go to <http://godsmonsters.com/cool> for a list of great old-school adventures that you can use with Gods & Monsters.

Why open source?

Why release a game as open source? In some of the discussions on the newsgroups, a few people have said that "open" games can serve to homogenize the gaming community, making it easier for gamers to travel from game to game. My hope for open source is exactly the opposite. I want full balkanization of games. You can take this game and chop out all the parts you don't want, and put in parts that you feel it needs, and someone can come after you and do the same to your work. Any gaming group can take this document and add their own house rules to it—and then release those rules on the net for potential players to read and other groups to borrow and modify from.

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