



Author's Note: Table-top role playing games (RPGs) are unique among game forms. Generations of people discovered how playing catapults their creative minds into different realms, while assuming adventurers' lives not yet imagined. But what really makes these games unique? I believe it's the social aspect. Not even video games can compete with the fun of friends sitting together to spin collaborative stories.

Unfortunately too many gamers today miss out on the true RPG experience, seemingly glued permanently to their computer chairs, their alter-egos running around in binary realms of imagining. One can only assume these poor souls yearn for a place of limitless creative immersion, but lost their way in Massively Multi-Player Dungeons.

Luckily, you hold in your hands a game that celebrates a long tradition of games played with polyhedral dice, paper and pencils in actual 3-D space. The authors honor the roots of the hobby without reinventing the wheel (or digging up the carcasses of sacred cows). Herein you'll find fun rules of play and an open-ended invitation to explore high fantasy worlds anew, whether veterans of the game form or refugees from online tourist traps.

The Eldritch Role Playing (or ERP for short) system is written for gamers who enjoy having myriad character options, exciting and diverse action scenes, without losing a narrative focus. Adventuring campaigns are about the development of characters into true world-shaking heroes, supported by the rules described below in a nutshell:

Combat : Attacker rolls dice to determine "Potential Harm", opponent chooses defense type; any exceeding "threat points" affect armor, then the body. There is no traditional, somewhat boring hit-or-miss "attack roll".

Action resolution: The challenge for many actions is determined by a random roll, the difficulty of actions represented by a basic system which plays very quickly, allowing for instant results that do not interrupt the flow of the story. No heroic act is impossible.

Character Concept: You will play exactly the character you want, with plenty of room for development and diversity, new characters created through a point-buy method, granting full flexibility of design. Characters advance by levels of experience without being tied to specific occupational classes.

Magic: There are different sources of power; mystic study, supernatural awareness, primordial connection, and psychogenic ability. Magic is powerful and flexible, while unified and streamlined rules prevent ludicrous effects. Fighter and thief types are just as viable at any level as those schooled in magic, and "multi-classing" is not restricted. EHF Characters can specialize in one area or dabble in many.

Most importantly, the game is not difficult to play or learn, whether by young adults or big kids like the authors.

-Dan Cross

Credits

Special Thanks to Larry Hols, Seth Clayton, and especially Kosala Ubayasekara; without their help this project would never have been finished.

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Introduction

Eldritch Fantasy



Eldritch Role-playing System: A Role-playing Game is a fantasy game that can incorporate any of the wonderful things fantasy gamers enjoy. Knights in shining armor, dragons with glinting scales, evil cultists scheming in the middle of the night, and sage wizards laboring in lonely towers—those can all be part of the game. Likewise, even those things that fall outside the bounds of traditional fantasy—mutant crossbreeding of men and jackals, or vicious, horse-sized carnivorous bats—are also possible.

Eldritch Role-playing System (or ERP) does not require a specific setting in order to run smoothly. Although the system best supports an epic milieu, the rules will work as well with a game of high chivalry as with a game of gritty desperation. Although future publications will include the official campaign setting of Ainereve, the rules offer a basic framework upon which individual groups and Game Masters can hang worlds of their own creation.

Some Experience Assumed

Experienced participants will have no trouble with the game rules, which are easy enough that a novice gamer could pick up the system during a first session of play. However, no detailed description of what makes good role-playing appears within this text. There is no advice on how to become a better player or how best to run a campaign or any such discussion. In short, the rules assume some basic experience with the game form, but the reader's playgroup can introduce the central concepts of role-playing games if needed.

The rules also assume that any would-be GM knows something about RPGs and the basics of running a game, and therefore this book does not provide instruction on how to be a better Game Master. However, there is frequent discussion on how to apply mechanics to game situations.

Abbreviated glossary

Some terms are nearly universal to role-playing games (PC, NPC, GM, levels). This book uses these terms in the conventional sense. Other terms and acronyms are unique to the Eldritch Role-playing System game. See below for terms pertaining to character creation and ability use. For a complete list of terms, see the glossary provided at the end of this manual.

Ability Branch: A single branch of an Ability Tree, referring to Specializations and Masteries, linked together by some logical succession. No ability check can incorporate more than a single roll of the root ability, plus one of its Specializations, and one of the Specialization's Masteries. This does not preclude the ability to have several Specializations under the root ability, or several Masteries under any one Specialization, but no single action can call on more than one Ability Branch. Also called an ADC, or Ability-Dice-Chain.

Ability Check: Many actions necessitate the resolution system to determine the outcome. The creature's effort may involve a basic physical ability or it may involve a test of skill. The challenge may be provided by the nature of the action or by active opposition. An ability check uses only one Ability Branch, with up to three branch dice.

Ability Tree: The basic ability rank plus all its branches. Any ability can include multiple Specializations. The third tier is called Mastery. There can be multiple Masteries per Specialization. For example, Melee Weapons is a basic ability, while specializing in the weapon group of swords (example: Melee > Swords) lengthens the branch, and Mastery in specific weapons extends the single branch further (example: Melee > Swords > Shortsword).

Ability: Any skill or innate capacity known by a creature.



ADC (Ability-Dice-Chain): See Ability Branch.

Basic Rank (ability root): The first tier in any ability tree, always a single die. The root ability may have several branches.

Character Points (CPs): Points used to build a character's abilities.

Die-Rank: A character's level of ability in any skill or capacity is ranked from D4 (Average) up through D12 (Superb). Throughout these rules, Die-Rank refers only to the value of a single die of any ability tree tier. This is expressed in the rules as the die-value itself: D4, D6, D8, D10, and D12.

GM: "Game Master." This person runs the game, and has final say over how actions are resolved.

Levels: Characters gain experience during play and will advance through a series of experience levels that reflect stages of development. For more on levels, see page XX.

Max-Rank-Value (MRV): Each rank has a corresponding die type, as explained above under "Die-Rank." The max rank value of each die is simply the highest roll possible. Thus, the max-value of D4 is 4, of D6 is 6, D8 is 8, D10 is 10, and D12 is 12. Sometimes several MRVs are added together to determine Defense Pools.

NPC (Non-Player Character): Any creature controlled by the GM and not a player.

PC (Player Character): A character in the game that is controlled by one of the players.

Some Design Philosophy

The ERP game supports fast-paced, cinematic play. The underlying idea of this game is that the emergent story is the focus of play and the mechanics exist only to further action in the story. The basic system also plays very quickly, and allows for instant results that do not interrupt the flow of the narrative.

Players can stay engaged in the story without having to stop and wrangle with complex mechanics and resolution systems. For example, the rules define character abilities broadly.

One might notice a lack of abilities that cover characteristics like intelligence, charisma, and wisdom, attributes frequently included in other RPGs. This is because the Eldritch game does not quantify such things, which are in the domain of role-playing. In EHF, character concept is king.

Individual players and Game Masters can fill in the level of detail desired, or use the examples provided (see abilities section, pp. 19) This allows for great latitude in detail, with some players describing fine nuances of character, and other players detailing only the most basic of skills and capacities.



Gamers sit down for a session of Eldritch Fantasy



Chapter 1

Character Creation



Character creation begins with a standard allotment of Character Points (CPs). These points are used for the selection of basic abilities, as well as related Specializations and Masteries, which are all rated on a scale of D4 up through D12—the higher the polyhedral die size, the better the proficiency level. These are levels of knowledge and proficiency, represented as “Die-Ranks.”

Racial packages and listed fantasy races are simply bundles of such abilities. Advantages and disadvantages are rules allowing greater customization of fantasy personas. Keep in mind that aside from racial bundles, no character has a standard, base set of abilities; the choices vary according to character concept.

Each character begins play with 30 character points with which to purchase abilities and advantages. There are two types of abilities: Unrestricted and Restricted. Any character may attempt *unrestricted* abilities, which default to an ability-check roll of 1D4. A character will be able to increase proficiency from this starting point, and most skills fall under this category. On the other hand, characters cannot attempt a *restricted* ability without proper training (i.e., purchasing at least a 1D4 rank, unless it is an ability made mandatory on a racial template). All Specializations are considered restricted and purchased from a D4 upwards. Thus, even unrestricted abilities can include restricted Specialization and Mastery ranks. For example, Martial Arts is a *restricted* Specialization under the *unrestricted* general ability of Unarmed Combat.

For regular campaigns, allow Specializations (the second tier of ability), at the time of character creation but do not permit Mastery (the third tier of ability) until the time of character level advancement. Limit purchased first level Die-Rank increases to no more than +2 from *zero*, which would be D8 if the ability is *unrestricted* (because

D4 is assumed and is automatically granted) or D6 if a *restricted* ability. After character creation, no single ability die can be increased more than one rank per level of advancement. Therefore, a player could raise his character’s basic rank in some ability of D4 to a D6 at the next level up, but not to a D8, or a Specialization from D6 to D8, but not D10, or a Mastery rank from D8 to D10, but not to D12. Otherwise, there are no restrictions.

Note that with all abilities except Arcanum, Specializations can exceed the basic Die-Rank (i.e. a D4 in basic, with D6 in Specialization). However, no Mastery can exceed the rank of its linked Specialization (for example, one cannot have a D6 Specialization and a D12 Mastery). Abilities may branch off into several successions of Specialization and Mastery, limited only by character points earned. The sections below intersperse examples detailing the creation of a level-one character; a step-by-step example of a generic dwarven fighter named Gegdin.

Cost per level of Die-Rank in Character Points:

Unrestricted: D4 is free, then 2 CPs per rank, D6 through D12.

Restricted abilities, Specializations, and Masteries: 2 CPs per rank, D4 through D12.

Masteries are not allowed at time of character creation.

Step 1: Racial Packages

All races have minimum Die-Rank requirements in specific abilities, purchased with character points at the time of creation. For example, to be a human one must use CPs to buy a rank of Willpower and a rank of Endurance, traits which typify a human hero (or anti-hero) in the world of ERP. No race



TABLE 1.1 THE RACES OF ELDRITCH FANTASY

Elf	Dwarf	Half Orc	Gnome	Halfling	Half-Elf	Human
Respectable reflexes, speed, willpower, melee ability (D6 or above), and ability with Arcanum D4 or above. Low-light vision.	Respectable Endurance, Resistance, and Feats of Strength (D6 or above). Good melee ability (D8 max at 1 st level).	Respectable Endurance, Unarmed, <i>or</i> Feats of Strength (D6 or above). Low-Light Vision, but always ugly.	Respectable Speed, Scrutiny, and Willpower (D6 or above). Low-Light vision. Can only use small weapons.	Respectable appraisal ability (D6 or above), but Good reflexes (D8 max at 1 st level) and stealth (D8 max at 1 st level). Can only use small weapons.	Respectable Reflexes, Willpower, and Endurance (D6 or above). Low-light vision.	Respectable Willpower and Endurance (D6 or above).

escapes the purchase of basic ability requirements; the player must choose the full package. The requirements constitute the stereotypical range of knowledge, skills, and abilities for these races.

First level player characters may increase racial ability ranks above the minimum required, but not above D8. Players should purchase any Specializations in the next step of character creation. In addition, the game treats innate racial powers as Advantages (see pp. Xx), which cost up to three CPs each.

The races presented are representative of generic fantasy, but if needed, the GM should find it easy to put together his own racial templates to suit any setting.

Race

Elf (14 points)

Elves have heightened reflexes, are fleet of foot, and possess great willpower, which affords them greater resistance to magic. All elves have some innate ability for the magic arts, and so have at least one rank in Arcanum. Most train in some form of martial weapon, usually beautifully crafted swords and high-quality, ornate bows. They can see well in low-light conditions. Elves tend to be either aloof and haughty or fun-loving and frivolous, depending on their clan or bloodline.

Minimum Ranks (12 CPs): D6 Reflexes, Speed, Willpower, Melee, and D4 in Arcanum.

Advantage (2 CPs): Low-Light vision.

Read this section once to gain some familiarity with the process, and read Chapter 2, Action Resolution, to understand fully the mechanics underlying character generation choices.

Step 1: Choose Race, Advantages, and Disadvantages

Step 2: Choose abilities & Occupational path

Step 3: Calculate Defense Pools

Step 4: Determine Character Concept

Step 5: Pick equipment

**Choose Racial Package**

We begin our running example with the generation of a stalwart dwarf named Gegdin. As a dwarf, Gegdin must purchase a respectable rank of Endurance, physical and spiritual Resistance, and be capable of many Feats of Strength.

So, as per the dwarven template (see racial section at left), the player purchases a rank of D6 in each (2 CPs each, a total of 6 points).

In addition, most dwarves live in a harsh underground environment, constantly battling nasty, ugly goblinoids. So each dwarf begins play with a good D8 die-rank in basic Melee (4 CPs), meaning he can pick up just about any blunt or sharp object and swing it with frightening results.

Lastly, all dwarves begin play with the advantage of Nightvision (3 CPs). The total racial package costs 13 points, leaving the player with 17 CPs to customize the character.

Dwarf (13 points)

Dwarves are extremely tough, possessing great endurance, strength, and a natural resistance to poison and the elements. All have perfect Night Vision. All Dwarves train in some form of martial weapon, usually axes, or bludgeons.

Minimum Ranks (10 CPs):

D6 Endurance, Resistance, Feats of Strength. D8 Melee. Advantage (3 CPs): Night Vision.

Half Orc (5 points)

Born of an unfortunate union between a savage orc and a human, these demi-humans are always stronger than the average human, but have the disadvantage of being ugly.

Minimum Ranks (4 CPs): D6 Endurance, Unarmed Combat (*or* substitute Feats of Strength). Advantage (2 CPs): Low-Light Vision. Disadvantage (+1 CP): Ugliness.

Gnome (7 points)

Gnomes are a race of small, misshapen, dwarf-like creatures that dwell in the earth. They are observant, stubborn, crafty, and swift on their feet when confronted by superior foes.

Minimum Ranks (6 CPs): D6 Speed, Scrutiny, Willpower. Advantage (2 CPs): Low-light vision. Disadvantage (+1 CP): Restriction: small weapons only.

Halfling (9 points)

These short humanoids are not proportionate in their physical features despite their small size. Halflings are almost child-like in appearance, having round faces and bright almond shaped eyes, but the adults have unmistakably mature physiques. Halflings are generally mischievous and roguish.

Minimum Ranks (10 CPs): D8 Reflexes, D8 Stealth, D6 Appraise. Disadvantage (+1 CP): Restriction: small weapons only.

Half Elf (8 points)

Prevailing relations between humans and elves dictate if a half-elf is revered or reviled in any given society. If human kingdoms, for example, were



Gegdin ponders equipment choices

encroaching upon the elves, their forest homelands in danger, then half elves may have a tough time in human or elven land. If, on the other hand, the elves and humans were allies, the half elf could likely travel anywhere in peace.

The union between human and elf usually grants greater reflexes, innate resistance to magic through enhanced willpower and better endurance through their human blood (as reflected in minimum ranks below). All half elves possess Low-Light Vision.

Minimum Ranks (6 CPs): D6 Reflexes, Willpower, and Endurance. Advantages (2 CPs): Low-light vision.

Human (4 points)

Homo sapiens, the most dignified primate of any fantasy world, usually enjoy military supremacy due to their tenaciousness, fecundity, and penchant for war. Humans are usually the most influential sentient creatures in the world, due to their resourcefulness, willpower, supreme inventiveness, and incredible knack for survival against all odds.

Minimum Ranks: D6 Willpower, Endurance.

Gender/Age

Human characters most often begin their adventuring careers during their youth, but players may create a first-level character of any age. Disadvantages can simulate problems related to old age if the player and GM so desire, but there are no strict penalties for creating elderly characters.

Many demi-human races live for an astounding number of years, but the ERP system assumes a childhood for these races that is comparable in terms to humans. The differences lie in where



middle and old age begin, and the potential maximum age of each. New characters of demi-human races should fall within the same “prime” range as humans. The GM must approve older characters with assumed experience if it were to grant an unfair advantage to a single player.

Advantages & Disadvantages

Advantages are useful traits that a character can possess that are not as quantifiable as a skill set. These abilities tend to be something the character either does or does not have from the outset. Each advantage costs 1 to 3 Character Points. Some advantages are race specific, as indicated in the list below. A few advantages are optionally broken into levels. In these cases, each level costs a Character Point.

Advantages

Ambidexterity: This is the ability to use both hands with equal proficiency. This advantage reaches full potential when taken with the Extra Weapon Attack (see separate advantage) granting +1 Potential-Harm, and allowing a character to wield two weapons of the same size.

Attractiveness: Those attracted to the character’s gender find the PC beautiful or handsome. As such, they tend to react well to the PC. This ranked advantage ranges from a single D4 to a D12. The PC can attempt to manipulate NPCs with an opposing die roll vs. Willpower.

Extra Weapon Attack (2 to 6 points): For two Character Points, this advantage allows the PC an extra Weapon Attack (coming after all other attacks, in the last phase of a round). The PC makes this extra attack using only his basic Melee Die-Rank.

An Extra Weapon Attack is usually a single attack using a PC’s favored weapon, so for an additional 2 CPs, once per round, the PC may add any single weapon group Specialization to use with the extra attack. However, specific weapon bonuses to harm or initiative are not to be added to the Extra Weapon Attack if already applied to the character’s action earlier in the round.

For example, Gegdin the dwarf has Melee D8 > Axes D4. He spends 2 CPs to be able to use his Melee basic for an Extra Weapon Attack, and 2 more CPs to add a Specialization each round. Thus, at the end of every combat round, in the last battle phase, he can roll another 1D8 + 1D4 of Potential Harm using the same weapon. Note that he cannot split dice on this extra attack (see Max-Split ratings, weapons table, page 23).

For an additional 2 CPs (a total cost of 6 CPs), the player can increase his Extra Weapon Attack advantage up to a level of Mastery. As with the Specializations, he must choose from weapon Masteries already possessed. This adds a third die to the Potential Harm roll for an extra attack with that weapon. So, if our heroic dwarf mastered the combat axe at a rank of D4, he would have Melee D8 > Axes D4 > Combat Axe D4; and use of his primary weapon for an extra attack would net an additional 1D8 + 2D4 of Potential Harm at the end of every combat round.

Another advantage to increasing the Extra Weapon Attack to the level of Mastery is the ability to split dice to target multiple foes with the Extra Weapon Attack, up to the maximum number allowed by his weapon type (Max-Split). If Gegdin chose to do this, for instance, since the combat axe has a Maximum Split dice attack rating of two (see Weapons table, page Xx), he could split his extra attack to target with the same weapon two opponents in either of the following combinations: 1D8 (first split-attack) and 2D4 (second split attack), or 1D8+1D4 (first split attack) and 1D4 (second split-attack).

If the character is wielding two weapons, assuming that he had already used his primary weapon for his action earlier in the round, the Extra Weapon Attack would be made with the weapon in his off-hand which, unless the character is Ambidextrous (see below) must be smaller and lighter than the primary weapon. In this instance, since he is using a weapon that he did not use previously in the round, he can add his secondary weapon’s harm bonus to the Potential Harm for the extra attack. Thus, if Gegdin carries a dagger in addition to his combat axe, and his primary attack is with the combat axe, he could make his extra attack with his dagger, adding the dagger’s harm bonus to that attack.

Ambidexterity (see separate advantage) in conjunction with Extra Weapon Attack is a particularly deadly combination, because it allows the character to wield two weapons of the same type and size, meaning that an extra attack can be just as lethal as the primary attack. It also gives a +1 bonus to Potential Harm rolls, including those on an extra attack, or with the off-hand.

Heightened Senses (sight, vision, taste/smell, touch): the character’s senses are superior to those of the average member of his race. The PC can choose one heightened sense for every two CPs. This allows a +1 bonus on ability checks using the heightened sense.

Advantages (CPs)

Ambidexterity (2)
Attractiveness (1 per level)
Extra Weapon Attack (2 to 6)
Heightened Senses (2 per sense)
Literacy (1 to 2)
Low-Light vision (racial) (2)
Night Vision (racial) (3)
Sense of Direction (1)
Underworld Contacts (2)

**Disadvantages (CPs)**

- Addiction (1 to 3)
- Unpleasant Appearance (1 to 3)
- Compulsion (1 to 3)
- Impaired Hearing (1 to 3)
- Impaired Smell & Taste (1)
- Impaired Vision (1 to 3)
- Missing Arm (3)
- Missing Leg (3)
- Mute (2)

Literacy (1 CP for literacy in one language and 2 for literacy in ALL languages the character knows): the ability to read. Note the PC need not be able to speak a language to be literate in it. He may take the advantage once for each language in which he is literate, or just spend two points and assume nominal literacy in all languages known. Note that either the character can read the language or not; the rules do not call for ability checks based on literacy. The PC who wants to learn ancient or arcane languages should instead purchase ranks under the Knowledge skill.

Low-Light Vision: this is the ability to see well in dim lighting conditions, including starlight, without penalties to ability checks in combat and other situations. The character with this ability is usually an elf, half-elf, gnome, or half-orc. The GM may see fit to restrict this advantage to specific races.

Night Vision: this is the ability to see well in total darkness, without penalty to ability checks in combat and other situations. The character with this ability is usually a dwarf. The GM may see fit to restrict this advantage to specific races.

Sense of Direction: this is the innate ability to find one's way. A character with this advantage is always able to find true north even underground or in the dark.

Underworld Contacts: the character knows several shady characters in less than reputable lines of work. In new locations, the character will know where to find contacts. The GM controls all such contacts.

Disadvantages

The opposite of advantages, these are traits that hinder a character in some way. When selecting a disadvantage, a character gains between one and four Character Points to use in character creation. These bonus CPs are available at character creation only. Acquiring a disadvantage through game play does not award any points. The number of disadvantages any PC possesses should not exceed 4 CPs in total value.

Addiction: the character is addicted to some substance. The character will spend at least an hour a day using the substance and spend a good portion of income acquiring it. If the character is forced to go for 2 days without the object of a 1-point Addiction, all actions are at -1 penalty, and will increase by an additional -1 for every two days that pass without the substance. It is possible to get clean from an Addiction, but in times of stress,

the character will have to make a Willpower roll to avoid returning to the substance.

A 2-point Addiction lowers any ability roll by another -2 for every 3 days without the object of addiction, and a 3-point Addiction lowers any ability roll by -3 for every 4 days. Note that addictive substances often have other effects on the character's behavior.

Unpleasant Appearance: the character has an appearance characteristic that is generally unappealing in some way. The character has a hunchback, crossed eyes, bowed legs, or is just plain ugly. This will often cause a -1 penalty to reaction or cause a -1 penalty per level to reactions from strangers. A character may take this disadvantage up to three times at 1 CP per level, for a truly unappealing or monstrous visage.

Compulsion: this disadvantage is much like an Addiction, but to an activity, not a substance. A compulsive PC will constantly try to perform the stated behavior, and will do so at any opportunity. Examples of a compulsive person are a pyromaniac, a pathological liar, and a compulsive gambler. The Compulsion disadvantage causes the same penalties as the Addiction disadvantage, and it may be acquired as a 1 CP, 2 CP, or 3 CP disadvantage.

Impaired Hearing: a character with this disadvantage does not hear as well as others. He is at a -1 penalty to any skill in which hearing is required. Optional levels are available at the GM's discretion. For 2 CPs, the character is at -2 for skills involving hearing. At the 3-Point level, the character is completely deaf and may not make hearing rolls. This can affect the cost and availability of skills based on hearing, like Artistry (GM's discretion). Sarcastic GMs would say this disadvantage is perfect for a player whose own hearing is so terrible it only makes sense to make his character deaf as well.

Impaired Smell and Taste: the character cannot smell or taste anything. The character cannot detect anything through these senses, but is also unaffected by bad smells, like the stench of a skunk, a stagnant, noisome sewer, the putrid smell of rotting fish, and so on.

Impaired Vision: this disadvantage requires the character to use some form of mechanical aid to see (i.e. spectacles or magical goggles of some kind). Without glasses or the equivalent, the character is at a -1 penalty to any skill that requires sight. Optional levels are available at the GM's discretion. For an additional 2 CPs, the character is at -2



penalty for skills involving sight when unaided by artificial lenses. At the 3-Point level, the character is completely blind, and may not make sight rolls at all. Such a character had better obtain significant powers to compensate for this disadvantage, like learning magic and focusing on the “Perceive” effect (see Magic section).

Missing Arm: the character is without the use of an arm. It need not be completely missing, but is not usable in any way. Tasks that require the use of two hands are all but impossible. The character cannot wield two weapons at once, including small shields, and he can never master two-handed weapons, which are always wielded at -2.

Missing Leg: the character is without a leg. He can walk with either an artificial leg or crutch, at -1 penalty in Speed and -1 to Reflexes.

Mute: the character is unable to speak. No spells are possible that require the use of speech, nor skills where speech is important. This is ideal for the player who just had his jaw wired shut due to some freak accident or, more likely, one who dislikes role-assumption.

Step 2: Abilities & Occupation Abilities

Abilities are at the heart of ERP. One or more dice represent a character’s level of proficiency, from swinging a sword, to performing a song, to turning a foe into a newt. As in life, some abilities are relatively simple and anyone can attempt them, while other abilities are more complex and require in-depth training just to be able to attempt. Characters purchase abilities and increase Die-Ranks with Character Points.

There are two types of abilities: Unrestricted and Restricted. Any character may attempt *unrestricted* abilities. They default to an ability-check roll of 1D4. A character will be able to increase proficiency from this starting point, and most skills fall under this category. On the other hand, characters cannot attempt a *restricted* ability without proper training (i.e., purchasing at least a 1D4 rank). All Specializations are restricted abilities and are purchased from a D4 upwards. Thus, even unrestricted abilities include restricted Specialization and Mastery ranks. For example, Martial Arts is a *restricted* Specializations under the *unrestricted* general ability of Unarmed Combat.

Die-Rank Cost in Character Points

Unrestricted: D4 is free, then 2 CPs per rank, D6 through D12.

Restricted abilities, Specializations, and

Masteries: 2 CPs per rank,

D4 through D12 .

Masteries are not allowed at character creation.

See section on Action Types for ability descriptions.

Bonus Die-Ranks

Some characters will at rare times gain bonus Die-Ranks to abilities, usually through arcane spells or magic items. These bonuses can be applied to the basic skill, Specializations, Masteries, or all three (GM decides). However, if the character’s ability (at whatever tier is considered) is already maxed-out at Rank D12, simply apply a +1 bonus to the *sum result* of the ability roll when checking for success. These bonuses can be cumulative.

TABLE 1.2 DIE-RANK AND MEANING IN RELATIVE ABILITY

Average	D4 (Average human rank)
Respectable	D6
Good	D8
Great	D10
Superb	D12 (Highest human rank)

Occupation

All characters can choose an occupational path, which helps orient the character within the campaign setting. These are occupational templates, consisting of bundles of abilities to aid the player in conceptualizing his adventuring hero. For example, in order to begin play as a knight-in-training (a squire), one must purchase the skills requisite for becoming a fighter (Endurance, one weapon group Specialization, and shield) *and* at least some Specializations unique to knights, like riding, pole arms, or heraldry (note that Masteries are normally restricted from first-level characters). A character is not considered fully a part of an occupation unless all requisite abilities are possessed, but it is possible to be “on the path” to earning a particular title.

Therefore, a player may decide to begin with only some of the listed abilities and purchase new ones as his character advances in level. In either case, she must justify her choices to her GM in terms of her character’s total concept. The occupational templates below are lists of suggested abilities for the character types provided. These are guidelines to character development, not straightjackets. Nevertheless, characters usually fulfill the requirements of the archetypal classes—fighter, rogue, arcanist—before pursuing more specific occupational paths. Doing so follows well-

Choosing abilities & Occupation

After race is determined, the player picks Gegdin the dwarf’s abilities and occupation. He has 17 CPs to work with, so he must choose carefully. Attributes like intellect, charm, and acumen are up to the player to determine; the rules do not seek to quantify them. The dwarf will be as intelligent, charismatic, and wise as the player chooses, according to the character concept worked out in cooperation with the GM.

In this case, Gegdin is blessed with great acumen, so is wise in many a thing, but he is not renowned for his intellect (in fact, he is rather stupid), and is known to be less than charming. In fact, he is downright frightening, so the player chooses the Intimidate Ability at D6, costing 4 CPs (13 remaining).

Gegdin is an excellent scout in his underground environs, earning him a D4 in Scouting (General Knowledge), and a D6 specialization in Scouting, Underground. Therefore, he is of average skill for one trained in exploring, observing, and evaluating, but his skill is quite respectable when underground, in his natural environment. The basic ability and specialization costs 6 CPs, with 7 remaining.

The player purchases the advantage of Sense of Direction for an additional point, and then decides on his occupation (6 points remaining). Occupations are listed and described above .

...continued on page 13



TABLE 1.3 ABILITIES AND SPECIALISATIONS

Occupation	Basic Abilities	Specializations	Masteries
Fighter	Endurance	1 Weapon Group plus Shield	
Barbarian	Feats of Strength Intimidate –R- Unarmed Combat		
Knight	Animal Handling	Riding	Charger (horse)
	Melee	Pole Arms	Lance
	Knowledge	Heraldry	
Gladiator	Melee	Exotic Weapons	Net
Calvary	Animal Handling	Riding	Courser (horse)
	Melee	Pole-Arms	Spear
Archer	Ranged	Bow	Long Bow
Samurai	Melee	Swords	Katana
Mercenary	Appraisal Endurance Scrutiny		
Bounty Hunter	Gather information		
Paladin	Arcanum	Supernatural	Theurgy
	Knowledge	Heraldry	
Ranger	Scouting - R-	Tracking	
Mystic Warrior	Unarmed Combat	Martial Arts	
	Arcanum	Psychogenic	Mentalist
Rogue	Appraisal Skullduggery Stealth Thievery	Knife Weapon Group	
Bard	Perform - R -	Musical instrument	
	Skullduggery		
Burglars	Thievery	Open Lock	Combination
Con-men	Skullduggery	Sense Motive	Bluffs
	Skullduggery	Lie	Bluff
	Skullduggery	Forgery	
Jester	Perform – R -		
	Skullduggery	Sleight of hand	
Highwaymen	Melee	Sword	
	Animal Handling	Riding	
Smugglers	Willpower	Resist control	
	Appraise		
	Skullduggery	Forgery	
Spy	Scrutiny		
	Stealth	Shadowing	
	Skullduggery	Disguise	
Thug	Coercion	Coercion	Bodily harm
Arcanist	Arcanum Willpower		Occupations and Arcanum Masteries
Artificer or Enchanter	Arcanum	Mystic	Artificer
Druid or Shaman	Arcanum	Primordial	Druid
Elementalist or Primalist	Arcanum	Primordial	Elementalist
Psionicist or psychic	Arcanum	Psychogenic	Mentalist or psychokietic
Sorcerer or Summoner	Arcanum	Supernatural	Sorcerer
Theurgist or Cleric	Arcanum	Supernatural	Theurgist
Mage or Wizard	Arcanum	Mystic	Wizard



The importance of names is not to be underestimated!

established precedents in fantasy literature and games, and serves to make character concepts more cohesive.

Society recognizes characters as aspiring members of a given occupation upon purchasing at least one Die-Rank increase in all associated basic abilities.

Character Name

Any gamer worth his salt knows the great importance of a good name for his character. Before naming your character it is wise to ask your GM if the character must be from a certain region and if so, whether there are certain kinds of names required or restricted. If using the default Eldritch Role-playing System campaign setting of Ainereve, Celtic names can be used as a starting point.

If you are having trouble finding a name there are many sources on the Web and naming books created specifically for the role-playing game enthusiast (notably *The Extraordinary Book of Names* published by Troll Lord Games).

Step 3: Calculate Defense Pools

A Defense Pool is a number of hit points used to mitigate or cancel Potential-Harm. There are two types of defense, Active and Passive. Active Defenses include actions like parrying, dodging, or rolling with the punches. Passive Defenses include magic resistance (Resilience) and general Toughness.

Your character's Defense Pools are calculated based on the Maximum Rank Value of related abilities.

Remember, the MRV of each die is simply the highest roll possible. Thus, the max-value of D4 is 4, of D6 is 6, D8 is 8, D10 is 10, and D12 is 12. Sometimes, several MRVs are added together to determine Defense Pools.

The character sheet lists all of the abilities that contribute to and define the Defense Pools, as follows:

ADP (Active Defense Pool): Weaponry [includes Parry, Entangle, and Keep at Bay] (Melee Weapons + Specializations + Masteries), Evade (Reflexes + Agility + Pugilism), Dodge (Speed + Agility), and Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic).

PDP (Passive Defense Pool): Toughness (Endurance $\times 2$ + Resistance), Resilience (Resistance $\times 2$ + Willpower + Arcanum tree).

See the section on Defenses on page xx for full explanations.

For Example:

In order to play his character in the game, Gegdin must have some essential statistics worked out in advance. These are the Ability-Dice-Chains (ADCs), hit point scores, Defense Pools (DPs) both active and passive (ADPs and PDPs), weapon modifiers, battle phase order, spellpoints, known spells, and other details.

We will begin with combat. At first-level Gegdin has the following combat abilities:

...continued from page 11

The player decides that Gegdin is a basic fighter. As a dwarf, Gegdin already met the D6 Endurance suggested for that occupation, leaving only the recommended Weapon Group specialization. Note that occupational abilities are suggestions based on the typical fantasy setting, not prerequisites, as is the case with racial templates. Gegdin specializes in the weapon group of Axes at D4, costing 2 CP and leaving him with 4 CPs. To spice things up, the dwarf has an understanding of the arcane, and knows a few primordial, elemental spells learnt while living in his underground homeland. The average die-rank of D4 in Arcanum and the subsumed specialization in the Primordial "power source" brings him down to zero CPs.



Don't be overwhelmed by all of the acronyms. There is a comprehensive glossary at the end of the book. Also, the game can be customized to accommodate any advantage, disadvantage, or skill imaginable. If an advantage, just give it a cost from 1 to 3 character points. Disadvantages grant 1 to 3 points back to the character. Or devise some other cost, based on die-rank. Don't see a skill or specialization you want? See if any of the basic abilities are close to the idea, and name whatever you want. The action system is unified; one cannot easily "break" this system

Melee D8 > Axes D4
 Ranged D4 (automatic)
 Unarmed D4 (automatic)
 His Specialization with the axe grants him +2 points to damage, and a +1 to initiative in battle when using his 1-handed combat axe. The melee ability "branches out to form an "ability-dice-chain" of Melee and Axes. Whenever he rolls an attack using an axe, he rolls an ADC of D8+D4, and adds whatever weapon modifiers are applicable.

Arcanum D4 > Primordial D4. Whenever Gegdin casts a spell, he rolls an ADC of 2D4, either to determine magical effects or to compare the results against opposing dice rolls. Likewise, if there is a spell that inflicts Potential-Harm (see Glossary or Combat section), he rolls a 2D4 to determine the results. He knows two spells: Strength of the Earth and Stone Hide. See the Magic section (page xx) for a full explanation.

His defense pools are as follows:

Active DPs (ADPs)

Weaponry: Melee Ability Tree = 12 hit points, representing defensive skill with weaponry.

Evade: Reflexes + Agility + Pugilism (Specialization) = 8 hit points. Gegdin does not possess skill in the Specialization of Pugilism, and has only average rank in the unrestricted abilities of Reflexes (D4) and Agility (D4).

Dodge: Speed + Agility = 8 hit points. Gegdin possesses only the automatically granted, average rank in both speed and agility.

Deflect: Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic = 8 hit points. Although the dwarf typically holds no shield, he has enough combat knowledge to pick up random objects and use them as impromptu shields, if he desires.

Passive DPs (PDPs)

Toughness: Endurance \times 2 + Resistance = 18 hit points. The dwarf has a minimum of D6 for each of these categories, and is therefore tougher than the average human is.

Resilience: Resistance \times 2 + Willpower + Arcanum tree = 26 hit points. Gegdin's Resistance is respectable, his Willpower average. He would have a score of 16 if not for his ability and Specialization in Arcanum, which adds up to a total score of 26 Resilience points.

His chain mail armor affords him between 1 to 8 points of protection (1d8) versus any attack that exceeds the hit points of his chosen Active Defense.

Full explanations of these concepts are in the chapters ahead.

Step 4: Determine Character Concept

The player paints the details of his character's intellect, acumen, and charm (if any). There are no rules to restrict these conceptual attributes, nor are there rules to dictate whether the character relies more on brute strength, or on adroitness and speed in battle. The player has full freedom to interpret these attributes within the scope of his desired character concept.

For example, Gegdin is not charismatic, or particularly intelligent, but he does possess a great deal of common sense. The player will role-play his character accordingly, interpreting abilities in light of those facts. In addition, Gegdin's Melee ability is probably strength-based, given his Specialization in axes and the mandatory ability in Feats of Strength. Despite this, the player still has the freedom to decide that Gegdin's *combat style* is based on quickness and dexterity. As such, the dwarf might master the hand or throwing axe, avoiding weapons like the great axe. The rules do not force any particular interpretation of ability—the Die-Ranks measure levels of knowledge and proficiency, not the type of knowledge or proficiency. The player or GM fills in those details, based on the guidelines provided.

Select Equipment

All characters begin play with equipment appropriate to the life of an adventurer. This includes one month of travel rations, a simple mount, lantern, rope, backpacks, sacks, or coin purses. The GM can approve or deny other things based on a character's proposed background. Clothes can be whatever the player imagines is appropriate for his character. Magic items should not be granted to first-level characters, unless the GM has a special reason to do so [see Equipment section on page 59 for more information].

Gegdin's equipment

As a fighter, Gegdin gets one weapon of choice, preferably in the fighter's weapon group Specialization, and one suit of armor. For that reason he obtains a heavy, broad-headed combat axe and a suit of chainmail (see Combat section for details), in addition to the essential goods of travel and exploration.



Chapter 2

Action System



The next point of order is to explain the Action Resolution System. Various types and quantities of dice represent abilities in the game. Type refers to the number of sides of a polyhedral die, and quantity refers to the number of dice rolled for a single action resolution attempt.

For any single ability, die type corresponds to “rank.” The more sides on the die, the higher the rank. Ability ranks normally progress from D4 through D12. This is the “**Die-Rank**.” Many in-game calculations require the highest possible number rolled on a Die-Rank. This number is the *Maximum Rank Value*, abbreviated **MRV**.

TABLE 2.1 DIE-RANKS HIERARCHY

Character Skill	Die Rank
Pitiful	1
Terrible*	D2
Poor**	D3
Average	D4 (Average human rank)
Respectable	D6
Good	D8
Great	D10
Superb	D12 (Highest human rank)
Superhuman***	D16
Extreme	D20

* A D6 can be used for a D2, with 1-3 resulting in a 1 and 4-6 resulting in a 2. Or you could flip a coin.

** A D6 can be used for a D3 by dividing the roll in half rounding up.

*** Roll a D20, re-rolling values greater than the MRV

A single broad ability can branch off into several narrower focuses, each branch represented by up to two additional dice, with each die representing

successive tiers of ability. There are up to three tiers of ability in any one branch, beginning with the root ability, called *basic*. Next is *Specialization*, and *Mastery*, respectively.

These tiers are often separated by an “>” sign wherever listed in the rules. For example, *Weapons (basic) > Swords (Specialization) > Long Sword (Mastery)*. The basic rank plus all of its branches constitutes an *ability tree*.

A Specialization is a refinement of a basic ability. As a rule of thumb, any skill Specialization should be applicable to roughly 10% to 20% of the situations that apply to a base ability. Likewise, Mastery is a refinement of a Specialization, and should be applicable to about 10% to 20% of the uses of the Specialization. Therefore, a character with a farming background would likely have the skill of Animal Handling.

A Specialization in Livestock would relate to about 20% of the use of the base skill, and would include the raising and handling of cows, pigs, sheep, and most any farm animal. If the character were a cattle farmer, he would likely have the Mastery skill of Cows. Thus, Animal Handling > Livestock > Cows.

The player must first determine the relevant ability for any of his character’s actions. This is usually a matter of common sense. For example, if a character wishes to shadow a villain in an urban environment, he would use his Stealth ability.

The GM might allow the roll of additional dice if he deems a Specialization or Mastery relevant to the task or attempted feat. For instance, if the shadowing character happens to be specialized in *City Stealth*, he would add his Specialization to the roll. If he had mastered *Shadowing* under the same branch as “City Stealth,” then he would add that die as well.



Design note: The GM may want forgo using random dice to determine challenge and set a target number. Most of the time this is a bad idea because any target number over 4 guarantees many characters will fail the action. On the other hand, sneaky storytellers may roll the dice and secretly have a target number in their head. Is that cheating? Not if it furthers the story, and everybody is having fun.



The adventurer executes a mighty leap to save himself from certain doom!

For example, our renowned dwarf Gegdin is attempting to shadow an elf named Nathal in the woods. The GM laughs, and says that Gegdin must roll a check against Stealth. All characters begin play with at least D4 in Stealth, so the dwarf can attempt to shadow the elusive elf through the woods. Alas, he rolls a 2. Nathal, on the other hand, is quite stealthy, and is specialized in hiding in the woods. In fact, the nimble elf mastered hiding in the forest (let us say the Die-Ranks are as follows: Stealth D6 > Hide D10 > Forest D8). Clearly, the elf cannot possibly roll lower than the dwarf (D6+D10+D8 has a minimum roll of 3). On the other hand, if the dwarf were shadowing the elf in a small town, his quarry's terrain-specific Mastery would not apply, making it possible for Nathal to roll a 2. Even so, defenders win ties, so the elf is guaranteed to get away.

No more than three dice can apply to a single ability check. In addition, all dice rolled must derive from the same Ability Branch, following a logical succession. For example, an adventurer might have learned “*Stealth > Ambush > Wilderness*,” as well as “*Stealth > Shadowing > City*,” but is allowed to check against only one of those two branches. Any such logical succession of skill or capacity is referred to as the “**Ability-Dice-Chain**,” a concept abbreviated as **ADC**.

When a character uses a basic ability, plus any associated Specializations and Masteries, the

Game Master must determine a suitable level of challenge. The challenge for a task is either an **active opponent** or **static opposition**. An active opponent provides opposition based on his/her/its abilities. Static opposition arises solely from the nature of the situation. In either case, the next step is for each side to roll the dice, adding up all pips, the higher result winning the contest, with the defender winning any ties.

An active opponent will use an ability to challenge the character's attempt. In such cases, the opponent rolls their Die-Rank in whatever ability is relevant to oppose the character's ability check. Specializations and Masteries add to the difficulty of the opposed test, the combined dice constituting the character's ADC. Such rolls generally occur between a PC and an NPC or monster, but opposed rolls could also take place between two PCs.

Static opposition happens when there is no active, living opponent, such as when a character is trying to climb a wall; obviously, the wall is not trying to push the character off. For ability checks of this type, the Game Master will assign an appropriate Challenge Rank. The challenge will correspond to a number of dice used in an opposition roll. The result of that roll is the “target number” that must be matched or exceeded with a roll of the PC's relevant ADC. The levels of challenge and their corresponding ranks are shown in table 2.3.



A rating of “easy” difficulty is the lowest rating a challenge may have. If the GM determines the challenge is less taxing than that, the character automatically succeeds at the attempt. Likewise, no challenge is more difficult than an extreme challenge—the only way to describe a task more daunting is to call it “impossible”.

TABLE 2.2 CHALLENGE RANK OPPOSITION DICE

Easy	1D4
Moderate	2D4
Difficult	2D6
Demanding	2D8
Formidable	2D10
Extreme	2D12

Once the GM establishes and rolls for difficulty, the player then rolls in opposition, using the dice indicated by his character’s ability rank, comparing the results. The character may roll multiple ranks in an ability check if she has a relevant Specialization and/or Mastery. In those situations, she adds the results of the rolled dice together, and uses the total in the resolution process. As mentioned above, the rules do not allow the use of more than three dice in a single ability check. If the player’s roll is equal to or more greater than the difficulty, the character succeeds.

For example, our very mundane character Frederick the farmer needs to calm an enraged bull. Fred has the following Ability Tree: Animal Handling (D8) > Livestock (D8) > Cows (D6). The GM determines that the challenge is Formidable (2D10). Fred rolls 2D8 + 1D6 for his ADC, the GM rolls 2D10. If Fred has a totaled dice roll that beats the GM’s roll, the beast will be calmed. If he fails... well, he could be in real trouble!

The GM then describes what happened based on the results of the player’s roll. The obvious part of the description is the simple outcome of the roll—whether the character succeeded or failed. That should only be the foundation for the description, however.

The GM has leeway in describing the results of the attempt from start to finish. The only given is that the outcome of the check must be respected. Beyond that given, details of how the outcome appears are up to him. A failure, for example, could occur at the beginning of the attempt, almost at the point of completion, or at any point in between. Likewise, he could describe a successful attempt as barely getting the task done, or succeeding in

fantastic fashion. How much a check succeeds or fails affects the described results. The difference between a character’s ability check total, and the totaled opposition dice can decide how serious a failure or how effective a success. For instance, a result that just barely succeeds indicates just basic success. The GM could describe the attempt as “just enough,” like jumping just far enough to clear a chasm and roll to safety away from the edge. The greater the difference between the player’s roll is and the target number, the better the effects of the action. Likewise, the amount by which a character fails a check can determine how bad the results end up. The GM can describe barely missing the roll as near success in the attempt. A terrible roll can result in a catastrophe for the character. If a character was attempting to use alchemical reagents to turn lead into gold, missing the target by one point may result in silver, or maybe fools gold, while a catastrophic failure may blow up the reagents with deadly effect. Following our earlier example, Frederick the farmer is staring the bull in the face using all his years of experience to calm it down. Whether he succeeds or fails, and by how much will determine the description the GM would use.

TABLE 2.3 MARGIN OF SUCCESS

Roll Result vs. Difficulty	Possible Descriptions
Better than +6	Fred not only calms the animal, and locks it away, but a lovely local barmaid swoons over his bravery.
+4 to +6	Fred calms the runaway bull and manages to lock it in its pen.
+1 to +3	The bull is calmed, and is lead away towards its pen.
0	The bull is calm but not ready to listen to instructions.
-1 to -3	The bull will not heed Fred, but it is not trying to gore him either. Fred may make another attempt.
-4 to -6	The bull is enraged and preparing to charge poor Fred.

Ability Trees and branches

All possible actions correspond to some basic ability. These abilities form the basis for all



action in the game. The basic abilities listed below are suggested skill successions, each with related Specializations and Masteries. The lists of Specializations and Masteries are by no means exhaustive, and players and GMs are encouraged to add to or alter the lists. As a rule of thumb, a Specialization should be useful in about 10-20% of the uses of the base skill. Likewise, Mastery should be able to be used in about 10-20% of the uses of the Specialization.

A * by the skill indicates that the Ability Tree (basic skill, plus all of its branches) are added up cumulatively, using MRV of dice-ranks, then applied to some corresponding Defense Pool (or DP; see Combat section). A ‡ indicates that the Ability can or always contribute to Potential-Harm (see Combat section).

An (R) means that one cannot ordinarily attempt to use the ability without training. Abilities are restricted based on the preferences of the authors—the GM may override these designations to match his conceptions of what adventuring heroes in his game ought to know at first-level.

Skill Successions (a.k.a., ability-dice-chains, or ADC)

Agility * > Acrobatics > Falling, tumbling, evasion
 Agility > Balance > Combat, climbing, performance
 Agility > Jump > Distance, height
 Agility > Swim > Diving, holding breath
 Animal Handling > Birds > Eagles, owls
 Animal Handling > Domesticated > Dogs, cats
 Animal Handling > Livestock > Cows, pigs, sheep
 Animal Handling > Riding > Animal type
 Animal Handling > Wild Animals > Wolves, deer
 Appraisal > Antiquities > Furniture, tools, crafted goods
 Appraisal > Art > Tapestries, paintings
 Appraisal > Coins > Counterfeit
 Appraisal > Gems > Diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, etc.
 Appraisal > Jewelry > Rings, bracelets, gold, silver, etc.
 Appraisal > Weapons > weapon group
 Arcanum *‡ > *See Magic section*
 Artistry (R) > Acting > Emotion, comedy, drama
 Artistry (R) > Dance > Ballet, interpretive, formal
 Artistry (R) > Musical Instrument > Guitar, mandolin, lyre, drums, flute, etc.
 Augury > Astrology > Horoscopes, omens
 Augury > Cards > Omens, personal readings
 Augury > Casting > Bones, runes
 Augury > Entrails > Goat, chicken, human, etc.
 Coercion (R) > Coercion > Blackmail, bodily harm
 Coercion (R) > Interrogation > Torture, inquisition

Climbing > Man-made Surface > Ropes, buildings
 Climbing > Natural Surfaces > Rocks, trees
 Endurance * > Carrying > Packs, unwieldy
 Endurance * > Climate > Desert, mountains, etc.
 Endurance * > Pain > Physical, elemental, torture
 Endurance * > Running > Distance, terrain
 Endurance * > Sleeplessness > Alertness, competence
 Feats of Strength > Breaking & Bending > Doors, metal bars
 Feats of Strength > Contests > Arm wrestling
 Feats of Strength > Lifting & Carrying > Lifting, carrying, holding
 Feats of Strength > Pushing & Pulling > Push, pull, brace
 Investigation > Casing > Patrols, security systems (mundane)
 Investigation > Court & Politics > Heraldry, bureaucracy, by region, by monarchy
 Investigation > Investigation > Questioning
 Investigation > Military > Arms, equipment, bureaucracy
 Investigation > Scholarly > Specific academic field
 Investigation > Streetwise > Organizations, narcotics
 Handicraft > Cobbling > Boots, slippers, shoes
 Handicraft > Cooking > Style, ingredient, or method
 Handicraft > Sewing > Embroidery, garments
 Handicraft > Smith > Blacksmith, silversmith
 Handicraft > Weaving > Flax, wool
 Handicraft > Woodworking > Boat making, carpentry
 Healing (R) > Animals > Wound type
 Healing (R) > Disease > Disease type
 Healing (R) > Herbs > Function of herb
 Healing (R) > Race > Wound type (burns, poison, lacerations, bludgeoning)
 Knowledge > Anthropology > Specific race
 Knowledge > Engineering > Architecture, fortifications
 Knowledge > Engineering > Gears, clocks
 Knowledge > Engineering > Siege engines, trebuchets
 Knowledge > History > By era or culture
 Knowledge > Linguistics > Specific language
 Knowledge > Mathematics > Astronomy
 Knowledge > Religion > Specific pantheon
 Melee Weapons *‡ - *See Combat section.*
 Perform (R) > Singing > Soprano, bass, etc.
 Perform (R) > Story telling > Inspirational, tragic
 Ranged Weapons ‡ - *See Combat section.*
 Reflexes * > Catching > Catching knives/weapons
 Reflexes * > Combat Reflexes > Quick shot, quick draw
 Reflexes * > Dodging > Missile weapons, traps
 Reflexes * > Initiative > Initiative Mastery
 Resistance * > Magic resistance > Specific source



Resistance * > Poison > Drinking, iocane powder
 Resistance * > Drinking > Beer & ale, wine, liquor
 Scouting (R) > Tracking > Specific terrain
 Scouting (R) > Surveillance > Urban versus wilderness
 Scrutiny > Movement > Terrain type
 Scrutiny > Read lips > Specific race
 Scrutiny > Security > Timing (watching for patrols, etc.)
 Scrutiny > Sense Mood > Anger
 Scrutiny > Sense Motive > Guilt
 Scrutiny > Unusual Things > Knowledge category
 Skulduggery > Disguise > Gender specific, make up, specific race
 Skulduggery > Forgery > Handwriting, legal docs, military docs
 Skulduggery > Impenetrable > Vs. mind reading
 Skulduggery > Lie > Bluff
 Skulduggery > Sense Motive > Bluffs
 Skulduggery > Sleight of Hand > Holdout, conceal
 Speed * > Track, Marathon, Sprint > By terrain type
 Stealth > Ambush > By terrain type
 Stealth > Hide > By terrain type
 Stealth > Shadowing > By terrain type
 Stealth > Walk Silently > By terrain type
 Survival > By Terrain Type > Find water, fish, forage, find shelter
 Thievery (R) > Disable Device > Mechanical, windlass, traps
 Thievery (R) > Filch > Pickpocket, cutpurse
 Thievery (R) > Open Lock > Combination, key
 Unarmed Combat *‡ - See *Combat section*.
 Willpower * > Resist Control > Mind, body
 Willpower * > Resist Magic > By type
 Willpower * > Resist Pain > Torture

Ability Descriptions

Specializations and/or Masteries add dice to opposed checks, when those capacities are relevant and called upon. In all cases, the game mechanics exist primarily to further the story. Other Specializations or Masteries might add to a hit point pool or increase an attacker's damage potential. See *Skill Successions* table above for Specialization and Mastery examples.

Basic abilities default to a rank of D4 (average) if the character is untrained, unless the skill is designated "restricted" (R), in which case the GM may disallow any attempt. Regardless, the GM may disallow default checks under some circumstances, or reduce the rank to D3 (poor). The story and character concepts should be the defining factors.



An arcanist summons the power of lightning

***Agility:** this ability covers many things but does not refer to combat reflexes or speed. Instead, it measures adroitness, nimbleness, dexterity, and gracefulness in action. This includes jumping, balance, swimming, tumbling, etc. Because all Die-Ranks of this ability contribute to the Evade and Dodge pools, specializing in "evade" or "dodge" is meaningless. *This ability adds its Ability Tree MRV to the Evade and Dodge ADPs.*

Animal Handling: the skill of working, training, or riding animals. This skill includes working plow animals, breaking horses, training a hunting dog, controlling a steed (usually a horse), or taming a wild beast. A character can specialize in a particular type of riding, including horses, and master types like warhorse, or riding horse. Other Specializations can include mounts of various species, aquatic, or aerial, with Mastery in elephants, gryphons or pegasi.

A character may use Animal Handling skill instead of Reflexes for determining initiative if fighting from horseback or any other steed. In addition, those with Animal Handling usually have some knowledge of how to deal with livestock (chickens, cows, etc.), birds (sparrows, condors, eagles, etc.), wild animals (bears, tigers, badgers, etc.), and domesticated animals (cats, dogs, etc.).

Appraisal: this is the ability to estimate the value of an item. Specializations include antiquities, art, coins, gems, jewelry, weapons, and characters may focus in a large range of things, from tapestries to counterfeit art. The rules represent money by substituting the word "crowns" for dollars and comparing the items to modern day prices. Imagine what something is worth today, and pretend that

Don't see a skill succession you like? Make one up. The rules encourage this. However, we do strongly suggest avoiding the creation of skills which add extra damage to an attack action. The ERP system is balanced to avoid juggernaut characters who crush everything in their path. Besides, that's what dragons are for.



Design Note: In most games “strength” is a skill that contributes toward damaging foes. In ERP, “Feats of Strength” is an oddball ability because it affects all actions involving might except attacking. Due to precedent, Game Masters may be tempted to change this ability and apply the die-ranks toward damage. But please take our advice; just say no.

translates into the fantasy economy, making all conversion easy, even if totally unrealistic.

*‡ **Arcanum (R):** this is the powerful skill of wielding and shaping magical forces. Basic knowledge allows a mage to detect magic, identify spell effects, and grants an understanding of magical energy in myriad forms. Knowledge of Arcanum also covers the creation or history of magical items, and recognition of the differences in magical techniques. Specializations are in sources of power: mystical, supernatural, primordial, and psychogenic. Actual spellcasting requires Specialization in one or more magical sources. Masteries are in the techniques of specific schools or colleges of magic, such as wizard, priest, druid, or psychic. *This ability adds its Ability Tree MRV to the Resilience PDP*; and because of this, specializing specifically in “Resilience DP” is meaningless. **See Magic section.**

Artistry (R): this is the ability to employ skills generally used in front of crowds. The Specializations include singing, acting, storytelling and playing one musical instrument. Masteries indicate great proficiency in specific songs, certain styles of acting, or the ability to play within a class of musical instruments.

Augury: This skill covers all manner of divination, with Specializations in astrology, tarot card reading, entrails, casting bones and runes, etc. The GM sets the challenge rank according to the sort of divination desired. Master augurs know that divining the future instantly changes the probabilities. How detailed the information desired is a big part of determining the challenge rank:

Easy: General and vague omens 1D4

Moderate: A clue to the future: boon or bane? 2D4

Difficult: Evokes a vision of boon or bane, and place (no time) 2D6

Demanding: Vision; time, place, boon, bane, and creature. 2D8

Formidable: Vision; dream vision, no more than 1 day in advance 2D10

Extreme: Total knowledge of time, place, danger, and all creatures involved. Outcomes are always impossible to judge. 2D12

Climbing: this is the skill of physically scaling surfaces, with and without assistance. Specializations include natural or man-made surfaces. Mastery can be in climbing ropes or specific types of surfaces.

Coercion (R): the ability to induce fear through force of will and presence. An intimidating

person does not often need to use force; typically, the threat or presence of force is enough. An intimidator can use their presence to induce fear, coerce cooperation and sometimes to inspire. Specializations include interrogation and coercion.

* **Endurance:** This is the ability to resist physical hardship and torment. It is also a measure of the body’s ability to resist toxins and sickness. Many Specializations exist, like carrying, climbing, running, staying awake, etc. *This ability adds its Ability Tree MRV to Toughness PDP.*

Feats of Strength: use this skill when a character’s ability to use might comes into question. This can be for anything from lifting a boulder to arm wrestling. Specializations include breaking items, lifting, carrying, performance (bending bars), pushing, etc. Certain massive, giant-sized weapons may require a Feat of Strength roll to attempt to wield in battle. This ability does *not* increase Potential-Harm with weapons. This is because the rules presuppose that all characters possess the necessary strength for any weapon wielded in battle. In other words, if the hero is wielding and using a weapon in battle, he must be able to carry and swing it. If not, the player is contradicting his character concept, not the rules of the game.

Investigation: this is the skill of finding information in books and records. Specializations are in various types of information. This includes casing a place, courtly investigative techniques, general investigation, politicking to penetrate bureaucracies, military investigative techniques, scholarly research, or street knowledge, allowing one to penetrate the criminal underworld (also covered by Skullduggery).

Handicraft: this is any skill of making things with your hands. Many Specializations exist, including woodworking, sewing, smithing, weaving, etc. This ability is useful in describing professional abilities related to backgrounds for both NPCs and PCs. One useful Specialization is cooking; with this skill, an adventurer can whip up a decent meal for himself and his comrades. Masteries include styles or methods of cooking (ethnic or cultural) or food preparation.

Healing (R): this is the skill of mending the wounded. Specializations include healing animals, knowledge of diseases or herbs, or specific races. The ability covers injury from cuts and bruises, to poisons, to treating sickness. Greater margins of success bring greater results. Better than +6 allows recovery at twice normal speed; +4 to +6 allows recovery at 1.5 normal speed; zero to +3 stems the



Thievery is a finesse skill, practised well only by the few

flow of blood and brings a Player Character back to 0 Toughness if already below; -1 to -6 can have any number of unfortunate consequences.

Knowledge: at the most basic level of Knowledge Ability, all educated characters know their local and perhaps regional history and language (depending somewhat on character concept). In addition, most characters above the status of peasant will know at least something of grammar, logic, rhetoric, astronomy, philosophy, and basic math. Specializations and related Masteries can be in just about any area of specific knowledge, if approved by the GM. For example, Specializations in history are by era or culture, while related Masteries usually narrow down to a specific region, culture, or special event.

Specializations in linguistics include languages other than the character's beginning tongue, and Specializations in engineering include general knowledge of engineering and mercantile. Masteries tend toward occupational subjects or complete knowledge.

*‡ **Melee Weapons:** this skill allows basic proficiency with all types of medieval style weaponry, and is further broken down into Specializations and Masteries for many weapon groups. *See **Melee Combat Rules**.*

‡ **Ranged Weapons:** the basic ability to use missile weapons of any sort. The total value of Ranged Weapons ranks do not add to the Weaponry Defense Pool. *See **Ranged Combat Rules**.*

* **Reflexes:** this skill measures a character's alacrity in close combat, and the responsiveness of his central nervous system, whether unconscious or through training. It defines hand/eye coordination, quickness of actions, and reaction time. This skill determines the character's combat initiative phase, and *adds its Ability Tree MRV to the Evade ADP*. Specializations include catching things, extraordinary reflexes, dodging, and initiative. Specialization or Mastery in initiative allows extra dice to be rolled when opposing a creature in the same battle phase (see initiative rules). These Specializations add to an ability check, but because all Die-Ranks of this ability contribute to the Evade pool, specializing specifically in "Evade ADP" is meaningless.

* **Resistance:** the ability to resist Potential-Harm from all forms of magic attack, as well as from natural forces, environmental conditions, and poison. *This ability adds its Ability Tree MRV to Resilience PDP.* **Specializations** include drinking alcohol, magic, and poison. These Specializations add to an opposed ability check, or when warding off some effects *after* all Resilience is depleted. Because all Die-Ranks of this ability contribute to the Resilience pool, specializing specifically in "Resilience PDP" is meaningless.

Scouting (R): to spy on creatures by tracking, or carefully to explore a wilderness area in order to obtain information, or merely to help others survive, this skill has many forms of specialty, including Specializations by quarry, terrain, and climate.



Design Note: A player might create a hero whose concept is strongly centered on unarmed combat. Unlike some abilities,

Unarmed combat does not contribute its ability tree MRV to a single Defense Pool. In this instance the GM may allow the addition of unarmed basic rank MRV to either Evade or Toughness. A player may purchase this advantage, called Advanced Unarmed Defense, for 2 CP.

Scrutiny: a character with this ability often sees things other observers miss. It covers things as diverse as detecting suspicious characters in a crowd, finding a mechanism for a trap door, locating hidden persons and things, and detecting stealthy creatures. Specializations are diverse and include sensing movement, reading lips, knowledge of security procedures, sensing a creature's mood or motive, or seeing unusual things. Masteries would narrow the focus even more; sensing movement in certain terrains, knowledge of a certain group's security procedures, sensing the moods of a particular race, etc.

Skullduggery: any roguish activity, including crafty deception and trickery. Lying, deceit, disguise, bluffing, withholding information, secrets—the skullduggery ability covers these things.

Specializations include having an impenetrable mind, lies, sensing the lies of others, disguises, forgeries, disabling devices, filching, opening locks, and sleight of hand. Masteries are in very specific types of deception or the detection thereof.

* **Speed:** this is the body's natural ability to move swiftly, a measure of celerity. Movement for PCs and full-fledged Non-Player Characters (NPC) is Speed x 10 in feet in a full round. A character may move up to the maximum of that number in a round and still make an attack or action. A Specialization might describe movement over various surfaces: snow, swamp, level ground and forest would be examples.

Also, running types may be specialized, like track, marathon and sprint. This also covers "area-spell escape": a character may use Speed to mitigate Potential-Harm from an area-effect spell, provided there is reasonable room for evasion (as determined by the GM). *This ability adds its Ability Tree MRV to Dodge ADP*, but because of this, specializing specifically in "Dodge ADP" is meaningless.

Stealth: this is the skill of moving while being silent, or hiding while stationary. It is a primary skill for thieves, assassins and anyone who wants to go unseen. A character can specialize in moving silently, hiding, or sleight of hand.

Stealth opposes an observing creature's Scrutiny ability. Specializations include ambush, urban or wilderness stealth, as well as hiding in the shadows.

Survival: this skill allows one to survive in uncivilized environments. All adventurers have some level of ability in this regard. Specializations are by terrain type, while Mastery is in specific survival techniques.

Thievery (R): this ability covers any action involving the skills of professional thieves, not in terms of beguilement (which is skullduggery) but in the actual technical practices. Specializations include disabling dangerous traps, filching, and opening locks. Masteries hone in on specific types of traps, methods of filching, or lock types.

*‡ **Unarmed Combat:** every humanoid creature has an automatic rank of D4 in Unarmed Combat, representing basic ability in fisticuffs, which is the ability to brawl, rather than the disciplined art of martial combat. Specializations include brawling, pugilism, martial arts, and wrestling/grappling. *This ability adds Pugilism Specialization MRV to Evade ADP, or Brawling Specialization to Toughness ADP.* Wrestling is its own reward in allowing one to take down and pin an opponent. Martial arts Masteries may add bonus points to the Evade ADP, depending on combat style. Note that an unarmed attacker lacking martial arts Specialization sustains Potential-Harm equal to what he inflicts on his target when parried by an armed foe. *See Unarmed Combat Rules.*

* **Willpower:** the Willpower skill measures one's self control and mental fortitude. It is a measure of resistance to mental pressures and the ability to force one's self to perform actions against better judgment. This is yet another skill where Specializations can take many forms, such as resistance to fear or torture, self-control, and mental fortitude (useful for overcoming mind control). *This ability adds its Ability Tree MRV to Resilience PDP.* Note that because of this, specializing specifically in "Resilience PDP" is meaningless.



Chapter 3

Combat



Abbreviated glossary

Defense Pool (DP): A Defense Pool is a number of hit points used to mitigate or cancel Potential-Harm. There are two types of defense, Active and Passive. Active defenses include actions like Parrying, Dodging, or rolling with the punches. Passive defenses include magic resistance (Resilience) and general Toughness.

ADP (Active Defense Pool): weaponry [includes Parry, Entangle, and Keep at Bay] (Melee Weapons + Specializations + Masteries), Evade (Reflexes + Agility + Pugilism), Dodge (Speed + Agility), and Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic).

PDP (Passive Defense Pool): toughness (Endurance $\times 2$ + Resistance), Resilience (Resistance $\times 2$ + Willpower + Arcanum tree).

Defense, Active: all willful and reflexive defensive actions taken by a combatant, using one of the Active DPs. Includes all parrying and dodging. Includes the Weaponry, Evade, Dodge, and Deflect hit point pools.

Defense, Passive: any protection afforded to a creature without conscious activation or effort. Includes Resilience and Toughness. Also includes non-ablative defenses such as armor and shields.

Max-Split (# of Attacks per Weapon per Round): the maximum number of times an Ability Branch can be split into multiple attacks in a single combat round, each independent die roll representing a separate strike. Dictated by weapon type. Applicable bonuses are added to each separate die roll, unless otherwise noted.

Potential-Harm, threat points, and damage: potential-Harm is representative of possible damage from a number of different attack forms, reducing Active and Passive DPs. Rolling for Potential-Harm results in “threat points” which must be mitigated

(meaning reduced or eliminated) by the defender’s chosen Defense Pool.

Combat rounds and battle phases

Like many fantasy role-playing games, *Eldritch Role-playing System* assumes a major part of game play will focus on heroic battle. This does not preclude the GM from generating adventures that feature great interaction with less violent plots. Rather, these rules focus on combat because it is traditionally the most difficult aspect for GMs to arbitrate with consistent fairness.

Even so, the ERP combat system is abstract rather than a “simulation,” the emergent story being the focus of play and the mechanics existing only to further action in the story.

Whenever battle commences, it is up to each defender to describe how he parries, dodges, evades, deflects, or otherwise absorbs the **Potential-Harm** of an opponent’s attack. **There is no “attack roll” per se, not for any action, but rather, attackers roll to determine Potential-Harm (abbreviated P-H), the dice delivering “threat points” representative of possible damage.**

For example, if Gegdin the dwarf uses Melee D8 > Axes D4, his P-H is 2-12 before bonuses. If he uses a ranged weapon, his Potential-Harm is 1-4, and Unarmed it is 1-4. Rolling for Potential-Harm results in threat points that must be mitigated (meaning reduced or eliminated) by the defender’s chosen Defense Pool.

Threat points exceeding the chosen ADP and penetrating armor are officially considered “damage,” affecting passive Defense Pools like Resilience and Toughness. Players may opt to ignore semantic distinctions like threat points and damage, referring to everything as Potential-Harm; mechanically and by the rules, it makes no difference whatsoever.



TABLE 3:1 BATTLE PHASES

Battle Phase: Use (Reflexes MRV + weapon speed)	Die-Rank	Reaction Time	Random Roll Result
Battle Phase L (Legendary Initiative)	D20	17-20	n/a
Battle Phase I (Incredible Initiative)	D16	13-16	13-16
Battle Phase 1 (Superb Initiative)	D12	11-12	12 +
Battle Phase 2 (Great Initiative)	D10	9-10	10-11
Battle Phase 3 (Good Initiative)	D8	7-8	8-9
Battle Phase 4 (Fair Initiative)	D6	5-6	6-7
Battle Phase 5 (Average Initiative)	D4	3-4	4-5
Battle Phase P (Poor Initiative)	D3	2-3	3
Battle Phase T (Terrible Initiative)	D2	0-2	2

However, do avoid calling all results of Potential-Harm rolls “damage,” because such wording betrays the point of the narrative combat system. To defend against such Potential-Harm, the combat system utilizes two types of “harm mitigation”: hit points and damage reduction. Hit points describe a character’s ability to withstand harm, with various Defense Pools using that concept to cover many aspects of combat, such as the ability to parry a weapon, dodge a boulder hurled by a giant, avoid a close knife thrust to the gut, deflect with a shield, rely on a magic force field, and so on. There are two types of Defense Pools, Active and Passive.

Active Defense Pools (or ADPs) cover parries, dodging and evading attacks. **Passive Defense Pools** (PDPs) cover attributes like overall **Toughness** against physical attack and **Resilience** versus magical attack, mental stress, fatigue, and other forms of harm. Damage Reduction methods include the random roll of dice, such as with the somewhat unpredictable level of protection afforded by armor, or more rarely, “static” damage reductions based on magic or other forces (-1 to P-H, etc).

The following is a breakdown of combat:

Combat Rounds and Battle Phases

The system divides combat into rounds, with each round further separated into battle phases. A battle phase is about 3 seconds, and corresponds to a rank of Reflexes Ability. This is how action order is determined in ERP. Because Reflexes ranks vary from *pitiful* to *extreme*, there are up to 9 such phases in a round, but ability is typically between D4 and D12 ranks, so the average round is 5 phases, or roughly 15 seconds long. Add weapon speeds to the MRV of each creature’s Reflexes rank before determining final *reaction time* and corresponding *battle phase*.

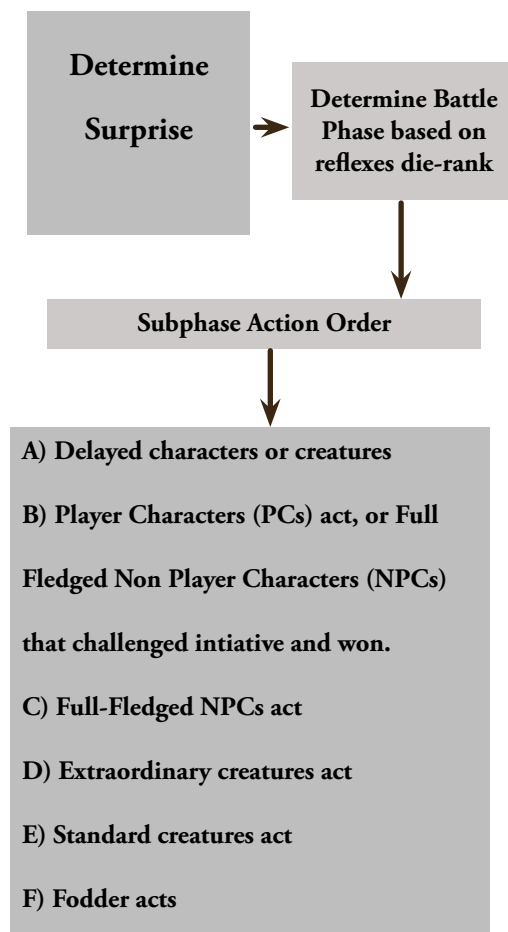
For example, our friend Gegdin the dwarf, is about to enter combat against several lowly goblins. His Reflexes ability is D4, which places him in battle phase 5, or “average initiative.” However, when wielding a combat axe he gets +1 to initiative, due to his Specialization in axes. That increases his effective reaction time from 4 up to 5 (MRV +1), placing him in Battle Phase 4, acting at the same time as creatures with a Reflexes of D6. The goblins are weak fodder, acting in phase 5. Gegdin attacks first every round.

Actions generally occur in order of battle phase, from the highest Die-Rank to the lowest (or from the lowest battle phase to the highest, depending on which column you are reading). The battle phase number ascends in accordance with descending ranks of Reflexes rank. A creature may opt to delay its action, dropping down one battle phase, and in so doing acts before anybody else in the lower phase, including PCs. See the chart below, as well as the weapons table in the Equipment section.

Sub-phase Order

Although reaction time within a combat round is determined by Reflexes, actions within a single battle phase cannot be ordered by such, because all creatures have the same Die-Rank. The GM can simply roll D10 for each side of the fight in the same sub phase, or he can determine initiative within a battle phase by following the cinematic “sub-phase order,” which follows the following pattern:

- Delayed Characters or Creatures
- Player Characters (PCs) act, or Full-Fledged Non Player Characters (NPCs) that challenged initiative and won.
- Full-Fledged NPCs act.
- Extraordinary creatures act.
- Standard creatures act.
- Fodder acts.



Determine subphase action by the “status” of each creature, which indicates its precedence in narrative terms. In each battle phase, Player Characters usually act first because they are assumed to be heroes and therefore somewhat superior. *Full-Fledged NPCs* and monsters act next (or may even challenge the upper hand of the PCs in initiative before the phase begins). Next are the actions of *Extraordinary* creatures, then *Standard*, and then *Fodder* (see NPCs and Monster section).

Each creature may take one action during each battle phase. This includes attacking, casting a spell, activating a magic item, or using a special ability. Actions in the same battle phase are not lockstep, as if creatures were politely taking turns to attack and defend. Rather, assume a chaotic situation of frantic action. Once all creatures have their turn, a new round begins, the first battle phase corresponding with the highest Reflexes rank (or Effective Reaction Time) among the combatants still able to act.

Random Initiative in a round (individual creature)
Any player, or Full-Fledged NPC or creature wishing to roll **random initiative** for that round must declare so **before** the beginning of the round (before the GM starts the action). At that time, the player or GM rolls 2D6, resulting in

an effective reaction time between 2 and 12, (or higher with certain bonuses). Weapon speed (or augmentation magic) does not add to this sort of initiative at all, due to its chaotic nature. Another drawback of this method is that a character employing random Reaction Time acts *last* in any phase above the MRV of his own Reflexes rank. For example, a creature with D4 Reflexes chooses random initiative, and rolls an 11 (with no weapon speed bonus). He acts in Battle Phase 2 (Great Initiative, Die-Rank equivalent D10, or reaction time 9-10), but only after all other creatures in that phase act in turn.

Initiative Challenges

The GM may allow a Full-Fledged NPC or monster to force a Reflexes roll against a single PC whose action lands in the same subphase turn. A successful roll allows the Full-Fledged creature to circumvent the normal subphase action order, attacking the PC first. The GM must declare such an attempt *before* any actions in that battle phase. The Full-Fledged NPC or Monster rolls his Reflexes rank (plus relevant Specializations or Masteries), adding in weapon speed or magic bonuses, versus the Reflexes (or Reflexes ADC) of the target. The higher roll wins initiative, but a tie indicates a possible *simultaneous attack*.

Simultaneous Attacks

A simultaneous attack occurs when the defender chooses to counter-attack in a tied initiative. In a simultaneous attack, both combatants cannot use their Active Defenses (weaponry, evade, dodge, and deflect), so Potential-Harm directly depletes Toughness after armor damage reduction is applied, or depletes Resilience in the case of magical attacks.

If the defender opts out of a simultaneous attack, then he may defend as normal, using all available active defenses, but must take his action *after* the challenging NPC (but still in the same battle phase). Handle opting for a simultaneous action as an extra, free attack for the defender. However, once the defender commits to a simultaneous attack, he *must* carry through with his intended action.

If the attacker opts out of a simultaneous attack, he thus defensively aborts his action, thereby hesitating, allowing himself an active defense to escape the mess, but cannot take his turn until the next battle phase. An attacker who opts out of a simultaneous attack cannot challenge a PC's initiative again that round.

Usually it's a desperate PC who takes this option, but a defending NPC or full-fledged monster

Design note: Bypassing Active Defenses. In early playtest the designers introduced “called shots” of a sort, allowing attackers to bypass active defenses, with penalties to the roll. But outside of simultaneous attack and grappling rules, this proved quite unbalancing to the game. Blood thirsty gamers loved it...until their enemies exercised the option. Remember, defense hitpoint pools are derivative of Ability Die-Ranks, so allowing the bypassing of active defense diminishes the value and impact of advancement.



can opt for a simultaneous attack if he meets two criteria: **a)** he delayed his action down one phase and **b)** he is attacked by a PC who acts in that new, lower phase. This situation is the equivalent of a tied initiative. As noted above, if an attacker wishes to avoid the penalties of a simultaneous attack, then the GM must grant him the option of ‘hesitating,’ thus delaying his action by one battle phase. A hesitating or delaying creature usually acts first in his new, lower battle phase.

For example, in Battle Phase 1 (D12), Ylundgar the half-orc warrior challenges initiative and wins over a single, targeted PC. Our hero must defend himself against the half-orc’s attack before he can counterstrike. In phase 2 (D10), Ylundgar challenges initiative again, but our hero rolls a tie. Because both parties are now acting in the same subphase, the PC opts to simultaneously attack. But Ylundgar recognizes the danger, and unwilling to risk death, parries his opponents blow, foregoing his own attack, thus hesitating, and dropping his action down a phase. In phase 3, another hero attacks Ylundgar, but this time the half-orc, emboldened, chooses to simultaneously attack. Both Ylundgar and the hero lose their Active Defenses, each rolling Potential Harm, and then subtracting points for armor protection, with any points penetrating armor depleting Toughness.

Simple Initiative

A GM wishing for faster combat rounds can opt simply to use only the Reflexes Die-Rank column from table 2.1 above. If two or more creatures have the same Die-Rank, each rolls Reflexes and compares the results to determine action order. Treat ties as simultaneous attacks. This amounts to ignoring all weapon, skill, and magic related bonuses to initiative, which may be appropriate for the PCs’ quickest and easiest battles.

Surprise

Characters that succeed in an opposed roll of Stealth vs. Scrutiny win *simple surprise* over their foes. Creatures who suffer simple surprise lose a full round of attacks, but can use any ADPs in response to assault or ambush. Characters who succeed in a roll of the Stealth ability twice (once for move silently, and the other for sneak-attack), and exceed their opponent’s Scrutiny both times, win *total surprise* over their foes. Creatures who suffer total surprise lose all actions for the round, and cannot use any ADPs.

Surprise is usually determined for each creature individually, but the GM can decide that defending creatures make a surprise check as a group. Of course, an advance scout or sentry can ruin either

type of surprise from afar by warning his friends of the danger. Precognitive powers and magic can also thwart the element of surprise.

Movement

Movement in ERP is abstract, players describing such movement as necessary, while the GM tracks how it will affect actions and timing. Occasionally, judging movement over distances becomes important for tactical or dramatic situations

Maximum movement in a round for most creatures is equal to Speed ability or Base Movement Die-Rank for monsters (See Opponent Development), multiplied by 10. That is the number of feet the creature may move in a round and still be able to act in some other fashion. A character may double the movement rate and not engage in other actions.

A rank of D6 thus means a character can move (6x10) 60 feet in a round and still be able to act in some other fashion. A character may double this rate and not take any other actions. The maximum distance per battle phase is Movement divided by five. For example, a hero with D4 in Speed can move a maximum of 40 feet in a round, or run 80 feet and take no other actions. This means she can move 8 feet per phase, or 16 feet per phase running.

The Attack Action

A standard attempt to inflict Potential-Harm requires no “to-hit” roll. Instead, once the attacker determines the method of harm, the defender chooses an appropriate Active Defense Pool (ADP) to thwart the effectiveness of the impending attack.

When a creature makes an attack, it will be effective and do harm unless the defender can avoid or mitigate the threat points (the result of the Potential-Harm ability roll). The defender then decides which Active Defense to use to defend against each attack. For instance, he may parry with a weapon (Weaponry ADP), physically sidestep the attack (Evade ADP), jump out of the way (Dodge ADP), or block with his shield (Deflect ADP). A creature can choose only one form of defense against an individual strike, whether it be from a blade or lightning bolt.

If threat points penetrate the chosen ADP, subtract any points resulting from armor protection, including any shield bonus. Threat points exceeding armor become actual damage, and deplete Resilience or Toughness (or both, one at a time, in that order). If the defender is lucky, no Passive Defense score depletes to zero or below, which can cause unconsciousness or death.



For example, Dangerous Dave brandishes his sword, and then rushes headlong into battle, attacking a knight with his footman's mace. His basic Melee ability is only a D4, but his skill with Bludgeons is *specialized* at D10, and he is also a *master* with the footman's mace (not just any mace) with an additional rank of D6. Therefore, Dave rolls a D4+D10+D6 against the knight as a single attack, representing a Potential-Harm of 3-20, before any bonuses (which we will ignore in this example). Dave rolls with a result of 15 threat points. The defending knight may choose to avoid the attack by physically moving out of the way (depleting his Evade DP) or he may parry (depleting his Weaponry DP). He chooses to parry, but only has 8 points in Weaponry ADP, so must still contend with seven threat points. He is wearing chainmail armor and carries no shield, so he rolls a 1D8 for his armor and gets a 5. His armor did not afford him full protection, but it helped. He must now contend with 2 points of damage, which depletes his Toughness score, leaving him with 2 points left in that category.

The attack method is as follows:

1) Attacker rolls Potential-Harm. Normally, only one action per creature is permitted, or a number of separately rolled attacks not exceeding the number of dice in the attacker's Ability Branch, as limited by the wielded weapon's "Max-Split" score (see multiple attacks below).

2) Resulting threat points are determined by adding the result of rolls as follows:

Unarmed Combat + Fighting style
(Specialization) + Sub style (Mastery)

Melee + Weapon Group (Specialization) + Specific Weapon (Mastery)

Ranged + Weapon Group (Specialization) + Specific Weapon (Mastery)

Arcanum + Power Source (Specialization) + School (Mastery)

For example, a Swordsman with D4 in Melee Weapons, D8 in sword, and D4 in Short sword would roll 1D8+2D4 to determine *threat points* inflicted against a foe, which is the foundational mechanic of combat in ERP.

3) Defender chooses an Active Defense Pool. Armor and shield can reduce threat points penetrating the chosen defense pool, with any

remaining harm depleting passive defenses such as Toughness or Resilience.

In actual play, a single roll of Potential-Harm and the target choosing and reducing the appropriate Defense Pool should take less than 10 seconds (in the real world). See chart on next page for a visualization of this simple concept.

Multiple Attacks

A character can combine the dice of a combat-related Ability Branch into a single attack, or split the dice to make separate strikes. The weapon type limits the number of times the wielder can split the dice pool. A weapon's harm bonus applies to each separate die with multiple attacks unless otherwise noted, and the attacker may choose different targets within the weapon's range.

Drawing or sheathing a weapon, readying or loosing a shield, manipulating an item, standing up, or mounting/dismounting a steed all reduces the maximum number of attacks in a battle phase by one. If a weapon already wielded has a Max-Split of one, then doing any of the above forfeits an attack that round. Certain Specializations in Reflexes may override this restriction, such as "quick draw" Specializations. Some magic spells can also create multiple attacks of varying forms (see Magic section).

So, why would players want to split their attacks? Splitting attacks allows the targeting of multiple enemies within range, and allows the application of weapon-based harm bonuses several times.

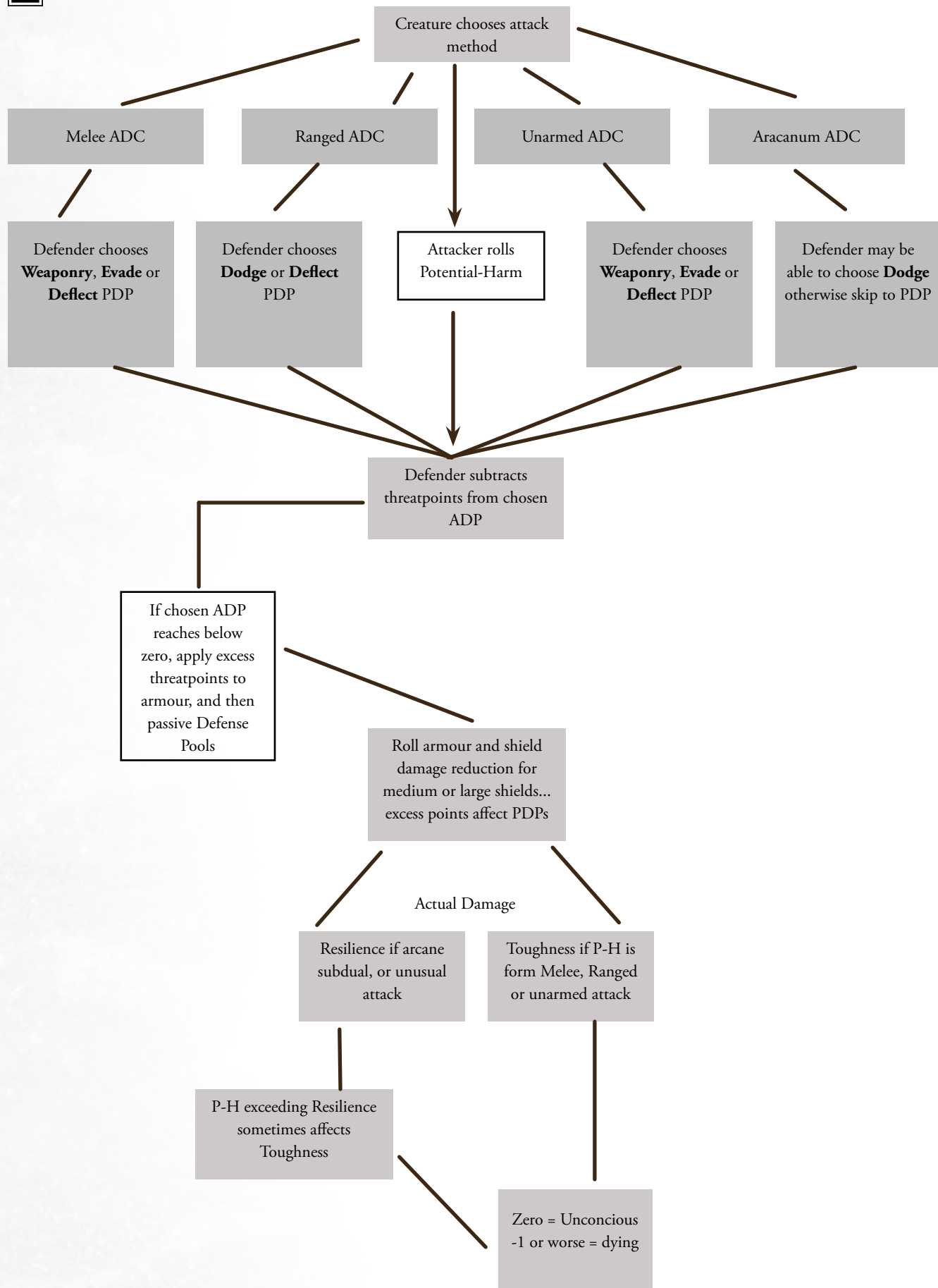
For example, Sir Hurtalot wields a Kris Knife, which has a max-split of 3. If Sir Hurtalot had an Ability Branch of Melee (D10) > Knife (D8) > Kris Knife (D4), he could split his ADC into as many as 3 separate die rolls, and add the knife's harm bonus of +1 to each attack.

While that may sound like a player would want to split all their attacks for the added bonuses, remember that the defender chooses defense after the attacker Potential-Harm for *each separate strike*. Splitting attacks means that each separate attack will tend to result in lower threat points, so damage reducers like armor and shields might easily block the separate attacks.

For example, our old friend Fred the Farmer has the following skill tree: Melee (D6) > Knife (D10) > Utility Knife (D8).

box text continued on page 29

Page 27: Design Note: Multiple-Attacks and Extra Attack. Don't confuse the ability to split weapon dice pools (when targeting several foes), with an extra action in the round. Multiple attacks usually depends on the weapon wielded, as well as the skill of the character. Another full attack is an advantage that must be purchased, or is part of a monster description. See the advantages section for more information.





He is wielding a large utility knife he uses around the farm with a +1 Harm Bonus. One of the wicked landowner's men is harassing him and Fred snaps, attacking the footman. The footman is wielding a mace, a large shield, and rather heavy armor D8. The following combat ensues:

Fred decides that he wants to get the max efficiency from his knife and decides to split his attacks. Max-Split on a utility knife is two. Fred decides to roll D6+D10 together, and D8 separately, and gets a 6, then 5 threat points. Fred adds a +1 to each for the knife bonus, for totals of 7 and 6. Let us assume the footman is suicidal and decides to use no active defenses whatsoever. Fred is emboldened, but for naught; to his frustration, the footman's large shield reduces each knife stroke by 2 threat points, bringing the incoming threat points to 5 and 4, respectively.

The footman gets to roll his armor against each separate attack, so rolls 1D8 twice, and gets a 5 and a 1. Thus, Fred's first strike is totally negated, but his second strike penetrates the armor with 3 threat points remaining. Fred's two attacks did only three points of damage, and the footman didn't even bother to defend himself!

Fred survives to his second round, opts for a new approach, and does not split his attacks. Rolling the same 3 dice results in a 15 total, and the +1 bonus for the knife for a 16. The footman will not risk absorbing that much damage with armor alone and parries with his sword, deciding to use his active defense pools. Fred may yet survive.

See flowchart on next page for a visual example:

Common Elements to Combat-Related abilities

Basic rank of D4 is automatically granted for Melee, Ranged, and Unarmed attacks. This is because anybody can pick up a large stick and swing it, throw stones, or punch another creature. Additional dice represent levels of Specialization or Mastery during an attack, increasing the Potential-Harm against an opponent, or the odds in some other contest of skill.

Only some combat related abilities add to one of the Active Defense Pools, including all ranks of the Melee (Weaponry), and only some branches of the Unarmed Combat ability. Ranged ability adds nothing to Active Defenses. Arcanum increases the character's Resilience score, but only adds to Active Defenses with certain types of spells used during play.

The following rules explain the major attack forms in greater depth.

Unarmed Attacks

Every humanoid creature has an automatic rank of D4 in Unarmed Combat, representing basic ability in fisticuffs, which is the ability to brawl, rather than the disciplined art of martial combat. Beasts and dangerous animals use Unarmed as the primary Threat Rank. Specializations include brawling, pugilism, martial arts, and wrestling/grappling.

Unarmed vs. Standard Hand-to-Hand Weapons

Note that an unarmed attacker normally sustains Potential-Harm equal to what he inflicts when parried by an armed foe. So, if one makes an unarmed attack against a swordsman for 8 threat points, then an equal 8 threat points are inflicted also on the attacker, directly affecting Toughness if not reduced by armor (with shield disallowed).

Martial Arts Specialization allows unarmed attacks and parries versus armed opponents. Such Specialization allows the character to fight with his hands and feet treated as lethal weapons. This allows a martial artist to use their Weaponry ADP even if they are unarmed! Even better, this Specialization allows the user to avoid taking Potential-Harm when a defender parries his unarmed attack with a melee weapon. Mastery in a particular Martial Art grants the user certain bonuses in battle. Note that a character can only use one Mastery form at a time in any given round, so bonuses are never cumulative.

Martial Arts Masteries include the following, and hold the listed advantages:

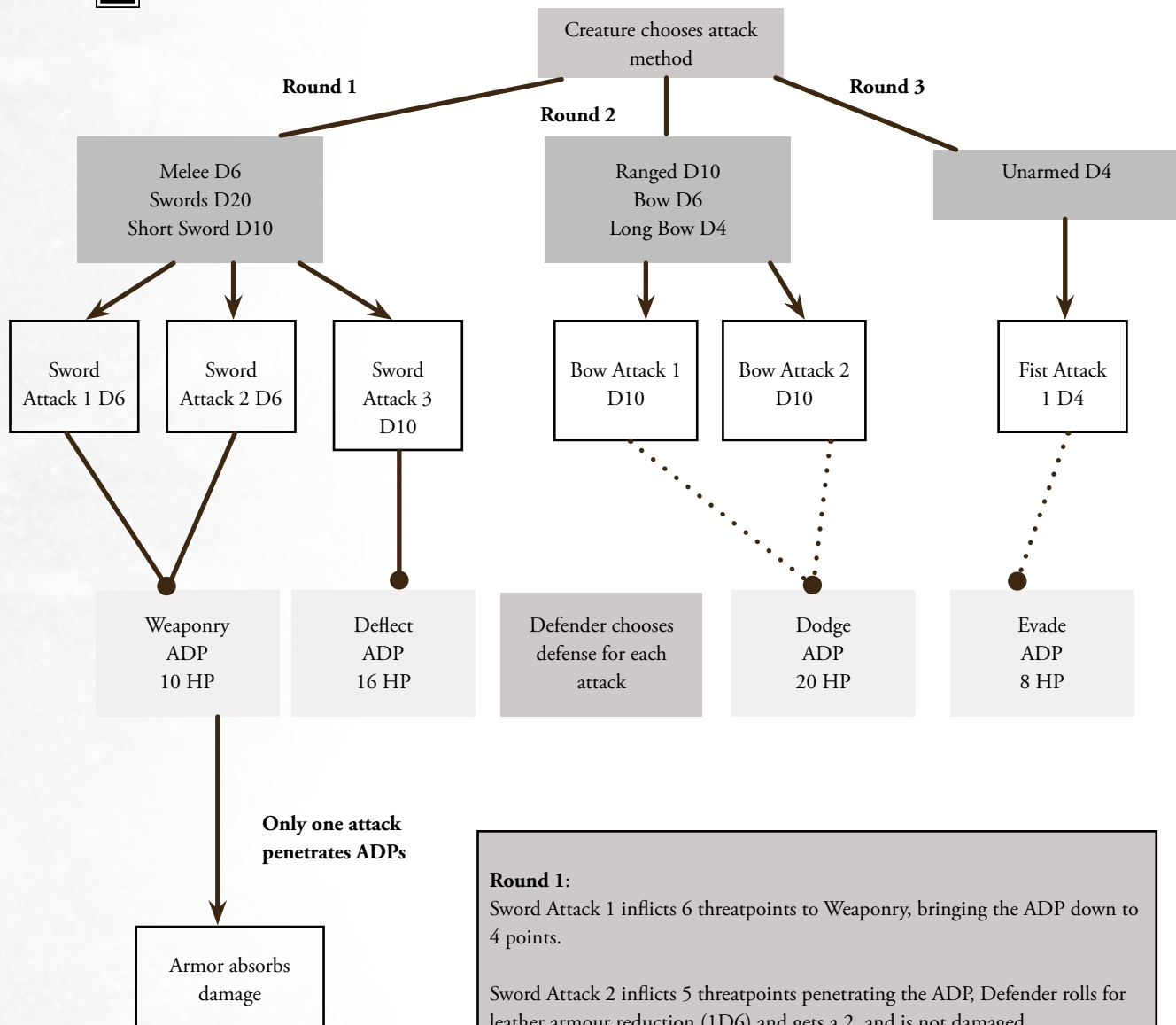
Karate: Harm Bonus +1 punch or +2 kick, Mastery Evade Bonus +4, Initiative bonus +1

Judo: Mastery Evade Bonus +6, +1 grapple, Initiative bonus +2.

Aikido: Mastery Defense Bonus +10, initiative bonus +4.

Kung Fu: Harm Bonus +3 (punch or kick), Mastery Evade Bonus +8

Grappling Specialization adds to Potential-Harm but also improves chances with wrestling maneuvers. In any case, a roll of Unarmed + Grappling (+ Mastery) versus an opponents Unarmed Die-Rank (+ Specializations and Masteries), determines whether the target has been grappled. If the attacker wins a second opposed-roll, the grappled opponent is pinned and unable

**Round 1:**

Sword Attack 1 inflicts 6 threatpoints to Weaponry, bringing the ADP down to 4 points.

Sword Attack 2 inflicts 5 threatpoints penetrating the ADP, Defender rolls for leather armour reduction (1D6) and gets a 2, and is not damaged.

Sword Attack 3 inflicts 6 threatpoints. This time the defender blocks the attack with a small shield, rather than parry. The threatpoints reducing the defenders deflect HP to 10.

Round 2:

Attacker retreats and uses Bow Attack 1, rolling maximum threatpoints of 10, depleting defenders Dodge by half.

Bow Attack 2 results in a 5, bringing Dodge down to 5 HP.

Attacker decides to drop his bow and sword, and attack with his fists (a stupid attacker in this case).

Round 3:

Fist Attack 1 results in 2 threatpoints. The defender decides to step aside from the Attack, using Evade. His remaining Evade HP is 6.



In the high passes of an icy fortress, friend and foe battle for supremacy

to evade until he breaks the hold. The attacker, once his target is completely pinned, can roll again to inflict non-lethal Potential-Harm, bypassing all ADP & armor. Use an opposed roll each round as grappling continues to see if the target breaks free of the hold. Such harm cannot bring a target below zero Toughness, excess threat points being lost, but can drive the target to unconsciousness. Note also that the attacker gets no ADP defense while grappling. He can choose to release his target at any time to regain his ADPs.

The MRV of the Brawling Specialization adds to the Toughness Die pool. This represents the robustness of a street brawler or berserker.

The MRV of the Pugilism Specialization adds to the Evade Die Pool. This represents the quickness and fancy footwork of a trained boxer.

In order to develop an unarmed fighter, a few points spread in each of the specialties can create the “feel” of just about any hand-to-hand fighting style. Masteries in grappling, brawling or pugilism need not be descriptive; to simply record “grappling Mastery” on the character sheet along with the Die-Rank should suffice. GMs who wish greater descriptive detail for those categories should find it easy to add such labels for the unarmed Mastery Die-Ranks.

Melee Attacks

Most humanoid creatures have at minimum a D4 rank in Melee ability, because nearly anybody can pick up an object and swing it as a weapon, whether a tree branch or a heavy sword. Characters

can make only a reckless attack using basic Melee, with no specific weapon bonuses added. A higher rank in basic melee represents either increasing brute force or speed, or an admixture, the precise interpretation depending on the character concept or monster description. This is why there are no purely combat-oriented “strength” or “precision” ability scores in the game. If a PC picks up a two-handed sword, he is strong enough to wield it. If the player makes his character a weakling who cannot wield a certain weapon, that is fine too. It may be that the PC prefers light, fast weapons, his Die-Ranks interpreted in terms of precision and finesse. Rules never trump character concepts.

Specialization grants skill with an entire group of weaponry, allowing harm and initiative bonuses for specific types of weapons brought into play, and Mastery in single, specific weapons grants the warrior even greater damage potential and defensive capabilities. A higher Die-Rank in Specialization or Mastery represents increasing brute force, speed, precision, or some blending of the three. Use the Weapons table in the equipment section to help determine the breakdown of what defines a Specialization and Mastery.

Add up the MRVs for the entire Melee ability tree to determine the Weaponry Active Defense Pool.

Ranged Attacks

Most humanoid creatures have at minimum a D4 rank in Ranged ability, because nearly anybody can pick up a rock and hurl it at a foe, and most heroes in a fantasy world ought to be familiar enough with conventional missile weapons to pick



Optional Rule: The GM may also handle cover and difficult shots by applying a (gasp) “to-hit” roll to the shot, using varying levels of challenge dice (see action system chapter). We advise against this because it’s very close to “called shots”, and players would wonder why they can’t name specific body parts as targets.

up the average short bow or crossbow and fire it. Some creatures use unusual ranged attacks, like the projectile quills of a manticores, or the acidic spit of a giant frog, or a giant who routinely rips trees out of the earth and hurls them at human pests. Making an attack using only basic Ranged rank is considered reckless (unless the creature is a beast using a natural weapon), and allows for no specific weapon bonuses. A higher rank in basic Ranged ability represents greater inborn talent, excellent eyesight and aim, or a combination of these, the precise interpretation depending on character concept.

Specialization grants skill with an entire group of missile weapons, allowing the harm bonuses of specific weapons into play. Mastery in single, specific missile weapons grants the missile weapon expert even greater damage potential. Higher Die-Ranks in Specialization or Mastery represent not only skill and aim, but also the honing of finesse and speed, natural talent, or all of the above. Ranged ability does not contribute to any Defense Pools.

Distance and Penalties

Distance can affect the *Potential-Harm* of a strike with a ranged weapon. Each weapon has its own short, medium and long-range statistics. Close to short range carries no penalties to a ranged attack. A shot at medium range imposes a penalty of -1 to the roll, while a shot at long range imposes a penalty of -2.

Partial to full cover can also create penalties to the Potential-Harm of the attacker. Each level of cover subtracts from the attacker’s threat points. It is possible to hit a target behind total cover, assuming the weapon used could penetrate the cover. For example, a long bow can easily penetrate a cheap wooden table. Note: Lying prone would provide the equivalent of Moderate Cover, but not allow for any Active DPs.

Minimal Cover (¼) - subtracts 1 point.

Moderate Cover (½) - subtracts 2 points.

Good Cover (¾) - subtracts 3 points.

Total Cover – subtracts 4 points and Potential-Harm is applied to the inanimate object first, as if it were an extra defense pool.

Arcane Attacks

Woe to any creature assailed by one gifted with arcane might! Luckily, not all creatures are capable of wielding magical power to attack their enemies. While some creatures are born with innate magical aptitude, knowledge of Arcanum alone is not enough to cast magic spells. Creatures with a

latent talent for magic must still specialize in using various sources of power before casting potent spells against their enemies (see Magic section, pp. 37).

The only exception are some monsters capable of attacking with innate, arcane powers, like a dragon’s fiery breath, or an energy bolt from the horn of a unicorn.

Most of the time, an arcane attack uses the Harm effect, which takes various forms, but works much like Melee, Unarmed, and Ranged; the attacker rolls Arcanum + Power Source (Specialization) + and sometimes School (Mastery) to determine Potential-Harm (see Magic section), with threat points mitigated by Resilience and Toughness, in that order.

Other magic attacks can incorporate effects like Curse, Influence, or Transmute. See the Magic section, page Xx, for further information on these effects.

Defense Pools

Defense Pools (DPs) are hit points divided into types of self-protective action, or are a measure of a creature’s general Toughness and Resilience. They are organized into “Active” and “Passive” types.

Active DP

Active DPs are the first line of defense a character can employ. Each represents something a character does to avoid Potential-Harm. It is typically parrying with a weapon, dodging, or deflecting with a shield. Determine all Defense Pool hit points values by the MRV of ranks in the relevant abilities, including the sum of Specializations and Masteries. Luckily, the character will find all of his Active Defenses fully refreshed and at 100% after officially escaping or ending combat.

Example: our daring hero Fred the Farmer survived his encounter with the King’s footman and is now on the run. He has since changed his name to Fred the Fierce. Fred has Melee Weapons at D6, Specialization in Knives at D10, and Mastery in Utility Knives at D8. Thus, Fred’s Weaponry Defense Pool is 24 hit points. That is, Fred can protect himself against 24 points of Potential-Harm per combat before getting bloody.

Note that one cannot combine two defense types to reduce the damage of a single strike. For example, a character cannot evade an attack while simultaneously parrying. A chosen defense pool must absorb *all* the damage, even if depleted to less than zero. In other words, one cannot choose to use only a few points from one or several Defense



Pools; it is all or nothing. Depletion beyond *zero* means the attacker penetrated the Active Defense. Luckily, armor normally reduces threat points exceeding the defenders chosen defense.

For clarification: A defending creature may choose 1 *Active DP* per separate strike of the attacker. If the opponent “splits” his dice pool for multiple strikes with the same weapon, then the defender may actively defend against each separate attack with different ADPs.

No hit point pool other than Toughness is reducible to negative numbers.

Once any Active Defense Pool reaches zero, it remains at that level until the character escapes combat, or uses the *revitalize* combat option.

Example: Fred the Fierce is trying to mitigate or cancel eight (8) points of Potential-Harm from a single attack from his foe. Fred has 4 DP points left in Weaponry, and 8 DP points left in Evade. He can choose to use the four (4) points left in Weaponry to parry, leaving 4 points of penetrating harm that must be stopped by his shield, armor, and Passive DPs, or he can choose to Evade, which would bring that DP down to zero.

Active Defense descriptions

Weaponry DP = MRV of Melee Tree (except Shield ranks).

This hit point pool represents defensive actions made with weapons to deflect a melee attack. This includes actions such as parry, entanglement (as with a length of chain or a whip), and keeping an opponent at bay by means of a reach weapon (such as with a polearm, bo-staff, or long spear). This category is the *abstract* score of a character’s overall knowledge of weapon-based defensive maneuvers.

The full point total of Weaponry ADP is usable by the creature regardless of weapon wielded. A creature may switch between weapons at will, but doing so never affects hit points—this is, admittedly, for the sake of simplicity (it is the authors’ opinion that subdividing this defense category further would overcomplicate things). However, switching weapons can affect Mastery bonuses for specific weapons. It is possible to begin combat with a weapon Mastery DP bonus granted by the weapon you are holding at the beginning of combat.

Once Weaponry hit points reach zero, the character is too exhausted to defend himself with his weapons and must find other means of protecting himself.

See the “Sacrifice” and “Revitalize” rules for options on how to replenish points during a battle. Refresh the pool fully after the character has officially escaped combat and had time to rest.

Example: A fighter character has the following ranks (bold adds to Weaponry DP). Add the base rank in Melee only once when determining Weaponry ADP hit points.

Melee **D4** > Swords **D8** > Longsword **D6**,
Greatsword **D4**
Melee D4 > Bludgeons **D4**

Weaponry Defense Pool = 26

Specific weapons add to the Weaponry Defense Pool during use, but only with Mastery. Add Mastery defensive bonuses to the DP total at the beginning of a combat. The extra hit points remain part of the Defense Pool throughout a combat situation, but a character dropping or discarding his weapon negates the mastered weapon defensive bonus.

This rule discourages players from beginning combat with a highly defensive weapon, adding the related bonus to his Weaponry ADP, and then immediately changing to a non-mastered weapon and gaining different bonuses.

Certain weapons may be limited in the capacity to deflect attacks from larger weapons. A utility knife cannot defend against a broad axe, for example. These situations should follow common sense, the arbitration of such left to the mind of the GM. Also, note that points from Shield Specialization or Mastery contribute to the Deflect DP rather than Weaponry DP.

Evade DP = MRV of Reflexes + Agility + Pugilism branch of Unarmed Combat.

This defense pool represents advanced close-combat evasion, by means of sudden or repeated shifts of place or position, as well as feints, or “rolling with the punches,” as well as evading most ranged attacks, all without significant movement. Such defense represents swashbuckling or acrobatic maneuvers, or as martial arts skill, whichever best fits the character concept.

A character cannot use this DP to evade magical attacks or area effect spells of any kind. Also, note that wearing medium armors only allow half of the Evade pool in a battle, and heavy armor would disallow it entirely.

Design Note: Evade versus Dodge. For clarification, one can evade or dodge ranged attacks, but one cannot dodge a close-combat or “point-blank range” attack. Also, characters can dodge some dangerous area effects, but cannot “evade” such things. Yes, it’s a semantic difference, but for the purposes of these rules, dodging involves more movement than evading.



Toxins (venoms, poisons, gasses, etc) and Diseases (plague, lycanthropy, etc.)

Like many other effects in the game, toxins and diseases are graded according to rank, from 1D4 through 2D12, but in some rare circumstances, when Resilience is at zero, the GM may require an Ability roll against Endurance, and if failed, death or some horrible curse occurs.

Magic Effects penetrating Resilience

Curse: Points exceeding Resilience wasted, but target fully affected by curse.
Damage: Points exceeding Resilience bypasses armor and directly deplete Toughness.
*Influence: Points exceeding Resilience wasted, but target fully enspelled.
Transmute: Points exceeding Resilience wasted, but target cannot resist transmutation.

*This could mean distracted, stunned, dominated mentally or physically, or incapacitated.

Deflect DP = Base Melee MRV + Shield branch + Magic Protect.

The Deflect active defense pool uses the base Melee skill MRV as its base, because any creature can pick up an appropriate makeshift object and use it as a shield. Note that this defense pool is not designed as a substitute for weapon parries, which is covered by the "weaponry" DP (the GM should allow exceptions only rarely). However, it is possible to specialize in the Shield Melee Ability, as well as master certain kinds of shields. Always add the shield Specialization ranks to the Deflect DP rather than to Weaponry.

Holding a small shield increases this hit point pool by 50%, while holding a large shield decreases it by 50% (but larger shields add to passive damage reduction; see *shields*). The arcane effect *Fortify* can increase Deflect, augment a held shield, or create a moving force shield (but such defense is not automatic; the defender must declare magical deflection against each attack).

Dodge DP = MRV of Speed + Agility.

This defense pool represents avoidance of harm by means of sudden bursts of movement, and is a measure of how well a character can anticipate and move his body out of the path of danger. Characters can dodge missile weapons, dangerous area spells or explosions, or a charging foe (such as a knight charging on horseback).

This maneuver cannot be used to reduce the Potential-Harm of close-combat attacks (whether melee or unarmed). Dodging while engaged in close combat provokes an opportune attack, with few exceptions (see below). In addition, this defense form assumes the character moves a distance greater than 5' (or 1 square or hex on a battle mat), so the defender must have somewhere to run to, which is impossible in a confined space.

When dodging area effects, the character must run to some point outside the radius in any direction. Movement in ERP is usually abstract, so the GM must determine whether this is possible. A good rule of thumb is to compare the spell's radius with the character's Speed or Move Rank $\times 2$. If the speed or move score is equal to the radius, the character can dodge to reduce damage. If not, he cannot move fast enough to dodge. When dodging missile weapons, boulders, or ranged magical bolts no wider than 5' diameter (all of which must have some visible and tangible component to dodge), the character must move at least 5 feet, or else half the threat points automatically bypass the dodge DP.

Passive Defense Descriptions

Resilience Defense Pool = MRV of Resistance $\times 2$ + Willpower + Arcanum tree.

This hit point pool represents mental, physical, and psychic resistance to Potential-Harm of a mystic, supernatural, primordial, or psychogenic origin (see Magic section). It also mitigates harm from toxins, extreme climatic conditions, natural forces such as fire and lightning, mental dominance or psychic infiltration, and diseases including lycanthropy. It cannot mitigate harm from physical melee, ranged, or unarmed attacks.

The cumulative value of a character's Arcanum ability tree adds to this total. This is because arcane knowledge empowers the soul and thus generates an invisible shield against many natural and magical forces.

Once this hit point pool reduces to zero, the character becomes vulnerable to all sorts of nasty effects, especially magic spells of influence. Some forms of attack exceed the Resilience DP with all excess threat points lost, causing a range of unfortunate effects (like stunning, mental domination or even incapacitation). Other forms of attack penetrate Resilience and then reduce Toughness.

Normally, dropping below zero in this DP does *not* cause one to drop unconscious. However, some circumstances do cause unconsciousness; principally through magical Influence effects. Most creatures recover Resilience hit points at a rate of 10% of their maximum hit points every hour of waking, or 20% each hour of sleep (always round up).

Toxins, climatic conditions, natural forces, and diseases will deplete Toughness after reducing Resilience beyond zero. Some magical effects will affect Toughness after penetrating Resilience, while other effects have their threat points dissipate once reducing Resilience to zero. See the magic effects for information.

Toughness DP = MRV of Endurance $\times 2$ + Resistance + Brawling.

Toughness is a measure of how much physical punishment a character can take before dropping unconscious or dying. A character is unconscious at zero Toughness. In such a case, he can survive Potential-Harm up to a negative number equal to MRV of Endurance + Resistance ability. Thus, one with Endurance and Resistance totals of 8 will die at -8, and so on.



Damage bringing a creature below zero Toughness causes bleeding at a rate of 1 point per round until somebody successfully administers first aid using magic or the Heal skill. This DP recovers 1 hit point per day of rest or 2 hit points per day of total bed rest, unless aided by magic or healing ability.

Order of Defenses

1. Target chooses one Active Defense (weaponry, evade, dodge, or deflect). Reduce DP by threat points. However, if chosen active defense is exceeded, go to step two.

2. Move on to Passive Defenses.

(a) Reduce Resilience DPs, if type of harm is magic, toxins, and extreme climatic conditions, natural forces such as fire and lightning, or disease.

(b) Roll for Armor damage reduction, if the target wears any armor. Apply passive Shield damage reduction, unless using a target or buckler (small) shield. Note that no armor or shield can reduce or stop damage caused by nonphysical, elemental, spiritual, or psychogenic attack forms, which generally are those depleting Resilience before penetrating into Toughness.

(c) Reduce Toughness DP by any threat points penetrating resilience and armor.

Note on "called shots" and critical damage: Attacks at specific body parts simply cannot succeed if an Active DP absorbs the threat points. In general, the spirit of the ERP rules do not support specific, gruesome damage results. Exceptions are up to the discretion and imagination of the GM, but note that no "hit-location" system is encouraged or recommended.

Special Combat Maneuvers

Opportunistic Attack [*Melee weapons, Unarmed. No ability check required.*] An attack of opportunity allows the PC or NPC an extra, single attack with the full Ability Branch against his target. This is a free attack action at close range with a melee weapon or using unarmed combat skill (not ranged or with magic). Use this option in four circumstances:

- 1) An opponent turns his back in close combat while running away at full speed, without any attempt at performing a tactical withdrawal. No Active DP is possible in this case;
- 2) The opponent uses a ranged attack at point-blank range against an armed foe (if the character is not a master of the ranged weapon they are using);

3) One attacking unarmed with no martial arts Specialization attacks an armed foe;

4) A magic spell cast when engaged in close combat. The spell is not disrupted unless the magic-user takes damage directly to the *Toughness DP*.

Sacrifice: Pump any Active DP

A creature may, at any time during the round and as a free action, temporarily "sacrifice" any number of Melee or Martial Arts Specializations or Masteries to bolster Weaponry Defense. A character may also sacrifice a Die-Rank of Pugilism Specialization to bolster Evade, but cannot do both in the same round. Add the MRV of the sacrificed Specialization or Mastery Die-Ranks to the associated Defense Pool. A character cannot sacrifice basic Die-Ranks. Points added in this manner may exceed the normal hit point maximum for the ADP. A character may reinstate the sacrificed Die-Ranks after combat ends, or after 10 minutes of rest, whichever happens first. Any points exceeding the normal max of the DP vanish after the battle.

However, do not adjust a Defense Pool downward after reinstating the Die-Ranks after a battle. Sacrificing ability ranks in this temporary manner does not lower the *maximum* score of any Defense Pool, so restorative magic always operates in the same manner.

It is simply, in semantic terms, transference of skilled energy. The character's Potential-Harm is thus lowered until the combat ends, and cannot be brought back even with a Revitalize maneuver. Not even a Restore Spell can "reinstate" sacrificed dice in the same combat round (see Magic system).

For example Fred the Fierce "sacrifices" his Mastery of D8 in Utility Knife and adds 8 temporary points to the Weaponry Defense Pool. He adds 8 points to Weaponry ADP, but cannot add a Utility Knife Mastery Die-Rank roll to a Potential-Harm check until the next combat.

Magic Sacrifice: Pump Magic Resistance

A spell caster may, at any time during the round and as a free action, temporarily sacrifice Die-Ranks in any Arcanum Specializations or Masteries, adding the MRV(s) to Resilience PDP. This act represents an explosive redirection of magical energy into pure defensive means, and points added in this manner may exceed the normal hit point maximum.

Sacrificing Mastery ranks still allows for spell casting of known spells, but this act reduces

Design Note: Armor. We played with all sorts of variations on armor simulation. Armor represented by yet another hitpoint pool was too much bookkeeping. Static damage reduction has its place, but would either be too effective or afford too little protection, each option offering little variation. Trust that random determination of armor effectiveness is best. Change this rule at the risk of game balance.



Design Note: Instant Death Effects. There are none, and we advise against introducing them because of the spirit of the game. This is a system of epic fantasy. However, if you want a grim game of desperation, it only takes a few changes...like eliminating the multipliers on Passive Defense Pools.



A rooftop prowler takes a fall

effectiveness in terms of ability checks and Potential-Harm. Sacrificing a magic Specialization cuts the arcanist off from casting any spells written for use with that power source until reinstating the dice. If there are any points exceeding the normal max of the DP once the danger ends, extra points vanish.

However, if the DP is lower than its max, do not adjust downward after reinstating the sacrificed dice. A character cannot sacrifice the basic Arcanum rank. Sacrificing ability ranks in this temporary manner does not lower the maximum score of Resilience, so restorative magic always operates in the same manner. A character may reinstate the sacrificed Die-Ranks after combat ends, or after ten minutes of rest, whichever happens first

Revitalize

A combatant may choose to forego an action for that round to rest and “revitalize” his Active DPs, regaining some strength and vitality. If the character is engaged in hand-to-hand or melee combat, he must perform a tactical withdrawal *before* attempting the *revitalize* combat option. A character *revitalizes* his Defense Pools by rolling the dice associated with each Active DP and adds the

results to each corresponding hit point total. If attacked during the round, this action fails. A creature cannot perform any other action (other than free actions) in conjunction with revitalizing.

Revitalize rolls (roll for result once for each DP):

Weaponry Defense = roll Melee + Specializations + Masteries

Evade Defense Pool = roll Reflexes + Agility + Pugilism branch

Dodge Defense Pool = roll Speed + Agility

Deflect Defense Pool = roll Melee + Shield Specialization & Mastery (does not replenish extra hit points from Arcane sources)

Hazard Rules

Collision (falls, boulders, etc.)

Falling causes damage equal to 10 hit points for every 10' fallen, with Resilience and then Toughness the only defenses. For objects falling or slamming into a living creature, the GM should assign 4, 6, 8, 10, or 12 points of damage for every 10' fallen, depending on size, weight, velocity, and circumstance. Do not bother with complex formulas for this. Allow the Dodge or Evade defense for most of these types of Harm, before depleting from Toughness. Resilience will never apply in the case of crushing damage.

Weather (heat, cold, etc.)

Bad weather conditions can create situations of penalties to ability checks, while extreme weather can damage creatures directly, bypassing all Active Defenses. The GM may assign random damage per round, as with terrible heat or cold, or a flat number of damage points for situations like lightning strikes or tornadoes. The range is usually anywhere from 1 point to 36 points (1d4 through 3D12), but in some rare circumstances, when Resilience is at zero, the GM may require an Ability roll against Endurance, and if failed, death occurs.



Chapter 4

Magic System



Study of Arcanum grants understanding of the occult and magic spells. An arcanist, by tapping into one of several magical sources of power, is able to channel this energy into spells, or create magic items, by means of incantation, foci, or ritual. All spells shape magic energy, regardless of the source of power, in accordance with the will of the arcanist, and within the limits of those powers, following mystical axioms written into the very fabric of reality.

Specializations are in sources of magic power. An arcanist can only cast spells created for the power sources he knows. He can, however, identify written spells, runes, ritual formulas, understand spell craft in general and, with a simple cantrip, detect magic emanations of any power source. A first level arcanist cannot specialize in more than one magical source of power, as each represents a tremendous amount of training and background.

There are no restrictions on learning different power sources at later levels, but the GM should allow such only with proper training from a suitable mentor within the story, in addition to character points spent. The sources of power are further broken down into Masteries, which are in different schools of the arcane. Arcanists create spells for specific schools, and always for a single power source.

Magic schools are useful for categorizing spells, but remember magic users can cast any spell listed under their known power sources, regardless of the school. This means that an Elementalist and Druid have the same access to spells of the Primordial power source, just as the Theurgist and Sorcerer can both cast spells linked to the Supernatural power source. There is good reason to master a school, however. One who has Mastery in the proper school can add the extra Die-Rank to a magic-related Ability Check, Potential-Harm, or both.

There may be cultural- or campaign-specific penalties for casting spells that violate a certain “character concept,” such as when a priest violates the strictures of his deity, but such penalties are under the domain of the GM.

Sources of Power

- Mystic study – Includes all thaumaturgy, alchemy, and magic item creation. Mystics are people who learn their spells by means of hard study, their approach being more scientific. The core schools of Mastery include wizards, alchemists, and artificers.

- Supernatural connection – Includes all summoning and channeling, the practitioners drawing upon its magic always dealing with a higher, or extraplanar being, be it an angel or devil, spirits of the dead, or the gods themselves. Core schools of Mastery include Theurgy or Sorcery, and both are called “Summoners.”

- Primordial connection – Includes elementalism, shamanism, or any magic drawing upon natural forces. It is akin to divine connection, but focused rather on the elements and nature. Core school Masteries include Druids (nature priests) and Elementalists.

- Psychogenic (psi) – All beings with psychic powers fall into this category. Although their power is internal, these creatures are not beholden to a philosophy or spiritual agent, their power springing rather from training and skill. Core schools of Mastery include Mentalists (telepaths), or Psychokinetic characters (such as martial artists with special powers).

Spell Points (SP)

An arcanist uses spell points to cast spells.

The number of spell points a magic user has is determined by adding up the MRV of Arcanum plus all Specializations and Masteries. 10% of that value is regained every hour of waking, or 20%



Optional rule: If you want to make magic even more powerful without seriously breaking game balance, remove the challenge roll for spell casting. Dice will still be rolled to determine spell point cost and effectiveness. Some GMs will see this as too generous. Well then, eliminate the challenge roll for spells that fall under a character's mastered school. For example, Faolan is specialized in the mystic arts, but has mastered the school of wizardry. He must make a skill check to cast any enchanter's spell (enchantment falls under the mystic sphere), but can cast any wizard spell freely.

each hour of sleep (always round up). Cost is listed either in each spell description as the sum of the ability roll, or as "result minus lowest die roll." A failed spell costs no spell points.

An arcanist may choose to reduce the effectiveness of a spell by eliminating dice from his ability check, which in turn lowers the spell point cost. Of course, for spells requiring a difficulty check, this also lowers the chances for success.

Example: Rosalee the half-elven mage has Arcanum D8, Mystic Specialization at D6, and Primordial Specialization at D4. Her spell points are 18. She regains 4 spell points an hour while asleep, or 2 points during hours of waking.

Spell Casting and Point Cost

Calculating spell point cost is easy:

Spells that target a single object or creature—including the caster himself, or his own possessions—costs a number of spell points equal to Ability check result, minus the lowest die roll.

Spells that target an area-of-effect will cost a number of spell points equaling the sum of the Ability check.

There is one exception; Protection spells costs the cumulative Die-Rank MRV of additional armor provided to recipients. Therefore, if an arcanist casts a protective spell on a warrior, granting him a magical force field of 1D8 value, the spell costs him 8 Spell Points. If he casts a spell providing three warriors with magical force fields of 1d4 power, the spell would cost 12 points.

To cast a spell, the arcanist rolls his Arcanum ability, plus Specialization (remember that without Specialization, spells cannot be cast), and any Mastery, if possessed and called for by the spell itself. The GM chooses the Challenge Rank based on the range and rolls the indicated number of dice against the caster, with tie or high roll going to the caster. Harm spells require no action check. A failed spell costs no spell points.

An arcanist who casts a spell but has no spell points to spend will deplete his Resilience Defense Pool. The spell will work this way, but it is fatiguing, and can leave him more vulnerable to many magical effects. If Resilience reaches zero, the mage falls unconscious. Spell point costs exceeding Resilience deplete Toughness and do real internal damage, perhaps killing the magic user.

INDIVIDUAL SPELLS: Source, Range, and effect.

The arcanist can bend reality, but cannot break it. These rules known to all arcanists are the Effects. The Effects are axioms that delimit the use of magic, forming the foundation for all magic schools. These Effects are the basic templates for all spells in the game.

Any spell is made up of six components: the magic source (Specialization), the underlying magic effect (Effect), a specific school of magic (Mastery), the form or appearance of the effect (matter or energy), the range (single subject or area), and what the spell affects, whether a specific ability, defense pools, free will, physical form, and so on. Artificers and Alchemists follow slightly different rules, discussed later (see magic item creation section).

For example, Infernal Bolt =

Supernatural—Harm—Unhallowed Energy—Single creature—Resilience/Toughness.

This spell requires the caster to be specialized in the Supernatural power source. Its range affects a single creature in line-of-sight, the effect one of Harm, which depletes the target's Resilience and then Toughness with unhallowed energy.

The Effects common to all spells in the game are Augment, Conjure/Banish, Curse, Fortify, Harm, Influence, Obscure, Perceive, Protect, Restore, Travel, and Transmute.

Spell "forms" are used mostly for descriptive purposes, and include Matter (elemental manifestations), Creature (creature manifestations, whether terrestrial or supernatural), or different forms of Energy. Forms of matter include gas, liquid or solids, or elemental manifestations such as fire, water, air, earth, or combinations thereof, like ice or lightning. Creature includes living or supernatural beings organized by monster type (see creating new spells). Arcanists categorize pure magic energy into several types, including "positive," "negative," "psychic," or "necromantic."

Spell ranges include a Single Subject (including self, single creature, or single object), or Area-Effect.

A spell's "aspect" designates which characteristic of the target is affected. It is usually an ability (including those used as Potential-Harm), a creature type, an item type, or concerning some aspect affecting personal protection, including Defense Pools or armor. Some spells have the



potential to affect more than one aspect at a time, such as Harm spells that deplete Resilience and then Toughness in succession. Other spells can target a wide range of abilities, but usually a spell names one aspect per magical effect.

There are also cantrips, minor spells that do not incorporate a powerful effect, created for general use under a Power Source, without reference to a specific school of Mastery (like Wizard, or Sorcerer, or Elementalist, or Psychic). Cantrips are described after the master list of Effects.

Spell Difficulty

As mentioned above, the GM chooses the Challenge Rank based on the range and rolls the indicated number of dice against the caster, with tie or high roll going to the caster. **Harm spells require no action check, and a failed spell costs no spell points.**

Spell Range and Difficulty dice:

Single Subject

Self: roll vs. 1D4

*Object within line-of-sight: roll vs. 1D6

*Creature within line-of-sight: roll vs. 2D4

Area-Effect

*Many subjects (objects or creatures) 2D6

Conjuration

Single Creature, Item, or controlled energy = ADC of creature, item ranks, or energy ranks.

* There is no ability check required for Harm spells.

Spell types, Casting Time, and Duration

There are two kinds of spells: incantations (or psychogenic mantras), activated on the caster's initiative phase, or rituals, which require more time to cast.

Incantations are normal spells and have two durations: **maintainable** and **instantaneous**. Duration is determined at the time of spell creation, limited by the type of effect, not the casting time. Maintainable spells activate immediately, or on the target's next action (whichever makes more sense), and can be maintained, paying ½ the spell point cost in the second and subsequent rounds of full effect, without need of re-rolling the ability check. Most spells are incantations.

Instantaneous Duration: Conjure/Dismiss, Harm, Restore, Transmute

Maintainable Duration: Augment, Curse, Fortify, Obscure, Influence, Perceive, Protect, Travel

Rituals require rounds, hours, days, or weeks to cast. The duration of a ritual equals the amount of casting time, which is a minimum of one round of preparation. Therefore, an arcanist who performs a one-round ritual to summon a demon will have that infernal minion available for one round before it vanishes. Rituals use the same rules for range and difficulty and spell point cost, with two exceptions. First, there is no such thing as an "instantaneous" ritual spell. Secondly, the units of time used in the arcanist's ritual determine the frequency of the spell's maintenance cost. For example, if an arcanist spent a week performing a ritual casting, then his maintenance cost is weekly.

In rituals requiring a day or more to cast, halve the *initial* spell point cost.

An arcanist may use only two Effects as rituals, increasing the spell's duration: These are Conjure and maintainable Travel spells. Artificers use the Enchant Item ritual (see magic item creation rules, pp.). Other Effects are too volatile to cast as rituals, so say the sages.

The GM can add other maintainable effects to the list, but should do so with extreme caution, to preserve game balance.

An arcanist attacked while maintaining one or more spells must make a Willpower check, his target number equals the total threat points sustained. Failing this, all maintained spells instantly fizzle out. Note that an arcanist can use an Active Defense against a normal attack while casting, even if maintaining several spells at once. The arcanist can forgo the Willpower check if he fully mitigates the attacker's Potential-Harm.

Learning Spells

Grimoires organize spells by Power Source, then school. Most arcanists learn individual spells as derived from those lists, or can create new spells themselves. Arcanists call spells cast using the Psychogenic power source "mantras." They memorize Psychogenic mantras rather than record them in Grimoires, but still must follow the rules restricting maximum number of spells known. For the sake of simplicity, "spells" refers to incantations, mantras, and rituals.

Learning New Spells

A first level arcanist learns a number of spells in each Specialization equal to half his power source MRVs (D4 is two, D6 is 3, D8 is 4, D10 5, and D12 6). For example, one who has specialized in

Instant spells are not strictly maintainable into subsequent rounds, but the caster can recast the next round, and if the ability check succeeds, the effect may *appear* continuous to onlookers. For example, an elementalist creates a firestorm in the first round of battle. In the second round, she recasts her spell, succeeds, and pays the spell point cost again. To those in the area of effect, the hellish blaze appears and feels uninterrupted.



Optional rule. GMs may wish to ignore limits on the number of spells known, allowing arcanists to cast any spell discovered, while still gaining one free spell each level. This does cut down on bookkeeping, and inflicts no harm on game balance. The current limits on known spells assumes a background milieu where magic is not overly common.

Mystic power sources at D8 can learn four related spells. If Rosalee tapped into the Primordial power source at D4, she would know six spells (four in one school and two in the other). The player can pick spells from the master list or generate new ones.

Picking up ranks or new Specializations at higher levels increases the maximum number of spells known, but does not automatically grant new spells. All power sources assume training, whether by college or individual mentor. However, the maximum number of spells known increases by one with every level of experience achieved. Also, the arcanist learns a bonus spell each level, assuming some rest, downtime, and proximity to a city for learning.

The arcanist can pick from a list or generated anew, waiving the normal time requirements (because the arcanist was developing the spell in the past). GMs need not be militant about judging such time, but if in the wilderness, an arcanist cannot obtain bonus spells until the character returns to civilization.

Creating New Spells

An arcanist has the option of creating new spells at first level (the # of spells up to the maximum of $\frac{1}{2}$ MRV for each Specialization), or when granted a bonus spell upon gaining a level. These bonus spells are useable immediately by the character, and assumes a certain amount of study, thought and resources.

Otherwise, creating new spells requires access to the right kind of arcane library and/or teachers. Again, the ERP milieu assumes relatively easy access to such places if belonging to the correct societal orders. Creating new spells (outside of 1st level picks or advancement bonus spells) requires Mastery in the school for which the spell is created, and assumes 1 week of study per increasing range category, plus whatever monetary requirements decided by the GM.

To create a spell:

Players should list spells on the character sheet in the following format:

Source-School-effect(s)-Form(s)-Range-Aspect

For example:

Increase Stealth:

Mystic/Wizard/Augment/Energy(P)/

Creature/Ability.

To create a new spell:

1) Choose Power Source (mystical, supernatural, primordial, psychogenic). Only arcanists possessing the spell's related Power Source Specialization can cast the spell.

2) Choose associated Mastery School (either those listed in the core rules, or as permitted by GM). PCs possessing the specified Mastery add another Die-Rank to the ability roll. For example, a player could create a spell under the Mystic power source, designed for either a Wizard or an Alchemist in mind. Both types of arcanists could cast the spell, but only one of them could add his Mastery Die-Rank to the ability check or to Potential-Harm.

3) Choose Effect and range. Using an effect template (see Effects Master List), the arcanist should decide on the spell's range and duration. The creator of the spell cannot alter the power source, school, or range when adding a second magical effect.

Range maximums are as follows: Area Spells: $2 \times$ MRV of the relevant Power Source Specialization in diameter (add Mastery if applicable). The point of origination up to $10 \times$ MRV of Power Source, in line of sight. Single subject spells: no greater than 5' diameter, with the maximum distance equal to $\text{MRV} \times 2$ Power Source in feet, always in line-of sight.

4) If there is a sub-effect tier used—such as with Influence or Transmute Effects—then pick the spells' tier of power, ranging from rank D4 up through D12. The arcanist must possess the same Die-Rank in the spell's power source to create or cast such a spell. For example, a wizard creates an Influence spell that can Control the Mind of his target. That sub-effect requires the Die-Rank of creator and caster both to be D10 or greater (see Influence effect for a point of reference).

5) Choose the Effect's form, for descriptive purposes. Forms of matter include gas, liquid or solids in elemental manifestations such as fire, water, air, earth, or combinations thereof, like ice or lighting. Decide on forms of energy based on the power sources (mystic, primordial, supernatural, or psychogenic), but most spells take one of four forms; "positive," "negative," "psychic," or "necromantic." Players use this category for the sake of description, but the form can have greater effect when two elements are naturally opposed to each other. For example, the GM may rule



that fire spells do extra Potential-Harm against ice elementals (GMs, note that such detail is part of an individual monster's description).

6) Choose the aspect of the target affected by the spell. This could be an ability check, a defense pool, or one subtype of Influence (see Influence Effect). Note that unwilling creatures like zombies are naturally exempt from "control" or "distract" type Influence spells. Sometimes which aspect of the target is affected is implied by the effect description. Harm spells always affect Resilience and then Toughness for a single creature or all creatures in the area of effect.

There is no spell point cost to create a spell; just roll Arcanum + power source + school versus Extreme Difficulty (2D12). Repeat for any additional effects added to the spell. Skip the difficulty roll if it is a newly created character or a bonus spell (or require a single roll in such cases for a multi-effect spell). Failing the roll means a waste of resources, but grants a +4 to the next attempt in an equal amount of time. Automatic success does not apply to spell creation. Record the spell in the character's Grimoire, not exceeding maximum number of spells known for that Power Source Specialization.

When creating a summoning spell, follow these steps:

Conjure effect rank Prerequisites:

D4: only "fodder" may be summoned.

D6: able to augment summoned creature with Extra Resilience, Improved battle phase, equipment or size.

D8: able to summon *standard* monsters. Mastery in spell's school allows summoning of preternatural creatures.

D10: caster can create spell incorporating improved battle phase, equipment or size of standard creature.

D12: able to summon Exceptional creatures.

Mastery in spell's school allows summoning of legendary creatures. Improve creature's battle phase, equipment or size.

Creating Summoning Spells

A). Choose creature's basic Die-Rank. This is the first part of the spell cost. A D4 creature costs 4 spell points, D6 costs 6, and so on. Maintenance cost on a conjuration spell is always ½ per round after initial casting, or follows the ritual casting rules. Caster can summon forth as many creatures as affordable through spell points, but it can be no more than one creature per round (except host conjuration spells, see below).

B). Choose the summoned creature's power

level; "Fodder, Standard, or Exceptional." This determines the maximum number of dice rolled with a primary attack (fodder 1D, standard 2D, and exceptional 3D). Fodder requires D4 minimum rank in power source, Standard a D8, and Exceptional a D12.

Summoning a standard (2 dice) or exceptional creature (3 dice) costs the cumulative MRV of the additional dice. Therefore, a D4 fodder costs 4 spell points, but a standard 2D4 creature costs 8 spell points, and an exceptional 3D4 creature costs 12 spell points. Remember, fodder do not benefit from harm bonuses based on weapon type.

A standard or extraordinary creature can gain the harm bonus and initiative bonus of the weapon wielded, for a price. If the creature wields a weapon, add the cost based on the harm bonus, initiative, or Mastery bonus, whichever is greater. Alternatively, the spell description can forgo a weapon for the summoned creature, adding no SP cost to the spell (assumed unarmed as primary attack). See table below.

+1 (harm bonus of +1, Mastery bonus* of 5 hp or init bonus* of +1, or armor bonus of D6)

+2 (harm bonus of +2, Mastery bonus* of 10 hp or init bonus* of +2, or armor bonus of D8)

+3 (harm bonus of +3, Mastery bonus* of 15 hp or init bonus* of +3, or armor bonus of D10)

+4 (harm bonus of +4, Mastery bonus* of 20 hp or init bonus* of +4, or armor bonus of D12)

* Choose the SP cost based on the highest value in this category for a weapon wielded. If there is a natural attack harm bonus, due to claws or teeth, then add SP value based on this.

Set the Spell Difficulty based on the summoned creature's primary attack form (its highest attack rank, and number of dice). Therefore, an extraordinary creature of 3D10 Rank would require a summoner to roll versus a 3D10, using his Arcanum, aided by whatever Specialization and Mastery the specific spell or ritual calls for.

There is only one range for any summoning spell, and that is "creature," meaning the monster is summoned within line of sight, and materializes at the chosen point of origination. The point of origination (or appearance) can be anywhere within sight, up to 10 x MRV of the caster's relevant ADC.

D). Choose the creature's type. In order to summon a preternatural creature, the arcanist must be a master of conjuration with at least a D4 rank, and to summon a legendary creature, he must

Optional Rule: There is a lot of complexity written into the summoning rules. This is for gamers who enjoy such structure. However, there is another, very simple way of handling summoning spells for experienced gamers. Create a spell called "summon mystic creature", or "summon supernatural creature" (name any power source). For example, if an arcanist has D10 in Arcanum, D10 in Primordial, and D6 in Summoning school, then he can summon any elemental creature with up to 26 hitpoints, and up to 2D10+D6 damage potential. Improvise the rest, based on fantasy tropes and the chapter on encounter generation. The spell point cost would equal the total MRV of the damage potential (26 points). Improvise the rest.



Angel: Legendary type and exceptional rank.	be a master with at least D6 in conjuration. For example, one with Arcanum D12 > Mystic D12 > Summoner D8 could summon a dragon.
Animal: Mundane type, fodder to exceptional rank.	
Aquatic: Mundane type, fodder to exceptional rank.	E) Size. After determining type, choose a subtype from the monster list, or make up a new creature with the GM's approval. Choose an appropriate size for the creature.
Demon: Legendary type, exceptional rank.	
Dragon: Legendary type, exceptional rank.	
Fey: Preternatural to Legendary type, standard to exceptional rank.	Medium: no extra cost. Large: + 2 SP (× 2 HP) Huge: +4 SP (× 3 HP) Gargantuan: +6 SP (× 4 HP) Colossal: +8 SP (×5 HP)
Giant: Mundane type, standard to exceptional rank.	
Humanoid: Mundane type, fodder to exceptional rank.	F) Battle Phase: Basic speed augmentation +1 SP for every category above "average." fair: D6 +1 SPs good: D8 +2 SPs great: D10 +3 SPs superb: D12 +4 SPs incredible: D16 +5 SPs legendary: D20 +6 SPs
Eldritch Beast: Preternatural type, fodder to exceptional rank.	
Extraplanar: Preternatural to legendary type, exceptional rank.	G) Other augmentations. x2 to HP = +25% to cost x3 to HP = +50% to cost x4 to HP = +75% to cost x5 to HP = +100% to cost
Plant: Mundane to preternatural type, fodder to exceptional rank.	
Shapechanger: Preternatural or legendary type, standard to exceptional rank.	x2 to RS = 10% to cost x3 to RS = 20% to cost x4 to RS = 30% to cost x5 to RS = 40% to cost
Undead: preternatural to legendary type, fodder to exceptional rank.	
Vermin: Mundane, fodder only.	

So a creature normally costing 12 points, (1.00), x4 to Toughness DP (.75), and x2 to Resilience DP (.10), would cost 22 spell points.

base 1.00 plus .75, plus .10 = 1.85.

$12 * 1.85 = 22.2$. Round down for a CS of 22.

The bonuses to a creature's Resilience and HP below are slightly different from the standard monster creation methods, but pertain only to summoned creatures.

Legendary type creature (requires D12 summoner Mastery rank): + 12 (×4 HP & RS). Attacks ignore normal and preternatural armor.

Preternatural type creature (requires D8 summoner Mastery rank): +10 (×2 HP & RS). An attack penetrating Active DP ignores up to +3 or D8 armor protection. Preternatural armor negates this advantage.

Extra Resilience (requires D6 summoner Mastery rank): x2 to RS. Common to creatures that are highly magic resistant.

Primary Attack is Arcane (D6 summoner Mastery rank): +2 SP (grants 100% RS to creature rather than 50%) .

Primary Attack is Ranged: +1 SP

Extra action in round using primary, secondary or third Threat-Rank: cost in SP is ½ Threat Rank.

A master summoner brings forth an ally





Comparing sizes



H). Add standard summoned equipment. If the creature uses natural attacks (without harm bonus), or a primary attack, or if there are no weapon based harm or init bonuses, then there is no extra spell point cost. Otherwise, extra cost depends on equipment or armor grade. Note that the extra spell point cost is cumulative for every category or rank chosen.

fair: D6 +1 SPs
 good: D8 +2 SPs
 great: D10 +3 SPs
 superb: D12 +4 SPs
 incredible: D16 +5 SPs
 legendary: D20 +6 SPs

I). Pick magic Effects that the creature can use, if any. Ability checks for these effects are based on Arcane threat rank (if the creature has no Arcane rank, it cannot cast spells). All magic Effects cost +4 SP to the spell casting, but using an effect with a tiered sub-effect, such as Stun (under Influence), adds the MRV of the power grade instead (in the case of Stun it would be +6 Spell Points). Choose from:

Augment
 Conjure/Dismiss
 Curse
 Fortify
 Harm
 Influence
 Obscure
 Perceive
 Protect
 Restore
 Transmute
 Travel

Note that arcanist can turn any conjuration spell into a ritual. The casting time for a ritual equals the duration. If the ritual performed requires a day or more, halve the initial spell point cost. The frequency of the spell's maintenance cost equals the units of time used during casting.

In addition, after the first round, a summoned creature gets to roll its highest Threat Die-Rank versus the arcanist's Willpower (including Specializations and Masteries if applicable) to break free of the spell. The frequency of this check matches the units of time used in ritual



preparation. Therefore, a ritual requiring two rounds to summon a goblin allows the goblin to attempt escape on the second round, and every third round after that. If the conjured creature wins the contest, it vanishes or attacks the caster (GMs discretion). However, the conjured creature becomes a permanent resident of the caster's plane if the summoner maintains control of the creature for 3 months. After that, the creature may attempt to break free of the command but once a year, or after forced into suicidal actions. If successful, the creature may attack or return to its home plane, or wander at will.

So to summon a standard 2D6 goblin, wielding a sword and wearing leather armor would cost:

Type/Challenge: Standard creature. Challenge = 12. Spell point cost 16.

Threat Rank: 2D6 Melee.

Hit points: 12. Medium creature of mundane origin. No alternation to HP.

Resilience: 6.

Battle Phase: Fair - D6.

Notes: wields a hand axe (harm +1, init +2).

Because he is not mastered, the weapon costs the summoner 2 SPs.

Armor: leather D6.

This spell thus costs 16 Spell Points to cast, and requires a minimum rank in Power Source of D6 (because the creature is standard). Maintenance cost is 8.

Or, to summon a demon:

Type/Challenge: Extraordinary/Legendary.

Challenge = 66. Spell point cost 56.

TR Arcane 3D12, 1D10 +4 (greataxe) Melee (costs 36 SP)

HP: 36×4 (legendary) = 144 (+12 SP) HP, or 154 with great axe (Mastery).

RS: 144

BP: Superb D12 (+4 SP)

Notes: Wields a great axe and has mastered it (+4).

Costs: 56 SPs to cast, and 28 to maintain. Best cast as a ritual.

Or a fodder goblin:

Type/Challenge: Fodder/Mundane. Challenge = 4.

TR 1D4 (4 SP)

HP 4

RS 2

BP: average (D4).

Wields anything, but gains no bonus.

Cost: 4 SP, maint. 2.

Example: a wizard summons a bunch of imps, each a D4 fodder. He has 35 Spell Points, so summons 8 creatures, using up all but 3 spell points. Each round the spell will cost him 16 Spell Points to maintain or the creatures vanish. He may very well hurt himself maintaining this spell.

Summon host:

The arcanist can choose to cast a "host" summoning, which conjures multiple, weak creatures. The number of creatures summoned is equal to the result of the ability check, and each creature's Potential-Harm is 1, with no more than a single hit point each, and zero resilience. Base the Spell Cost for this effect on an Area range, so is equal to MRV of the Ability Branch.

The creatures' initiative rank is as one group, equal to the caster's Specialization in the spell's power source, or Mastery in the related Summoner school (whether Mystic, Supernatural, Primordial, or Psychogenic), whichever is higher. Host creatures are always instinct driven, able to follow simple commands, but never possessing real intelligence or significant equipment (although it doesn't matter how their Potential-Harm is described, just don't add any specific weapon bonuses). Controlling a summoned host requires no additional ability checks, but maintaining the spell requires a maintenance cost of $\frac{1}{2}$ initial casting each round.

Reading a spell from a grimoire or a scroll

Casting an unlearned spell from a scroll allows a roll of Arcanum, no more (meaning no Specialization or Mastery dice), and the character must be specialized in the spell's power source. Some spells still require a Specialization minimum rank to cast, even from a scroll.

Major Effects Descriptions

Augment

Conjure/Dismiss

Curse

Fortify

Harm

Influence

Obscure

Perceive

Protect

Restore

Transmute

Travel

Below are listed the major effects, and the choices of duration (maintainable or instantaneous). An arcanist may use only three Effects as rituals;



Conjuration, Enchantment, and maintainable Travel spells. See magic item section for more information on Enchantment rituals.

Maximum Ranges for Effects

Area Spells: $2 \times$ MRV of the relevant Power Source Specialization in diameter (add Mastery if applicable). The point of origination up to $10 \times$ MRV of Power Source, in line of sight.

Single subject spells: no greater than 5' diameter, with the maximum distance equal to $MRV \times 2$ Power Source in feet, always in line-of sight.

Other notes: The Perceive effect max-range can be increased using a magic item. Maximum range for a Perceive effect through a scrying device is converted from feet to miles.

Augment (Maintainable)

This magic effect improves the result of the beneficiary's ability check, using the sum of the caster's dice roll. Only the following abilities are augmentable (as defined by each spell): Agility, Animal Handling, Arcanum, Climb, Endurance, Feats of Strength, Coercion, basic Melee, basic Ranged, Reflexes, Resistance, Scrutiny, Skullduggery, Speed, Stealth, Unarmed Combat, and Willpower.

Increasing Melee, Ranged, or Unarmed adds to a creature's threat points. However, no spell can directly "augment" defense pools, which are covered by the Fortify effect. An arcanist can change a target creature's battle phase by augmenting a *random initiative roll*.

Note: augmenting an ability that ordinarily contributes to a defense does not add hit points to its associated defense pool.

Conjure/Dismiss (Maintainable)

This effect allows the arcanist to summon or banish a monster, and conjure or dismiss an object. The arcanist is able to conjure one specific object, or summon one creature type per round.

Conjure or Dismiss Creature

See spell creation rules (above) on how to create summoning spells, or refer to the master spell list for examples. An arcanist can dismiss a monster he summoned without effort, unless he has lost control over its will, in which case a battle of wills ensues (Arcanum ADC versus highest Threat rank of monster). Banishing a creature summoned by

another arcanist requires an opposed roll with several requirements. First, the arcanist must be specialized in the same Power Source whence the creature originated. For example, only a Theurgist or sorcerer can banish a creature summoned with a Supernatural spell. Likewise, only an Elementalist or Druid can banish a creature summoned using a Primordial spell, and so on.

Note: Conjuration and Summoning spells allow the player (or GM) to predetermine the power and nature of the monster upon first use, after which the creature summoned remains identical.

Conjure Object

With the Conjure Effect, the arcanist is able to conjure one useful, small object to his hand, with no difficulty. In fact, a simple object is handled as a cantrip, with a cost of 1 spell point. Also, if an arcanist conjures an object for entertainment purposes only—like a colorful explosion of flowers—treat the spell as a cantrip (see cantrips, pp.).

Larger or more complex objects usually require rituals. An object bigger than what the caster can hold in one hand requires a round to cast, while huge objects (a boulder or wagon) require two rounds, and three rounds for enormous object (a small ship). It requires four rounds for a massive object (a tremendous siege engine). The preparation time used in the arcanist's ritual determines the frequency of the conjuration's maintenance cost. If the conjurer spends two rounds to conjure a small horse, he must spend spell points in upkeep for the spell every third round.

Conjuring objects requires a difficulty roll against 1D6, regardless of size or complexity (unless the GM decides to treat the spell as a cantrip). However, conjuring objects larger than those easily held in one hand, *does* require higher Power Source proficiency—large items require a D6 in Power Source, huge a D8, enormous a D10, and massive a D12. For intricate items, like a clock, the GM might decide on a higher minimum Power Source rank on an "ad hoc" basis; there are too many varieties of objects to have a single, comprehensive list. In the case of conjuring a piece of armor, it is simple; the requisite Specialization Die-Rank equals the protection afforded. However, the GM should not lose sleep over arbitrating conjuration effects. Judge minimum requirements based on the utility an item grants to the character at the time, within the context of the ongoing story.

The object is normally one of the following: one piece of regular armor, a weapon, a container, tool,



Optional Advantage: Eldritch Focus (2 points per die-rank, up to 3D12). Must possess Arcanum basic Skill to purchase, and no die-rank may exceed Basic Arcanum. Each instance of Eldritch Focus must be in a single power source. So an arcanist with D8 Arcanum and D4 Supernatural and D6 in Mystic can purchase an Eldritch Focus of up to D8+D4 (8 CPs) in Supernatural, or D8+D6 (10 CPs) in Mystic. In combat, penetrating a target's Resilience can take more than a few rounds, especially frustrating enchanters and psychics.

With Eldritch Focus advantage, the arcanist adds one or more die-ranks, rolling the extra dice after the first ability check. Add up the results and compare against the target's remaining Resilience, without actually inflicting Potential-Harm. If the result exceeds the target's score, the magic spell takes full effect (as if the victim's Resilience score were at zero). The drawback is that every use of this advantage depletes the caster's own Resilience score, which gets dangerous.

wheeled vehicle or mount, a plant, money (copper, silver, gold, platinum, mithral, adamantine, gems), one ration, or clothes. Objects must be mundane in nature and common to the experiences of the average human. The caster's knowledge of how an item works does not color the effectiveness of his spell. For example, if he conjures a padlock, it will work (so long as he conjures a key to accompany it). He does not need to be a locksmith to do this. Of course, this leads to interesting questions; how hard would the lock be to pick? What if a conjurer wants to create a silver dagger rather than one made of steel? How heavy is a conjured boulder? How hot is a conjured campfire? How much money can a conjurer create out of thin air? These sorts of questions are answerable with standardized parameters:

Size: requires one hand (no minimum Die-Rank), two-hands D6, large D6, huge D8, enormous D10, massive D12. The GM should judge size based on description and relative comparisons; it is not an exact science. Remember, we define an island as such only in comparison to larger surrounding landmasses. Likewise, if the largest ship in the land is a two-masted vessel, like a brig, then a ship like a galleon might appear "massive." Use common sense and creative license.

Quantity and Proximity: the spells generally allow one object per conjuration. For every additional item required to make a "set," increase the final spell point cost by one, or the conjurer can cast two separate spells, risking a failure on the second attempt, and likely spending even more spell points (unless it is a cantrip). This prohibits an Arcanist from generating large amounts of money. Therefore, a conjurer creating "fools gold" had better materialize a platinum coin if he wants to impress the locals. This effect works to create the appearance of copper, silver, gold, platinum, mithral, adamantine, gems, or silk, but remember when the spell ends, all of the materials vanish. For another example, an arcanist creating a set of clothes will expend extra energy with a fancy, complete outfit.

Alternatively, a lock and key would require an extra spell point, or two conjurations. Any conjured item will remain in existence, regardless of the distance of the originator of the spell, so long as the caster continues to pay the spell point maintenance cost.

Qualities of Energies: almost all conjured objects are illusory. Fire will not actually burn, although it feels real. Cold feels like winter but cannot cause frostbite, etc. Light and shadow are perceptible but not blinding. To turn these magical effects

into something more powerful, a multi-effect spell would be required. For instance, a magic user who wants to conjure fireball-launching cannons might develop an artificer spell—possible only by combining Conjuration with the Harm effect. You will find rules for creating multi-effect spells on page 52.

An arcanist can summon real, unique items to his hands if owned for at least a year, but he must first carve his personal sigil into the object. This effect cannot be used to cause objects to drop onto (or materialize within) any space occupied by a sentient being. Hence, the effect is not an adequate means of direct attack. Summoned objects possess structural hit points equal to the result of the casting roll.

Curse (Maintainable)

This effect is the exact opposite of Augment. It cannot drain hit points directly, which is the domain of the "Harm" effect, but it does affect ability rolls, using the sum of the dice roll. It affects one of the following (as defined by the spell): Agility, Animal Handling, Climb, Endurance, Feats of Strength, Coercion, basic Melee, basic Ranged, Reflexes, Resistance, Scrutiny, Skullduggery, Speed, Stealth, Unarmed Combat, and Willpower.

Unlike Augment, the caster must penetrate the target's Resilience before the penalty to the target's Ability is applied. Once the effect causes enough threat points to deplete the target's Resilience, apply the penalty. Never apply excess points to the target's Toughness. Successfully decreasing Melee, Ranged, or Unarmed rolls subtracts from a target creature's threat points during an attack.

Fortify (Maintainable)

An arcanist can increase a single Defense Pool with this effect, even above the maximum allowed, using the sum of the dice roll. The effect is temporary; the extra protection existing only so long as the caster maintains his spell. Fortify can be used to increase any Active or Passive Defense pool, the extra hit points lasting so long as the spell is maintained. Fortifying an object increases its resistance to damage by a number of hit points equal to the ADC roll result.

The Fortify Effect always protects against normal sources of Potential-harm, but an arcanist cannot fortify an ally against an unfamiliar Power Source. For example, a priest whose power source is supernatural casts a Fortify spell and boosts the Resilience of his ally. Nevertheless, those extra hit points protect his ally *only* against normal or "legendary" damage. Record bonus hit points



separately, because if the spell is not maintained, those extra hit points are immediately lost (unlike a Restore spell).

Harm (Instantaneous)

Harm Effects manifest as elemental or psychic energy, casting forth bolts of fire, ice, lightning, acid, wind, psychokinetic or necromantic force, or various elemental storms, including hailstorms or explosions of earth, or an enervation spell that saps the target creature's soul, or infiltrates to destroy the mind. Harm spells deplete Resilience, and then Toughness, in that order, **with no difficulty roll required**. Instead, the caster uses his ADC to determine Potential-Harm, the result of the roll used as threat points against the targeted subject. Spell point cost remains as per the standard rules, which depend on an individual spell's range.

Harm spells can take three forms:

A **bolt** is no greater than 5' diameter, and the maximum distance the bolt travels is equal to MRV \times 2 Power Source in feet, always in line-of sight.

For **area** spells, the area-of-effect equals $2 \times$ MRV of the relevant Power Source Specialization in diameter (add Mastery if applicable), with the point of origination at a distance of up to $10 \times$ MRV of Power Source, in line of sight.

For **streams**, the width is no more than 2' wide, originating from the caster, and the length of the stream extends up to twice the MRV of the chosen sphere die(s).

Damaging spells that target only objects cannot harm adjacent creatures. However, harmful spells that target single creatures can harm held or worn objects caught in the effect, depending on the form of the attack. Area-effect spells can have an impact on both objects and creatures, depending on how the attack manifests. Use common sense; obviously, if the spell's form would not touch things of physical matter, like a purely spiritual area attack, then assume no "collateral" damage to surrounding objects.

The only way to "maintain" a Harm spell is to recast it each round, rolling the caster's ADC at full SP cost. An arcanist can split a "bolt" Harm Effect spell into multiple attacks, one magical strike per Die-Rank in his ADC. For example, an elementalist throwing lightning bolts could send one at each enemy. If he had D6 Arcanum, D4 Primordial, and D4 Elementalist, he could cast up to three lighting bolts on his battle phase, each against a different target creature.

Influence (Instantaneous or Maintainable)

This effect covers a wide range of magical spells, ranging from distracting a target, to the most debilitating results possible. Influencing means using magic to subdue, beguile, manipulate, or incapacitate the target. **The arcanist must penetrate the target's Resilience before the magical influence is applied.** Once the effect causes enough threat points to penetrate the target's Resilience, apply the spell's designated sub-effect (distract, stun, control body, control mind, incapacitate). Do this even if the points exceeded Resilience by only one point. *Never apply excess points to the target's Toughness.* Influence spells require the caster to possess a minimum rank in the spell's corresponding power source, beginning with the standard requirement of Die-Rank D4. These sub-effects are:

Distract - instant (D4): reduce the target's battle phase by one category on next action.

Examples:

Distraction can take many forms...

Mystic: causes a burst of magical energy confusing all vulnerable targets in area.

Supernatural: creates a temporary sense of numinous terror that delays target's action.

Primordial: a flash of light dazzles target.

Alternatively, a blast of wind delays action or movement.

Psychogenic: the target's mind is clouded, due to a psychic attack that befuddles humans.

Stun - instant (D6): Target loses next action due to temporary paralysis.

Examples:

Stunning can take many forms...

Mystic: an illusory dragon (or some other frightening creature) materializes and terrorizes the target creature. Alternatively, a wizard strikes all targets in area-of-effect with temporary paralysis, crackling chains of energy wrapping around the target's bodies.

Supernatural: slimy tentacles burst from the floor and hold all targets in the area-of-effect. Or, an invisible phantom holds the target in a ghostly vice-grip.

Primordial: the earth on which the target stands suddenly forms a fist and knocks the target into the air, stunning her for a round. Alternatively, a violent hailstorm stops all movement and action in the area-of-effect.

Design Note: Sub-effects and prerequisite die-ranks. Sub-Effects like distraction, stun, controlling the mind, and especially incapacitation are extremely powerful, especially when used in conjunction with the optional advantage of "Eldritch Focus" (see sidebar page 46). The GM may require a minimum die-rank for these options in basic Arcanum rather than in one specific specialization. This rule would make it easier for arcanists to access powerful effects in all known power sources.



Design Note: Incapacitated characters cannot be instantly slain. Although active defenses do them no good, armor and Toughness are still helpful. This rule applies just as well to sleeping characters during a nighttime ambush.

Psychogenic: a psychic blast disorients the target, causing vertigo and nausea for one round. Or, a psychokinetic attack lifts all targets off the ground and slams them back to the earth, causing one round of stunning.

Control body – maintainable (D8): the target's body obeys caster's commands. The arcanist can command only the most basic of physical actions. If the spell lasts into a second round, the victim can attempt to break free of the effect by rolling Willpower versus the caster's Arcanum ADC.

Examples:

Control over the target's body can take many forms...

Mystic: a wizard creates a cursed item that allows him to control the actions of the possessor. Alternatively, an alchemist creates a potion that grants him total control over the physical actions of the imbiber.

Supernatural: a sorcerer summons a demon, or a theurgist summons an angelic being to possess the target creature, thereby controlling physical action. Alternatively, a priest takes control over a creature's body through the power temporarily granted him by a god.

Primordial: an elementalist causes thirst in the target by removing water, or causes feelings of cold by removing body heat. A druid controls the actions of a man by tapping into his basic animal instincts, overriding reason.

Psychogenic: a mentalist controls a target's actions by dominating his mind. A vampire commands his victim to walk toward him, despite her fear.

Control mind - maintainable (D10): target obeys caster's commands, using any abilities at his disposal to obey. If the spell lasts into a second round, the victim can attempt to break free of the effect by rolling Willpower versus the caster's Arcanum ADC.

Examples:

Control over the target's mind can take many forms...

Mystic: a wizard creates a cursed item that allows him to attack his friends or act contrary to his nature. Alternatively, an alchemist creates a potion that grants him total control over the speech of the imbiber.

Supernatural: a sorcerer draws upon infernal energies to inculcate a feeling of despair, or a theurgist forces a target to tell the truth. Or, a shaman enters the dreams of a sleeping target and controls his beliefs by implanting false omens.

Primordial: an elemental invades and dominates the mind of a fire elemental, bending its will to his own, causing it to attack and burn down a quiet hamlet. A druid gazes to the sky and commands a kettle of vultures to swoop down and attack a band of lumberjacks.

Psychogenic: a psionist prevents harm to himself by dominating the mind of a soldier, warping his assailant's mind. Now the soldier stands confused before the strange man he was about to attack, suddenly recognizing him as a dear friend.

Incapacitate (D12) – maintainable : target falls to the ground unconscious and helpless, losing all Active Defenses, remaining so until the caster stops paying the maintenance cost. Victims cannot break free of this Effect unless some agent disrupts the caster's continuous maintenance of the spell.

Examples:

Control over the target's body can take many forms...

Mystic: a wizard casts a bolt of pure magic energy (called draíocht), incapacitating the target. Or, an alchemist brews a powerful potion that will instantly fell a humanoid imbiber of medium height.

Supernatural: a sorcerer summons unhallowed energies, or a cleric evokes the power of his deity to knock his victim unconscious, or just freeze the target into a state of total inaction, the effect accompanied perhaps by brimstone upon heated wind, or a dramatic thunderclap.

Primordial: an elemental creates a field of non-lethal electricity that causes debilitating agony to everybody in the area-of-effect. A shaman knocks a group of foes unconscious with a primal scream, or a druid causes a copse of trees to seize his enemies and prevent any action so long as he maintains the spell.

Psychogenic: a mentalist infiltrates the mind of his victim and forces her into deep, dreamless sleep. Alternatively, a psychic shoves a target into a wall with a blast of telekinetic force, knocking her unconscious.

Examples:

Each Influence spell can only target one type of creature. The type may be one of the following: Angel, Animal, Aquatic, Demonic, Dragon, Elemental, Fey, Giant, Goblinoid, Humanoid, Incorporeal, Legendary Beast, Ooze, Plant, Shapechanger, or Vermin.

Note that "unwilled" creatures such as the the undead are naturally exempt from "control" or "distract" spells. GMs should take note that there



An obscure spell saves the day

are deliberately no “instant death” spells in the game; such breaks the spirit of the rules.

Obscure (Maintainable)

This effect obscures the target, making it nearly invisible, or covers an area, making it murky, dim, or foggy, figuratively or literally. Obscure can mirror a Curse spell, reducing the Scrutiny checks of anybody in the area-of-effect. Alternatively, its penalties can apply to all creatures attacking the spell's single target, or to all attacks made within an area-of-effect, either way, using the sum of the ADC roll.

The area-of-effect equals $2 \times \text{MRV}$ of the relevant Specialization Power Source in diameter (add Mastery if applicable), with the point of origination at a distance of up to $10 \times \text{MRV}$ of Power Source, in line of sight. For example, Sid the Illusionist has specialized in the primordial power source and has Mastery in elementalism. He creates a deep fog, rolling Arcanum D6 + Primordial D4 (Specialization) + Elementalism D4 (Mastery) ADC, resulting in a 10. As a result, all creatures suffer -10 to their Potential-Harm with any attack against a target in the spell's area-of-effect.

Mystic: A wizard materializes out of nowhere, touches the accused murderer lightly on the shoulder, causing the prisoner to disappear before the astonished judge and jury. With a flourish, the mage winks at the crowd and vanishes.

Supernatural: A hideous sorcerer, cornered at a dead-end of a dungeon corridor, intones demonic words of power, thus producing a jet of inklike substance, completely blinding those who pursue in hopes of his capture. A priest gains the upper hand against a group of subterranean monsters with a single word of celestial command, causing a burst of light that blinds his enemies, making them more vulnerable to his “holy sledgehammer.”

Primordial: An Elementalist whispers words of concealment, creating a magical fog which coalesces around his allies, protecting them from those who watch in the darkness of the surrounding, unhallowed hills. A Druid calls upon the flora and fauna of the forest to conceal his whereabouts, cover his tracks, and silence his steps.

Psychogenic: A Psionicist confuses the mind of his enemy, making his victim see double, perceiving mirror images of all things in the vicinity. The afflicted

Obscured by rules: The GM may rule that some sub-effects of Obscure are subject to resistance, and that the ability roll must exceed a subject's Resilience to be effective. This can be ignored if the spell would aid the heroes (like a fog spell), and enforced if it would harm them (a darkness spell cast at them by a foul necromancer).



Optional Rule: Protection effect:
The caster may spent 5 sp per
+1 bonus against Potential-
Harm, applied before regular
armor. Up to +4 per individual
creature.



Resurrecting the dead

swings his sword wildly in response, missing the mark each time.

Perceive (Maintainable)

This effect, cast on the self, represents detection spells allowing one to find disease or magical forces at work in ones own body, as well as grant the power of premonitions, or hear the voices of spirits. Cast on a creature, perception spells can act as telepathy or mind reading. Used on a willing subject, telepathic communication requires no difficulty roll (roll dice anyway to determine cost). Cast as an Area spell it works as clairvoyance or clairaudience.

This magical effect does not cover Divination, which is the domain of the Augury ability. Also, Perceive is an effect that works through the mind's eye, and therefore does not grant special or unusual physical powers to the target, such as physical night vision (use transmute for such effects). A spell using the "Perceive" effect may allow the caster to add a bonus to Scrutiny, or the Specialization to sense another's motive, or even gather information. The GM must assign difficulty as circumstances demand.

Protect (Maintainable)

The Protect effect adds temporary, magical armor to the target. It manifests in different ways, and deflects physical attacks, or magical attacks from a power source matching that of the spell. Either cast on oneself, or made to protect another creature, the effect creates a shield, or a force field made of mystic, supernatural, primordial, or psychogenic energy (depending on the spell). Objects benefiting from this effect are more resistant to damage,

gaining a protective benefit that works just like a standard, randomized armor roll. If the object is itself armor, then the spell merely increases its effectiveness. When protecting a single creature, the range can be no greater than $2 \times \text{MRV}$ of the caster's relevant Power Source. Sometimes an arcanist will join this effect with another, like "Harm," to damage a creature making contact with the force, such as with a fire shield.

See the rules for multi-effect spells, but note here the recipient of such protection is always immune to any associated damaging effects. Cast on an area, this effect protects every creature within from attacks originating outside of the force field, or, alternatively, increases the effectiveness of armor worn by those inside the area-of-effect.

The arcanist pays for the level of protection by Die-Rank, but cannot exceed one die of additional armor per recipient. For example, the effect provides up to 1D12 magical protection to a single target, or up to 1D12 for all creatures in the area. D4 costs 4 Spell Points, D6 costs 6 SP, D8 costs 8 SP, and so on.

Mystic: with a quick, deft gesture, a Wizard under attack creates a shield of pulsing energy, the floating force field interposing itself with every strike of sword or arrow.

Supernatural: a Sorcerer invokes the power of his patron demon, thereby hardening his skin into a resilient, inhuman armor, forming a hideous, gnarled visage in the process. A priest prays to her god, and her enemies step back as her shield bursts into righteous flame, protecting her from the mightiest of blows.



Primordial: an Elementalist commands the earth to rise up, a wall of stone heaving up from the ground to protect him. A Druid walks into the trunk of a tree, disappears for a moment, then emerges from the other side changed, his body as hardy and tough as an old oak.

Psychogenic: a Psionicist alters the very essence of his internal structure, strengthening his bones, toughening up his organs against bludgeoning attacks, generally making his body bigger, and more resistant to damage.

Restore (Instantaneous):

Restore heals any one chosen defense pool, active or passive, up to the maximum amount. Restoring limbs requires D10 rank in the spell's Power Source, and bringing a character back from the dead requires a D12 specifically in the Supernatural power source. Healing power equals the sum of the ability check.

Excess points of healing are wasted. An evil arcanist can use the Restore effect for necromantic ends, to raise a corpse as an undead creature. In such a case, treat it as a multi-effect conjuration spell. Unfortunately, mages cannot heal themselves with Restore if they are out of spell-points. Any healing spell cast on oneself fails if the power of the spell exceeds the number of spell points available.

Mystic: a Wizard snaps his fingers, sending a crackling bolt of positive energy to his exhausted friend, whose ability to evade the traps and pitfalls of the lost ruin's dangerous rooms had been nearly spent.

Supernatural: a Sorcerer calls upon the demonic powers of the netherworld to restore a dead body to pseudo-life, creating a zombie. A powerful bishop, a crusader chosen by the gods, is granted the power to raise his fallen king from the dead.

Primordial: an Elementalist draws upon the energies of the earth to restore his own resilience against a raging hurricane. A Druid restores the health of his fallen animal companions in the wake of a band of poachers.

Psychogenic: a Psionicist touches his fallen ally with his mind, forming a powerful connection of inner strength, then transferring this power to restore health and vitality.

Transmute (Maintainable)

This effect changes the properties or essence of an object or creature. Changing oneself or target creature into a different sort of creature requires a minimum rank in the spell's related power source, increasing with more dramatic changes.

A nonmagical item cannot be transformed into a magic one with this effect (see magic item creation section).

D4 Creature: caster can alter hair color, hair texture, and skin. Adds 1D4 to Disguise checks. **Object:** Change an item from one thing into another, but must be of the same size and material (change a wooden desk into a chair).

D6 Creature: change height, weight, and gender within the norms of the caster or target. Adds 1D6 to Disguise checks. **Object:** Change the size or weight of an item by one category.

D8 Creature: can change size (tiny, small, medium). Alter type into goblinoid, animal, aquatic or vermin. Gain any racial abilities, and height, weight, and gender are under your control, but must fall within the norms for the new form. Equipment held or worn melds into form, reappearing when the effect ends. **Object:** change the size or weight of an item by two categories.

D10 Creature: can change size to large or huge. Change into giant or legendary beast. **Object:** Change the size, weight of an item, or change hardness or state (liquid, solid, or gas).

D12 Creature: able to change into elemental, incorporeal, or dragon. Caster gains all physical special attacks and defenses possessed by the form. Whatever elemental form is assumed conveys immunity to that element. If transmuted into an incorporeal creature, your form is immune to negative energy, but still susceptible to necromantic or psychic energy attacks. **Object:** change the size, weight of an item, hardness, state (liquid, solid, or gas), or composition of an object. Transmute lead into gold. Effect is temporary (see alchemist or magic item creation rules for more information).

Mystic: A roguish mage stops in a back alley to change his eye, skin, and hair color, to better disguise himself from the authorities.

Supernatural: a Sorcerer penetrates the natural defenses of her terrified victim, transmuting him into a toad. An evil priest changes his staff into a giant boa constrictor, and combining that transmutation with a conjuration, gives the deacon a deadly surprise.

Primordial: an Elementalist sinks into the ground, becoming one with the earth, and then vanishes, just prior to a localized earthquake, killing his pursuers. A Druid turns himself into a hawk and soars above the trees.



Psychogenic: a Psionicist masters the notion that the body is merely energy made incarnate, and by summoning his inner strength, transmute himself into a being of pure spirit.

Travel (Instantaneous or Maintainable)

Travel allows the magical and harmless transportation of creatures or objects. The maintainable travel spell allows safe travel through hostile environments, like water, fire, or other inhospitable places.

If an arcanist uses Travel as an instantaneous spell, the effect transports the subject by whatever descriptive means desired to a maximum range of $MRV \times 10$ in feet. This could be travel by means of telekinesis, shifting to gaseous form or shadow, or teleportation. Unwilling creatures cannot be teleported—due to some magical law not yet understood by sages (with the real reason being that it violates the games prohibition of instant death effects).

The GM may deem some materials impossible to travel through by any means (like lead as a barrier to teleportation), or limit how far a traveler can move, depending perhaps on the thickness of a wall, or the sort of stuff traveled through, but there is never any chance of error. For example, an arcanist cannot cause a creature or object to materialize inside a solid object.

If the caster's intent is to harm the subject, then use the *Harm* or *Influence* (sub-effect incapacitate) Effects instead. To travel by a summoned mount or a magically created chariot or wagon, use the *Conjure* effect instead.

Examples:

Mystic: an Artificer creates a flying carpet. A Wizard casts a spell allowing flight. An Alchemist brews a potion granting the imbiber the power to fly. Supernatural: A cleric prays and his god opens a portal to another land...

Primordial: an Elementalist turns himself into the element of earth and walks through a mountainside as if it were air.

Psychogenic: a Psionicist teleports to avoid an attack (using the result of the ADC as temporary Evade or Dodge points).

Multi-effect Spells

A spell may incorporate multiple effects, but such spells have a spell point cost of $\times 1.5$ for the secondary effect, with a maximum of two Effects in

a single spell. All multi-effect spells must designate a primary and secondary effect. The secondary effect must have the same range as the first, and if the primary fails to activate, the spell fizzles out, as normal. If the secondary effect fails to activate, then only half of the spell's effectiveness occurs, and the spell point cost drops to normal. A multi-effect spell can only have one source, school, and range.

Extra-aspect Spells

Any effect that incorporates more aspects than is within its normal range costs $\times 1.5$ in spell points with every casting. For example, an Augment spell that increases both *Melee Potential-Harm* and *Reflexes* would cost whatever the range dictated, but multiplied by 1.5. No spell may exceed the normal range of Aspects by more than one. So if a wizard casts "lion's strike," using Augment to increase *Reflexes* and *Unarmed harm*, then rolls a 16, with his highest die a 10, the cost would be 15 points.

Multi-effect and Extra-aspect Spells

No spell may incorporate more than one secondary effect and one extra aspect. Such spells cost $\times 3$ to cast. An arcanist can choose not to activate the secondary effect on such spells, thus saving him spell points and a second ability check, but does forgo those secondary benefits.

Cantrips

There is one other type of spell—the cantrip. Cantrips are innocuous, less than full incantations or rituals, and have fewer components to consider. A cantrip consists only of the magic source (Specialization), the form (or appearance of the effect), and a limited range. Most view them as a form of conjuration or illusion, but arcanists need not record their formulas or components in Grimoires.

Magic users cast cantrips through their will alone, while usually muttering a few magic words. They do not count against the maximum number of spells known, and an arcanist does not assign a major Effect or school to a cantrip. The rules reserve this category of spell for *miscellaneous* and improvised spells that do not mimic the more powerful spells.

Cantrips can only indirectly affect another creature. Therefore, a cantrip to create light is possible, but not one to blind a target, which would be an *Influence* effect. The only ranges permitted for cantrips are *self*, *object*, and *area*. The arcanist does not roll for difficulty, but there is still a spell cost of 1 point for activation, and 1 point for maintenance.



A **cantrip effect** is no greater than $2 \times \text{MRV}$ in radius, with an origination range of no greater than $10 \times \text{MRV}$, using only the associated Power Source Specialization. The GM may allow a cantrip to grant the benefit of +1 to some effort or action, but no greater.

See the examples below, organized by magic source and range, to get an idea of how this works. The detection of magic is a basic cantrip that all arcanists know from the start, even before gaining knowledge of and access to the spells of various Power Sources. For instance, a magic user with ability only in Arcanum (no Specializations) can still spend a single spell point to detect *active* magical emanations. He could detect these energies on himself, an object, or a room, and even identify the power source, all for 1 spell point. To detect inactive or dormant spells and emanations, the spellcaster would require the Perceive effect.

Cantrip examples

Mystic study

Self: a Wizard activates a cantrip to wreath himself in an eerie green light.

Object: an Alchemist uses a cantrip to give his deadly potion a pleasant smell.

Area: an Artificer casts a cantrip to reveal all of the metals stuck in the walls of a dungeon.

Supernatural connection

Self: a Theurgist says a quick prayer, causing his anklet to glow, shedding some holy light into the room. He has a D4 in his connection to the Supernatural, so the light is 8 feet in diameter.

Object: a Sorcerer casts a cantrip and causes the top of his snake-headed staff to suddenly open its reptilian eyes, thus frightening his good company.

Area: a paladin casts a cantrip to bring warmth to a dank, chilly room overrun with undead, improving the morale of his stalwart soldiers in battle.

Primordial connection

Self: an Elementalist activates a cantrip to make his hands burst into flame, as a warning to his enemies before he launches a real Harm spell.

Object: a Druid uses a cantrip to mimic the howl of a wolf, alerting his friends of approaching danger without revealing his human voice.

Area: A shaman casts a cantrip that merely alerts the spirits of his ancestors to his presence.

Psychogenic (psi)

Self: a psychic uses a cantrip, cast as a verbal mantra, to help him concentrate on a psychogenic effect. The GM grants him a +1 to the next psychogenic ability roll. Object: a mentalist picks up a crystal ball and peers into it. She uses a mantra to sense that somebody used the ball for scrying. Convinced of the need, she uses Perceive effect to find out more...

Area: an arcanist uses a telekinetic trick to cause every plate, utensil, and cup in the room to shake, freaking out his dinner guests.

Magic item creation rules

Any arcanist can learn a ritual for the creation of a single magic item, but must record the knowledge into a grimoire, which counts against his maximum number of spells known. Designing rituals to infuse items with cantrips requires only basic Arcanum, but creating a magic item capable of effects that are more powerful requires knowledge in the various arcane Specializations.

A ritual spell to create a magic item incorporates the Enchant Effect, described below, and once learnt, requires at least one day to cast (see rituals, pp).

Enchantment of Items

The Enchant Effect allows the arcanist to create a spell that adds one magical effect to an item. An arcanist must designate to every enchantment ritual an associated arcane source, the particular form or manifestation of the magic effect, a chosen range (always *object*), and the details of the infused magic Effects. Always list the ritual's magic school as "artificer," regardless of the enchantment ritual's power source. Therefore, it is like the creation of any spell in most regards, with some exceptions noted herein.

Enchantment rituals have a preparation time of one day per rank, and per die, of each magical Effect infused into an item. Therefore, completing an enchantment ritual to create a staff capable of a light-based cantrip at 1D4 rank would require one day. Creating the same light-shedding staff at 2D6 rank would require four days of ritual preparation. After creation, the holder of the staff activates its magic through her will, and perhaps a special word, with spell points drawn from the item's own energy pool.

For example, a wand of fireballs at Rank D10 requires 4 days, and 2D10 requires 8 days to create. These rules assume the artificer has adequate magic item creation facilities at his disposal (a laboratory).



Create Magic Fire Sword
 Type: Ritual.
 Preparation time: three days
 (one for 1 die, and two for
 increasing two ranks).
 Source: Primordial
 School: Elemental Artificer
 Effect: Enchant
 Form: Elemental Draíocht (Fire)
 Range: Single Object
 Aspect: Infuse item with Harm
 Effect at 1D8.
 Max Item Charges: permanent!

No item can contain multiple magical effects from different arcane power sources. Also, the arcanist must use one ritual per single effect infused into an item, with no *single* multi-effect spell permitted (which is different than several single effects each infused separately). The arcanist's Arcanum rank limits the total number of separate effects in a single item, as well as the highest Die-Rank effect that he may add to a magic item or potion:

D4 = one Effect, max 1D4
 D6 = two Effects, each max 1D6.
 D8 = three Effects, each max 1D8
 D10 = four Effects, each max 1D10
 D12 = five Effects, each max 1D12

For example, a mage with D10 Arcanum can add up to a 1D10 Harm Effect, as well as three others not exceeding D10 rank. In addition, Specialization or Mastery in any arcane school does not increase the maximum number of effects or the highest Die-Rank the caster can infuse into an item; basic Arcanum ability is the sole determinant of this.

Note that the duration of an Enchantment ritual works differently than other spells. There is no maintenance cost; the wielder of a magic item can use it repeatedly, spending the energy point cost each round until he completely depletes its energy pool (note that the rules use the term "energy points" to differentiate magic item use from use of internal spell points). The maximum number of energy points depends on the creator of the spell, not the user of the item, and always equals the creator's MRV of Arcanum + the designated Magic Source + Artificer Mastery if possessed.

For example, Merlanis the Mage creates a wand of fireballs, capable of a 1D10 Harm Effect directed at a single creature. Merlanis possesses Arcanum D10, Primordial D6, and Artificer Mastery of D4. Thus, the item has 20 internal energy points (10 + 6 + 4).

Using a Magic Item

The cost to activate a magic item equals the item's effect Die-Rank(s), using a single random roll for self/single creature ranges, or the MRV for area-effect spells. For example, Rosalee picks up and uses the wand of fireballs. She launches the fireball at a single target, and rolls 1D10, getting a 5, therefore causing 5 threat points, and expending only five points of the item's energy. To cast a fireball at many creatures with the same item, the wand would need to be enchanted with two Effects, nearly identical, but with two separate ranges (one single creature, the other area-effect). An area-effect spell from the same item would always cost 10 energy points.

If the cost exceeds the item's available energy points, the full effect still takes place, but the item immediately becomes inert. Recharging an item is possible, but a magic user must do this before the item's internal energy is spent, unless a "permanency" spell was cast upon the item. Recharging a magic item is a cantrip requiring no Power Source Specializations, only Arcanum knowledge. The Recharge cantrip allows an arcanist a single roll of the Arcanum Die-Rank to determine the number of spell points returned to an item in his possession, up to its maximum.

Casting an Enchantment Ritual to create a magic item

Once the ritual preparation time is complete, enchanting an item requires a roll of Arcanum + Specialization + Artificer Mastery *if possessed*, against a difficulty of 1D6. As mentioned in the section above, enchantment rituals have a preparation time of one day per rank, and per die, of each magical Effect infused into an item.

The caster spends no spell points until the very last seconds of the ritual, and if he fails his ability check, no energy is spent, and nothing is lost (except time and materials).

Remember, the parameters of the ritual enchantment dictate the arcane power sources involved. Multiple Effects in a single item require separate ritual castings, and all must be within the same Power Source. For example, Merlanis decides to create a ring of clairvoyance. She first creates a ritual allowing the enchantment of a crystal ring for this purpose, as follows:

Enchant Crystal Ring

Type: Ritual.
 Preparation time: Two days (one for 1 die, and one for increasing one rank).
 Source: Mystic
 School: Artificer
 Effect: Enchant
 Form: Draíocht (psychic)
 Range: Single Object
 Aspect: Infuse item with Perceive Effect at 1D6.
 Max Item Charges: The creator of this ritual had an Arcanum D10, Primordial D6, Mystic D8 and Artificer Mastery in both arcane schools of D4. This ritual uses only the mystic power source, so the max energy points equal Arcanum + Mystic + Artificer Mastery (22).

Then, Merlanis wants to add an Influence Effect to the ring. Luckily, she found an old, dusty tome containing a powerful, mystic, Influence-enchantment ritual. If the ritual were written for



His magically crafted mirror in hand, Cordon waits for the Medusa to come closer.

any other Power Source, she would not be able to use it to add it's Effects to the crystal ring.

Type: Ritual.

Preparation time: Three days.

Source: Mystic

School: Artificer

Effect: Enchant

Form: Draiocht

Range: Single Object

Aspect: Infuse item with Influence/Distract Effect at 1D8.

Max Item Charges: The creator of this ritual had Arcanum D8 and Mystic power at D8. Max Charges 16.

Artificer Mastery is available as a Mastery of any arcane school. If the caster possesses artificer Mastery as part of the ritual's Power Source, then he may add his Mastery die to the ability check while creating a magic item. For example,

a supernatural ritual to enchant an item would allow a theurgist to add his artificer Mastery to the ability check roll, but a wizard could not use the same ritual. Conversely, a mystic ritual to enchant an item allows a wizard to use his artificer Mastery, aiding in the creation of the magic item, but one connected only to the supernatural would not be able to perform the enchantment.

Most magic items become mundane when their spell points are spent.

Permanent Magic Items

Items with a permanent static bonus (+1, +2, etc) are tougher to make, and require an ability check that meets or exceeds the difficulty roll, or a target number (as given in parentheses in the chart below), depending on the GMs arbitration. Creating an item with a permanent bonus requires Specialization in Arcanum, one rank for every plus. Therefore, a +1 bonus corresponds to a D4, a +2 to

Create Staff of the Wailing Banshee

Type: Ritual.

Preparation time: four days (one for 2 die, and two for increasing two ranks).

Source: Supernatural

School: Supernatural Artificer

Effect: Curse

Form: A entrapped banshee is unleashed in an area effect
Range: Single Object / area effect

Aspect: infuse item with banshee spirit possessing a Curse effect on all who hears, except wielder.

Max Item Charges: 30



a D6, a +3 to a D8, +4 to a D10, and +5 to a D12. For the magic item user, a static bonus requires no “activation,” nor does it drain spell points.

Static bonuses can be an Augment Effect, or as a bonus to Potential-Harm, or as a nonrandom Protection Effect. In addition, all permanency rituals require a component difficult to acquire, whether animal, mineral, or vegetable.

Difficulty of creating Static Bonus

2d4 (or target 4) Moderate for +1

2D6 (or target 6) Difficult for +2

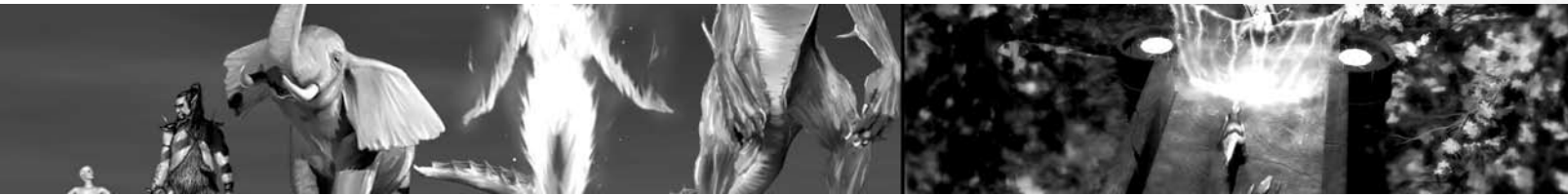
2D8 (or target 8) Demanding for +3
2D10 (or target 10) Formidable for +4
2D12 (or target 12) Extreme for +5

Magic items created with permanent Effects do not become inert when their energy points are exceeded. Rather, at that point such items draw upon the wielder’s life energy. If the wielder does not possess Spell Points, or is at zero Spell Points, then use of the item drains his Resilience, one point for every plus of the item’s permanent powers. Once Resilience is at zero, the item simply cannot function, and the user falls unconscious (for 1D4 rounds). Rare magic artifacts will drain Toughness after penetrating Resilience.



Chapter 5

Character Development, Equipment and Monster Creation



Character Development

Level: ERP measures character experience by level, without dictating advancement in terms of any one “character class” or bundle of abilities. Rather, experience level applies to a hero’s capabilities in total. **At each level of advancement, the character is granted Character Points equaling level +2 at time of advancement.** For example, a level 1 character advancing to level 2 gains three character points. A player uses these points to “purchase” increases to a character’s ability *Die-Rank*. As explained in the first part of this text, Die-Rank refers to the standard hierarchy of polyhedral dice used in Eldritch: D4, D6, D8, D10, and D12, with D20 reserved for monsters and (optionally) D30. Advancement in ability simply means increasing incrementally from one die to the next, usually from D4 up through D12.

For each level of advancement, a player character cannot purchase more than one increase to an ability’s rank *value*, including Specialization or Mastery dice. In other words, a character may move an existing ability up from D4 to D6, but not from D4 to D8 for a single level of advancement. However, he can purchase any number of *new* abilities, including Specializations and Masteries.

Experience System

ERP bases Advancement on two types of experience point (XP) scores: Victory Points and Role-Playing Points. Excess Points is a third category of XP, used as a game balance mechanic. In order to advance in level, each character must earn the requisite number of Victory Points *and* Role-Playing Points. Having gained a new level, a hero earns Character Points, which are the currency of character advancement, used to buy or improve abilities.

To advance to the next level of experience, a character must achieve two things:

1. Victory points equal to the character’s current level of experience.
2. One hundred Role-Playing Points, representing 100% capability within the current level of experience.

Victory Points (VPs)

To advance to the next level a character must earn a number of VPs equal to his current level. Receiving VPs depends on the character(s) surviving one or more dangerous situations or battles during the session. However, if the GM decreases battle odds beneath “*challenging*” by virtue of excellent player tactics, then he may still award VPs (see Awarding Experience, below).

Likewise, if the encounter is with a puzzle, trap or time-sensitive dilemma, the GM will often award situational VPs. If there is no risk, no points are awarded.

Convert Each VP beyond what a character needs to advance into 20 Role-Playing points (see below). When a hero gains a new level, his total VP score resets to zero.

Role-Playing Points (RPs)

Characters must accumulate 100 Role-Playing points in addition to the required number of VPs to advance to the next level. Points exceeding 100 in this category carry over into the *Excess Points* category, described below.

When a hero gains a new level, this score resets to zero.



Gaining Experience

Excess Points (EPs; 100 = 1 VP)

If a character has gained 100 RPs, but does not have enough VPs to rise to the next level, those excess Role-Playing points are “dumped” into the Excess Points category. When Excess Points accumulate to 100, they convert into a single VP, and the category resets immediately to zero.

Advancement

The GM allocates the experience (VPs and RPs) according to the GM section below. Each player records the granted points on his or her experience track sheet. If the character has enough VPs and RPs to advance one level, then follow the instructions below:

First, at the moment a character advances, “Reset” the current RP score to zero. Victory points exceeding the requirements *at time of advancement* convert to 20 RPs each. Then, “Reset” the VP score to zero. After that, any Excess points remaining “roll back” into the RP category.

If the new RP score goes over 100 (via VP conversion and rolling back Excess points combined), then the extra points form a new Excess score. So, a character who just advanced a level can end up with a RP and Excess score, but will always have zero VPs.

ERP bases experience point awards on battle odds, or situational danger, as it turns out in retrospect. It does not matter how tough a fight it was “supposed to be.” What is important is how difficult the encounter ultimately was to the adventuring party. GMs should award VP points immediately after

any dangerous battle or difficult situation over which the heroes triumph or escape.

Grant experience for every character involved in the situation or encounter; do not individualize the awards unless dealing with a split adventuring group.

Battle Odds and VP Awards

Devastating: 5pts
Deadly: 4pts
Nearly Outmatched: 3pts
Formidable: 2pts
Challenging: 1pt

Awarding Experience for Battle

Victory Points awarded for battle usually involves a straightforward decision process. If, for example, the party encounters a bunch of raiding goblins and kills them all without a scratch, that would probably not warrant any Victory Points. If, however, one of the goblins laid a clever trap and hurts one or more of the PCs, then the GM may decide the encounter was challenging, granting each hero 1 VP. On the other end of the spectrum, the heroes may encounter an ancient red dragon, spitting devastating gouts of flame from its mouth. In such a situation, the GM may consider the party subduing or escaping the dragon a victory. Even if the dragon were killed, the battle odds against creatures of legendary power are often devastating, and could kill several members of an adventuring group too brave (or stupid) to retreat. Any survivors would earn five VPs each.



Some encounters are dangerous in a different sense. The danger could involve a loss of prestige or repute. A situation may be precarious politically, or have the potential for erupting into violence.

Alternatively, some critical thing may be uncertain, with a riddle or mystery that the heroes must solve before disaster strikes. The GM must make the decision of how difficult a situation actually was to the PCs, and award VPs accordingly.

Situation Danger Level VP Awards

Nearly Impossible: 5pts
Extreme: 4pts
Difficult: 3pts
Troublesome: 2pts
Easy: 1pt

Awarding Experience for Role-Playing

The GM should award RP experience points as she notices excellent play. ERP discourages RP “penalties,” as that is no fun for anybody. Players earn RP points whenever they play up their character concept, think of good ideas, or utilize abilities in a clever way.

RP points should also directly reward the player solving problems (beneficial conjecture) or thinking of excellent tactical maneuvers in battles—although the GM may question whether a particular tactic or idea falls far outside of the character’s concept, as demonstrated through time in actual play.

If a player is ignoring the fact that he claims his character is mute and rather stupid, yet the PC constantly chatters and comes up with brilliant ideas, the GM should encourage the player to alter the character concept, or reward no points.

Individual RP Awards:

5 Points

Good, but ineffective idea or action:

10 points

Clever use of skill, feat or ability:

25 Points

Good, helpful idea or action, beneficial conjecture, excellent tactical maneuver:

50 Points

*Excellent Role-playing

+ Daring or personal sacrifice

Quick-thinking idea or action

* Awarded only if the character would have benefited from ignoring his character concept, but instead remained consistent.

+ Awarded only if battle odds were at least *deadly* or *devastating*, or

situation was *extreme* to *nearly impossible*.

#Awarded only if performed with no advance warning or time for premeditated action.

Character Equipment

All characters begin play with equipment appropriate to the life of an adventurer. This includes one month of travel rations, a simple mount, lantern, rope, backpacks, sacks, or coin purses. The GM can approve or deny other things based on the character’s proposed background. Clothes can be whatever the player imagines is appropriate for his character. Magic items should not be granted to 1st level characters, unless the GM has a special reason to do so. In addition, occupationally based items granted at the start of play are as follows:

Fighter: One weapon of choice, preferably in the fighter’s weapon group Specialization. Also, add one type of armor, as decided by the GM based on character background.

Rogue: One set of thieves’ tools.

Arcanist: One Grimoire or holy text.

Monetary transactions in the game world use a system like our own modern day currency; simply substitute the word “crowns” for dollars. Assign dollar amounts to items that would be comparable to things in our own world. For example, renting a car is not unlike renting a horse in the medieval context, so charge 50 crowns a day for a good horse. Imagine what something is worth today, and pretend that translates into the fantasy economy, making all conversions easy and fun, even if totally unrealistic.

The reason for a short equipment section is that mundane items do not require excruciating detail—the stock-in-trade of adventurers is mostly weapons, magic, and armor. Accordingly, the rules cover these items thoroughly. Normal treasure found during the course of an adventure takes many forms, but players usually convert loot into regular currency without fanfare. A little reading on ancient history ought to give the GM sufficient imagery for the rest.

Weapon Statistics

Weapons categorize into light, medium, and heavy types, each with a “max-split” of 3, 2, or 1

Remember, character level is an indicator of knowledge and overall competence, not necessarily power in battle.



TABLE 5.1 WEAPONS

Name	Handedness	Harm bonus	Mastery Defense	Max-Split	Reach	Weapon Initiative Bonus
Bonus						
Axe						
Combat Axe	1H	2	10	2	Medium	1
Great Axe	2H	4	10	1	Medium	0
Hand Axe	1H	1	5	3	Short	2
Pick	1H	0	0	3	Medium	3
Throwing Axe	1H	1	0	3	Medium	+2/+3 thrown
Bludgeon						
Club	1H	1	5	2	Medium	3
Military Hammer	1H	1	10	2	Short	0
Sledgehammer	2H	3	5	1	Medium	0
Footman's Mace	1H	2	10	2	Medium	1
Horseman's Mace	2H	3	5	1	Medium	0
Mourning Star	2H	3	10	1	Medium	0
Baton/Tonfa	1H	0	15	3	Short	3
Quarterstaff	1H	1	15	3	Medium	2
Flail	2H	3	10	1	Long	1
Bo Staff	2H	1	15	3	Long	3
Knife						
Dagger	1H	0	0	3	Short	2
Parry Dagger	1H	0	15	2	Short	2
Throwing Dagger	1H	0	0	3	Short	+2/+3 thrown
Kris	1H	1	5	3	Medium	2
Utility	1H	0	0	2	Short	1
Pole Arms/ Spears						
Halberd	2H	4	5	1	Long	1
Lance	1H*	3*	N/A	1	Long	1
Pike - medium	2H	3	15	1	Long	1
Pike - short	2H	2	10	1	Medium	2
Spear	1H	1	10	1	Medium	+1/+2 thrown
Shield						
Small	1H	0	n/a	1	Short	2
Medium	1H	0	n/a	1	Short	0
Large	1H	0	n/a	1	Short	0



Name	Handedness	Harm bonus	Mastery Defense	Max-Split	Reach	Weapon Initiative Bonus
Bonus						
Sword						
Short	1H	2	10	3	Short	2
Long - used 2H	2H	3	20	2	Medium	2
Katana	2H	3	20	2	Medium	2
Greatsword	2H	4	5	1	Medium	0
Fencing	1H	1	20	3	Medium	3
Chain						
Loose - short	1H	1	5	3	Short	2
Loose - medium	1H	2	10	2	Medium	1
Loose - long	1H	3	15	1	Long	0
Mace & Chain	1H	3	5	1	Varies with length	Varies
Nunchaku	2H	1	15	3	Short	2
Whip						
Bull whip	1H	0	10	3	Long	4
Cat o' nine tails	1H	0	5	3	Medium	2
Unarmed						
Fist	1H	0	See Martial Arts	3	Close	0
Kick	n/a	+1	See Martial Arts	3	Close	0
Crossbow						
Hand	1H	2	0	2	Ranged	n/a
Light	2H	3	0	1	Ranged	n/a
Heavy	2H	4	0	1	Ranged	n/a
Thrown						
Axe	1H	2	N/A	2	Ranged	3
Dart	1H	0	N/A	3	Ranged	4
Knife	1H	1	N/A	3	Ranged	3
Skuriken	1H	1	N/A	3	Ranged	4
Spear	1H	3	N/A	1	Ranged	2
Sling & stone	1H	0	N/A	2	Ranged	2
Bow						
Short	2H	2	n/a	3	Ranged	n/a
Long	2H	3	n/a	2	Ranged	n/a
Compound	2H	4	n/a	1	Ranged	n/a



respectively. The “max split” refers to the maximum number of separate attacks a character can take with a specific weapon in a single round. Consider Gegdin the dwarf, who possess skill of Melee D8 > Axes D4. Using a combat axe allows him two swings in a single round, because the weapon has a max-split of two. He could split his dice up in two ways: D8+D4 (+2 weapon-based harm bonus) for a single attack, or make multiple attacks, one using D8 (+2 weapon-based harm bonus), and the other using D4 (+2 weapon-based harm bonus).

Remember, armor subtracts from the sum of an attack, whether the attack uses a single die or combined dice, but only if the Potential-Harm exceeds Active DP. If the attack combines dice, armor applies once. If the attacker splits dice, armor applies against each separate strike. Weapon based Harm bonuses are added to each attack, whether the dice are combined or split.

The weapon stats include weapon name, handedness, threat points bonus per attack, the defense bonus for those who master a specific weapon, and max-split. The speed and reach of each weapon are not listed individually, but have been factored together to arrive at the final initiative bonus.

Weapons are in the following format:

Name and Handedness
Harm Bonus is either 0, +1, +2, +3, or +4.
Mastery Defense Bonus: ranges from zero to twenty, measuring the weapon’s defensive potential in the hands of a master. (0, 5, 10, 15, 20)

Remember, # A = max-split of an Ability Branch utilized as an attack with a specific weapon.

Weapon Reach. Long, medium or short.
Ranged Weapons get no bonuses or penalties to initiative. They have a distinct advantage as missile weapons and need no boost. Hence, speed and reach factors apply only to close combat in ERP.

Initiative bonus measures the advantage one has when wielding the weapon in terms of first strike capability.

Armor

Armor categorizes into Light, Medium and Heavy types. Armor protection uses the roll of a random

die to reduce the Potential-Harm of an attack, mitigating or eliminating threat points that would otherwise directly affect Toughness. The higher the roll, the more points are subtracted from the attack. Only make an armor check when threat points exceeds the Active Defense Pool chosen by the target (or Resilience DP, as with many magic spells). A high roll means the armor afforded its wearer good protection, or that the attacker’s strike was less than perfect. A low roll means the attacker penetrated a vulnerable area of the armor, simulating the chaotic nature of battle. Alternatively, a poor roll may represent greater luck or a more precise strike on the part of the attacker... whichever interpretation works.

Example: A much-improved Fred attacks with a rank of D12 in Melee, using a 2-handed sword. His target, a drunken knight, wears heavy plate, but lost his weapon and cannot parry. Nor can he evade because he is in heavy armor. Fred rolls the dice with maximum results of 12 threat points. The knight cannot actively defend himself, so rolls an armor check, using a 1D12 because he wears plate mail. He gets a seven, so only five threat points get through to reduce the warrior’s Toughness.

GM’s Note: Concerning Armor and Evade DP:

medium armors only allow half the Evade pool to be used (see Defense Pools), and heavy armors disallow it entirely.

Armor Types

Type / Protection Rank

Hide / D4 - Light
Leather / D6 - Light
Chain / D8 - Medium
Plate / D10 - Heavy

Mithral variations (extraordinary metal)

Chain / 2D4 - Light
Plate / 2D6 - Medium

Shields

Shields offer both an Active and Passive DP to the wielder. The Deflect DP uses MRV of base melee skill as its base, because any creature can pick up an appropriate makeshift object and use it as a shield. It is possible to specialize in shields, as purchased under the Melee basic ability tree, with the Die-Rank MRV value added to the Deflect DP. The total of the Deflect Defense Pool and the amount of passive damage reduction depends on the size



Gegdin always prided himself on being able to pick his opponents well. He just never managed to get the number of them right.

of the shield used. The damage reduction points add to the Armor check, when applicable. Shields categorize into sizes of Small, Medium, and Large.

A **small shield** offers zero damage reduction, but grants a + 50% to Deflect DP.

A **medium shield** grants a +1 to the armor check, and Deflect is calculated normally.

A **large shield** grants a +2 to armor check, but incurs a penalty of - 50% to Deflect DP.

Opponent and NPC Development

Role-playing games are not exciting without conflict. These games are about adventure, after all, allowing us to step out of our mundane existence, clobbering wickedness vicariously in the fantasy realms of our creation.

Warriors brandish their swords to thwart evil, wizards bend reality to achieve the impossible, and rogues sneak past them both to claim the treasure for themselves. In realms where clerics resurrect more often than forgive, we need an exciting

system to represent monsters and foes of legend and nightmare. Luckily, ERP provides such a method. There is nothing inherently wrong with complex NPC and monster generation; however, ERP focuses on speedy action resolution. GMs do not have to spend hours creating statistics for the opponents in the game. There are four categories of creature significance in ERP: Fodder, Standard, Exceptional, and "Full-Fledged." Fodder, Standard and Exceptional creatures encourage quick battle resolution, while Full-Fledged are more fleshed out, their skills usually covering more than combat situations. Of course, there is no bar to creating interesting personalities, quirks, or strategies in conjunction with foes of less significance than Full-Fledged.

All opponents except Full-Fledged possess only the most basic of statistics. Those statistics are Type and Challenge Score, Threat rank (TR), Extra Attack (EA), Hit points (HP), Resilience (RS), Battle Phase (BP), and any notes specific to a template; including Armor, Weapons, spell points,



Challenge score and designing encounters] If Nathal had a brother with the exact same statistics, their group CS would be 136. To determine a suitable challenge for them, divide the *group* CS by the CS of the opposing monsters, or use a combination of opponents with different CS ratings, subtracting one at a time from the total Group score. Always round down.

For example, our two elves above might face a pack of goblins of the *fodder* variety. If these goblins had a CS of eight (TY-fodder, TR D4-close, D4-unarmed, HP 4, RS 2, BR D4), then an easy fight would involve 17 opponents. This may seem like a lot, but remember that fodders are weak and automatically lose initiative to the PCs in every battle phase.

Standard creatures would have no less than a CS of 12 (TR 2D4-close, HP 8, RS 4, BR D4), so the two elves could face off against eleven such opponents; a tougher fight. Exceptional creatures have no less than a CS of 16 (TR 3D4-close, HP 12, RS 6, BR D4), so the two elves could face off against eight such opponents; less opponents but tougher still. Alternatively, the two elves could face off against five of the weakest Extraordinary (80 points) creatures, 2 Standard foes (24), and three Fodders. Full-fledged enemies may or may not pose a greater threat, as some may have abilities that are formidable but not combat orientated.

magic items and other special treasures. The GM determines regular treasure depending on the type of creature encountered and circumstances.

TY/CS: (Type/Challenge Score)

TR: (Close combat, Missile, and Magic attacks)

EA: (Extra attacks, if applicable—different from multiple attacks via a split dice pool)

HP: (All physical active and Toughness)

RS: (All magic resistance and fatigue)

BP: (Movement rank for initiative)

Notes: Special abilities, spell points, (if possessing an arcane attack), common equipment, etc.

Type: Fodders are creatures meant to be easy and fun to defeat. They are an inferior and abundant type of monster. They make large-scale battles swift and often give the heroes a sense of accomplishment. Fodder is not often the source of important or significant treasure. Examples of fodder include rapacious hordes of goblins or kobolds, ordinary rabble, inexperienced town militias, weaker sorts of undead minions like skeletons and zombies, and so on. Fodder rarely possesses more than a single attack type (see threat ranks, below), and are always medium sized or smaller.

Standard creatures are more of a threat, but still no match for a single full-fledged ERP PC. Typical Standard creatures include town guards, ordinary soldiers, common criminals, experienced hirelings, and lesser monsters of all sorts. These foes can inflict significant damage on a hero when attacking in numbers, especially if there are eight or more.

Exceptional creatures pose the greatest threat, short of Full-Fledged opponents, capable of inflicting significant Potential-Harm, and have more hit points. Legendary monsters like gorgons, chimeras, lesser dragons, golems, and werewolves easily fit into this category. Experienced warriors, assassins, or any other sort of threat can be an exceptional foe.

Challenge Score (CS) = the highest MRV of each Potential-Harm category (close, missile, and magic), including bonuses, cumulatively. The three P-H categories are **Close combat attacks** (Melee and Unarmed, including natural attack forms like bear claws), **Missile attacks** (any sort of ranged attacks), and **Magic attacks** (arcane or innate powers). Therefore, an Exceptional creature with Melee of 3D8 (close), Unarmed of D6 (close), Ranged bow attack of D6, and no capacity for magic, would have a basic Challenge 30 (Melee and Unarmed are in the same category, so only the highest rank is counted). *Close* and *Missile* combat

categories contribute a minimum of 4 points each to the Challenge Score, unless the creature has no means of using physical or ranged attacks of any kind. A creature's battle phase rank does not factor into its CS. Creatures who are faster do indeed pose more of a threat, but the GM can see that clearly in the statistic bloc (and it will quickly be obvious to the players). Always add in any points that increase Potential-harm. GM's should count only the highest plus in each of the three major categories (close, missile, or magic combat). For example, a standard creature with a D8 Melee, possessing a +1 sword, and a D10 Unarmed, would still only add 10 points to his CS for the Close combat category. If it were D10 Melee, and D8 Unarmed, then the player would add 11 points to the CS. CS calculates offensive capability only, and is useful for designing encounters.

Also, Extra Attacks adds ½ of their cumulative MRV to CS (see Extra Attacks section, below for further details). Items or special powers which grant "bonus Die-Ranks" to Potential-Harm—usually via magic weapons—contribute ½ of the cumulative MRV to the creature's CS (see Extra Attacks section for an example), no matter the form of attack.

GM's should count only the highest bonus in each of the three major categories (close, missile, or magic combat). For example, an NPC who carries a wand of fire 1D8 and a staff of fireballs 1D10 would add 5 points to CS, not 9.

Multipliers to a creature's hit points or resilience increase its challenge score as follows (always round up):

x2 to HP, Toughness = +25% to CS
x3 to HP, Toughness = +50% to CS
x4 to HP, Toughness = +75% to CS
x5 to HP, Toughness = +100% to CS

x2 to RS = 10% to CS
x3 to RS = 20% to CS
x4 to RS = 30% to CS
x5 to RS = 40% to CS

So a creature with a 14 CS (1.00), x4 to Toughness DP (.75), and x2 to Resilience DP (.10), would increase the difficulty score as follows:

base 1.00 plus .75, plus .10 = 1.85.

14 * 1.85 = 26 (rounded up).

For each Full-Fledged character, the Challenge Score roughly reflects total offensive capability. Adding up the MRVs of the highest ranked branch



(also called Ability-Dice-Chain) in each broad category (close, missile, and magic), and then add all of those sums together to get the final Challenge Score for the character. For example, Nathal the elven wizard has his highest ranked Ability Branches as follows:

Close combat: Melee D4 > Sword D8 > Long sword D6 (18)

Unarmed D4 > Pugilism D4 +1 (bonus due to cestus) (9)

Missile combat: Ranged D12 > Bow D6 > Short Bow D4 (22)

> Thrown weapons D4 (16)

Arcane combat: Arcanum D10 > Mystic D8 > Wizardry D6 (24)

> Primordial 12 (24)

Reflexes: D4

Total Challenge is sum of highest branches = (18+22+24+4) 68.

Threat Rating: threat rank is a category that describes all attack forms available to a creature. Such attacks are abstract, with specific weapon modifiers used only for creatures of standard or exceptional rank. The various means of attack are abbreviated in a creature's stat bloc as follows:

Close Combat:

M for Melee and U for Unarmed.

Missile Combat:

R for Ranged,

Magic Combat:

A for Arcane.

All creatures possess a minimum of D4 in Melee and Unarmed (only the highest of these are added to the Challenge Score). Most humanoids have a minimum D4 rank in Ranged ability (for at least throwing stones) unless there is some exception based on biology. For instance, most bears cannot throw stones. The GM must use common sense, unless strange magic dictates otherwise. If humanoid creatures are "capable" of ranged attacks, but carry no missile weapons into combat, then it may be a moot point.

However, if a GM wishes for there to be some convenient makeshift weapon lying around, he can make it so (there is usually at least a rock on the ground to use as a ranged weapon). If a creature cannot use a particular combat ability, its Challenge Score is reduced accordingly.

A creature's Primary attack is whichever attack form has the highest Die-Rank. Fodder can only have one attack form above D4, with no threat category

above a single Die-Rank. Standard creatures can have two attack forms above D4, with a maximum ADC in one category of 2D12. Extraordinary creatures can have three attack forms above D4, with a maximum ADC in one category of 3D12. Secondary and tertiary attack forms do not have to be equal to the number of dice of the primary. Therefore, a standard creature with a primary attack of 2D6 could have a secondary attack of 1D4, not always 2D4, etc. It is not necessary to describe the extra dice as Specializations or *Masteries* for the purposes of simple opponents (fodder, standard, and extraordinary). On the other hand, Full-fledged creatures *do* get such treatment, usually because they are more important to the plot of the adventure.

Arcane attacks use the Harm effect by default (see magic system). Spell points for that effect are always determined by multiplying the threat rating by × 1.5. Determine range based on the nature of the attack, or the range given by a spell description. Creatures capable of other sorts of magic effects, or those possessing innate magical abilities mirroring magic spells, will have the fact noted in its template notes.

Natural attacks: dangerous beasts usually use Unarmed as the primary Threat Rank. Some use unusual, but nonmagical, Ranged attacks, like the projectile quills of a mantichore, or the acidic spit of a giant frog, or a giant who routinely rips trees out of the earth and hurls them at human pests. Some monsters are capable of attacking with Arcane breath weapons, such as a dragon's fiery breath, or an energy bolt from the horn of a unicorn.

Attack form Die-Ranks

Pitiful	1
Terrible*	D2
Poor**	D3
Average	D4 (Average human rank)
Respectable	D6
Good	D8
Great	D10
Superb	D12 (Highest human rank possible)
Superhuman***	D16
Extreme	D20

Hit points = equals MRV of Primary attack form, plus the MRV of each attack form *above D4* in the other threat-ratings (Melee, Unarmed, Ranged, and Arcane). The total is multiplied by the sum of all creature modifiers.

Legendary and Preternatural creature Attacks

Legendary creatures' unarmed attacks ignore normal and preternatural armor.

Preternatural creatures' unarmed attacks ignore 3 to 8 points of armor protection (roll 1d6+2). Preternatural armor negates this advantage.



An ironic note: In defiance of rules, challenge scores can be largely ignored once players get the feel of the game. They are there merely to help GMs prepare adventures.

For example, a human archer with primary attack Ranged D10, second highest being Melee D8, and possessing only the default D4 in Unarmed, with no proficiency in Magic attacks, would have a base HP score of 18. If it were a faerie archer, then he would be a preternatural creature, multiplying the final score by two to arrive at 36 hit points. Remember the underlying supposition that hit points for creatures of less than “full-fledged” status roll all forms of defense into a single score, and is very open to narrative interpretation during battles. Full-Fledged creatures would add the modified hit points to Toughness if based on size, or to Resilience if something other than a mortal.

Creature Size Modifiers

Large modifier: 4

Huge modifier: 6

Gargantuan modifier: 8

Colossal modifier: 10

Creature nature modifiers

Mundane/mortal: no adjustment

Preternatural HP and/or RS modifier (fay, magic creatures, etc): Usually x2 to x3.

Legendary HP and/or RS modifier (undead, ghosts, demons, etc): Usually x4 to x5.

Add all modifiers together and multiply HP or RS by the result.

Increase creatures' Challenge Scores as follows:

x2 to HP* = +25% to CS

x3 to HP* = +50% to CS

x4 to HP* = +75% to CS

x5 to HP* = +100% to CS

*(or Toughness for full-fledged NPCs)

x2 to RS = 10% to CS

x3 to RS = 20% to CS

x4 to RS = 30% to CS

x5 to RS = 40% to CS

So a creature with a 14 CS (1.00), x4 to Toughness DP (.75), and x2 to Resilience DP (.10), would increase the difficulty score as follows:

base 1.00 plus .75, plus .10 = 1.85.

14 * 1.85 = 25.9. Round up for a CS of 26

Extra Attacks: some monsters have special, extra attacks, in addition to their regular attacks. Each additional attack is listed in any monster stat bloc after the abbreviation “EA,” and can be of any type (physical, mental, magical, etc), and take any form (claws, bite, fire breath, psionic attack, etc). The Potential-Harm of an Extra attack follows

the standard rules (like a maximum of three dice in a single ADC, or “max-split” limitations based on weapon or attack form). Otherwise, a creature may have any number of Extra Attacks in a round, limited only by its concept. This rule better simulates special creatures with unusual attack combinations—hellhounds, multi-limbed demons or golems, giant squid, giant snakes, dragons, two-headed giants with psychogenic powers, the ever loved hydras, and so on. Do not confuse an Extra Attack category with *multiple attacks* achieved by “splitting” a dice pool (see Max-Split, pp 27). In fact, some creatures' Extra Attacks are additional ADCs, divisible into yet more attacks. These special, extra attacks always occur one phase after the creature's regular attacks in a round.

For example, imagine a humanoid monster with four arms, and just to make it really frightening, it is wielding in each hand a magic bludgeon, each club inflicting +1 threat points, *plus* an extra 1D6 of fire-based Potential-Harm (as a magic Harm effect). For illustration, consider its template:

Le Monstre Supplémentaire D'attaque

TY: Extraordinary

CS: 62

TR: Melee 3D8 (+1 and +1D6 fire), Unarmed

1D4, Ranged D6, Arcane n/a

EA: 2D8 (+1 and +1D6 fire)

EA: 1D8 (+1 and +1D6 fire)

EA: 1D8 (+1 and +1D6 fire)

HP: 30

RS: 15

BP: D10 (13 with club, allow it to act in phase D12)

Notes: each club (+1 harm, max-split 2, init bonus +3) wielded is magical, granting an additional +1 to threat points, plus an extra 1D6 to Potential-Harm with every strike, treated as a Harm Effect spell.

Example of Battle: this dangerous *Supplémentaire* (or whatever the GM calls it) attacks a terrified soldier in phase D12, using its clubs, and decides to split its regular Melee ADC by the maximum allowed by the weapon type (max-split 2). So the GM rolls against the monster's target: tossing down 1D8 + 2 (multiple attack 1) and then adding 1D6 (as magic Harm), and then rolling another 2D8+2 (multiple attack 2), plus 1D6 (as magic Harm) against the same target. The threat points penetrate the hapless foe's defenses, killing him. But *Le Monstre* is not finished. Turning to the next foe, in the very next battle phase (of the same round), it uses its extra limbs to attack three more times (2D8, then 1D8, then 1D8). Remember to allow a targeted foe his armor roll whenever applicable; never roll individual Extra Attacks all at once and



add the damage of all those ADCs cumulatively (doing such would be grossly unfair).

Extra Attacks and Challenge Score: as mentioned in the Challenge Score section, these Extra Attacks adds $\frac{1}{2}$ of their cumulative MRV to CS. How did we calculate this Challenge Score? First add up the highest Potential-Harm in close (melee or unarmed), missile (aka ranged), or magic (aka arcane) categories. For *Le Monstre*, those numbers add up to 30 ($3 \times 8 + 6$, ignoring the 4) + 16 ($\frac{1}{2}$ value of extra attacks) + 16 (magic and $\frac{1}{2}$ value Die-Rank bonuses). Note the magic clubs' threat points bonus applies only once to any ADC, whether primary attack or extra attack, even if the creature has the potential to split the ADC.

GM Notes: "Fodder" type creatures generally do not possess extra attacks, but as is the case with most rules, such is only a guideline for the GM to consider. In addition, Extra Attacks for Monsters are different from an "Extra Attack" advantage for full-fledged characters, an ability governed by different, more limiting rules.

Resilience

This is magic resistance, and represents protection against non-direct harm of any sort. This score equals $\frac{1}{2}$ of the primary attack Threat Rating, being the highest ranked, unless primary attack is Arcane, in which case it is 100% of Threat Rating. Preternatural and Legendary creatures add their type modifiers to this category, adding to the creature's total challenge rank.

Battle Phase

Each creature template has a Battle Phase score. There is no formula for this. It varies for each creature and animal, based on averages for that type. Fodder automatically lose initiative in any given battle phase. Standard, Extraordinary, and Full-Fledged creatures follow an order of precedence in a battle phase:

- Player Characters (PCs) act, or Full-Fledged Non Player Characters (NPCs) that challenged initiative and won (see initiative rules).
- Full-Fledged NPCs act.
- Extraordinary creatures act.
- Standard creatures act.
- Fodder acts.

Add weapon initiative bonus if a Full-Fledged creature has a Specialization in that type. For example, a Specialization in sword allows anyone who uses a short sword to gain a +2 to initiative. If the BP were D6, this bonus would raise their effective BP to D8. Standard and Extraordinary

creatures should consider their second Die-Rank in any ADC to be some sort of Specialization. For convenience's sake, the GM can assume whatever weapon the creature holds entering into battle is within that Specialization.

Phase	Rank
Battle Phase L (Legendary Init)	D20
Battle Phase I (Incredible Initiative)	D16
Battle Phase 1 (Superb Initiative)	D12
Battle Phase 2 (Great Initiative)	D10
Battle Phase 3 (Good Initiative)	D8
Battle Phase 4 (Fair Initiative)	D6
Battle Phase 5 (Average Initiative)	D4
Battle Phase P (Poor Initiative)	D3
Battle Phase T (Terrible Initiative)	D2

Weapons, Armor, Treasure

Armor Types

Hide / D4 - Light

Leather / D6 - Light

Chain / D8 - Medium

Plate / D10 - Heavy

Magic armor types add a Die-Rank or a static bonus.

Some creatures possess armor. The GM can decide which type, and if other possessions are held by the creature, or in a lair. Simplify the use of shields with any creature below the level of "full-fledged," by using the following bonuses:

Small Shield: + 8 to hit points.

Medium Shield: +4 to hit points, +1 to armor check.

Large Shield: +2 to hit points, +2 to armor check.

Full-Fledged

Use the standard character creation rules to generate Full-Fledged NPCs and monsters. Do not be fooled into thinking that Challenge Scores alone can gauge Full-Fledged characters' strengths. The rules provide CS as a means to guesstimate encounter difficulty, not to limit the definition of what a "challenge" can be in an RPG. Do not confuse level with combat power in ERP.

Level measures total experience within a given character concept. A Full-Fledged character serves

Common Orc
TY/CS: Fodder

TR: D8 Close combat (usually a club or sword), D4 Missile (usually short bow), and no magic.

EA: No extra attacks.

HP: 8.

RS: 4

BP: D4

Notes: Orcs are stupid, barbaric, tribal creatures. Bigger and meaner than goblins, they enjoy robbing human villages and terrorizing every living thing.



many roles in the game, and can certainly act behind the scenes. However, if the GM wishes to consider Character Point totals when designing adversaries, use the guidelines below.

The GM must consider Character Point totals when designing adversaries.

Respectable (1-5): 70 CPs

Good (6-10): 140 CPs.

Great (11-15): 210 points.

Superb (16-20): 280 points.

Glossary

Ability: any skill or capacity known by a creature.

Ability Branch: a single branch of an Ability Tree, referring to Specializations and Masteries, linked together by some logical succession. Also called an ADC, or Ability-Dice-Chain.

Ability Check: many actions necessitate the resolution system to determine the outcome. The creature's effort may involve a basic physical ability or it may involve a test of skill. The challenge may be provided by the nature of the action or by active opposition. An ability check uses only one Ability Branch, with up to three branch dice.

ADC (Ability-Dice-Chain): no ability check can incorporate more than a single roll of the root ability, plus one of its Specializations, and one of the Specialization's Masteries. This does not preclude several Specializations under the root ability, or several Masteries under any one Specialization.

Ability Tree: the basic ability rank plus all its branches. Any ability can include multiple Specializations. The third tier applies only to combat related abilities, and is called Mastery. There can be multiple Masteries per Specialization. For example, Melee Weapons is a basic ability, while specializing in the weapon group of swords (Melee-Swords) lengthens the branch, and Mastery in specific weapons extends the single branch further.

Basic Rank (ability root): the first tier in any ability tree, always a single die. The root ability may have several branches.

Character Points (CPs): points used to build a character's abilities.

Defense Pool (DP): a defense pool is a number of hit points used to mitigate or cancel Potential-Harm. There are two types of defense, Active and Passive. Active DPs include actions like parrying,

dodging or rolling with the punches. Passive DPs include magic resistance (resilience) and general toughness.

Defense, Active: all willful and reflexive defensive actions taken by a combatant, using one of the Active DPs. Includes all parrying and dodging. Includes Weaponry, Evade, Dodge, and Deflect hitpoint pools.

Defense, Passive: any protection afforded to a creature without conscious activation or effort. Includes the Resilience, Toughness, and Falling DPs. Also includes non-ablative defense pool defenses such as armor and shields.

Die-Rank: a character's level of ability in any skill or capacity is ranked from D4 (Average) up through D12 (Superb). Throughout these rules, Die-Rank refers only to the value of a single die of any ability tree tier. This is expressed in the rules as the die-value itself: D4, D6, D8, D10, and D12.

Levels: characters gain experience during play and will advance through a series of experience levels that reflect stages of development. For more on levels, see page XX.

Max-Rank-Value (MRV): each rank has a corresponding die type, as explained above under "Die-Rank." The max rank value of each die is simply the highest roll possible. Thus, the max-value of D4 is 4, of D6 is 6, D8 is 8, D10 is 10, and D12 is 12. Sometimes several MRVs are added together to determine Defense Pools.

Max-Split (# of Attacks/Weapon): the maximum number of times an Ability Branch can be split into multiple attacks, each independent die roll representing a separate strike. Dictated by weapon type. Applicable bonuses are added to each separate die roll, unless otherwise noted.

Potential-Harm: rolling for Potential-Harm results in "threat points" which must be mitigated (meaning reduced or eliminated) by the defender's chosen Defense Pool. Avoid calling all results of Potential-Harm rolls "damage," because such wording betrays the point of the narrative combat system.

Threat points: points representative of *possible* damage from a number of different attack forms, reducing Active and Passive DPs. Threat points that penetrates the target's ADP and armor is real damage, remaining points depleting passive Defense Pools like Resilience and Toughness.



Appendix 1

Example Spells



Example Spells

Mystical	Primordial	Psychogenic	Supernatural
Alchemical Transmutation	Animal Growth	Ash	Animate Dead
Animate Object	Ants go Marching	Astral Projection	Blade of Righteousness
Armor	Armadillo	Battle Sense	Blessed Be
Charm	Beast Friend	Debris	Blinding Light
Eldritch Bolt	Conjure Elemental	Dominate	Confession
Hasten	Conjure Swarm	Dual Minds	Demonic Form
Homunculus	Conjure Weapon	False Mind	Divine Power
Invisibility	Conjure Woodland	Focus Mind	Fear
Malleable Visage	Guardian	Indomitable Will	Fortify Faith
Mending	Drown	Inertial Barrier	Guardian Spirits
Scry	Earthly Fortitude	Lethargy	Heal
Slow	Elemental Form	Lost Time	Hellfire
Spell Immunity	Fertilize	Meditation	Hold
Spider Climb	Fire Dance	Mind Bleed	Life Drain
	Fireball	Psychic Armor	Light
	Fog	Psychic Shield	Mantle
	Grasping Thorns	Puppet	Passing through the Underworld
	Lifting Winds	Pyrokinesis	Purify Water
	Lightning Bolt	Shield Mind	Rejuvenate
	Locate Plants	Swords to Plows	Safe Passage
	Maelstrom	Telekinesis	Sense Demon
	Purifying Waters	Telekinetic Bolt	Smite
	Shape Change	Telepathy	Strength of the Grave
	Smoke Cloud	Unyielding	Summon Demon
	Stone Hide	Ventriloquism	Terror
	Stone Spear	Way of the Warrior	Twisting Forms
	Strength of the Earth		Vermin Cloud
	Survival of the Fittest		Weaken
	Warp Wood		



NOTES: Each spell listed below details the power source, school, effect, range, aspect, and special notes, if any. For details on game mechanics, refer to the master Effects list. All spells operate according to the master templates.

To cast a spell, roll the required Ability Dice Chain against the difficulties given below, unless casting a damage spell, in which case no check is required.

Unless otherwise stated, range maximums are as follows:

Area Spells: $2 \times \text{MRV}$ of the relevant Power Source Specialization in diameter (add Mastery if applicable). The point of origination is up to $10 \times \text{MRV}$ of Power Source, in line of sight.

Single subject spells: No greater than 5' diameter, with the the maximum distance equal to $\text{MRV} \times 2$ Power Source in feet, always in line-of sight.

Note: The Perceive effect max-range can be increased using a magic item. Maximum range for a Perceive effect through a scrying device is converted from feet to miles.

Note: *Conjuration and Summoning spells* allow the player (or GM) to predetermine the power and nature of the monster upon first use, after which the creature summoned remains identical. The list below gives examples of summoned creatures under their respective spells.

Spell Name: Alchemical Transmutation

Power Source: Mystical

School: Alchemy

Effect: Transmute

Manifestation: Matter

Range: Object

Aspect: Object

This transforms the material from which an object is created into any other material. Thus a wooden chair could be transformed into a gold chair, a pool of water could be transformed into a pool of acid, or a cup of milk could be transformed into a cup of solid lead. Prerequisite: D12 Primordial

Spell Name: Animate Object

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Travel

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Object

Aspect: Object

This spell imbues an object with the ability to move. The object uses whatever methods of movement are at its disposal. Thus chairs will walk

(assuming they have legs), brooms may walk on their bristles or slither like a snake, etc.

Spell Name: Armor

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Protect

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Armor

The arcanist pays for the rank of the shield or armor enhancement by dice size, but cannot add more than one magical armor die at a time to a single target or item. D4 is 4 SP, D6 is 6 SP, and so on.

Spell Name: Charm

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Influence

Manifestation: Negative energy

Range: Creature

Aspect: Humanoid

This spell forces the target to obey the wizard's commands. The target will attempt to fulfill a command to the best of his or her ability. Must penetrate target's Resilience before full effect takes place. Prerequisite: D10 in Mystical.

Spell Name: Eldritch Bolt

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Harm

Manifestation: negative energy

Range: Creature

Aspects: Resilience then Toughness

Notes: No ability check required. Just roll

Potential-Harm.

Spell Name: Hasten

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Augment

Manifestation: Creature

Range: Area

Aspect (2): Melee + Reflexes

This spell speeds a creature in battle, allowing them to attack more quickly and accurately. 2 separate casting checks are required and the wizard must spend the spell points accrued by each check.

Spell Name: Homunculus

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Conjure

Manifestation: Creature

Range: Subject (Creature)

Aspect: Legendary Creature



This spell creates a creature of nightmare from the wizard's own flesh and blood. See summoning spell creation rules. A sample creature:

Example: Minor Homunculus

TY/CS: Fodder, Medium Humanoid / 12

TR [1D12 Unarmed, D4 Melee]

HP (12)

RS (6)

BP: average phase.

Notes: attacks with claws.

SP cost: 12

Spell Difficulty: 1D12

Spell Name: Invisibility

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Obscure

Manifestation: Positive energy

Range: Creature

Aspect: Scrutiny

Penalties apply to creatures attacking the target, *using the sum of the ability dice roll.*

Spell Name: Malleable Visage

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Transmute

Manifestation: Creature

Range: One subject (self or creature)

Aspect: Humanoid

This spell allows the wizard to change his or another creature's general appearance, creating a disguise. He may change skin color, hair color, eye color, facial features, etc. He cannot change height, weight, or body form with this spell.

Spell Name: Mending

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Restore

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Toughness

This spell knits flesh together, aiding in the body's natural healing.

Spell Name: Scry

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Perceive

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Area

Aspect: Scrutiny

This spell allows the caster to view the current activities occurring in another area. So long as the caster has a good idea of where the area is, and what the area looks like, he can view whatever transpires

within as if he were there. To scry in places beyond 10X MRV in feet, a magic item must be used.

Spell Name: Slow

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Curse

Manifestation: Negative

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience then Reflexes

This spell lowers a creature's effective initiative. For example, if the target has a Reflexes score of 10, and 5 threat points penetrated his Resilience, then the MRV of his Reflexes is reduced by 5, placing him in the Fair phase, rather than Great phase (see initiative rules). Note that individual weapon bonuses can increase effective initiative score.

Spell Name: Spell Immunity

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Fortify

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience

This spell adds temporary hit points to the targets' Resilience. This *cannot* break an active Effect currently affecting the target, like Influence spells, but can prevent similar problems while active.

Spell Name: Spider Climb

Power Source: Mystical

School: Wizardry

Effect: Augment

Manifestation: Creature

Range: Creature

Aspect: Climb

This spell greatly enhances the caster's climbing ability.

Spell Name: Animal Growth

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Augment

Manifestation: Positive energy

Range: Creature

Aspect: Unarmed Threat Rank

This spell increases an animal's threat points upon rolling an Unarmed attack. This spell can only affect animals of mundane to exceptional type.

Spell Name: Ants go Marching

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Travel

Manifestation: Creature

Range: Object

Aspect: Object



This spell summons hundreds of ants, which surround and lift an object, moving it as the caster desires. Only small objects can be affected by this spell.

Spell Name: Armadillo

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Protect

Manifestation: Positive energy

Range: Creature

Aspect: Armor

This spell thickens the caster's skin, giving it the consistency of armadillo's hide. The skin then protects the caster like armor. The arcanist pays for the rank of the armor enhancement by dice size, but cannot add more than one magical armor die at a time to a single target. D4 is 4 SP, D6 is 6 SP, and so on.

Spell Name: Beast Friend

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Augment

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Animal Handling

This spell increases the result of a check against Animal Handling ability.

Spell Name: Conjure Swarm

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Conjure

Manifestation: Creature

Range: Area

Aspect: Insects

This spell conjures a hoard of large stinging insects. Each insect has Potential-Harm of 1, with no more than a single hit point each, and zero resilience. The creatures' initiative rank is as one group, equal to the caster's Specialization in the spell's power source, or Mastery in the related Summoner school (whether Mystic, Supernatural, Primordial, or Psychogenic), whichever is higher. Controlling a summoned host requires no additional ability checks, but maintaining the spell requires a maintenance cost of ½ initial casting each round.

Spell Name: Conjure Woodland Guardian

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Conjure

Manifestation: Creature

Range: Creature

Aspect: Legendary Creature

This spell conjures a woodland creature to come to the caster's aid.

Example: Badger

TY/CS: Fodder, Medium Animal / 4

TR [1D4 Unarmed]

HP (4)

RS (2)BP: average phase.

Notes: Natural attack only.

SP cost: 4

Spell Difficulty: 1D4.

Spell Name: Fertilize

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Restore

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Area

Aspect: Fertility

This spell restores the nutritive qualities of the earth, allowing the area to be used as healthy farmland after it is drained.

Spell Name: Fog

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Obscure

Manifestation: Air

Range: Area

Aspect: Scrutiny

The area is blanketed in a dense fog, making it difficult to see or hear while within it. Everybody in the area has a penalty to Potential-Harm when making attacks in the fog, equal to the caster's ADC roll.

Spell Name: Grasping Thorns

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Harm

Manifestation: Negative

Range: Creature

Aspect: Toughness

This spell causes thorny roots to break from the ground and lash out at the victim.

Spell Name: Locate Plants

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Perceive

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Area

Aspect: Scrutiny

This spell allows the caster to instantly sense the location of a specific type of plant, so long as it is within the area.

Spell Name: Maelstrom

Power Source: Primordial

School: Druidism

Effect: Curse



Manifestation: Negative
 Range: Area
 Aspect: Resilience then Ranged Weapons
 This spell creates an area of swirling wind, which interferes with all forms of ranged attacks.

Spell Name: Shape Change

Power Source: Primordial
 School: Druidism
 Effect: Transmute
 Manifestation: Creature
 Range: Self
 Aspect: Creature
 This spell will transform the wizard into any animal form he desires. The wizard gains all normal physical advantages of the form, yet possesses his own mind. Prerequisite: D8 Mystical.

Spell Name: Survival of the Fittest

Power Source: Primordial
 School: Druidism
 Effect: Fortify
 Manifestation: Positive
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Dodge ADP
 This spell heightens the target's natural reflexes to increase defensive capabilities, helping to ensure its survival.

Spell Name: Warp Wood

Power Source: Primordial
 School: Druidism
 Effect: Transmute
 Manifestation: A green ray.
 Range: Object
 Aspect: Wood
 This spell turns useful wooden items into warped, splintered, useless items.

Spell Name: Conjure Elemental

Power Source: Primordial
 School: Elementalism
 Effect: Conjure
 Manifestation: Creature
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Fire, Earth, Air or Water
 This spell must be learned once for each element, and brings forth an elemental.

Example: Fire Elemental

TY/CS: Extraordinary, Medium Elemental / 20

TR [2D10 Unarmed, 1D10 Arcane]

HP (30)

RS (15)

BP: good phase (+2 SP).

Notes: Attacks with fiery fist or fire stream.

Preternatural (requires D8 summoner Mastery rank): +10 (×2 HP & RS). An attack penetrating

Active DP ignores up to +3 or D8 armor protection. Preternatural armor negates this advantage.
 SP cost: 42.
 Spell Difficulty: 2D10.

Spell Name: Conjure Weapon

Power Source: Primordial
 School: Elementalism
 Effect: Conjure
 Manifestation: Earth
 Range: Object
 Aspect: Object
 This spell conjures any normal melee weapon.

Spell Name: Drown

Power Source: Primordial
 School: Elementalism
 Effect: Curse
 Manifestation: Negative
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Resilience then Agility > Swim
 This spell reduces the result of the target attempting to swim.

Spell Name: Earthly Fortitude

Power Source: Primordial
 School: Elementalism
 Effect: Fortify
 Manifestation: Earth
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Toughness
 The Elementalist grants extraordinary stoutness to the target, imbuing him with the endurance of earth itself.

Spell Name: Elemental Form

Power Source: Primordial
 School: Elementalism
 Effect: Transmute
 Manifestation: Positive
 Range: Self
 Aspect: Creature
 This spell transforms the wizard into an elemental, complete with all of the normal abilities of an elemental. This spell must be learned once per elemental type. Prerequisite: D12 Mystical

Spell Name: Fire Dance

Power Source: Primordial
 School: Elementalism
 Effect: Influence - Stun
 Manifestation: Fire
 Range: Area
 Aspect: Humanoid only (must penetrate Resilience)
 This spell causes the flickering flames of a nearby fire to assume a hypnotic effect, mesmerizing those who look at it. Those who do view it stand



transfixed, unable to act. The target loses his next action due to temporary paralysis. Prerequisite: D6 Primordial

Spell Name: Fireball

Power Source: Primordial
School: Elementalism
Effect: Harm
Manifestation: Fire
Range: Area
Aspect: Resilience and then Toughness
The caster can hurl or fire a damaging ball of fire.

Spell Name: Lifting Winds

Power Source: Primordial
School: Elementalism
Effect: Travel
Manifestation: Air
Range: Creature
Aspect: Humanoid
This spell causes strong, localized updrafts allowing the caster to fly.

Spell Name: Lightning Bolt

Power Source: Primordial
School: Elementalism
Effect: Harm
Manifestation: Lightning
Range: Creature
Aspect: Resilience and then Toughness
The caster can fire a beam of damaging electricity.

Spell Name: Purifying Waters

Power Source: Primordial
School: Elementalism
Effect: Restore
Manifestation: Positive
Range: Creature
Aspect: Toughness
This spell utilizes the healing powers of water, soothing wounds and aiding in recovery.

Spell Name: Smoke Cloud

Power Source: Primordial
School: Elementalism
Effect: Obscure
Manifestation: Fire
Range: Area
Aspect: Scrutiny
This spell raises a cloud of obscuring smoke to shield the target from view.

Spell Name: Stone Hide

Power Source: Primordial
School: Elementalism
Effect: Protect
Manifestation: Earth
Range: Creature

Aspect: Deflect

This spell covers the caster's skin in a thin layer of stone. This stone offers protections from most physical attacks.

Spell Name: Stone Spear

Power Source: Primordial
School: Elementalism
Effect: Harm
Manifestation: Earth
Range: Creature
Aspect: Resilience and then Toughness
This spell creates several sharp stone projections to shoot from the ground, impaling the target.

Spell Name: Strength of the Earth

Power Source: Primordial
School: Elementalism
Effect: Augment
Manifestation: Positive
Range: Creature
Aspect: Feats of Strength
The target becomes immensely strong.

Spell Name: Astral Projection

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Mentalism
Effect: Travel
Manifestation: Psychic
Range: Creature
Aspect: Humanoid
This spell allows the caster to separate his mind from his body. He is then able to move about normally. However, the wizard is invisible, cannot affect anything, and may only use spells from the Mentalism school. He may pass freely through walls and doors, so long as they are not magically barred. Once the spell ends, the caster is catapulted back into his body, awaking with a start.

Spell Name: Dominate

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Mentalism
Effect: Influence – Control Mind
Manifestation: Negative
Range: Creature
Aspect: Humanoid
This spell strips away the target's willpower, making him obey the caster unconditionally.
Prerequisite: D10 Psychogenic

Spell Name: Dual Minds

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Mentalism
Effect: Conjure
Manifestation: Psychic
Range: Creature
Aspect: Mind



This spell creates a second mind within the caster's own. This allows the caster to do 2 things at once, so long as they have the physical capacity to do so.

Spell Name: False Mind

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Transmute

Manifestation: Psychic

Range: Creature

Aspect: Humanoid

This spell changes the appearance of the caster's mind, making it seem like it is something it is not. In this way, the caster can attempt to mimic someone else's mind, provided he has used telepathy or other mind-to-mind contact, or they can merely change their own. The caster may appear benign, malignant, full of an emotion, sincere, or whatever else. Note that this does not actually change the caster's mind, only its appearance to those who are probing their mind.

Spell Name: Focus Mind

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Fortify

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience

This spell fortifies the mind against psychic attacks.

Spell Name: Indomitable Will

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Augment

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Willpower

This spell increases willpower to resist mental domination.

Spell Name: Lethargy

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Curse

Manifestation: Negative

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience then Endurance

This spell fills the target's mind with apathy, which saps their energy.

Spell Name: Lost Time

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Obscure

Manifestation: Psychic

Range: Creature

Aspect: Humanoid

This spell obscures the caster and his companions from the target by actually removing the memory of their passing from his mind. As long as this spell is in effect, the target will not remember anything that happens. At a later date, he will be unable to recall the events that transpired.

Prerequisite: D12 Psychogenic

Spell Name: Meditation

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Restore

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience

This spell helps restore Resilience.

Spell Name: Mind Bleed

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Harm

Manifestation: Negative

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience and then Toughness

A mentalist attack to cause harm.

Spell Name: Shield Mind

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Fortify

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience

This spell protects the caster's mind from outside influence.

Spell Name: Swords to Plows

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Curse

Manifestation: Psychic

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience then Melee

This spell saps the target's will to use a weapon.

Spell Name: Telepathy

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Mentalism

Effect: Perceive

Manifestation: Psychic

Range: Creature

Aspect: Humanoid

This spell allows the caster to communicate with a target mentally.

Spell Name: Ash

Power Source: Psychogenic

School: Psychokinesis

Effect: Transmute



Manifestation: Fire
Range: Object
Aspect: Object
This spell allows the caster to harness her pyrokinetic abilities to reduce a normal, small item to ash. This spell does not affect stone, metal, or other things which will not burn.

Spell Name: Battle Sense

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis
Effect: Augment
Manifestation: Positive
Range: Creature
Aspect: Melee
The psionicist augments the target's prowess with weapons.

Spell Name: Debris

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis
Effect: Obscure
Manifestation: Psychic
Range: Area
Aspect: Any attack
This spell uses telekinesis to pick up small particles, such as dust, leaves, and papers, and whirl them around the area, blocking all vision and filling the area with the sound of fluttering debris.

Spell Name: Inertial Barrier

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis
Effect: Curse
Manifestation: Negative
Range: Creature
Aspect: Resilience then Speed
This spell slows the target down, making it difficult to move quickly. The spell has no effect on reflexes, only the ability to move outside of a 5' square. The farther and faster the target attempts to move, the more she'll realize the inertial barrier.

Spell Name: Psychic Armor

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis
Effect: Protect
Manifestation: Positive
Range: Creature
Aspect: Protection.
This spell conjures a suit of armor made of pure psychic energy. The armor is light and nearly transparent, though it still incurs normal armor penalties because of the increased concentration. The arcanist pays for the rank of the enhancement by dice size, but cannot add more than one magical armor die at a time to a single target. D4 is 4 SP, D6 is 6 SP, and so on.

Spell Name: Psychic Shield

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis
Effect: Fortify
Manifestation: Positive
Range: Creature
Aspect: Deflect
This spell is like Psychic armor, but adds to a DP rather than generate a source of random harm mitigation (a.k.a. armor).

Spell Name: Puppet

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis
Effect: Influence - Control body
Manifestation: Negative
Range: Creature
Aspect: Humanoid
This spell telekinetically pushes the target's body into any action. It does not control the mind, only the body as the target becomes a helpless puppet.
Prerequisite: D10 Psychogenic

Spell Name: Pyrokinesis

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis
Effect: Harm
Manifestation: Fire
Range: Creature
Aspect: Toughness
The psychokinetic can cause a target to burn, inflicting harm.

Spell Name: Telekinesis

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis
Effect: Travel
Manifestation: Psychic
Range: Object
Aspect: Object
At its most basic level, the caster's psychic powers can move an object through the air as the caster wishes. Up to 1 pound per point of result can be moved.

Spell Name: Telekinetic Bolt

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis
Effect: Harm
Manifestation: Psychic blast
Range: Creature
Aspect: Toughness
This spell blasts the target with a bolt of pure psychic energy, destroying brain cells.

Spell Name: Unyielding

Power Source: Psychogenic
School: Psychokinesis



Effect: Fortify
 Manifestation: Positive
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Resilience
 This spell makes it tougher for spells or other harmful effects to penetrate Resilience to affect Toughness.

Spell Name: Ventriloquism

Power Source: Psychogenic
 School: Psychokinesis
 Effect: Curse
 Manifestation: Psychic
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Resilience then Scrutiny
 By compressing and shifting the air around a target, the cast is able to create localized distortions, emulating sounds or voices. The caster is able to cause any normal sound to manifest around the creature, though it will be faint. Because it is localized, others around the target may not even sense the sound.

Spell Name: Way of the Warrior

Power Source: Psychogenic
 School: Psychokinesis
 Effect: Restore
 Manifestation: Positive
 Range: Self
 Aspect: Weaponry
 This spell allows the caster to put himself in a trance which allows his martial prowess and psychic abilities to become one. His weaponry defense pool becomes revitalized as it draws from his telekinetic power.

Spell Name: Animate Dead

Power Source: Supernatural
 School: Sorcery
 Effect: Conjure
 Manifestation: Necromantic
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Spirit
 This spell conjures a spirit and forces it to animate a corpse.

Example: Zombie

TY/CS: Fodder, Medium Undead /
 TR [1D6 Unarmed, 1D4 melee]
 HP (40)
 RS (20)
 BP: average phase.
 Notes: Legendary (requires D12 summoner Mastery rank): + 12 (×4 HP & RS). An unarmed attack penetrating active DP ignores normal and preternatural armor.
 SP cost: 22.
 Spell Difficulty: 1D6.

Spell Name: Blessed Be

Power Source: Supernatural
 School: Sorcery
 Effect: Restore
 Manifestation: Positive
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Toughness
 This spell conjures an angel of mercy whose touch heals the caster.

Spell Name: Demonic Form

Power Source: Supernatural
 School: Sorcery
 Effect: Conjure
 Manifestation: Positive
 Range: Self
 Aspect: Demonic
 This spell summons a possessing demon that enters the caster. Only through his own will can he prevent the demon from controlling him. Instead, he controls the demon, gaining many of its powers.
 Prerequisite: D12 Supernatural

Spell Name: Fear

Power Source: Supernatural
 School: Sorcery
 Effect: Influence – Control Mind
 Manifestation: Negative
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Humanoid
 This spell conjures demons of fear, which harry the target. This causes the target to flee as fast as possible, in any direction away from the demons.

Spell Name: Guardian Spirits

Power Source: Supernatural
 School: Sorcery
 Effect: Fortify
 Manifestation: Necromantic
 Range: Creature
 Aspect: Deflect
 This spell conjures several spirits who swirl about the caster. They interpose their own forms between the caster and incoming attacks. As they are struck they disappear, giving an opponent a vague idea of how much protection the caster still has.

Spell Name: Hellfire

Power Source: Supernatural
 School: Sorcery
 Effect: Harm
 Manifestation: Negative
 Range: Area
 Aspect: Resilience and then Toughness
 This spell conjures the flames of hell, which leap forth from the underworld to grab new victims. Those who die cannot be resurrected. Prerequisite: D12 Supernatural

**Spell Name: Life Drain**

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Sorcery

Effect: Harm

Manifestation: Necromantic

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience and then Toughness

This spell opens a small rift to the underworld.

The spirits within then suck the life force from the target.

Spell Name: Passing through the Underworld

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Sorcery

Effect: Travel

Manifestation: Necromantic

Range: Creature

Aspect: Humanoid

This spell summons powerful spirits, which take the caster through the underworld and back out to another location on Ainereve. While this form of travel is dangerous, the spirits summoned serve to protect the caster. The sorcerer must cast this spell using an item sacred to the dead as a foci.

Prerequisite: D10

Spell Name: Sense Demon

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Sorcery

Effect: Perceive

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Demonic

This spell allows the caster to see demons as they truly are. The result of this spell must be applied to the demon's Skullduggery > Disguise check to see if the arcanist is able to penetrate the ruse.

Spell Name: Strength of the Grave

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Sorcery

Effect: Fortify

Manifestation: Necromantic

Range: Creature

Aspect: Toughness

This spell grants supernatural endurance to the target.

Spell Name: Summon Demon

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Sorcery

Effect: Conjure

Manifestation: Creature

Range: Creature

Aspect: Demonic

This spell summons a demon that remains under the caster's control for the duration of the spell.

When the spell ends, the demon is banished.

Example: Demon

TY/CS: Extraordinary legendary Demon / 50

TR [3D12 Arcane, 1D10+4 (greataxe) Melee]

HP (144) or 154 with greataxe

RS (144)

BP: Superb D12 (+4 SP)

Notes: legendary (requires D12 summoner Mastery rank): + 12 (x4 HP & RS). An attack penetrating.

Attacks ignore normal and preternatural armor.

Wields a great axe and has mastered it (+4).

SP cost: 56 SPs to cast, and 28 to maintain.

Spell Difficulty: 1D6.

Spell Name: Terror

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Sorcery

Effect: Augment

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Intimidation

This spell summons the likeness of a fearsome demon, one who growls hungrily at those near the caster who speaks unwelcome words.

Spell Name: Twisting Forms

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Sorcery

Effect: Curse

Manifestation: Negative

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience then Agility

This spell conjures crawling, twisting demonic tentacles and claws that constantly grasp, pull, and hang on the target, lowering his ability to perform dexterous or nimble actions.

Spell Name: Vermin Cloud

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Sorcery

Effect: Obscure

Manifestation: Creature

Range: Area

Aspect: Scrutiny

This spells summons a cloud of insects, bats, or other mostly harmless flying creatures, which fill the area and make any form of sight or hearing impossible.

Spell Name: Blade of Righteousness

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Harm

Manifestation: Negative

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience and then Toughness

This spell conjures a blade of good energy, which can be used to cut away at the sin and vice which has sullied the souls of the caster's enemies. [Nice



description, but does this actually have any effect on how the spell works?]

Spell Name: Blinding Light

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Obscure

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Area

Aspect: Scrutiny

This spell creates a bright light, which blinds everyone in the area.

Spell Name: Confession

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Perceive

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Humanoid

This spell allows the caster to sense the most recent wrongdoing committed by the target. This need not be something that the target thinks is wrong, but rather is simply morally wrong to the caster. It does not provide details, merely what act was committed.

Spell Name: Divine Power

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Augment

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Arcanum

This spell increases the result of any check against the target's Arcanum skill or Potential-Harm.

Spell Name: Fortify Faith

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Fortify

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience

This spell increases the target's resilience against harm other than direct, physical attacks.

Spell Name: Heal

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Restore

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Toughness

This spell mends wounds.

Spell Name: Hold

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Influence - Stun

Manifestation: Negative

Range: Creature

Aspect: Humanoid

This spell saps the will to do anything from the target. The target is unable to act in any way while this spell is in effect. Prerequisite: D6 Mystical

Spell Name: Light

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Conjure

Manifestation: Fire

Range: Object

Aspect: Scrutiny

This spell creates light equal to torchlight.

Spell Name: Mantle

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Fortify

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Deflect

The theurgist fortifies the target against harm, creating a deflective holy energy shield.

Spell Name: Purify Water

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Transmute

Manifestation: Water

Range: Object

Aspect: Water

This spell removes any impurities from water, transforming poisoned, stale, or stagnant water into pure drinking water.

Spell Name: Rejuvenate

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Restore

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Resilience

This spell restores a creature's mental and physical stamina, replenishing their resilience.

Spell Name: Safe Passage

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Travel

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Humanoid

This spell calls upon the caster's deity to provide him with unconscious direction, allowing him to



instinctively pass around or by traps, wild animals, or other dangers.

Spell Name: Smite

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Harm

Manifestation: Negative

Range: Creature (infidel)

Aspect: Toughness

This spell only works upon those who are of a

different religion than the caster.

Spell Name: Weaken

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Curse

Manifestation: Negative

Range: Creature

Aspect: Melee

This spell weakens an enemy, rendering them ineffectual in combat for as long as the spell lasts.



An Overview of the Official Eldritch Role-playing System Campaign Setting By Peter Schaefer,

Ainerêve



Description: No single description suffices to encapsulate Ainerêve. It is a dream world, a place both above and within the Earth that we all know so well. Based in belief and imagination, Ainerêve is understandably unstable – for we humans are capricious and indecisive creatures.

In general terms, Ainerêve is made up of *settled lands* and *unsettled lands*. These terms are common and in use, in one form or another, across the dream world. Settled lands are stable regions, internally consistent and relatively static. There can be weird things in settled lands, things that no person on Earth ever saw (but definitely conceived), but even the weird things there are somewhat predictable. In short, things are pretty much like a

fantastic Earth. Walk down the road to the baker, and he'll always be there. Houses don't get infected with some sap's random thought of Baba Yaga and walk away on their owners. It is beliefs, solid and lasting, that create settled lands. Over time, as a mythology or religion refuses to fade on Earth, it creates a place in the infinitely malleable Ainerêve. That is where settled lands come from.

Unsettled lands are lands unclaimed by any belief, and they are ruled by dreams. Where lasting faith or consistently-held ideas forge a settled land and stabilize it, the quicksilver dreams of humanity keep the unsettled lands in constant flux. Far stranger things happen or live there than in the settled lands, and they are far more dangerous. Unsettled



lands are about ideas and ,thoughts of the moment, and their appearances refelct this. Love creates a blushing pink-and-red area with soft curves and some razor-sharp angles. Cult beliefs focus (usually) on the cult leader and vague savior figures, with the cold, blue and white backdrops of unswerving dedication. A location in the unsettled lands can be concrete and real in appearance (if definitely thematically so) or completely abstract.

Proximity in Ainerêve is dictated largely by conceptual nearness. That is, one place in which a person could stand and another place a person could stand are only as close as the dreams or beliefs that color those locations. To travel from an unsettled place that is based on fear of death to another constructed of fear of the dark is a short jaunt – the emotions are the same, and both are shadowy unknowns. Going from the idea of a circus, complete with spun sugar and eerie clowns to a wealthy fantasy kingdom requires a longer trip. Worse, in the unsettled lands you can never be sure if going the same direction means you'll get to the same place. At least in the settled lands, directions are normal.

Ainerêve's definition of nearness means that the settled lands, defined largely by a single belief system, surround themselves with related concepts. Travel out of a Buddhist settled land, and the unsettled lands will be more Hindu or Taoist than Christian or Norse.

Still, it usually takes a significant period of traveling through unsettled lands to reach a settled land not one's own. Leaving the Buddhist region, one is more likely to come across pseudo-Buddhist unsettled ideas first. Buddhist-like religions, ideas of peace, reincarnation, vegetarianism, and other Buddhist precepts will abound. Next come admixtures of Buddhist and Hindu (or Taoist, depending on which conceptual direction one travels), and then near-Hindu beliefs and concepts before the traveler finally reaches a Hindu-flavored settled land.

The change is very gradual. Settled lands exert their stabilizing influence over a significant area. Leaving one means that a traveler will experience a slow change in general wilderness décor as one belief





melds into another, and from the various ideas that have seeped in over the years. It is only far from any settled land that a person finds places that change as he watches and where a misstep can mean a thousand years of ideal pain. There are not settled lands for every religion and belief, or the entirety of Ainerêve *would* be settled lands, with a slow change in nature as one traveled across it. Instead, the criterion for becoming a settled land is a sort of energy; in short, to make an interesting setting.

One can navigate unsettled lands in two ways: the educated manner, which involves following the chain of concepts from one settled land to another; and by conventional (settled land) navigation techniques, which almost never function as intended but boil down to a matter of instinct. In the end, both are equally effective – that is, neither really is. Skilled travelers of the unsettled lands are very rare, and usually use a combination of the two methods to find their way in and out more than once.

Beyond conceptual similarity, there is one other thing that can bring two places together in the dream world. Repeated and shared experience can solidify parts of the unsettled lands to make a reliable (if not necessarily safe) path between two unlike locations. This happens only rarely.

Inhabitants come to Ainerêve from two places: dreams and beliefs, and Earth. The first is more common, as Victorian-age children dream a Jack-the-Ripper into existence or early American settlers have nightmares about the fiendish red Indians. Entire unsettled lands have been populated this way, though the inhabitants generally fade over

time and disappear unless reinforced with belief. People from Earth occasionally travel to the dream world through a form of unknown magic. (This magic remains unknown because, despite this setting's connection to Earth, games are intended to be played completely in Ainerêve.) Once there, most end up making their lives there and beginning a new society in whatever settled land they can find. Usually, people from Earth only find their way through to settled lands to which they are close – those based on beliefs similar to theirs.

The campaign setting book concerns itself with a very small section of Ainerêve. It involves three settled lands with enough concepts in common that they grew together over long periods of time. Today, the three are bound together irrevocably. They are the Forest of Meath, a place defined by the Celtic mythology and its eventual transformation into Celtic Christianity; Piusarmorum, defined by Christianity during the time of the Crusades and peopled by a lost company of Templar Knights; and Maedoen, a kingdom founded on the Celtic/Welsh that preceded Roman occupation.

Piusarmorum is evangelistic and conformist, and their discovery of the heathen Maedoen on the other side of the Forest of Meath roused them to another of their many holy crusades. This one has been going on for at least a hundred years, but it's hard to be certain. On the Maedoen's parts, they war for their way of life and their sidhe brethren. The Forest of Meath, apparently stuck in the middle, manages to flourish despite soldiers tromping back and forth through it.

Character Summary



Player Name

Character Attributes	
Character Name	
Race	
Gender	
Age	
Occupation	
Physical Description	

Advantages & Disadvantages	Background Summary

[illegible]

elritch

ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEM

* May contribute to a Defense Pool ‡ Contributes to potential-harm –R = Restricted Ability

Total Points	Basic Ability	Die-Rank	Specialization	Die-Rank	Mastery	Die-Rank
	Artistry –R					
	Agility *					
	Animal Handling					
	Appraisal					
	Arcanum *‡		<i>Magic Sheet</i>	—		
	Augury					
	Climbing					
	Coercion –R					
	Handicraft					
	Endurance					
	Feat of Strength					
	Healing –R					
	History					
	Investigation					
	Knowledge					
	Melee Weapons *‡		<i>Combat Sheet.</i>	—		
	Ranged Weapons ‡		<i>Combat Sheet.</i>	—		
	Reflexes *					
	Resistance *					
	Scouting –R					
	Scrutiny					
	Skullduggery					
	Speed					
	Stealth					
	Survival					
	Thievery –R					
	Unarmed Combat *‡		<i>Combat Sheet</i>	—		
	Willpower *					

Melee Weapons Specialization & Mastery

Melee Basic	Specialization	Die-Rank	CPs	Mastery (list weapon)	Die-Rank	CPs	Ability-Dice-Chain
	Axe	+			+		=
	Bludgeon	+			+		=
	Chain	+			+		=
	Knife	+			+		=
	Pole-arms/Spears	+			+		=
	Shield	+			+		=
	Sword	+			+		=
	Whip	+			+		=

Ranged Weapons Specialization & Mastery

Ranged Basic	Specialization	Die-Rank	CPs	Mastery (list weapon)	Die-Rank	CPs	Ability-Dice-Chain
	Bow	+			+		=
	Crossbow	+			+		=
	Thrown	+			+		=

Unarmed Combat Specialization & Mastery

Unarmed Basic	Specialization	Die-Rank	CPs	Mastery (list style)	Die-Rank	CPs	Ability-Dice-Chain
	Brawling	+			+		=
	Martial Arts*	+			+		=
	Pugilism	+			+		=
	Grappling	+			+		=

*Contributes to a Defense Pool



Magic Specialization & Mastery

Arcanum Basic	Power Source	Die-Rank	CPs	Magic School	Die-Rank	CPs	ADC
		+			+		=
		+			+		=
		+			+		=
		+			+		=
		+			+		=
		+			+		=
		+			+		=
		+			+		=
		+			+		=
		+			+		=
		+			+		=

Magic Spells

Spell Name	Source	School	Effect(s)	Form	Range	Aspect(s)	Difficulty/ Cost
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=
							=

Spell Points Maximum (MRV of Arcanum + MRV of all Schools and Masteries)	SP Recovery Waking 10%	SP Recovery Asleep 20%	Spell Points Current



Active Defense Pool

Defense Pool Type	Hit Points	Current
Weaponry {includes Parry, Entangle, and Keep at Bay} (Melee Weapons + Specializations + Masteries)		
Evade (Reflexes + Agility + Pugilism)		
Dodge (Speed + Agility)		
Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic)		

Passive Defense Pool

Defense Pool Type	Hit Points	Current
Toughness (versus physical attacks) (Endurance $\times 2$ + Resistance)		
Resilience (versus magical, mental or non-direct harm) (Resistance $\times 2$ + Willpower + Arcanum tree)		

Armor

Armor Type	Light, Heavy, or Medium	Random Die Reduction Value

Shield

Shield Type	Static Points Reduction Value



Afterword

Why Play Eldritch Fantasy?

A Note to the Experienced Gamer

If you are an experienced Game Master, then you have likely tried running many role-playing game systems on the market. You have preferences concerning what a particular game engine focuses on, be it the strategic, tactical, narrative, or theatrical. Within the gaming subculture there has been a war of epic proportions waged for decades, fought not by fantasy personas, but in the minds of players themselves: what is the best style of play? People bandy about words like Power Gamer and Method Actor, accepting or rejecting these labels with equal fervor. Players often debate, questioning the differences between styles, or if any approach reaches the level of “art.”

Alas, beleaguered GMs seeking answers to which style of play is best will suffer for a long time to come because definitive answers are not to be found here. Rather, this game is designed for the sort of GM more interested in weaving stories than debating mechanics, eager to delve into fantastic worlds before questioning their verisimilitude, and content to present an epic milieu with just enough rules to avoid fistfights at the gaming table. Every gamer wants exciting stories and heroic characters, and while some players may choose more strategy and others greater tactical combat, the rules herein are not antithetical to any individual style of play. That said, this game is undeniably written

for the “story oriented” GM, his group’s personal preferences notwithstanding, who might resent a preponderance of rules.

On the other hand, this game is not “rules-light.” Such is not the aim of our design. Rather, the Eldritch Role Playing role-playing system, or ERP for short, seeks to be Rules-Transparent. The rules should be transparent to the GM and players after they delve into the setting and story. It is the authors’ opinion that rules should exist only to facilitate unproblematic game sessions. This sort of rules-transparency is achievable with either complex or simple systems, but ultimate effectiveness depends on the engine matching the GM’s own stylistic preferences. For ERP, the focus is solidly on the story. Furthermore, ERP’s design is to achieve rules-transparency in the act of preparing for a game session.

GMs should not have to “work” to prepare adventures, or all but require software programs with which to build their campaigns. In other words, if you’re a GM who enjoys running easy to manage epic fantasy game systems, one that your friends will enjoy despite differences in style, then look no further than Eldritch Role Playing, as you’ll be instantly transported beyond the debate, and directly into the game!

~Dan Cross



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Appendix

Quick Reference

TABLE 2.1 DIE-RANKS HIERARCHY

Character Skill	Die Rank
Pitiful	1
Terrible*	D2
Poor**	D3
Average	D4 (Average human rank)
Respectable	D6
Good	D8
Great	D10
Superb	D12 (Highest human rank)
Superhuman***	D16
Extreme	D20

TABLE 2.2 CHALLENGE RANK OPPOSITION DICE

Easy	1D4
Moderate	2D4
Difficult	2D6
Demanding	2D8
Formidable	2D10
Extreme	2D12

Important Rolls

Revitalize rolls (roll for result once for each DP):

Weaponry Defense = *roll Melee + Specializations + Masteries*

Evade Defense Pool = *roll Reflexes + Agility + Pugilism branch*

Dodge Defense Pool = *roll Speed + Agility*

Deflect Defense Pool = *roll Melee + Shield Specialization & Mastery* (does not replenish extra hit points from Arcane sources)

Magic Effect Types

Augment

Conjure/Dismiss

Curse

Fortify

Harm

Influence

Obscure

Perceive

Protect

Restore

Transmute

Travel

TABLE 3:1 BATTLE PHASES

Battle Phase: Use (Reflexes MRV + weapon speed)	Die-Rank	Reaction Time	Random Roll Result
Battle Phase L (Legendary Initiative)	D20	17-20	n/a
Battle Phase I (Incredible Initiative)	D16	13-16	13-16
Battle Phase 1 (Superb Initiative)	D12	11-12	12 +
Battle Phase 2 (Great Initiative)	D10	9-10	10-11
Battle Phase 3 (Good Initiative)	D8	7-8	8-9
Battle Phase 4 (Fair Initiative)	D6	5-6	6-7
Battle Phase 5 (Average Initiative)	D4	3-4	4-5
Battle Phase P (Poor Initiative)	D3	2-3	3
Battle Phase T (Terrible Initiative)	D2	0-2	2



Spell Range and Difficulty dice

Single Subject

Self: roll vs. 1D4

*Object within line-of-sight: roll vs. 1D6

*Creature within line-of-sight: roll vs. 2D4

Area-Effect

*Many subjects (objects or creatures) 2D6

Conjuration

Single Creature, Item, or controlled energy = ADC of creature, item ranks, or energy ranks.

* There is no ability check required for Harm spells.

Range maximums

Area Spells: 2 ×

MRV of the relevant Power Source Specialization in diameter (add Mastery if applicable). The point of origination up to 10 × MRV of Power Source, in line of sight.

Single subject spells: no

greater than 5' diameter, with the maximum distance equal to MRV × 2 Power Source in feet, always in line-of sight.

Individual RP Awards

Good, but ineffective idea or action: 10 points

Clever use of skill, feat or ability: 25 Points

Good, helpful idea or action, beneficial conjecture, excellent tactical maneuver: 50 Points

*Excellent Role-playing: Awarded only if the character would have benefited from ignoring his character concept, but instead remained consistent.

+ Daring or personal sacrifice: Awarded only if battle odds were at least deadly or devastating, or situation was extreme to nearly impossible.

Quick-thinking idea or action: Awarded only if performed with no advance warning or time for premeditated action.

Battle Odds and VP Awards

Devastating: 5pts

Deadly: 4pts

Nearly Outmatched: 3pts

Formidable: 2pts

Challenging: 1pt

Situation Danger Level VP Awards

Nearly Impossible: 5pts

Extreme: 4pts

Difficult: 3pts

Troublesome: 2pts

Easy: 1pt

Monster template

TY/CS: (Type/Challenge Score)

TR: (Close combat, Missile, and Magic attacks)

EA: (Extra attacks, if applicable—different from multiple attacks via a split dice pool)

HP: (All physical active and Toughness)

RS: (All magic resistance and fatigue)

BP: (Movement rank for initiative)

Notes: Special abilities, spell points, (if possessing an arcane attack), common equipment, etc.

Steps to Determine Challenge Score

1. Find highest MRV of Close, Missile and Magic threat categories. Close and Missile contribute a minimum of 8 points (D4 in each category), unless monster description states otherwise. Add only the highest bonus in all three threat categories to the CS.

2. Extra Attacks adds ½ of their cumulative MRV to CS.

3. Items or special powers which grant “bonus Die-Ranks” to Potential-Harm—usually via magic weapons—contribute ½ of the cumulative MRV to the creature’s CS. Only count the highest bonus in each of the three major threat categories.

4. Multipliers to a creature’s hit points or resilience increase its challenge score as follows (always round up):

x2 to HP, Toughness = +25% to CS

x3 to HP, Toughness = +50% to CS

x4 to HP, Toughness = +75% to CS

x5 to HP, Toughness = +100% to CS

x2 to RS = +10% to CS

x3 to RS = +20% to CS

x4 to RS = +30% to CS

x5 to RS = +40% to CS

For each Full-Fledged character, the Challenge Score roughly reflects total offensive capability (see page 64).

Creature Size and Type Modifiers to HP:

Large modifier: 4

Huge modifier: 6

Gargantuan modifier: 8

Colossal modifier: 10

Mundane/mortal: no adjustment

Preternatural HP and/or RS modifier (fay, magic creatures, etc): Usually x2 to x3.

Legendary HP and/or RS modifier (undead, ghosts, demons, etc): Usually x4 to x5.



Simplified armor rules for fodder creatures

Small Shield: + 8 to hit points.

Medium Shield: +4 to hit points, +1 to armor check.

Large Shield: +2 to hit points, +2 to armor check.

Armor Types

Weapons, Armor, Treasure

Armor Types

Hide / D4 - Light

Leather / D6 - Light

Chain / D8 - Medium

Plate / D10 – Heavy

Battle Phase Order of Precedence

a) Player Characters (PCs) act, or Full-Fledged Non Player Characters (NPCs) that challenged initiative and won (see initiative rules).

b) Full-Fledged NPCs act.

c) Extraordinary creatures act.

d) Standard creatures act.

e) Fodder acts.