

MOD

Basic Manual - Beta

The nuts-and-bolts make-anything RPG from



MOD

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To John, Dave, and Rob, without whose
advice and mentorship we never would have
figured a lot of this out.

HEY THERE!

Hello! Welcome to the beta edition of the Mod Basic Manual!

We've worked to bring you the simplest, easiest-to-use universal without sacrificing rules or clarity, as much toolset as ruleset for bringing about the game you want without compromise.

This PDF contains the base rules for our Mod universal ruleset, including spell parameters, abilities, and all the play rules. It's got everything you need except a setting, and we've included some advice for creating those in the final GM chapter.

Thanks so much for giving us a shot. If you enjoy this game and want to purchase more of our products, or want to contact us, check out our website at <http://www.cabalgames.ca>. We'd love to hear from you!

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WHAT IS MOD?

Mod is a “pen-and-paper” role-playing game. What this means is that it needs no computer, and no pieces. You create characters and then role-play their adventures through an imaginary setting, using dice and numbers to determine what happens. Your characters interact with each other and overcome challenges through a storyline you create. A campaign, or plot line, can be as short as an afternoon or as long as several years if you like; the beauty of pen and paper is that the players have all the control.

This is the beauty of Mod. This is a game that has taken the concept of player control to the limit. Unlike most pen and paper games, which limit players by supplying lists of spells and techniques and by making players define their characters by classes, Mod is all about freedom. In this game, you can choose your own path, make your own spells, and design your own combat techniques. Everything about your character is yours to choose, and the sky’s the limit!

Ready to begin?

WHAT YOU NEED

You’ve already got the first item you need – the Rulebook. This is where you can find all the information you need to construct your character, as well as sample spells and techniques.

You’re also going to need some other players.

The average playgroup contains about five people: four players and one GM, or Game Master. The Game Master is the one who runs the game, setting the scene for the characters and controlling side characters and monsters. When you're putting your playgroup together, try and choose people who get along well together, and can focus during long games. Finally, try and keep your number of players close to five. Too few players and your party will be weaker, but if you have too many players, combat will take too long and things will get boring.

To keep track of your character's stats and abilities, you'll need a piece of paper. You can copy the Character Sheet at the end of Chapter 2 if you like, or you can make your own. You'll also need a pencil for marking changes to your character, and you might want some scrap paper.

Finally, you'll need dice. All Skill Trials in the game are rolled on three six-sided dice. A six-sided dice is the cube-shaped dice that most often comes with board games, and is easy to find in game and hobby stores. Although the trials are made with three dice, it is best to have at least six or seven.

Here's how we do it!

When a section like this shows up in the manual, it shows a house rule, something that you can take or leave as you like. Some house rules are just for fun, while others offer a different perspective that may or may not fit your setting. Have a look and see what you like! Create your own house rules, too; if you find something that works with your group, just go with it! We'd love to hear how you play; visit us at <http://www.cabalgames.ca> and let us know!

Solid-line sections like this one contain bits of useful information, like samples, GM tips, and clarifications. For example, “DT” stands for “Dice Target”, and is the number you need to roll over in order to succeed at an action!

These are the bare essentials, but there are other things that you might want on hand to help the game run more smoothly.

A binder is useful for keeping character sheets, plot notes, monsters, and other information together in one place. This can be kept with the GM so that the players don’t have to worry about keeping track of their paperwork.

Players whose characters cast a lot of spells may want to buy a notebook for keeping their spells written down. Keeping a spellbook like this is optional, not restricted by normal game play at all, but it does help players who like to make spells.

If your players have trouble visualizing combat or keeping track of distances, it is a good idea to keep a map grid and some figurines or tokens to represent characters. A grid is simple enough to make out of a large piece of paper, but map grids can also be purchased at hobby stores, as can miniatures.

For long games, it’s good to have drinks and snacks on hand. This is the point where we tell you that it’s good for you to have water and vegetables for your snack, but sometimes late-night gaming simply requires energy drinks and chips. At any rate, it’s not a party without snacks!

YOUR CHARACTER

The most important part of playing Mod is your character, your representative in the game's world. When you put your character together, you set your path through the game, so have fun here! In Mod, all the control lies with you, the player, so you can pull out all the stops and create the unique, engaging character you've always wanted to play.

Unlike most games of its type, Mod has no class system. That means that you can combine skills and abilities however you like – you're not restricted to playing a "thief" or a "mage". Players could go so far as to become a thief who uses magic or a mage trained in thievery.

CHARACTER CONCEPTS

The first step in creating a character is devising your concept. What kind of person will you be playing? What are their strengths and weaknesses? There are a lot of questions to be answered, and it can be a little overwhelming without a character class to act as square one.

The first thing to keep in mind is that the game is based on skills and occupations. Your character will be becoming stronger just by using their skills often, and using them well. Keeping this in mind, you may want to look to the skills list (See Chapter 3 – Playing the Game) for ideas. Combat skills are a good idea, but it's the minor skills like professions and athletics that add flavor to your character's personality, so look through those to get a feel for who you want to play.

Code

The term “Code” refers to your character’s personal code of ethics.

All characters, excepting those with mental illness, have 2 Codes to begin with. They will preserve their own lives, and they will pursue their own goals. They don’t count toward the total Code written down on the character sheet, but they can be blacked out; the aura of someone who no longer values his own life will show it.

Codes have a numerical value of 1, 2, or 3 showing their importance to the character. “Will Preserve Own Life” has a value of 2.5, and “Will Pursue Own Goals” has a value of 0.5. Any Code valued at 3 represents something the character values more than his own life, and any Code represents something the character will always choose over his own personal goals.

If two codes conflict, then the character will choose the higher-valued code. If they have the same value, then the character can choose one or the other as he pleases.

If the character breaks his code regularly, the Code will either drop in value or be completely removed. In this case, the Code is “blacked out”, and someone looking at his aura will see that he’s compromised his values. Blacking out only happens when a character breaks his Code willingly; someone holding a gun to your head can’t make you black a Code out unless that Code is a principle you value more than life.

Before the game begins, ask your GM to look over your Code so that she knows what it is, and so

she can correct you on something that might be a problem in the campaign.

PST

PST stands for “Primary, Secondary, Tertiary”, and it refers to your priorities. Out of the four general stats, you must choose one to be your Primary stat, or your character’s strongest point. Your Secondary stat represents your next strongest point, and the two remaining stats are Tertiary, meaning they are weaker areas in your character’s build.

Choosing PST will help you define your character’s abilities and skills. All skills are based on stats, so your strengths will point you down the best path to follow.

“Build” is the stat that determines strength and sturdiness. It is divided into “Strength”, the capacity for brute force, and “Fortitude”, the ability to withstand damage and effects. Many athletic and combat skills are derived from Build.

“Grace” is a measure of ease of movement, and consists of the general “Agility” and the more specific “Dexterity”. Agility is about movement of the entire body, and Dexterity concerns manual dexterity, or the ability to manipulate small objects. Some combat and athletic skills are based on Agility, and many professional skills are based on Dexterity.

“Mind” determines intelligence. “Intelligence” is a specific statistic that refers to memory for detail, ability to use logic and cunning, and book knowledge. “Wisdom” is more general, and refers to common sense, memory, and perceptiveness. Many skills are derived from Intelligence, especially

Knowledge, and most Perception skills are derived from Wisdom.

“Personality” determines how well you get along with others and how they perceive you. “Etiquette” is your understanding of how to conduct yourself in social situations, while “Charm” represents sheer force of personality. Interaction skills are based on your Personality stats. Pact magic is based exclusively on Etiquette.

If you’re looking for a little perspective on stats, the range of 0-5 represents the average human range. Your starting character will probably be firmly within this range.

0 represents the bare amount needed to get by. Someone with 0 Etiquette is irritating and unlikable, but not to the point where they can’t get by in normal society. (*Polite* society, however...) Negative stats indicate extremely low abilities, to the point where a character cannot function without help. A character with negative Strength may be an invalid.

Think of the smartest person you know. That person probably has 5 Intelligence. 5 represents the top of the range that most human beings encounter.

About Settings

If you have not done so already, ask your Game Master what kind of setting you will be playing. If races are an option, choosing one may help you along with your character concept.

Some settings also naturally suggest certain directions to take your character. If your Game Master has created a pirate setting, then taking a phobia of deep water would be foolish. Keep the game's world in mind while building your character.

CHARACTER CREATION

By now, you should have some idea of the kind of person that you want to play. If not, you should browse the Traits, Skills, and Abilities in the next few chapters to see if anything strikes you. Once you have a clear plan, or even a very rough one, you can prepare your character sheet and get started.

Traits

Choosing your traits is the first step in creating your character. These represent the very core aspects of your character; they are divided into faults and merits, and are listed at the end of this chapter, starting on Page 14.

A character fault can be something like an allergy or a phobia; it is a character trait that may place you at a disadvantage during play. Faults have a positive value, not because they are positive things, but because taking them increases your Stat Pool by the value. For example, the trait *Hesitant* is valued at +2, so it increases the Stat Pool by two.

A character merit has a negative value, so it reduces the Stat Pool in exchange for traits that may provide an advantage in the game. For

example, Compassionate is valued at -1, so taking it will reduce the Stat Pool by 1, but a compassionate character gets the advantage of being a good healer.

When you are finished choosing your traits, add up the total values of the traits you selected. This will be added to your Stat Pool, up to a maximum of 6 points gained from faults.

Stats

Once you know your stat pool, you can assign your stats. If you haven't done so already, decide which stat groups will be Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary. Your Primary stat group starts with six points, your Secondary group with four points, and your Tertiary groups each start with two points. Divide these up between the two stats that make up the stat groups.

No stat can be higher than 5 at first level for a normal human character. Other races may change this maximum if they have a different size; add their size bonuses or penalties after.

Next, add the bonus points you gained from your traits. Keep in mind that you still can't increase any of your stats above your maximum!

Derived Stats

Most of your skills will be reliant on your stats, but a lot of mechanics are based on a second category of stats, called "derived stats" because they're mathematically based on the stats that you just determined.

Initiative: The average of your Intelligence and Agility. This score represents how fast you can

come up with and enact a plan of action – in other words, it determines your turn order in combat.

Will: Choose the two highest of your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charm. Will is the average of these two scores. Your willpower determines how you relate to magic, including your defense against spells.

Vitality: Fifteen plus your Fortitude stat. This is the first layer of health, and decreases when a character takes damage.

Wounds: Ten plus your Fortitude stat. Once a character is out of Vitality, they will begin to suffer Wound damage, which represents actual injury. Weakened by pain and blood loss, a character will suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls for every 2 points of Wound damage suffered.

Mana: Fifteen plus your Will stat

Luck: Roll a single six-sided dice, and write the value down. This is your starting Luck; you'll spend and gain luck points as the game goes on.

Toughness: You have two Toughness scores. First, you have High Tough, which reduces damage that you would normally reduce easily. Second, you have Low Tough, which reduces any damage that you're not specifically strong against. Your High Tough is your Fortitude, plus the Toughness bonus from any armor you happen to be wearing. Your Low Tough is half of your High Tough.

Human beings naturally have no High Tough without spells or armor.

If a creature or player somehow has a negative Fortitude, they will add to damage rather than reducing it. Their Low Tough is equal to their Fortitude, and their High Tough is equal to half that.

If they have a Weakness, they add 1.5 times their Fortitude, and if they have a special resistance, they add half their High Tough.

Movement Speeds

Shift: A shift is a simple side-step, a movement so quick that it takes nothing from your turn, and this score is the distance you can move (in meters). Your shift value is simply half of your Agility.

Walk: Your Walk score is the distance you can walk (in meters) in a single turn, and is six meters faster than your Shift.

Run: Your Run speed is twice your Walk speed plus one-half of your Strength score.

Sprint: Your Sprint speed is twice your Run speed.

Aura

We are filled with and surrounded by energies which respond to our emotions and great events in our lives. Some people have the ability to see and interact with these energies, called Auras. Each character has just such an Aura and it is divided into major and minor life events.

Major Events

- Magic Specialization
- Total number of a character's Code (not the details of those Codes)
- Black spots from having broken a Code
- Magical curses
- Major illnesses

- Elemental affinities (Being an elemental)
- Traumatic experiences (GM discretion)

Minor Events

- Current emotions
- Active spell effects
- Current state (Tired, sick, injured...)
- Approximate Vitality and Mana

Abilities and Skills

Both of these require you to consult a list of things. You begin with 5 Ability Points to spend on any of the abilities in the Ability list (See Chapter 7).

To choose your skills, first take a look at your stats. If any of your stats are 5, then you can choose two bonus skills based on that stat. (For example, if you have a 5 Intelligence, then you can choose two skills based on Intelligence, such as magic skills or Knowledge skills.) If you have any stats with a score of 3 or 4, then you get a bonus skill based those stats too. (See Skills, Chapter 3.)

Now that you've chosen bonus skills, you get eight more skill levels. You can use these to buy new skills or to increase the level of your bonus skills to 2. (At first level, we have to ask you to stop at 2.)

Creating characters at higher levels than 1

We equate every five ability points with a level. So, to make a character at level 2, just start with 10 Ability points, 13 skill levels, and 20 base Vitality and Mana. You can keep scaling these numbers up

as high as you like. There's more information on character advancement starting on Page 114.

Your Character DT is 10 plus the average of your total Mana and Vitality. Every now and again you'll need to roll against it, and it's also the DT to summon a monster you've created. It might not be a bad idea to figure it out, especially if you're using Aura rules.

Now you're ready to play! Before sending your character out into the world, turn to Chapter 8 to select your character's equipment, unless you want to take on your GM's diabolical plans bare-knuckled and naked. It's possible, especially if you plan on playing a character who makes heavy use of his fists, but before making this decision you should at least look at the weapons.

TRAITS LIST

Beside each trait is listed its cost and its type. Don't worry about the types at character creation; they only apply to Polymorph spells. If a trait has no type listed, it cannot be Polymorphed at all. (See Chapter 5)

The traits are sorted by complexity; the GM may choose to restrict a campaign to basic traits, especially if it's someone's first time playing. As a general rule, traits with varying costs, or which add extra game mechanics, are in the Advanced section.

Vows

Vows are 0-cost traits that relate to a character's Code. It's an interesting way to give extra benefits to players who choose to restrict themselves with those do-or-die 3-point codes. Here are some examples;

Vow of Fealty

Must have a 3 point "will serve and protect character X" Code

The DTs of all actions directly taken to protect the named character are reduced by one.

Vow of Non-Violence

Must have a 3 point "will not harm others" Code and a 2 point "will not allow others to come to harm" Code.

The DT of any action the character undertakes is reduced by 1 as long as these Codes are maintained.

If you want to create a Vow, try to give a benefit that will help the character keep to their restrictive Code, Small bonuses add up, so don't make them too extravagant!

BASIC TRAITS

Merits:

Animal Person (-1) (Spiritual)

Some people, whether or not they know heads from tails when it comes to human beings, have no trouble communicating with animals. This trait grants a character a +3 bonus to any trial in which he attempts to deal peacefully with beasts, as long as they have any kind of intelligence.

Please note that “peacefully” above. The bonus from this trait is lost as soon as the character attacks the animal.

Brave (-1) (Spiritual)

It takes a special kind of person to stare death in the face and come out laughing. Whether it's the threats of the angry brute across the room or a wizard's illusory death's-head, a character with this trait gets +3 to trials against fear.

This includes both mundane fear effects, like intimidation or just plain scary circumstances, and magical effects like illusions and the Fear status.

Careless Caster (0)

A character with this trait can't help putting it all on the line. Pouring everything he's got into his magic, he can push the boundaries just a little further. He gets a -2 to the DTs of all spells he casts, but if he fails his Magic trial, he loses Mana as though the spell was cast.

Compassionate (-1) (Spiritual)

More than equipment, more than circumstances, the key to real healing is compassion. A compassionate character gains +2 to Medicine trials, and -1 to the DTs of spells that including the Healing parameter. Just call it “good bedside manner”.

Contacts (-1)

This character knows people who know people. Those people? They know people too. Through a network of friends, acquaintances, and owed favors, a character with Contacts can find out information that would have been otherwise impossible to find. He also gains +2 to any Inquire trials.

Decisive (-2) (Spiritual)

As an old buffet saying goes, “First come, first served.”

Now, in races, there’s nothing wrong with second place. But in combat, going first makes the difference between being the fastest gun in the west and being yet another tombstone. A Decisive character always begins a combat with the highest Initiative, as long as he’s aware that the combat has started.

Decisive applies any time the GM asks for Initiative rolls. If two characters have Decisive, then the one with the highest Initiative derived stat goes first. If they tie, it comes down to rolls.

Enhanced Sense (-1) (Biological)

A character with Enhanced Sense can see a little further, hear the pin drop, or feel the slight breeze around the edges of a concealed door. For every time he has this trait, he adds +1 to any trial to detect something using that sense, and he may pick up something no normal person can. Typically, this will be Awareness or Examine trials, but a Profession: Carpentry check to see if the bridge will hold the party would benefit from excellent eyesight.

When you take Enhanced Sense, choose a specific sense (Sight, Smell, etc.). You can take it as many times as you like.

Fearsome (-1) (Spiritual)

Blackbeard, captain of the Queen Anne's Revenge and history's most famous pirate, fought relatively few naval battles. Oh, he was prepared for a fight, but once the Jolly Roger went up the mast, his enemies decided to give peace a try, if you get our meaning.

Fearsome characters like Blackbeard get +2 to Intimidate trials, and cast Fear spells at a -1 to the DT.

Immunity (-1) (Biological)

From Alcohol to Wolfsbane, some people are just plain better at handling toxins than others. A character with Immunity gets a +3 bonus to trials to resist poison, and treats his Fort as 3 higher for determining a poison's effect. This works whether the poison was inhaled, injected, or delivered by any other method.

Iron Willed (-2) (Spiritual)

Some people call them "stubborn", among other epithets, but the iron-willed are the very pinnacle of mental fortitude. They're hard to crack, however you try. A character with Iron Willed counts his Will derived stat as 1 higher for defensive purposes. Every time he makes a Resist trial against a magical effect, the DT for his future attempts drops by one.

Note that the decrease in Resist DT only applies to a single effect. If the effect is broken and a new spell cast, the DT will return to its starting value.

Lucky (-3) (Spiritual)

Like a character in an old-fashioned cartoon, a character with the Lucky trait just plain has things going his way. When he starts the game, he doubles the Luck score he rolls on the single die. He also automatically succeeds on a roll of 17 or higher, rather than just on 18. When he rolls two

sixes on any single trial, he may re-roll the third die and take the higher result.

Malicious (-1) (Spiritual)

The secret of success is to like what you do. Malicious characters just happen to like hurting people, and they do it very well. Characters with this trait add +2 to Intimidate trials and -1 to the DT of damaging spells.

Monster (0)

Everyone's eager to lend the hero a hand, either because they believe in his cause or because they know history will remember them favorably for it. But what kind of help does the villain get?

Anyone trying to aid a Monster in any way suffers a -1 to any trials. This includes offering first aid, advice, or even fighting a common enemy. Most people just can't bring themselves to do it. Meanwhile, the Monster himself gains +1 to Weapons trials and Magic trials when casting damaging spells.

Natural Leader (-1) (Spiritual)

Characters with this trait have raw charisma. It's not about brains, or power, or even looks; it's about the sheer force of personality that draws other people to obey. Natural Leaders get a +2 bonus to Leadership and Convince trials.

Nobody's Fool (-1) (Spiritual)

For every starry-eyed young hero setting out into a beautiful new world, there's a cynic holding him back, seeing the pickpockets in the shadows and the dollar signs in the salesman's eye. It's not a glamorous job, but it's part of the world we live in. Characters with this trait get +2 to any trials to see through deception or manipulation.

Oracle (-1) (Spiritual)

Normal people are divine pawns, moving about without understanding the greater plan, without knowing anything beyond the range of their senses. Oracles, however, can see just a little further; once per session, they can ask the GM a single yes or no question, to which she must respond truthfully.

Too Close for Comfort

As a GM, it can be tempting to jealously guard your secrets, so this trait may seem a little scary. But, remember that, if they can find a single “yes” or “no” that would give away your plot, odds are good your players know most of it already. They have to ask the right questions, after all.

If the answer to the question depends on other events, there are two options to take. You can tell the players the most likely answer, or, if it’s really up in the air, you can say “it depends”. Just don’t rely on that too much, or your players will get suspicious!

People Person (-1) (Spiritual)

The life of every party! A People Person, whether they know it or not, and whether or not he does it deliberately, just plain makes people like him. He gets +1 to trials made with Influence and Interaction skills.

Spellbook (0)

Most of the time, casting a spell is a mix-and-match affair, kneading magical energies into the right shape for the situation. Some people, though, just can’t improvise. A character with this trait, due to sheer rehearsal, gets -5 to the DTs of his spells, but he can’t cast any spells that he hasn’t taken as an ability. (see Page 121.)

When you take Spellbook, you gain one free Spell Ability. A character with Spellbook cannot also be a Careless Caster.

Faults:

Coward (+1) (Spiritual)

Not everyone can be a hero. Some guys can look a dragon in the eye without flinching, and some guys consider it a feat to look a dragonfly in the face without screaming. A Coward suffers a -3 penalty on any trials against fear-based effects, such as Fear spells and intimidation.

Cursed (+2) (Spiritual)

When you're cursed, every day is One Of Those Days. A Cursed character fails more often and usually fails more spectacularly, too. He halves the result of the die roll when he determines his starting Luck. If he ever rolls two ones on any trial, he must re-roll the third die and take the lower result. Finally, his range for a staggering failure increases from 3 to 4 or below.

Frail(+2) (Physical)

"Not the face!" is the rallying cry of the frail. A character with Frail calculates his Toughness as though his Fortitude score was reduced by two.

Please note that this trait doesn't change your actual Fortitude.

Hesitant (+2) (Spiritual)

They never write ballads about the Slowest Gun in the West, with good reason. They usually die before they can do anything useful.

A hesitant character never gets to act in the first round of combat. He rolls for an Initiative score, but it doesn't apply until the second round.

He can avoid this delay only if he is aware of the combat in advance and the opponent is unaware. Like Decisive, this applies any time the GM asks for Initiative rolls.

Magic Dead (+3) (Spiritual)

People exist who are completely numb to the wonders of the world around them. For whatever reason – and most think it’s just a genetic quirk – magic dead people are completely devoid of magical energy. They cannot cast spells at all, and they gain a +3 to Resist trials against magic. They must resist every spell that is cast on them, even if they would normally consent to the spell.

Magic Vulnerable (+1) (Spiritual)

Magic tends to take people by surprise. The forces that create it are invisible, after all, can be sensed but cannot be clearly measured. As a result, some people just can’t handle it. A magic vulnerable character suffers a -1 penalty to Resist trials against magic, and suffers an additional point of damage from any damaging spell after Toughness has been applied.

Naive (+1) (Spiritual)

A naïve character is the kind of guy who inspired P.T. Barnum’s famous quote: “There’s a sucker born every minute”. He suffers a -2 penalty to any trial to see through deceptions or manipulation.

One Eye (+1) (Physical)

For those who are looking for style points, this trait does come with an eye patch, glass eye, or other interesting detail. Unfortunately, a character with one eye suffers depth perception issues, such as a -2 penalty to Ranged Weapons trials, -1 to Dodge trials and vision-based Awareness, and a -2 penalty

at the GM's discretion to other tasks that might involve depth perception, like trying to determine the distance between objects.

Quirk (+1) (Spiritual)

Quirk is a catch-all trait. If there's any situation in which a character is uncomfortable, distracted, or otherwise slightly impaired, it can be expressed in a quirk. Whenever the character is in the presence of their trigger, they suffer a -1 to all trials. Here are some examples:

A character with a smoking habit could have *Quirk: Haven't smoked in 12 hours*

A skirt-chaser who can't pay attention when women are around could have *Quirk: Women*

A character allergic to dogs (since Allergy is more serious than the sniffles: see below.) could have *Quirk: Dogs*

Note: Check quirks with your GM to make sure they're balanced properly within the setting.

Talkative (+1) (Spiritual)

Not knowing when to stop talking can be a big problem. First of all, as the military used to say, loose lips sink ships. A character with this trait suffers a -2 to any attempt at deception. Second, it's just plain irritating; the character also suffers a -2 penalty to influence skills.

Uneducated (+2)

Education isn't just about doctors in lab coats; it's about learning essential skills, from physics to car mechanics. Without even a basic education, it can be difficult to get by on just your own experiences alone; uneducated characters start with 4 bonus skills rather than 8.

Weak Willed (+1) (Spiritual)

Some people just crumple under pressure and do what they're told. A little mental pressure,

or worse, a little “C’moon!”, and they’re putty. A weak willed character suffers -1 to any Resist rolls. This includes rolls against magic, but also rolls against intimidation or coercion.

ADVANCED TRAITS

The traits in this section involve a change of gameplay beyond just adding or subtracting points from rolls. There’s a little more to keep track of, but they can be a lot of fun. Give the traits in this section a try!

Merits:

Adrenaline (-2) (*Biological*)

When the chips are down, every human being has that moment of power, the surge of desperate energy. A character with the Adrenaline trait can channel that surge in combat. If he falls below half his total Vitality or to 0 Vitality, he gains +2 Strength, +1 Fortitude and +1 Agility until he loses consciousness or the combat is over.

Note: In either case, the character must start above the benchmark. If a character passes both benchmarks in a single combat, the bonuses stack.

Ally (-2)

The character has a close friend, about as powerful as himself, who will go out of his way to be helpful. He might not always be nearby, but he’ll be sure to come to the rescue if he’s needed.

Note: An Ally is necessarily an NPC, so it’s best to talk this trait over with your GM to make sure everything is accounted for in the storyline.

Dispersed Growth (0)

Instead of having a Primary, a Secondary, and two Tertiary stat groups, the character begins the game with 3 Secondary stat groups and only one Tertiary.

Ferocious (-1) (Spiritual)

Never back an animal into a corner, the conventional wisdom says, for a reason. Like a cornered animal, a character with this trait lashes out more and more fiercely the worse his pain and fear. When he's taking penalties due to Wound damage, he applies those penalties as a bonus to the damage of any weapon that adds his Strength.

Find Aura (-1) (Spiritual)

Characters with this trait are minor psychics, able to reach through the ether and read the energies surrounding a human. It's not instantaneous; a character with Find Aura can make an Empathy trial. If the result is higher than the target's Character DT (see Page 13), the character can read the major life events written in the aura.

Focused Growth (0)

A one-trick pony is pretty good at its only trick. Like the proverbial pony, a character with this trait has expended more energy on one aspect of their being than anything else. Instead of having one Primary, one Secondary, and two Tertiary stat groups, he has one Advanced stat group and three Tertiary. The Advanced group begins with 8 points to assign, has a maximum of 6 points in either stat at creation, and costs 2 less than the current score to increase with ability points (see Page 117).

Glimpse Aura (-2) (Spiritual)

Although their vision is not yet perfect, characters with this trait are minor psychics. Upon meeting someone new, a character with this trait

learns all the major events written in their aura. With an Empathy trait higher than half the target's Character DT (see Page 13), he can also learn all the minor events.

Inherent Spell (-X) (Spiritual)

The value of this trait is equal to the mana cost of the spell. It is created when the trait is taken, and never changes. In addition, the spell has one of two triggers, also chosen at creation, that determines when it can be used.

The character has a spell. It's not a spell he knows, or a spell he can read from a scroll, or even one that he made up. Rather, it's a spell inscribed on his very being, that he can use as surely as he can walk and breathe. It is cast instantly, without spending any Mana.

The spell can be triggered by "concentration". This means that the character can use it consciously, but needs to focus to do so. It can only be applied to spells that have a duration; the spell lasts as long as the character continues to focus; he must make Focus trials every round and if presented with spectacular distractions.

An Inherent Spell can also be triggered by a particular emotion. Once per session, if the character is experiencing the feeling he chose when he created the spell, he can cast it for free. Common triggers include anger, fear, and sorrow.

Made Magic (-1)

When this trait is taken, you choose a skill and two parameters (see Page 78). Ask your GM for approval.

Characters with this trait make their magic in a very literal sense. They invest spells into physical objects that they create with a specific Craft skill. The object must be destructible but otherwise permanent, like a potion, a cupcake, or a piece of embroidery.

To create a magic item, the character makes the Craft trial to make the item as though he were making a normal Magic trial. He invests the item with his Mana – his Mana total is permanently lowered by the spell’s Mana cost until the item is used up or expires, at which point he can regain the Mana normally. If he fails the trial at the creation of the item, then this Mana is spent, not invested, and the item is produced, but is not magical. A magical item will maintain its power until activated, or until a “best-before” date set by the craftsman when it is created.

When the item is created, the craftsman also chooses its method of use. For example, he may make a potion that activates when drunk, or an origami crane that activates when torn. The action must take at least as much time as casting the spell would – in order to activate an item reflexively, the item’s spell must also be Reflexive (see Page 121).

See Aura (-3) (*Spiritual*)

Characters with this trait are proficient psychics who, upon meeting a character, have access to all the information in his aura.

Single-minded (0)

A character with this trait has perfect, unbreakable focus. When his eyes are on the prize, he doesn’t even think of looking at anything else. It’s admirable in its own way, but there are times he could be called clueless, too. He suffers a -3 penalty to Awareness trials, and, while auto-rolling (see Page 52), he automatically fails Awareness trials. When he auto-rolls, however, his perfect focus gets the job done faster; he takes as much time as the next lower roll on the table.

Example: A character with Single-minded can auto-roll a 15 in 3 rounds instead of the usual 5.

Skill Magic (-2)

When this trait is taken, you choose a skill and two parameters (see Page 78). Ask your GM for approval.

Magic takes many forms. It's about more than chants, arcane gestures and ancient runes. After all, it's a manifestation of the same mysterious forces that give us life and personality. Characters with this trait can channel magic through a skill not normally used for spells, like Song or even Knowledge.

Soothsayer (-1) (Spiritual)

With the right knowledge, the right skills, and the right equipment, the power of prophecy isn't as far from human hands as many think it is. A character with this trait can, provided he has the right equipment (runes, tea, cards, yarrow stalks), use a Prophecy magic skill. This skill is only capable of the Divination parameter, but the DTs of all its spells are reduced by 3.

Faults:

Addiction (+2) (Spiritual)

There's vice and then there's habit, and there's habit and then there's addiction. When a vice gets out of control, a character can have a serious problem. Unlike Quirk addictions, which are usually harmless, addictions falling under this trait put the character in a compromising situation. The fix in question is difficult, illegal, or dangerous to obtain, but the character will chase it at any opportunity, and suffers a -1 penalty to all skill trials for every day he goes without indulging.

Ailment (Variable) (Physical)

When the old trick knee's acting up, when the surgical scars start hurting, when the asthma kicks in, that's when things start to get rough for the

weak of body. When things get hairy, a character with this trait finds his body giving out on him. He rolls fewer dice on all physical actions, depending on the severity chosen below.

Note: When you take this trait, choose both a Severity and Frequency below. Add the total values of the two components to get the total cost. For example, a Moderate ailment that triggers on a natural 3 would add 2 to your stat pool.

Frequency:

+1 - Whenever you would roll a natural 3

+2 - Whenever you would roll a natural 5 or lower

+3 - Whenever you would roll a natural 7 or lower

Severity:

0 (Mild) - You can only roll 2 dice for any physical actions for the next 10 minutes, and cannot sprint

+1 (Moderate) - You can only roll 1 die for physical actions for the next 30 minutes, and cannot run or sprint.

+2 (Severe) - You are unable to make any significant physical actions, including casting spells, and are otherwise only able to make simple movements, like using most items. You have a 50% chance of losing all Vitality, losing consciousness, and dying if you don't receive help within a minute.

Allergy (Variable) (Biological)

A character with an allergy, be he a vampire who can't bear holy water or a doctor who can't eat peanuts, is completely defeated the moment a certain substance comes into the equation. It can be a dire weakness.

Note: When you take this trait, choose both a Severity and Rarity below. Add the total values of the two components to get the total cost. For example, a vampire's severe allergy to holy water is worth 4 points.

Rarity:

+0 (Rare) - The average person may never happen across it, and someone looking to buy it would find it difficult to find or prohibitively expensive. (Platinum or the nectar of an extremely rare flower, for example)

+1 (Avoidable) - The average person may or may not encounter it in a given day, but someone looking to buy it should be able to do so with little trouble. (Amethyst crystals, for example, or holy water.)

+2 (Common) - The average person will almost certainly encounter it in their daily life, and someone wanting to buy it will likely not have to pay much, if anything, for it. (Grass or flour, for example.)

Severity:

+1 (Mild) - The character suffers -2 to all trials while in contact, and for 2 turns afterward.

+2 (Moderate) - The character suffers -3 to all trials and 2 damage per round while in contact and for 5 rounds afterward. (This damage is not reduced by toughness.)

+3 (Severe) - The character suffers -5 to all trials and 5 damage per round while in contact and for 10 rounds afterward. (This damage is not reduced by toughness.)

Blind (+6) (Physical)

The character can't see. This, as you may believe, makes operations somewhat more complicated. He automatically fails any trial based exclusively on sight, and is always considered unaware against attacks. When attacking, he must first roll Awareness to locate the target, and then make the attack without adding his Strength or Dexterity stat. The GM may add additional penalties on tasks that are difficult to accomplish without the eyes, like navigation.

Deaf (+4) (Physical)

The character can't hear. He automatically fails any trial based exclusively on hearing. He suffers a -1 penalty to Dodge, -6 against an attack from behind. He suffers a -4 penalty to any trials involving verbal communication, including Empathy. None of these penalties apply to nonverbal communication, like sign language or writing.

Enemy (+2)

Sometimes people just don't get along. Ordinarily, it's nothing to worry about, but sometimes a little disagreement over a game of cards, or a price at market, or who stole whose wife gets a little out of hand, and suddenly the character can find he's made himself an enemy. This enemy is typically as powerful as the character himself, and will often follow him around, seeking his downfall through any possible means.

Note: Please remember to notify your GM that you've made an enemy!

Magical Curse (Variable) (Spiritual)

Whenever Pinocchio told a lie, his nose grew. That's a good old-fashioned magical curse for you; it triggers on certain behavior, and punishes the victim whether they deserve it or not.

Note: When you take this trait, choose both a Rarity and Severity below. Add the total values of the two components to get the total cost. For example, a curse that triggers when a character fails a trial and causes him to lose half his mana would be worth 5 points. Listed severities are just examples, and can be substituted for an effect you've come up with yourself, or with an effect from the Allergy or Ailment tables, see above.

Rarity:

0 (Rare) - These triggers are situations that a person normally has complete control over, such

as stealing, letting their hair grow out, or saying a certain word.

+1 (Avoidable) - These triggers are situations that a person may sometimes control but that often can't be helped, such as being put under a magical effect, falling below half his total Vitality, or hearing a certain thing spoken.

+2 (Common) - These triggers are situations that a person can rarely control, such as being involved in combat, or avoiding a certain task set out by the one who cast the curse.

Severity:

+1 (Mild) - Hallucinations, temporary deafness, temporary status effect such as Seal.

+2 (Moderate) - Temporary severe status ailment, such as Frenzy or Fear, loss of half total Mana or Vitality.

+3 (Severe) - Murderous paranoia, loss of all senses for an hour.

Nightmares (+2) (Spiritual)

The character suffers from terrible nightmares. The upside of this is that, according to Freud, he has an opportunity for a great deal of self-discovery, but it comes with an unfortunate downside. Every night, he has a 50% chance of developing a temporary phobia of the GM's choice for the next 24 hours, and recovers Mana at half his usual rate.

One Arm (+3) (Physical)

A character with only one functioning arm, whether he was born that way or injured in a later incident, cannot wield two weapons, use a shield and a weapon at the same time, or use any two-handed weapon properly. His strength is halved for any trial that requires two hands, and he can suffer other related penalties at the GM's discretion.

Note: If your setting includes functioning prosthetic hands or cybernetics, this trait's value is reduced or even negated. Check with your GM.

One Leg (+5) (Physical)

Whether or not the character replaces his missing leg with a stylish wooden peg is up to him. He cannot sprint, and all his other movement speeds are halved. He suffers a penalty (up to -5) to Dodge and Nimbleness skills. When he is attacked, he must make an Acrobatics trial exceeding the damage dealt to avoid toppling.

Note: If your setting includes modern prosthetic legs or more advanced cybernetic replacements, this trait's value is reduced or even negated. Check with your GM.

Phobia (+2 or +3) (Spiritual)

A phobia is an extreme fear of a specific object, creature, or situation. When he is aware of its presence, the character falls under an effect similar to a Fear spell (see Page 87) and must remain at least 5 meters away (if the value is +2) or completely out of perceptual range of it (if the value is +3). If he finds himself within that range, then he must take any possible actions to escape it.

Note: Please check phobias with your GM to make sure they're balanced within the setting. Having a phobia of deep water would make life very inconvenient for a pirate.

MONSTER TRAITS

Monsters are created in Mod the same way player characters are, and traits follow the same rules. The traits below are a little more unusual than “Quirk”, and they’re well beyond the scope of a normal human being. Ask your GM if you’re even considering any of these traits for a second, and you may have to beg to be allowed to put it on your character sheet!

All is not lost, however. Even if your GM won’t let you breathe fire permanently, if you take a magic that can use one of the Polymorph parameters, you can temporarily apply almost every trait in this chapter, including most monster traits. If you’re playing a magic-focused character, or have one in the party, it might be a good idea to familiarize yourself with the possibilities. If you’re playing a summoner, either with Pact or with a magic specialization, then you can use these traits when creating a summon creature.

Merits:

Regeneration (-Any number) (*Biological*)

A monster with this trait regains 1 point of Vitality or Wound each round for every point spent on it. It can even re-grow lost body parts, given enough time, so that’s helpful.

Glide (-1 or -2) (*Physical*)

Like the mighty flying squirrel, a creature with this trait can glide using either vestigial wings (-1) or natural buoyancy (-2) so that when it falls, it can instead move at its Walk speed and only fall 1 Meter for every 2 Meters of horizontal movement, and not take any fall damage. Nature’s parachutists.

Natural Weapon (-1, or -2) (Physical)

Most creatures, monstrous or otherwise, have some form of natural defense. Porcupines have quills, komodo dragons bite, red dragons breathe fire. When you pick this Trait, you make a weapon as you would normally, except that you can only choose from Brawling (-1), Crossbows (-2), 1-Handed Balanced Weapons (-2) or Whips (-2), and may choose from some special bonuses. Otherwise, treat these weapons exactly as you would their counterparts, only the creature cannot be disarmed and can add half of its Strength to the damage of a ranged natural weapon, and Agility to accuracy.

All Limbs (1 Bonus Point): Because it's no fun just having a single clawed forepaw, this trait makes sure that the weapon exists on all available limbs. With this, the monster is able to attack with multiple weapons as per normal. Note that whether or not the monster has claws is entirely up to you; this trait is just so that the monster can use them.

Dangerous Skin (1 Bonus Point, Crossbow base): A monster with acidic skin, sharp quills, or a body wreathed in perpetual hellfire has a natural weapon covering the entirety of its body's surface. It can attack with this normally, but it also deals its base damage to anyone coming into contact. In a grapple, any time the monster makes a roll (such as brute weapons or escape), the opponent will take the dangerous skin's base damage.

Different Damage Type (2 Bonus Points): It's all well and good to have monsters slash, crush, and pierce their way through life, but this special ability grants access to more...exotic damage types. This is how you breathe fire, how you spit acid, how your porcupine is suddenly coated with tiny ballistic missiles. Instead of adding Strength, the monster adds half of its Fortitude to damage. Attacks with a different damage type have their range halved.

Tail (-1) (Physical)

The monster has a tail, not a prehensile one (that's an extra limb, see below), but one strong enough to help with balance, adding +2 to Acrobatics and Climb. A tail strong enough to hit someone with is a Brawling-type natural weapon (see above).

Durable (-2) (Physical)

As anyone who's tried to shoot a rhinoceros with a tranquilizer dart can tell you, some creatures are just tougher than others. For each time you take Durable, choose a type of damage normally rolled against the monster's Low Toughness. It is now rolled against High Toughness instead.

Elemental (-2) (Biological)

When you take this trait, choose one of your game's magic skills. Damage caused to the monster by magic cast using that skill is nullified, opposing elemental damage is doubled, and regardless of whether or not a caster has the ability to do so, they may use that creature's elemental magic skill to heal it or its opposing elemental type to damage it.

(Note: In games without an opposing magic skill system, this trait may be unavailable or available at a reduced cost. Generally speaking, the lower the number of magic skills in the game, the higher the cost.)

Resilient (-2) (Physical)

Because it's kind of hard to punch a giant crab into submission. This trait increases High Toughness by 2 and Low Toughness by 1.

Serpentine (-2) (Physical)

Monsters with this trait have extremely flexible bodies, like eels, snakes, worms, sea serpents, and contortionists. This trait adds +2 to all

Nimbleness Skills, to Swim, and +3 to any grapple check. Did we mention boa constrictors?

Ethereal I (-3) (Spiritual)

An ethereal creature, like most ghosts and malevolent energy clouds, is only semi-corporeal. Unlike the full package, below, Ethereal I doesn't grant complete immateriality; the monster is still half-material.

Physical attacks (that is, any attack from a physical source, as opposed to magic) is now reduced by a higher Toughness. If the creature has a weakness, for example, physical attacks are reduced by its Low Tough instead, all the way up to High Tough. If the creature would reduce the attack by its High Tough, it now reduces by the total of its two toughnesses. If it would already use both toughnesses (as in a special resilience), then the creature is completely immune.

Ethereal creatures can pass through solid objects, but usually at a reduced speed. If it tries to interact with physical objects, its Strength, Agility, and Dexterity are all treated as five lower, since great focus is required to shake light fixtures, activate children's toys, and engage in other similar pieces of classic ghostly chicanery.

Magic affects the creature as normal, and it may have a little difficulty clearly perceiving events in the material world at the GM's discretion.

Ethereal II (-7) (Spiritual)

A fully ethereal creature follows much simpler rules. Physical attacks from physical sources have no effect at all, and it can pass through physical objects as though they weren't there at all. When trying to get a fix on something happening in the real world, it can suffer penalties up to -4, at the GM's discretion.

Special Resilience (-3) (Biological)

Special Resilience is used for monsters like the yeti, monsters so impervious to a certain kind of damage that ordinary high tough doesn't cut it. When you take Special Resilience, choose a damage type. Damage of that type is reduced by both High and Low Tough.

Thermovision (-3) (Biological)

You can see heat, allowing you to see creatures in even complete darkness and even through thin barriers. The undead are invisible when using this vision and details are far more difficult to make out if it is possible at all. Reading, for example, is impossible unless the ink is a different temperature from the writing surface.

Extra Limb (-4) (Physical)

It's an extra limb. Specifically, this is an extra limb with the functionality of an arm, so like a tentacle or a prehensile tail. It can hold a weapon and operate exactly like the monster's normal limbs. Pretty convenient.

Deathless (-15 or less) (Spiritual)

A monster with Deathless does not die at 0 Wound. Instead, it either turns into a harmless form (like Dracula's cloud of mist) and retreats to a specific location or simply regains all its wounds where it was killed (choose which when you take the trait).

One weakness can kill this monster for good. There are lots of good methods, but some examples include decapitation, silver bullets, or fire. If the monster loses its last Wound to its special weakness, then it's dead for good. When making a deathless monster, you can choose extra weaknesses; this trait costs 1 less for every extra weakness added past the first.

You can also choose to make the revival process take longer. If the monster comes back after a day, the trait cost is reduced by 1. After a week, it is reduced by 2, by 3 after a month and by 4 after a year. Try to find a good balance between durability and cost! As always, if you're a player, check with your GM to make sure she's okay with your weaknesses. If this trait is Polymorphed, the time of revival is set and the character will still revive after the set time, even if the spell has worn off.

Faults:

Slow (+2) (Physical)

This trait can be taken up to a maximum of 3 times.

Slow monsters can't move very quickly. Lurching zombies, for example, or a creeping sentient ooze that swallows all its encounters. This trait lowers base Shift and Walk by 2, which in turn reduces Run by 4 and Sprint by 8.

Weakness (+2) (Physical)

It's just not a fairytale unless the monster has a secret weakness you can use to take it down, right? This trait is pretty straightforward. The monster's Toughness counts as 0 against a certain damage type (0 - 2xFortitude if the monster's Fortitude is a negative number. Yes, that means it takes extra damage), and it takes 1 damage from simply coming into contact. For anything more serious than this, you might want to give your monster an Allergy.

Soulless (+3)

A Soulless monster is a simple automaton. Its mind type (see monster creation rules on Page 159) is always Mindless, and the monster can't control itself at all. It has 0 Mana and 0 Will, and can't even

use magic. It's immune to all magical effects except for physical damage and movement. It acts purely on instinct, or else on the commands of its creator, but can't really interpret commands very well.

Note: A Soulless creature cannot be summoned

Unliving (+3)

Not alive. Specifically, something that is animate but not technically alive, like a zombie or a golem, animated by some bizarre means. It can move, and it can maybe even think, but that doesn't mean it has the same animating forces as a living being. It does not heal Vitality or Wound points naturally, and any healing spell cast on it has the DT increased by 3. On the plus side, though, the monster receives no penalties for wound damage and is not affected by poisons or diseases. (Allergy still counts, though.)

Handless (+4) (Physical)

Being Handless doesn't necessarily mean being strictly handless. It just means the creature's hands/forelimbs don't have enough dexterity (though opposable thumbs, for example), to manipulate objects. Any act that would require the Dexterity stat suffers a penalty of at least -6, maybe more, depending on how complicated the task is. The monster might even be wholly incapable of some actions, like lockpicking or watchmaking, so ask your GM before trying to hold a fine carving knife in your mouth.

Note: If you take Extra Limb, your extra limbs will also suffer from this trait.

Name
Profession

<i>Strength</i>
<i>Fortitude</i>

Build

<i>Dexterity</i>
<i>Agility</i>

Grace

<i>Intelligence</i>
<i>Wisdom</i>

Mind

<i>Etiquette</i>
<i>Charm</i>

Personality

Initiative

Mana

High Tough

Low Tough

Will

Vitality

Shift

Walk



Luck

Wound

Run

Sprint

Combat Skills

Brute Weapons (Str) ()

Finesse Weapons (Dex) ()

Ranged Weapons (Dex) ()

Dodge (Agi) ()

Resist (Will or Strength) ()()

Magic (Highest Mental) ()

Analysis Skills - Intelligence

Appraise () Examine ()

Assess () ()

Intuition Skills - Wisdom

Empathy () Focus ()

Awareness () ()

Athletics Skills - Any Build

Climb () Jump ()

Run () Swim ()

Nimbleness Skills - Any Grace

Acrobatics () Escape ()

Dance () Stealth ()

○ ○ ○ ○	Convince ()	Inquire ()	○ ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○	Leadership ()	Socialize ()	○ ○ ○ ○

○ ○ ○ ○	Manipulation Skills - Intelligence	○ ○ ○ ○	
○ ○ ○ ○	Disguise ()	Intimidate ()	○ ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○	Lie ()	()	○ ○ ○ ○

○ ○ ○ ○	Profession: _____	() ()
○ ○ ○ ○	_____	() ()
○ ○ ○ ○	_____	() ()
○ ○ ○ ○	_____	() ()

○ ○ ○ ○	Miscellaneous Skills	() ()
○ ○ ○ ○	_____	() ()
○ ○ ○ ○	_____	() ()
○ ○ ○ ○	_____	() ()

Code

0.5 - Will Pursue Own Goals
2.5 - Will Preserve Own Life

Abilities	<i>Total Spent:</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Traits

<i>Total Value:</i>

Weapons and Inventory

THE GAME

If you haven't already, take a look at the character sheet on the previous two pages of the manual. As you might notice, about half of the character sheet consists of tables for your character's skills. If you make a connection between the amount of character sheet space and the importance, you would be misled; skills are not half of this game. Skills are this game.

Luckily, all skills in the game, from Finesse Weapons to Water Magic to Climb, follow the same basic set of principles and are easy to learn.

First of all, a skill has a stat associated with it. It may be a normal stat like Etiquette or Wisdom, or a derived stat such as Will. When you make a trial for any skill, you add the value of the associated stat.

Skills also have levels. These levels indicate how practiced your character is in the skill, and will increase as your character uses the skill, or skills connected with it. Your level in the skill will also be added to any trials you make with the skill.

So, in order to make a skill trial, first announce what skill you are using. (You can't just roll dice until you get a good result and then point to them and say you succeeded at a skill nobody knew you were using.) Next, roll three six-sided dice and add the results together. Add your skill level and your stat, which should be listed next to the skill in all that space on your character sheet. If the value is higher than the required Dice Trial (or DT), or higher than your opponent's skill trial, you've succeeded.

Some skills will have DTs set by your Game Master, and some will have DTs that you set yourself. When you're casting a spell that you've created or using a technique, make sure the Game Master knows the DT you've set before you actually roll the dice. On most skills, rolling a 3 is a staggering failure, while rolling an 18 is an automatic success.

At the heart of the matter, all skills work this way. You use the same procedure to swing a sword as you do to turn an opponent into a monkey. More or less.

SKILL LEVELS AND THE RULE OF 5

In Mod, characters get better at their skills the more they practice. This means that every time you drop the dice for a skill trial, your skill may increase, and as you play, your character will naturally become stronger in skills that come up more frequently. Regardless of the character you build, your character will come out of your GM's mountain climbing campaign with a high-level Climb skill.

Whenever you use a skill, you might get a "dot" - a point of experience for that skill. You gain a dot every time you would roll 5 or lower, or 15 and greater. You can learn from your mistakes as well as your successes; this is referred to as the "Rule of 5". If you happen to roll three sixes or three ones, you gain a second dot in that skill. Of course more actions and more varied actions will always give you better chances at dotting, so be inventive! Just mark the dots in the space provided on your character sheet. When you get five dots in any skill,

you gain a Skill Level and an Ability Point. Mark the Ability Point where the Abilities are, at the bottom of the character sheet; you can use this later to buy abilities and advance your character (See Chapter 7 for the full list of Abilities you can buy.)

Alternate Systems

We prefer to assign experience based on the dice rolls because it helps keep the party together in terms of levels, even if some players are inexperienced and don't roll as often, but still lets the stats grow as they're used. That said, there are other ways to assign experience that your group may prefer.

Our head playtester came up with what we call the "Rule of Use", which assigns a dot to a skill the first time it's used in a session, in addition to the Rule of 5. This is best for groups where all the players participate roughly the same amount, and where the GM is willing to step in and say, no, you can't use Climb for the *social* ladder. Parties playing with Rule of Use tend to grow faster, too.

If there's a gap in experience among your players, or if some people take a much more active role in the game than others, the GM can assign everyone a set number of "bonus dots" at the end of a session. This can work with the other systems or on its own. If there's no other way to gain dots, then eight to ten ought to do the trick, but if you're also using another rule, then four or five is good. Many GMs like to restrict where bonus dots can be used - no two in the same skill, for example. It's also a good way for the GM to handle skills the characters are training but not necessarily using.

All of your skills, except Combat and Magic skills, are in groups; if you level one of these skills, then you can choose to raise the level of any other skill in the same category instead. For example, five dots in your Appraise skill can be used to raise your Appraise level by one, or they can be used to raise your Examine level by one, unless your Appraise level is zero. If the skill you are trying to raise is more than five levels above the skill that gained the five dots in the first place, you can no longer increase them through linking.

Combat skills don't link with one another, and neither do Magic skills. However, with your GM's discretion, you can link a Combat or Magic skill with other skills on your own by using the blanks on the bottom of the lists or making a profession. (For example, if your character is a hunter, you could convince your GM to allow you to make a Profession out of Ranged Weapons, Stealth, Awareness, and Knowledge: Animals.)

Character Level

Character level in Mod is really just an abstract concept; every 5 Ability Points is one level. Plain and simple. This serves little purpose for the players, but it can be helpful for a GM trying to balance encounters.

For every 5 Total Ability Points a character has gained, whether they've been spent or not, a character will increase in level and gain 5 Vitality and 5 Mana. Remember to keep the total number of Ability Points you've earned written at the bottom of your character sheet so as not to forget these useful little bonuses.

Combat Skills

Check the next chapter for more specific rules about combat skills, including how to run a combat.

Brute Weapons

Your Brute Weapon Skill is for using weapons like swords, fists or axes. It represents your ability to hit things really hard. This is pure brute force with little explanation or reason, and it is made stronger and more accurate using your Strength Stat.

Finesse Weapons

Finesse Weapons are different from Brute Weapons; they're more concerned with how you hit the opponent rather than merely how *hard*. Weapons like rapiers, daggers and spears rely more on your ability to pinpoint vital areas and hit them precisely and are made more accurate with a higher Dexterity rather than a high Strength. You do still use your Strength to calculate damage.

Ranged Weapons

Ranged Weapons are weapons used from a distance, such as thrown weapons or a bow and arrow. The major difference is that, due to the way long-range weapons are used, you do not add your Strength to the damage (except in the case of thrown weapons.) Use Dexterity to determine that all-important accuracy.

Resist

Resist is your ability to defend against effects, and is split into two different types: Struggle and Resolve. When you Struggle, you use your Strength to overpower a physical effect, like a Paralyze spell or a trip attempt. When you Resolve, you use your own force of will to resist a mental effect, like a Fear spell or intimidate attempt; this skill is based on Will. Both Resolve and Struggle are based on the same skill level, even though they usually have different totals.

Dodge

Your Dodge is your ability to avoid being hit; it depends on your Agility to get you out of the way as fast as possible. Heavy armor, while reassuring, can slow you down; try to find a nice balance between Dodge and Toughness in order to survive.

Athletics

Athletic Skills move your character around, and are all improved by the highest of your Build scores - either your Strength or your Fortitude.

Nimbleness

Nimbleness Skills need your body to move in more specific ways. Unlike Athletics, which are about raw motion, Nimbleness is about how you move rather than your ability to move, based on Agility. When using Stealth, or when using Escape to get out of someone's clutches, the GM should assign bonuses and penalties if there are any size differences.

Intuition

Intuition Skills deal with your perception and your common sense; all Intuition skills are based on Wisdom. Most of them, like Awareness and Empathy, rely on being more in tune with your surroundings, but Focus is exactly the opposite. Focus is used to shut out the world and completely immerse yourself in a particular action.

Analysis

Analysis Skills are used to process information. These skills are used in the logical evaluation of the world around you based on the information you already know, using your Intelligence. Assess is a general logic skill, used to put the pieces together. If your character might be better at following the GM's clues than you are, you can roll Assess to get a little help in that department.

Manipulation

Manipulation Skills affect others through coercion and trickery. You need raw wits, so these skills are based on your Intelligence. A good player can get bonuses to these skills by actually coming up with a good lie to tell, but don't be afraid just to roll the dice if you can't roleplay through it.

Special Treatment

Look, as tempting as it can be, it's best not to use your Manipulation or Influence skills on your fellow player characters. It's one thing for an NPC, who isn't someone else's representative in the game, but you should never try and take control of another player's character. It's just no fun to have your character hijacked by someone else

on a die roll! But, if you think that it would be more interesting, say, for your friend's character to believe your character's outrageous lie, just talk to your friend and arrange it.

Influence

Influence is Manipulation's good twin. These skills rely on your social skills to get information, help, or anything else you want. They're based on your Etiquette stat, since they almost universally favor the well-mannered and well-spoken.

Interaction

Interaction Skills deal with others on a short term, friendly basis. While Influence is one-sided, used to get something out of someone, Interaction Skills are more of an exchange. Either of your Personality stats will be effective in boosting these Skills; you can be likable, well-mannered, or both. Socialize, for example, is used to fit in with a crowd, or to forge a friendship. Like manipulation and influence skills, bonuses should be assigned here for roleplay.

Helping Hands

Most tasks become easier if you have a little competent help. Your allies can try to help you succeed at a skill roll by making the same roll at a 5 lower DT. If they succeed, you receive an extra die on your own check. If they fail by 15 or more, they failed badly enough to mess you up, and you have one less die to roll. Of course, only so many people can help you perform a task, and it is up to the GM to determine how many is allowable.

Professional Skills

Unlike all of the skills listed above, Professional Skills cannot be used normally if the character does not have any levels. They are difficult, highly specialized tasks, like casting spells or removing tumors, and they require study or training before they can be used. You can still try it without ranks, but you'll be rolling fewer dice. For a relatively easy task, like driving, you may use 2 dice instead of 3, whereas if you were to try and separate DNA you would not be able to use any dice at all. It is up to the GM as to how many dice you get.

If a linked group is created, a player can take a Knowledge skill and, once the Knowledge has reached first level, start transferring dots into the Professional skill. Study first.

A character who has a specialized skill, such as a doctor or a thief, will require some Professional Skills to represent their years of hard work. These are some sample Professional Skills; skills can be made to fit your character concept at your GMs discretion. (One of our play-testers had "Protagonist" as his character's profession – anything goes here.)

Sense: (Wisdom) Sense is the ability to notice the effects of magic on the world. If a truck's gas tank had been repaired with Earth magic, a character with Sense can try and notice. In some campaigns, this might mean that a character can see auras. Although a Professional skill, it can be used with no training as long as a character has a level in a magic type.

Sense DT for a spell is equal to $10 + (\text{Magic Skill Level} \times 2) - \text{Mana cost}$. So, a character with level 3 Water magic casting a DT 16 spell would have

a Sense DT of 10. What a character learns from a Sense check varies depending on the result of his own roll.

DT -5 – The fact that a spell was cast

DT – Who cast the spell, and the target

DT +5 – Which skill was rolled, and the total Mana cost (+2 to any future Dispel attempt)

DT +10 – The exact spell cast (+5 to any future Dispel attempt)

First Aid: (Wisdom) When rolled, restore a character's Vitality by the *result* - 12, or -10 if you have the proper supplies at hand. If the character is in Wounds, then you would only restore *result* - 25, or - 20 if you have supplies. (For example, a result of 18 would heal 6 Vitality, or 8 Vitality with supplies). A typical First Aid trial takes three to fifteen minutes, depending on the injury.

Magic: (Charm, Intelligence, or Wisdom) Allows you to cast spells. A character can take many different magic skills, and each produces different effects (See Chapter 5)

Pact: (Etiquette) This special magic skill allows a character to summon creatures. See Summoning in Chapter 5 for more details.

Getting Lucky

When rolling a skill, you can choose to expend a Luck point for one of two things. First, you can roll an extra die and keep the three you want as your roll. You can also choose to pick up a die and set it at a certain value by spending a Luck. If you do either of these things, you can't gain a dot or a Luck Point from the resulting roll.

Auto-Rolling

Almost anything that can be done in a split second can be done just as well, if not better, when you take your time and do it right. Even an attack, provided your target is completely immobile, can benefit from a little caution.

Taking your time allows you to assume a certain dice roll without picking up the dice. You don't gain dots by doing this, since you only dot when you actually roll the dice.

Ask your GM if you can auto-roll. Sometimes, you just can't take your time on something. When the action couldn't normally be done in a round, like forging a weapon, you can just multiply the time it would normally take according to the table.

Roll 3-12 – 1 round (regular duration for long term actions)

Roll 13 – 2 rounds (2x duration for long term actions)

Roll 14 – 3 rounds (3x duration for long term actions)

Roll 15 – 5 rounds (5x duration for long term actions)

Roll 16 – 7 rounds (7x duration for long term actions)

Roll 17 – 1 minute (10x duration for long term actions)

Languages

All players start knowing one language, and can choose to pay 1AP at creation for every additional language they know. After character creation, a language is treated as a Knowledge skill (See below). Once you've gained 5 levels in the skill, you gain the fluency ability for free. Until then, you can suffer as much as a -10 penalty in any communication attempt, depending on what you're trying to say and how much of it you can get across by flailing your arms.

Knowledge and Studying

Every category of linked skills has an extra blank space at the bottom. This is for the addition of Knowledge skills, which can be linked with any appropriate skill and used to raise that skill's level.

Knowledges are different from most skills in that they do not grant Ability Points. They still give skill levels, which can still be transferred to linked skills if the Knowledge is at least level 1 and the other skill is not more than five levels above it. They are a key part of Profession bundles and, like Professional skills, can be created to suit the character concept. For example, the Hunter would have Knowledge: Animals, which he would use to identify animals and their habits. While he was at home, he could study animals in books and, while this would not give him abilities, it would perhaps improve his ability to listen for them (Awareness) and sneak up on them (Stealth).

COMBAT

In Mod, character growth is based on your actions, and not the deaths of innocent monsters. We recognize, however, that sometimes it's just not an adventure until something tries to kill you, and so have included rules for combat.

Combat operates based on the rules in the previous chapter, and a lot of opposed trials. In high-pressure situations like chasing a thief or punching a face, time is broken down into discrete turns so that timing can be more precise. Although usually these rules apply to actual fights, a GM may choose to enter a combat situation when timing is critical, such as in a chase or a very close jailbreak.

Upon entering combat, all players make an Initiative trial. This is not based on a skill, so the players will only add their Initiative derived stat. The GM will keep track of all of these numbers and who rolled them, from highest to lowest. This is the turn order, normally, but if anyone in the combat was unaware (for example, if they were attacked by assassins and weren't sharp enough to hear anybody coming), then everyone else will get to take one turn before they are allowed to join combat. The entire round from the first character's turn to the last, takes around six seconds.

Each player's time in combat is divided into three parts.

The *Defensive Phase* is everyone else's turn. You can still act on another player's turn, but only to defend yourself from attack using Dodge. Once per round, your character can use a Reflexive tech or spell, or attack someone running past you or casting a spell next to you. In certain

situations, a GM may let you take a particularly dramatic reflexive action, such as trying to catch the detonator remote before the reactor goes live, but for the most part your actions during other players' turns are limited.

When your turn comes, you first get the *Preparation Phase*. The first half of a spell will use up this phase, as will making a Skill Trial to use a Technique. You can also use your Preparation Phase to move up to your Walk in meters.

The second half of your turn is called the *Initiation phase*. It can be used, like the Preparation Phase, to make a spell trial, but it is the only part of the turn in which a spell can actually be cast. If you want to attack an enemy, it takes up your Initiation.

Should you decide to give up your entire turn to focus on moving, you can move up to either your Run speed or your Sprint speed in meters. In this case, you cannot attack or cast spells this turn.

ATTACKING AND DEFENDING IN MELEE

Attacks and dodges are opposed trials, so if you've read the previous chapter, you should know almost everything. Let's break it down!

First, the attacker rolls his attack, which is a skill trial with the appropriate weapon. He adds his stat and their skill level, as well as any modifiers from his weapon. The defender opposes this with a Dodge skill trial, adding his skill level and Agility.

If the attacker wins, then damage was dealt, but if the defender wins, the attack was avoided. (Although the skill is named Dodge, it also

encompasses skills like Parrying or Blocking; Dodge is considered the All-Purpose Avoid Getting Hit By Things Skill.) If the defender has been attacked before in this round, he suffers a -2 penalty to Dodge for every attack he has already received. If your target was unaware of you or unable to react, they do not get to dodge at all, and the bonus damage from Strength and the weapon is doubled.

If the attack hit, the attacker looks at the total roll of the die and subtracts 10, adding this number to the damage for his weapon and his Strength. For example, a roll of 13 adds +3 to the attack, while a roll of 8 subtracts 2.

Subtract the defender's Toughness from the total value. If the damage type the attacker dealt is marked as the defender's High Tough, then subtract the High Toughness value from damage. Otherwise, subtract the Low Tough.

The remainder is the amount of damage that the defender takes; subtract this from Vitality or, if the defender has no remaining Vitality, from Wound.

RANGED COMBAT

There are two different kinds of Ranged Weapons; medieval ranged weapons, like bows or thrown objects, and firearms. Medieval weapons allow a dodge, and are treated as normal weapons (see above), except at an increased range.

Firearms, however, do not allow the target to dodge. The base DT to shoot someone with a firearm is 10. This goes up by 1 for every five meters between you and the target. A target moving at their Walk speed adds +2 to the DT, a target moving

at their Run speed adds 5, and a target moving at their Sprint speed adds 7.

Some ranged weapons, particularly firearms, can fire a limited number of times before needing to be reloaded. Reloading takes a preparation phase.

Cover

If someone's firing at you, conventional wisdom suggests you take cover. Anything big and strong enough to resist bullets will do. For every 10% of you that is covered, the DT to hit you increases by 1, or you gain a +1 bonus to Dodge. Obviously, once you are 100% covered, it becomes impossible to hit you without firing through your cover.

Size and Ranged Combat

It is simply harder to hit something smaller than you are with a ranged weapon. Of course there are many sizes in between the ones below, so make up a number for sizes in between using these numbers as a guide.

Insect – +25 DT
Small – +7 DT
Human – 0
Giant – -7 DT
Enormous – -25 DT

For Example:

Kersten is attacking Alex with her baseball bat. She has a total of +5 to attack, and +9 total damage.

She rolls a 15 on her attack, for a total of 20. Alex's Dodge attempt was only 18, so she hits.

Now, she subtracts 10 from her die roll (for a result of 5) and adds 9 (1 from her Strength and 8 from her bat, which should be written on her character sheet) for a total of 14 damage. Alex's toughness is 4, so he takes 10 well-deserved damage.

When fighting with two weapons, you divide your level of skill in that weapon type between your two attack rolls. Your off-hand suffers a penalty of -2 to both attack and damage, while the primary hand receives only a -1. If these are two totally different weapons, use the average of both skill levels; just don't assign more to a weapon than you would have normally.

For example, if you're fighting with two swords and you have a 6 in Brute weapons, you divide that 6 however you like between the two attacks. If you're fighting with a longsword and main gauche, you use the average of your Brute and Finesse weapon skills. If these skills were at levels 6 and 3, respectively, then you would have 5 skill levels to divide between the two attacks, but you couldn't put more than 3 of those into the dagger attack.

A tech will only affect one of these attacks; a bonus needs to be added twice for it to apply to both.

COMBAT AS A STATE OF BEING

Obviously, a player with 0 remaining wounds is dead and cannot take most actions, although your GM may permit you to make a Rot trial if you feel it would help.

Death, however, is not the only thing that can impair your play; there are magical status ailments, and if ninjas attack you while you are sleeping, you will be unable to defend yourself, mostly because your GM probably hates you.

Asleep

When you're asleep, you can't do anything. Whether you're sleeping from a magical effect or because it's bedtime, you'll wake up if touched or startled by a sudden noise. Until then, take it easy.

Blind

If you can't see for any reason, you don't get to roll Dodge. You can still attack and cast spells, but you make ranged attacks at a -10 penalty. You lose all your reflexive actions, and your tech rolls suffer a -5 penalty.

Bind

Bind is a status ailment that prevents the character from moving. When under a Bind spell, you suffer a -3 penalty to Dodge. You can still attack as long as you can reach your target from where you're standing, and can perform techs as long as they can be done stationary.

Fallen

If you've fallen on the ground, you suffer a -5 to dodge melee attacks, but you can dodge ranged attacks normally. You suffer a -3 to one-handed and ranged attacks, and -5 to attack with two-handed weapons. You suffer a -3 penalty to your spells, and a -5 penalty to your techs.

Frenzy

If a spell puts you into a frenzy, you can't dodge, but you can attack as normal. In fact, you get no reflexive actions at all, and you can't cast spells. You can only use a tech if it's specifically made for use in a frenzy.

Grappled

While you're wrestling, you suffer a -5 penalty to any dodge. However, you count as having cover. You don't get reflexive actions, and you can't cast spells. You can only use a tech if it's specifically made for use in a grapple.

Pacified

If a spell pacifies you, you can still dodge normally, but you can't attack. You can't use attacks or spells that harm anyone, and you can't reflexively attack.

Paralyzed

When paralyzed, you don't get to act.

Pinned

When pinned, you suffer a -5 to dodge (but still count as having cover). You can only attack

with very short weapons, like daggers or katar. You can only use techs that require you to be in a grapple, and you suffer a -5 penalty to cast spells.

Running

When running, you can dodge normally, but you don't get an initiation phase to attack or cast spells.

Sealed

When sealed, you can do anything but cast spells.

Sprinting

While sprinting, you suffer -5 to dodge melee attacks but get +5 to dodge ranged. You don't get preparation or initiation phases, so you can't attack.

Unaware

You don't get to do anything if you're not aware that it needs to be done.

SPECIAL ATTACK OPTIONS

When swinging a sword or firing a bow, it's not always just as simple as hitting a target. How you hit a target and what you do as you attack can make a huge difference in combat.

You can, for example, make some very specific targeting choices. When making a special attack, you take a penalty to your attack in order to aim for a specific body part. A success depends on two

things: your die roll, and whether or not the attack hits.

Called Shot (Eye): -6 to the Attack trial; if you roll a 17 or more and hit, the target suffers -5 to Dodge, Weapon Skills and Awareness for 5 rounds. The target may lose the eye on a direct hit with anything but crushing damage.

Called Shot (Head): -4 to the Attack trial; if you roll a 16 or more and hit, the target suffers -3 to Dodge and Awareness for 1 round per Weapon Skill Level.

Called Shot (Limb): -2 to the Attack trial; if you roll a 15 or more and hit, the target suffers -3 to Str or Agi for 1 round.

Called Shot (Vital): -6 to the Attack trial; if you roll a 17 or more and hit, the weapon bonus to damage is quadrupled and the target suffers -5 to all rolls the next turn.

Pulled Shot: -1 (-3 if Ranged) to the Attack trial; if you roll a 12 (14 if Ranged) or more, the damage stops if the target would take wounds. If the target reaches the end of their Vitality points, they must make a Fortitude trial against a DT of 10 + your weapon skill or be knocked out.

Grappling

Even with all the focus on weaponry, cracking each other over the heads with clubs isn't the only way to get fighting done. You can also choose to grapple with an opponent in a street brawl, or naked and oiled up in the classic Greek fashion. Grappling is based on Brute Weapon skill and is considered Brawling if you want to use a weapon.

Starting a grapple is as simple as hitting an opponent; you have to have at least one hand free to grab him. He can Dodge the attack or, if he fails to Dodge, make either a Grapple or an Escape trial to get away before you can cement your hold. Once an opponent is grabbed, he is considered grappled. Within a grapple you have several options.

Separate: You can try to get out of a grapple by pushing away with an opposed Brute Weapons trial or an Escape trial. If your opponent performed another grapple action on his turn, you receive a +5 bonus to separating.

Injure: You can try to kick, punch, bite or head butt your opponent. The only weapons you can use when grappling are Brawling or Short weapons; otherwise, you are forced to hit with another part of your body. Having only one hand free gives you a -3 penalty, while having no hands free gives you a -5 penalty to this trial.

Special Grappling Moves

By making Brute Weapons trials at a penalty, you can try some more elaborate wrestling.

Disarm: -6 (must have at least one hand free) Your opponent must Struggle against your result or lose his weapon.

Trip: -6, (or 0, if you let yourself fall down as well) Your opponent must Struggle against your result or fall to the ground.

Knockback/Pull: -4 for every meter you try to shove or drag your opponent. Your opponent must Struggle against your result or be shoved/pulled.

Cover Mouth: -1 (must have at least one hand free) Your opponent must Struggle against your result or he cannot cry out, cast spells, or make any other use of his mouth.

Resting

Magic is not the only way to recover from cuts and scrapes. You can restore up to $\frac{1}{2}$ of your total Vitality and completely restore your Mana by simply getting a good night's sleep. The GM can decide how much rest a character received if his sleep was interrupted, or if he was on a stone floor of a damp tomb with no pillows or blanket. GMs should remember that even a half night's sleep can be restful, and it's no fun for players not to have any Vitality or Mana.

Mana can also be restored by about 6 hours' worth of mental rest. This could mean lying in bed, or just taking a nice carefree walk in the woods. If you're able to do this, you restore half of your total Mana, but you do need total quiet in order to pull it off.

If you've taken Wounds, you regain only one per good night's rest, and no Vitality until your Wounds are all healed.

About Damage Types

Mod has a list of ten damage types, qualities of a weapon or attack. If you're playing a normal human being, you will likely not have High Tough against any of these, but magic and armor can help with that.

Crushing—Damage from blunt forces

Slashing—Damage from a blade

Piercing—Damage from a point

Ballistic—Damage from a bullet or explosion

Heat—Burning

Acid—Chemical burning

Cold—Frost burning

Holy—Something of a misnomer, Holy damage isn't divinely powered. It's powered by faith and conviction, no matter what the cause.

MAGIC

MAKING MAGIC

This game uses a “modular” magic system. This means that, instead of choosing set spells, you put together spell “parts” into a whole spell. These spell effects, or parameters, (See below), affect the difficulty of your final Dice Trial, the roll you use with your magic skill to cast the spell. The spell’s parts can be added, removed, or changed as you play; you do not have to restrict yourself to a “spell book”.

Magic is based on skills. Aside from special magic types, or skills like Sense which interact with magic, there are eight magic skills to choose from. They are based on your highest mental stat, (Charm, Intelligence, and Wisdom) and count as both Professional skills and Combat skills for the purposes of training. Ask your GM before you start if there are any special rules governing magic; some settings have different magic skill sets, and some optional rules change a player’s access to magic.

Every spell costs Mana; the Mana cost of a spell is the total DT minus 10. For a spell made up of multiple rolls, subtract 10 from each DT in the spell, and then add the totals together. This is the amount subtracted from your total Mana when the spell is successfully cast. If you have 0 Mana remaining, you can no longer cast spells - no spell can have a Mana cost below 1, no matter what modifiers are added.

For Example:

A spell that deals 6 damage will look like this:

Ghostknife (3)

Magic DT 13

+6 Damage

Or:

Dual Knife (3)

Magic DT 11

Magic DT 12

+6 damage

IN COMBAT

To cast a spell in combat, first decide exactly what spell you're casting, and make sure everyone, especially the GM, knows the DT you need to make.

Next, roll the skill trial like you would with any other skill. If you want to cast a spell that involves multiple skill trials, move on to the next trial. (Note, though, that each trial takes a phase of your turn. If you want to cast a four-part spell, it will take you two turns.) If you fail any part of the spell, the spell fails. You do not lose Mana for failed spells.

When the spell succeeds, choose your target. Some effects can be resisted by the target (Either Struggled or Resolved against a DT of 10 + Will of the caster), so wait for the target to roll the appropriate skill. If they succeed, the spell is still cast and you still lose Mana, but the effect fails.

If your spell deals damage, then just skip straight to the opponent's Toughness; most spells are just plain too fast to dodge.

About Auto-Casting

In a life-or-death situation, you can barely manage to concentrate, and you have to go with what the dice say. However, if you have time to properly focus, without someone trying to cut your head clean off, you can carefully control your mental state and make sure that your spell is cast properly.

The table below lists the amount of time you must spend in perfect concentration in order to set a certain roll. For example, if you sit and meditate for 5 minutes, you may cast the spell automatically as though you had rolled a 15.

Auto-casting sets dice; since you're not rolling, you can't get skill dots from auto-cast spells.

Result 3-10 – 1 round
Result 11 – 2 rounds
Result 12 – 5 rounds
Result 13 – 1 minute
Result 14 – 2 minutes
Result 15 – 5 minutes
Result 16 – 10 minutes
Result 17 – 30 minutes
Result 18 – 1 hour
Result 19 – 6 hours
Result 20 – 1 day

Yes, it is impossible to roll 19 or 20 with 3d6, but with proper focus and time you can perform better with magic than you ever could in the spur of the moment.

MAGIC SKILLS

Below are listed the eight main different magic types. Depending on the type of campaign you're playing, you can choose any of these, but ask your GM if you're playing a campaign without magic, or perhaps one with a special magic system.

The parameters listed below the magic description are the spell parameters that the magic is allowed to use. The numbered parameters are "locked", and cannot be used by that magic until the caster has taken a certain level of Magic Specialization (See Abilities, page 120.)

Making Magic

This is our default arrangement for magic skills. In most high-fantasy campaigns, this is what we find most appropriate, as it keeps the magic skills distinct and rewards specialists. Of course, there are a lot of different ways you can use and create magic skills. For example, you can take the "locks" off the parameters. For very high-magic campaigns, you can give magic skills access to every parameter with certain bonuses or penalties to certain parameters, like giving Fire spells -2 to the difficulty of damaging spells and +2 to the difficulty of healing.

You can also invent setting-appropriate magic skills and give them their own specialization abilities and parameter sets. For example, a setting based on the myths of ancient China and Japan might have five magic skills based on the five elements, or four based on the cardinal directions.

Magic doesn't always need to be cast "on the fly", either; if your players take too long generating spells, or if your setting requires a more arcane, studious feeling, you can require that all spells be taken as an ability. (See Chapter 7 for more on spell abilities.) Check the GM's chapter later on for more hints on building a magic system!

Earth:

One of the Four Cardinal Types, Earth magic draws its power from stone, soil, and wood. It's driven by growth, by steady movement rather than sudden apparitions, by relaxed easy power rather than shows of force. According to theory, it's governed by the urge to nurture and protect, although few formal schools study it. Earth magic is many things, but it's not glamorous.

Damage dealt by Earth spells is of the Crushing, Ballistic, Slashing, or Piercing damage types.

Barrier +3 DT

Bind +3 DT

Damage +1 DT or +4 DT

Polymorph (Physical) +2 DT

Resist + +3 DT

Skill Increase: Build +2 DT

Stat Increase: Build +3 DT

1. Recover +1 DT or +4 DT

2. Cocoon +3 DT

3. Lift +2 DT

Fire:

The second and possibly most popular of the Four Cardinal Types, Fire magic is most well-known for its damage capability. It's flashy, dramatic, and full of what a lot of casters want: sheer power. It draws its power from heat, obviously, but scholars suspect that it's also linked to the soul, to the "spark" of a personality. It's not hard to see why; like the loudest guy at the party, a good fireball is pretty hard to miss.

Fire deals Heat damage. Surprised?

Damage +1 DT or +4 DT

Frenzy +5 DT

Illusion - *Special*

Skill Increase: Brute Weapons +2 DT

Skill Increase: Dodge +2 DT

Skill Decrease: Personality +2 DT

Stat Decrease: Personality +3 DT

1. Haste +5 DT

2. Veil +3 DT

3. Fear +X DT

Water:

Water magic, the third of the Four Cardinal Types, has been studied the longest. Ancient sailors trying to understand the sea opened the discussion, and it hasn't been closed since. It proves that there's more to power than damage; Water magic excels in twisting and shaping the world, moving objects, creating shields, and even warping human beings. Its power seems to come from the limitless ocean, and, through strained gravity, the distant moon.

Whenever Water gains the damage parameter, it deals Crushing damage.

Barrier +3 DT

Stat Increase: Personality +3 DT

Pacify +3 DT

- Push +2 DT
- Polymorph (Biological) +5 DT
- Recover +1 DT or +4 DT
- Stat Increase: Mind +3 DT
- 1. Bind +3 DT
- 2. Veil +3 DT
- 3. Illusion - *Special*

Wind:

The last of the Four Cardinal Types, Wind magic has no formal schools. It's often taught in alleyways, on wide open savannahs, in stone circles in the world's most ancient places. Unlike the more "magical" types like Fire and Water, Wind magic has more to offer someone who's willing to do a little of the work themselves; it makes the fast faster, the quiet quieter. Few are the people who can't benefit from what used to be called the "courage of the winds".

When able to deal damage, it deals Slashing damage.

- Barrier +3 DT
- Lift +2 DT
- Push +2 DT
- Skill Increase: Dodge +2 DT
- Skill Increase: Finesse/Ranged Weapons +2

DT

- Skill Increase/Decrease: Grace +2 DT
- Veil +3 DT
- 1. Illusion - *Special*
- 2. Haste +5 DT
- 3. Damage +1 DT or +4 DT

Lightning:

There is much about lightning magic that is not currently understood. As a matter of fact, it seems to literally defy explanation, slipping through the fingers of scholars and mages and only just barely allowing itself to be harnessed by people who aren't looking to understand it. Rumor has it that it obeys an extremely strict and predictable set of laws, but if it does, no one has ever managed to learn them.

Lightning deals Heat damage.

Damage +1 DT or +4 DT

Haste +5 DT

Paralyze +5 DT

Skill Increase: Struggle +2 DT

Stat Increase/Decrease: Grace +3 DT

Teleport +5 DT

Vitality Drain +5 DT

1. Seal +3 DT

2. Frenzy +5 DT

3. Recover +1 DT or +4 DT

Ice:

Rumor has it that the first ice magic was given to humankind by a demon, in exchange for unspeakable acts and rituals. Schools dedicated to its study are not welcoming places, their finest students borderline sociopaths. There is little more to the energy of ice than pain. Most practitioners are fine with that.

Ice deals Freezing, Crushing, Piercing, or Slashing damage.

Bind +3 DT

Damage +1 DT or +4 DT

Seal +3 DT

Skill Increase: Resist +2 DT
Sleep +4 DT
Slow +5 DT
Stat Decrease: Mind +3 DT
1. Personality +3 DT
2. Stasis +10 DT
3. Veil +3 DT

Life:

Life magic takes its power from the forces that animate the living. Its study dates back to dedicated herbalists, devoted healers, midwives, and elders. Its practitioners range from mighty scholars to humble priests to hedge witches. At heart, most human beings want to help one another.

If twisted to be able to deal damage it would be able to deal any type but Holy.

Personality +3 DT
Cocoon +3 DT
Pacify +3 DT
Recover +1 DT or +4 DT
Skill Increase: Build +2 DT
Skill Increase: Personality +2 DT
Stat Increase: Personality +3 DT
1. Polymorph (Spiritual) +10 DT
2. Sleep +4 DT
3. Polymorph (Physical) +3 DT

Death:

For as long as there have been blessings, there have been curses. Death magic has its roots in closer study than Life, in the cycle of life and death, in all the things that human beings all secretly fear. By looking death, change, pain, and fear in the face, death mages can develop brutal power.

Death magic is best used to deal damage, and can deal any type but Holy.

Damage +1 DT or +4 DT

Fear +X DT

Mana Drain +5 DT

Paralyze +5 DT

Slow +5 DT

Stat Decrease: Build +3 DT

Vitality Drain +5 DT

1. Sleep +4 DT

2. Skill Decrease: Resist +2 DT

3. Polymorph (Spiritual) +10 DT

SUMMONING

Using Pact, an Etiquette-based magic skill, you can summon creatures from other realms to serve you.

The base difficulty is the Character DT of the creature (Character DT is 10 + the average of the creature's Vitality and Mana.) When you summon a creature, it is automatically under your control so long as you constantly keep half of the creature's total Mana worth of your own Mana invested in it. To "invest" Mana means that you not only spend it, but that you cannot regain it unless you remove the bond. After the bond is removed, you can regain it normally, but it doesn't return automatically when the bond is severed.

For example, if you summon a creature with 14 total Mana, you would need to keep 7 of your own Mana permanently in the creature in order to tether it to this world and to you.

Someone attacking a summoned creature with mental damage will first damage the creature's own Mana, and then yours. At any point, you can choose to retract the link to avoid this, even if you've already been damaged. Once the link is severed, the creature will act normally for 1 minute per Mana used in the bond, after which it will return to its plane.

Attempting to summon a creature you have never encountered adds 2 to the creature's Character DT

You can lower the DT by making a successful examination of the creature (-1 to the DT) or by performing a successful autopsy (-2 to the DT).

Some summoned creatures are weaker than others. Weaker summons require less Mana invested to maintain control, but the invested Mana can never dip below 1. For example, if the 14 Mana creature was Weak, then the summoner would only need to invest 4 Mana to maintain control over it.

Power Level:

Powerless:-5 Mana

Weak:-3 Mana

Below Average:-2 Mana

Average:0 Mana

PC:+5 Mana

Summon creatures are created via normal monster creation, and can gain levels like normal characters. If your summon is killed, you'll have to summon a new creature of the same type and start again. Check out Page 159, in the GM chapter, for detailed rules on monster creation.

Demon Pact

Instead of trying to summon a lesser imp and control it, you can summon a more powerful demon and simply attempt to strike a bargain. The regular Character DT of any demon for this purpose is cut in half, and you need not invest any Mana to control it. The creature will be under no control but its own, but it will still stick around for 1 minute per Mana that would have been required to form a bond. If the summoner is killed, the demon will immediately return home.

According to rumor, demons, once they have given their word, will follow it to the letter even if it would normally take longer than their regular time on this plane. Making a deal with one can itself be a dangerous ordeal, given that there is very precious little we can offer demons. Most often the deal is to threaten to imprison the demon or to destroy it, but they are not easily threatened. It goes without saying that the specifics of a demon pact are up to your GM, so ask her before deciding you've got a fair arrangement.

Elemental Opposition

Though it's not often an issue, some creatures have elemental affinities that make them vulnerable to damage from the opposing type. This is possible even if the caster can't use damage parameters normally, such as first-level Water and Life. When targeting a creature with an elemental affinity, the opposing magic skill gains access to the Damage parameter temporarily.

Earth Opposes Wind
Fire Opposes Ice
Life Opposes Death
Lightning Opposes Water

Utility Kit

Of course, magic can do a lot more things than what we've listed here! You can make your own magic skills and magic parameters, but there are a lot of things that you just can't quantify clearly or even anticipate. What's the DT to repair a ruptured gas tank? What's the DT to push the water back from the shoreline so you can look for the body? What's the DT to remove the pressure from a shaken-up soda can?

YOUR SPELL

When creating a spell, assume a base DT of 10. Then, modify the DT based on the effect modifiers listed below and the magic skills you have. You can choose most of them as many times as you please. (For example, adding Damage 16 times will give you +16 to the DT and a +16 to the damage roll. The total DT will be 26 with the 10 base.) The basic spell range is 6 meters plus your Will.

Resistance

To calculate the Resist DT of a normal spell, all you have to do is add the Will score of the caster to 10. The caster may have some abilities, like magic specializations, that increase this, but for the most part it's just 10+Will. Any time a parameter's rules say a spell can be resisted or dodged, this is the DT.

Damage

Damage (+1)

Duration: None

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill damage

Add 2 to the base damage of a single-target spell each time this is added. A spell does not have a base damage unless this effect is added at least once. The “base damage” of a spell is either your level in the magic skill or your casting stat, whichever is higher. The damage type depends on the magic used to produce the effect. For a multiple-target spell, add 1 instead of 2 to the base damage.

Damage (1d6) (+2)

Duration: None

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill damage

You can choose to simply grab randomly at magical energies and, by increasing the spell’s DT by 2, roll a d6 for damage. This can be done multiple times or combined with regular damage increase, and Luck can be spent to set a 6 on the die. Any magic capable of using the Damage parameter can also use random damage.

Mental Damage (+2) (0 for Death skill)

Duration: None

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill damage

Mental damage is damage that attacks an opponent’s Mana, as opposed to his Vitality. Instead of working against the opponent’s Toughness, it rolls damage against the target’s Will. Once the opposition’s Mana has been depleted, Mental damage deals half its normal damage against

Vitality instead.

Energy Drain (+5)

Duration: None

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill damage

This effect can only be added to spells that deal mental damage. You gain half the mental damage dealt in Mana, or all the damage dealt in Mana if this effect is added twice. This effect cannot bring your Mana above its normal maximum.

Vitality Drain (+5)

Duration: None

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill damage

This effect can only be added to spells that deal damage. You gain half the damage dealt in Vitality, or all the damage dealt in Vitality if this effect is added twice. This effect cannot bring your Vitality above its maximum.

Recover (+1)

Duration: None

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill Vitality recovered

This effect adds 2 to the base healing of a single-target spell each time it is added. A spell does not have base healing unless this effect is added at least once. The base vitality healing of a spell is equal to the level in the magic used or the casting stat, whichever is higher. For a multiple-target spell, add 1 to the base healing instead of 2.

Recover (1d6) (+2)

Duration: None

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill Vitality recovered

You can also choose to instead simply grab randomly at magical energies and, by increasing the spell's DT by 2, roll a D6 to determine the amount recovered. This can be done multiple times or combined with regular healing increase, and Luck can be spent to set a 6 on the die. Any magic capable of using the Recover parameter can also use random recovery.

Movement

Movement effects change the actual position of the target, either lifting them, pushing them, or even teleporting them around. If duration is added to a movement spell, the spell maintains the force for the whole duration, in the same place and direction. For example, adding a five-minute duration to a 2m lift spell will cause anything lifted to be held up, and anything that enters the area to be pushed up, until it wears off five minutes later.

Push (+2/meter)

Duration: 1 round

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Push moves a character 1m in any horizontal direction each time this is added. This effect is naturally struggled by an unwilling target, or by someone holding on to the target. It has a base duration of 1 turn, meaning someone who fails to break the effect cannot move against it until the end of the caster's next turn. Against larger, heavier objects than a person, treat the character's

magic skill level or stat, whichever is higher, as a substitute for Strength when trying to determine what is and isn't too heavy.

Lift (+4/meter)

Duration: 1 round

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Lift actually levitates a character into the air for each time this effect is added, or pushes them into the ground (essentially tripping them). This effect is struggled by an unwilling target, or someone holding on to the target. It has a base duration of 1 turn, meaning someone who fails to struggle the effect floats or is unable to get up until the end of the caster's next turn. Against larger, heavier objects than a person, treat the character's magic skill level or stat, whichever is higher, as a substitute for Strength when trying to determine what is and isn't too heavy.

Teleport (+5/meter)

Duration: None

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill Vitality recovered

This effect moves a target from one place to another without actually having it pass the space in between, up to 1m of distance each time it is added. It is struggled by an unwilling target, and can't move someone or something into space already occupied by a solid object. This effect has no base duration but, after teleporting, a subject suffers a -5 to all rolls for the next round from disorientation.

Enhancement

Enhancement effects change a person's capabilities, either by changing their stats and skills temporarily, adding traits they didn't have before, or giving them additional actions. Enhancement effects have a base duration of the caster's Will in rounds, if the effect is Resisted, or the caster's Will in minutes if it is not.

Skill Increase/Decrease (+2/point)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

This changes any skill's value temporarily by +1 or -1 each time it is added. If the target is unwilling, he uses his Resolve or his Struggle, depending on whether the skill is based on a mental or physical stat. You can add or subtract a maximum of your magic level to or from any specific skill with this parameter.

Haste (+5)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

This effect allows the target to replace a reflexive action with a full turn. If it's applied multiple times, it will change yet another reflexive action; if any are unused by the end of the spell's duration, they are lost.

Stat Increase/Decrease (+3/point)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Each time this effect is added, it increases or decreases a specific stat's value by 1. If the target is unwilling, they may Struggle it for physical stats, or Resolve it for mental stats. You cannot increase or decrease a stat by more than your level in the magic being used.

Polymorph (+3/+5 /+10 per cost of trait) (See details)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Polymorphing allows you to temporarily add traits to a target. The cost varies by trait, and by the trait's polymorph type. The polymorph type is listed along with the trait in Chapter 2 (traits without a polymorph type cannot be polymorphed). Look up the trait and take the absolute value of its cost (in other words, chop off the minus sign). Then, multiply it by 3, 5, or 10 depending on which kind of polymorph that trait takes:

Physical Polymorphs are the easiest to perform, usually changing the body in a superficial manner; they add +3 DT multiplied by the cost of the trait. For example, blinding someone, since Blind is worth 6 points, adds +18 to the spell DT.

Biological Polymorphs change how the body itself works, a significantly more challenging feat, and are worth +5 multiplied by the trait's cost. For example, polymorphing a +3 Allergy onto someone adds +15 to the spell DT.

Spiritual polymorphs don't change the body as much as they do the heart, the mind, or even the Aura. They reach past the physical being they

are targeting to change its nature. These changes require a lot of manipulation, and cost 10x the trait cost. For example, polymorphing a +2 Phobia onto someone adds +20 to the spell DT.

An unwilling target gets to Struggle a Physical or Biological Polymorph, and Resolve a Spiritual one.

When polymorphing different movement types onto or off of a creature, treat the trait cost as though they were moving a step up or down this chart. All of these are Physical Polymorphs, by the way, except magical levitation. For example, reducing a biped (like a particularly irritating party member) to slithering movement adds +6 to the spell DT. Reducing him to crawling movement, like an inchworm, would add +15, since he had to get past “slither” first.

Crawl : 3

Slither : 2

Walk (Bipedal): 0

Walk (Quadrupedal): 2

Walk (3 or more pairs of legs): 3

Here are some other movement types you may want to add or remove. Unlike the chart above, don't worry about taking steps.

To and from underwater movement: 1

Glide: 1

Fly (Wings): 3

Levitate (Physical): 4

Levitate (Magical): 2 (Spiritual Polymorph)

Finally if growing or shrinking in size, the trait cost is the same as the amount your stats would be changed. For example, going from

Human to Human +2 would add 9 to the DT, since there's a total stat difference of 3. This is a physical polymorph. To see how changing sizes changes stats, see the table on Page 165.

Status Effects—Basic

The basic status effects are Bind, Pacify, and Seal. Each one prevents a certain kind of action (movement, attacking, and magic use, respectively).. Adding the effect multiple times makes the target Resist once for reach time the effect is added. If the target has the same effect added multiple times, he will have to Resist once for each instance every turn, and will not be free of the effect until all the instances are Resisted.

Add Basic Effect (+3)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

This adds the effect onto the spell. Choose which effect to add (Bind, Pacify, or Seal).

Bind prevents a target from moving from his current position, but doesn't impede dodging; it is struggled (you can also escape it with a pure Strength trial). Bind will not cause a flying creature to plummet nor will it save a falling creature from dying; it will only prevent lateral movement.

Pacify prevents attacking in any way; this includes normal attacks in melee or ranged, as well as any melee action or special shot, and is resolved.

Seal prevents the use of magic completely, and is resolved. Every turn, the target gets to make a new Resist trial.

Status Effects—Advanced

These are spell parameters that change the status of the target (See “Combat as a State of Being” in Chapter 4.) As some effects are potentially helpful, a target may choose not to Resist. Like basic effects, they have a base duration of the caster’s Will in rounds if Resisted, (minutes on a willing target) or until the target succeeds at the Resist trial. As with basic effects, adding the effect multiple times makes the target Resist once for each time the effect is added. If the target has the same effect added multiple times, he will have to Resist once for each instance every turn, and will not be free of the effect until all the instances are Resisted.

Add Paralyze (+5)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

This effect prevents a target from moving entirely, negating all defensive actions, spell casting, attacking, and movement. He is vulnerable to attacks, and always takes damage to Low Tough. This effect is struggled, the target receiving a new trial every turn at a 3 lower DT.

Add Sleep (+4)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

As paralyze, but the target simply falls asleep. He’ll be awakened normally by sounds and sensations. This effect is resolved by the target. Unlike most status effects, this effect has no set

duration; if no sensation or sound awakens him, he'll sleep for up to 8 hours, feeling quite well rested.

Add Fear (+X)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Fear is unique in that the caster sets the DT to add the effect. If the target fails their resolve, he will not come within X meters of the caster, and the caster gets +X to Intimidate trials.

Add Compulsion (+3)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

These spells add Compulsions to the target's list of Codes. Initially, the caster can only add the Compulsion "Will aid the caster" at either 1 or 2 points. The DT modifier for the compulsion is +3DT per level of the Compulsion added. In order to add more complex Compulsions to the spell, the caster needs special abilities. See Page 120.

Add Veil (+3)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Veil is an effect that renders the target nearly undetectable by normal means. The target does not Resolve the effect, but rather, anyone actively looking for the target does. A character doesn't even

roll Resolve unless they are looking, or succeed at an Awareness trial versus the spell's Resist DT. If anyone succeeds, the spell is broken and anyone else can normally see the character. The spell also ends if the character does anything to draw attention to himself, such as attacking someone, unsuccessfully stealing something off a person, or picking up an object in plain view.

Add Frenzy (+5)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Frenzy forces the target into a blood-thirsty mania, giving him an extra action at 5 lower initiative every turn that the effect lasts, but preventing him from defending himself (this means no Dodge!).

Add Slow (+5)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Slow denies the character his next Preparation phase, effectively cutting his turn in half. It can be added multiple times, and will effect subsequent turns if it is.

Add Cocoon (+3)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Cocoon wraps the target in a soothing, bulky coat of regenerative magic. The target suffers a -1 penalty to all rolls for the duration of the spell,

which is always exactly 4 rounds, and at the end of the duration he is healed by 8 vitality. Cocoon can be added multiple times; each +3 to the DT increases the penalty by 1 and the healing by 8.

Add Barrier (+3)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Barrier creates a magic barrier around someone which redirects damage from his Vitality to the caster's Mana supply. Since this barrier does not even touch the target, all equipment and physical traits no longer matter for Toughness; instead, the Toughness of this barrier is the caster's Will.

When creating this spell, you can increase the DT of the spell by 4 to increase the Toughness by 1 as much as you like. Once erected, it requires no concentration to maintain and the caster can act perfectly normally, although regular spell duration applies. The caster can dispel it automatically at any time she chooses; if she dispels it while it's taking damage, she can choose which portion of the damage is absorbed and which portion goes ahead normally to the target's Vitality.

Note: Like all status effects, Barrier is considered to individually target units within a circle if the Burst parameter is applied. In order to actually make a spherical barrier enclosing an area, a player will require the Extend Barrier ability.

Add Stasis (+10)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: None

Stasis puts the target into a state of temporal suspension, during which he cannot act in any way, and cannot be acted upon. He is unable to perform any actions or thoughts but is also completely invincible during the duration.

Illusion

Illusions cause anyone interacting with them to have a peculiar sensory experience that you set out when you create the spell. Anyone under the spell gets to make a Resolve against it; if he succeeds, he becomes aware of the spell and no longer believes the illusion. Any time someone tries to interact with the illusion (touch it, talk to it, et cetera), in a way not covered by the spell, he gains an additional Resolve at -1 to the DT. By default, an illusion only affects one sense.

Base Area of Effect:

2-Dimensional Image: +2DT/ 1m area

3-Dimensional Image: +5DT/ 1m area

Effects:

Static image - 0 DT

1 round repetition: +1 DT

Programmed Effect: +3 DT (Illusion responds to a certain event in a predetermined way. For example, it could show a fleeing monster when a human arrives.)

Direct Control of Illusion: +5 DT (You maintain the ability to control the illusion)

Reacts to surroundings*: +10 DT (It changes on its own based on factors around it.)

Add a sense: +3 DT

*Illusion effects that conceal a person or object must react to surroundings, or the resolve/awareness trait to disbelieve them receives a +6 bonus.

Divination

Divination lets you discover information you can't normally find, because it's being hidden from you, because it's far away, or because it just plain hasn't happened yet. For most casters, it's just a matter of thematics how the magic skill reveals unseen truths. Soothsayers (see the trait on page 27) use a more traditional method, like reading in a crystal ball, using a pack of cards, or cutting open an animal to examine its entrails.

When divining, you pick out a piece of information that you are trying to learn. You then calculate the DT based on a number of factors, including the location of the subject, the time frame, and the goal.

Time:	DT	Effect
	+7	Past
	0	Present
	+15	Future
Location:		
	0	Target is present
	+10	Target is elsewhere
	+20	Target is dead or on another plane
Aid:		
	-5	You have an object which you use as a mental focus
	-10	You have a personal object of the target as a mental focus
	-15	You have a body part of the target as a mental focus (Can't be a living part)
Target:		
	+10	You do not know the target
	+5	You know the target
	0	You are personally close to the target
Learn:		
	0	Status
	+5	Location
	+7	Thoughts
	+10	Major Events
	+15	Knowledge
	+20	Minor Events
Accuracy:	+/-5	Vague impression
	+/-10	Good idea
	+/-15	Clear information
	+/-25	Absolute certainty with precise information
Resist:	+5	Unwilling
	+10	Veiled (Must Resist even if willing)

Targets can use their Sense skill to tell if they're being divined and react accordingly. Someone casting a divination spell may find their spell "hijacked" by other information; a diviner can sense shifts in magical energy near their target, even if they're not directly related.

Be Generous!

As a GM, it can be really tempting to withhold a lot of information from your players. After all, where's the mystique in your plot if they literally find out the villain's plans right away? First of all, divination spells get pretty difficult the further from the caster in time and space they get. Second, although you may have to improvise a little to keep things challenging, there are lots of ways to keep a game exciting! Try showing your players a hint of something terrible to come, but leaving the exact methods vague so they have a puzzle to solve.

Finally, it can be tempting to run with the idea of a spell being "hijacked" or "blocked" by a strong magical current, but just remember that your players are expending mana and casting a spell, so they deserve to get something in return. As a rule of thumb, the players should always discover something useful or interesting, even if it's not exactly what they had in mind.

Finally, information that changes often, such as a person's location or thoughts, can't be found with auto-cast spells unless the information stays the same the whole time. Divination provides a glimpse into someone else's world, and things get too tangled when that glimpse gets stretched out.

Universal Parameters:

These parameters aren't limited by magic skill; any spell can use them to modify the spell's other effects. This is where a fire spell becomes a fireball, so feel free to take a look and see what you can use to fine-tune your spellcasting.

Damage Subtype: +3 DT

This effect adds a subtype to the damage dealt (see Page 65) in addition to the default for the magic skill used.

Dispel Magic

Dispel is a way of getting rid of the effects of someone else's spells, like polymorphs or stat reductions. Cast a spell of the same DT as the spell that you are trying to Dispel. That spell will make a Resist, using the caster's magic level or stat as its Resist score, or be removed.

Shaping

These modifiers change the way your spell is shaped, how many targets you can hit, and how far away. This is the section most often used "on the fly", to give your damage spell that extra reach it needs, or to avoid a party member standing in harm's way. These effects have no base duration, and cannot be added to Enhance spells.

Touch: -2 DT

The spell has no base range. If another shaping effect is added, the effect emanates from you (not including you in the area). If not, you must be within melee reach in order to affect someone with the spell.

Self Only: -2 DT

The spell can only target the caster. (Only available for spells taken as abilities)

Extra Target: +3 DT

Adds an extra target to the spell, within the spell's normal range, each time this is added. This cannot be combined with Shape or Burst.

Burst 1m: +1 DT

Adds a burst effect with a 1m radius to the spell. Each additional time this is used, the radius increases by 1m, with everyone in the area being affected by the spell.

Shape 1m: +1 DT

Adds a 1m diameter circle of area each time it is added; these can be put together in a line, or used to put holes in a burst spell, generally bending a spell into any desired form. The circles need to be connected.

Range: +2 DT

Increases the range of the spell by the base range each time this is used. (For most spells, the base range is 6, and adding one Range parameter would make it 12.)

Chain Reaction: +2 or +5 DT

When the spell hits its target, the target makes a Resist attempt (or Struggle or Dodge, chosen by the caster). If the resistance fails, the spell then forks off to another target and the process

is repeated until it is either Resisted or it hits an amount of targets equal to the caster's level in the magic used, or Will, whichever is higher. The spell cannot target any one creature more than once, and the mage cannot end it prematurely.

For +5, the caster chooses all new targets when the spell forks off.

For +2, the caster has no control and the spell automatically targets the closest unit.

Imbue: +3 DT

The spell only costs a preparation to cast, and its effect is added onto an attack with a melee or ranged weapon. Rather than being cast as normal, on the Initiation Phase, it is instead "cast" when the attack hits its target. Choose if the effect happens before or after the damage is dealt; if the attack does not hit, the spell is wasted. (Requires an Ability to use, see Page 119)

Time

These effects change how long a spell lasts and when it applies. They affect base duration of a spell, and do not have a base duration of their own.

Delay: +2 DT

Each time this effect is added, delay the effect of a spell by 1 turn or 1 minute, as chosen by the caster.

Duration: +2 DT

Add the 1 to the duration of the spell each time this effect is added, in whatever units the spell already uses

Slow Release: +2 DT

This effect can be added to a spell with no base duration to artificially stretch it out.

Each time it is added, it adds a duration of 1 turn (meaning, adding it once makes the spell happen again on your next turn).

For Damage and Recover effects, divide the added amount (not the base) over the number of turns the spell lasts, rounding down. For example, a Life spell DT 16 (Recover +4, Slow Release +2) would heal 2 + base vitality healing on the turn it is cast and then again on the turn after it is cast, because the spell is halved over two turns. Making the same spell last four turns would cause it to heal 1 + base vitality healing each turn.

Mental Focus:

If you constantly maintain your Focus on a spell, you can maintain its duration near-indefinitely. During this time, if you are distracted, you must make a Focus trial equal to the spell DT to maintain the spell (Adding the damage dealt to you, if any, to the DT of your Focus trial.) You are unable to cast any other spells, and the cost of all the spell's modifiers is doubled if you attempt any sort of combat actions, or other actions requiring great focus themselves.

For example, trying to constantly maintain a Fear 5 spell through focus requires a DT 15 Focus trial every time you're distracted. If you try to take an exam while focusing on this spell, then the DT becomes 20.

Telekinesis:

When using a Push or a Lift Parameter, you can use focus to sustain it over time, instead of simply making a burst of force. You can move a still object

the same amount every round with no additional Mana cost, though you must focus on the act, so you can't do much else. If the target is resisting, you must expend additional Mana every turn; the effect persists until the target successfully Struggles the effect. Your effective Strength begins at 0 for the initial spell (1 Push and Lift modifier) and increases by 1 for every +5DT added to the initial spell.

Finally, if you use both Lift and Push on an object and maintain it, you can manoeuvre it however you like. Yes, this includes using a weapon proficiently! You can manoeuvre any object as well as you would normally (use your same skill level).

Cost

These effects modify the DT of the spell, and can make a powerful spell more manageable.

Avoidable: -2 DT

The spell effect, usually a damaging spell, can be dodged by the target, using the Dodge skill, at the normal Resist DT; if they dodge it, the spell has only half effect (for damaging spells), or no effect for other types of spells. If this is added, the target must attempt to dodge even if they normally could not or would not want to.

Strugglable: -2 DT

The spell effect, usually damage, can be Struggled by the target at the normal Resist DT; if they endure it, the spell has only half effect (for damaging spells), or no effect for other types of spells. If this is added, the target must attempt to Struggle, regardless of whether they want to or have already made a Struggle trial for the same spell.

Resolvable: -2 DT

The spell effect, mental damage or a mental effect, can be Resolved by the target at the normal Resist DT; if they Resolve it, the spell has only half effect (for damaging spells), or no effect for other types of spells. If this is added, the target must make the Resolve trial even if they normally would not, would not want to, or even if they have already made a Resolve for the same spell. (For example, if a Fear spell were cast with Resolvable added to it, the target would make two Resolve trials, not just one.)

Infuse Mana: -1 DT

The brute force method of making a spell easier to cast is to throw more of your energy into it. By spending an additional 5 Mana, you can lower the DT of a spell by 1 to make it easier to cast.

Joint Spells: -2 or -3 DT

Additional casters can lower the DT of a spell by casting a spell simultaneously (They must delay to have their actions on the same turn).

+3 DT to lower the DT of a spell being cast by another caster by 1

+2 DT to lower the DT of a spell being cast by another caster by 1 if both have that specific spell as an ability.

Wound Sacrifice: -2 DT

When you use this effect, you take 1 wound damage for each time it is added. The wound damage is dealt after the spell is cast, so failing the spell will not deal wound damage. If you take wound damage due to sacrifice, your vitality drops to 0. You cannot sacrifice more wound points to a spell than your level in the magic used.

Step-by-Step

Now that you've gone through the parameters that make up most spells, it's time to go through the step-by-step process of building a simple spell. The steps are as follows:

1 – Choose a Magic Type

Select which of your magic skills to use.

2 – Add combat effects

Look at your magic skill's parameters and choose what the spell will do.

3 – Calculate DT

Add the bonuses from the parameters together, and add it to a base of 10. This is the DT of the spell.

4 – Calculate Mana Cost

The total of the bonuses, before the 10 is added, is the Mana cost.

5 – Add Cost Effects

If the spell is too difficult or expensive for you, look at ways to make it cheaper. This may change the results of the last two steps.

6 – The Fun Part

Name your spell and decide on the totally awesome visuals! All this stuff is completely up to you.

TECHS

GETTING TECHNICAL

Combat techniques, or techs, work in much the same way as magic, in that there are a number of parameters that you add together, followed by a dice roll to determine success. After that roll, you add the tech and its effects to your next melee attack. If the tech roll fails, you still get your melee attack like normal, so it's a good idea for every character to have at least one. A tech uses your preparation phase unless it's specifically made as a reflexive tech, using a more limited pool of parameters.

Unlike a magical spell, you do not expend Mana to use a Tech, but you do need to create it in advance at the cost of 1 Ability Point. Many techs are like martial arts forms, practiced and practiced until they're second nature, in preparation for just the right moment. Once you have spent the ability point, the tech cannot be changed. You can choose to make a tech on the fly, like a magic spell, and forego the ability point cost. Instead of being a practiced strategy or movement, these are spur-of-the-moment opportunistic leaps, so all the parameters cost four times what they normally do. (For example, an extra attack adds +40 to the DT on the fly. Highly impractical!)

You put a tech together like you do a spell. You take a base of 10, and then add your parameters, increasing the DT until you've reached a number you feel you can make comfortably. Since there aren't set technical skills, just choose one of your own skills, figure out how it works, and ask your GM if it makes sense. For example, a tech that causes

distraction, rolled using the Lie skill, can be a sort of “Hey look over there!” gambit, but it’s hard to get an extra hit using Knowledge: Chemistry. For an extra hit, though, you could use something like Dance or Acrobatics, gracefully flowing through the battle. If you choose to use your weapon skill, however, all parameters will be one point more expensive, which can really add up for more complex techs. Use your imagination and have a little more fun with it!

TECH PARAMETERS

Here’s your list of options. Of course, ask your GM if your setting has any unique parameters, since the world of your game might have some really exciting possibilities. Unless the parameter’s specific rules say otherwise, you can add a tech parameter to a single tech as many times as you like.

Stat Adjustment

You can use a tech to temporarily raise or lower your stats in combat for a turn at a time. These are the bread and butter of simple techs; try sacrificing Dodge to increase Tough, or sacrificing your weapon’s accuracy for damage.

Boost (+2) (*)

Lasts until your next turn, or until your next defensive phase for a reflexive tech.

Boosts a combat skill (A weapon skill or Dodge) or stat (Weapon damage or Tough), selected when you make the tech. You can only boost a stat a number of times less than or equal to the highest

weapon skill level you have. (For example, if your best weapon skill is Ranged Weapons, at rank 5, then you can give yourself up to +5)

Penalty (-1) (*)

Lasts until your next turn, or until your next defensive phase for a reflexive tech.

Makes a tech easier to use by lowering one of your combat stats, either Weapon Skill, Dodge, Damage, or Tough. You can only lower your stats a number of times less than or equal to the highest weapon level skill you have. (For example, if your best weapon skill is Ranged Weapons, at rank 5, then you can give yourself up to -5)

Special Actions

There are a lot more things you can do with a weapon than just hit someone, right? More strategic or involved tech choices involve tripping, disarming, or distracting enemies, so experiment with these if you want to add another layer of combat strategy.

Struggling a tech is like resisting a spell, except that the DT is 10 + the stat used for the skill involved in the Tech, instead of the attackers Will. So, for the “Look over there!” tech described in the intro paragraph, the DT would be 10+the user’s Intelligence. A tech is resisted with Struggle if this is a physical stat or Resolve if it’s mental.

Full body attacks, such as a body check or a tail whip, are considered two-handed weapons for these actions.

Extra Attack (+10)

Adds another attack, which happens immediately after your last melee attack.

If you're using a Finesse weapon, reduce the DT of the finished tech by 2. If using a two-handed weapon, increase the DT of the finished tech by 2. Finally, if you specify that the second attack must have a different target than the other attacks you've taken so far, reduce the DT of the finished tech by 2.

Distract (+3)

Leaves an opponent unaware for one full round, which means they don't get to dodge the next attack.

Can be resisted. You can add 2 to the DT to increase the Resist DT by 1.

Disarm (+6)

Removes a weapon from an armed opponent until they can draw another or retrieve it.

Can be resisted.

If you're using a two-handed weapon, the cost of this parameter is 8. If using a finesse weapon, the cost of this parameter is 4. For a whip, the cost of this parameter is 3.

Trip (+6) (*)

Knocks an opponent to the ground.

Can be resisted.

If you're using a two-handed weapon, the cost of this parameter is 8. If using a finesse weapon, the cost of this parameter is 4. For a whip, the cost of this parameter is 3.

Knockback 1m (+4)

Knocks an opponent backward one meter.

Can be resisted.

If you're using a bladed or piercing weapon, increase the DT of the finished tech by 2.

Charge (+3 or +5)

A charging tech can only be used after moving at Run or Sprint speed the turn before (choose

which when you make the tech, see below)

Run: (+3) Knock opponent back 1 meter, -3 accuracy, +2 damage. Knockback effects can be resisted.

Sprint: (+5) Knock opponent back 2 meters, -5 accuracy, +3 damage. Knockback effects can be resisted.

Injure (+5)

Reduces the opponent's Agility, Strength, or Wisdom by one.

Can be resisted. Lasts one minute per level in the skill used.

Pin (+5)

Requires the target to be within a meter of a wall or large enough object.

Pins an opponent up against a wall, using your weapon or your own weight. Starts a grapple (See Grappling, Page 62), but you and your opponent may only make barehanded attacks or try to separate. Attacking with a short weapon (provided it was already drawn when the tech was used) applies a -5 penalty to the next grappling trial. Either of you may also drop whatever you're holding and enter a regular grapple.

Can be resisted.

Silence (+1)

You seize your opponent and cover their mouth so they cannot cry out. If your opponent attempts to push you off, you suffer -6 to any trial to hold on. Your opponent can still attack you with a short one-handed weapon.

Can be resisted.

Can only be used with a short, one-handed weapon, such as a dagger.

Limits

Like Cost Parameters on a magic spell, these make your tech easier to use by reducing the DT. They also limit the times when you can use your tech, so think carefully about when you're going to want it. After all, a tech you can never use is like having no tech at all! But, if you make a tech you can only use when you're really against the ropes, you can put many more parameters into it, and give yourself a real trump card.

Weapon Type (-1) (*)

The tech can only be used if your attack uses a specific weapon (sword, hammer, truncheon, etc.) chosen at creation.

Revenge 1 (-2) (*)

The tech can only be used if your opponent has damaged you since your last turn.

Grappled (-3) (*)

The tech can only be used if you are engaged in a grapple.

Enemy Grappled (-2) (*)

The tech can only be used if your opponent is engaged in a grapple.

Revenge 2 (-2) (*)

The tech can only be used if you successfully dodged an attack from your opponent since your last turn.

Momentum (-2) (*)

The tech can only be used if you damaged your opponent since your last turn.

Injured - Mild (-2) (*)

The tech can only be used if you have less than half your remaining Vitality.

Injured - Severe (-5) (*)

The tech can only be used if you have no remaining Vitality.

Mostly Healthy (-2) (*)

The tech can only be used if you have more than half your remaining Vitality.

Perfectly Healthy (-4) (*)

The tech can only be used if you have all your Vitality.

Advance (-2) (*)

The tech can only be used if you knocked your opponent back since your last turn.

Blindside (-3)

The tech can only be used if your opponent is completely unsuspecting.

Ground (-3) (*)

The tech can only be used if you are on the ground.

Trip Self (-4) (*)

By using this tech, you deliberately fall to the ground.

Disarm Self (-4) (*)

By using this tech, you deliberately lose your weapon.

Fallen Target (-4)

The tech can only be used if your target is on the ground.

First Attack (-5)

The tech can only be used in the first turn of combat.

Provoke (-5)

By using this tech, you deliberately open yourself up to a reflexive attack from your opponent, even if your opponent has already used a reflexive action this round.

Defensive Stance (-10)

By using this tech, you sacrifice your attacks until your next turn.

Desperation Attack (-10)

By using this tech, you sacrifice your next turn. (This can only be used when there are turns. You know. Combat.)

SPECIAL TECHS

The rules above are for normal techs, which you'll be using most often. Below are a few special tech types that require their own rules and restrictions.

Reflexive Techs

Reflexive techs can be used on an opponent's turn; although they don't grant an attack, they're handy for helping you deal with other people's attacks. When you make a reflexive tech, make sure it's marked as one on your character sheet. The base DT is 12 instead of 10, and you can only use parameters marked with an asterisk (*) above.

Prepared Defense (+10) (*)

Can only be used for a reflexive tech.

Adds another damage type to High Tough, as you prepare for a specific type of attack, which lasts until your next turn.

Frenzy Techs

A Frenzy tech can be used while you are suffering from the Frenzy status effect (see page 89). Any parameters you add cost twice as much as listed, and you cannot use any Limits to bring the tech's cost down.

Combo Techs

If you and your ally make sure you both act on the same initiative, you can use combo techs and help each other out! Your ally doesn't need to have a specific tech created just to use with you, but the amount you both get out of the tech correlates to how much you've committed to working together. You can only take one of these parameters per combo tech, although you can take any of the regular parameters.

Independent Tech (-2)

The tech can only be used if your ally is using any tech at the same time.

Combo Tech (-4)

The tech can only be used if your ally is using a combo tech at the same time.

Paired Tech (-6)

This tech can only be used if your ally is using a specific combo tech made to be used with it.

Ranged Techs

Instead of making a skill roll for your tech and then making a normal attack, a ranged tech, specifically made for use with guns and other long-range weapons, just adds modifiers directly onto your attack. You can't use limiters or any of the other parameters above, so plan carefully! You might want to save the trick shots for opponents who are unable to react.

Boost (-2 Attack)

Lasts until your next turn.

Boosts either your weapon's damage or your Dodge skill, chosen when you make the tech. You can only boost a stat a number of times less than or equal to the highest weapon skill level you have. (For example, if your best weapon skill is Ranged Weapons, at rank 5, then you can give yourself up to +5)

Charge (-4 or -7 Attack)

A charging tech can only be used after moving at Run or Sprint speed (choose which when you make the tech, see below)

Run: (-4) Knock opponent back 1 meter, +2 damage. Knockback effects can be resisted.

Sprint: (-7) Knock opponent back 2 meters, +3 damage. Knockback effects can be resisted.

Extra Attack (-10 Attack)

Adds another attack, which happens immediately after your last attack.

Distract (-3 Attack)

Leaves an opponent unaware for one full round, which means they don't get to dodge the next attack.

Can be resisted. You can penalize your attack by -2 to increase the Resist DT by 1.

Disarm (-6 Attack)

Removes a weapon from an armed opponent until they can draw another or retrieve it.

Can be resisted.

Trip (-4 Attack)

Knocks a moving opponent to the ground.

Can be resisted.

Step-By-Step

Just like when you make spells, you can follow a simple step-by-step process to get a tech.

1 - Choose a skill.

First, you select what skill you will use. It's best to use a skill that doesn't often see use but that your character would like to continue to practice. Don't forget to ask your GM—he may not agree with your choice to base an extra hit tech on “Knowledge: Criminal Law”!

2 - Choose parameters

Second, just like making a spell, you add on the effects you'll want to have on your tech. They range from a simple +1 attack to +10 to get an extra attack, so have fun here!

3 - Determine DT

Add up the total of your parameters and add 10. This will be the DT you'll have to beat in order to successfully use the tech.

4 - Adjust DT

If this DT is too high for you, there are a lot of parameters to add that will reduce it. A good bet is to make a tech that you can use on a roll below 10, for maximum reliability.

5 - Spend ability point.

Finally, once the tech is done, you need to name it and buy it with an ability point. Once you've done this, the tech is set in stone—it can't be changed on the fly like a magic spell. The tech must stay the same as written on your character sheet, so make sure you're happy with it before you buy it!

ABILITIES

GROWING UP

At character creation, you have 5 free Ability Points that you can use to buy any of the abilities listed below. The cost in Ability Points is listed in parentheses next to the ability's name. (Combat Mobility costs 1 AP, for example.)

In case you missed Chapter Three, ability points are the way that characters “level” – there actually aren't any real concrete levels in the game. Players gradually get stronger the more they do, by practicing their skills. When you collect five of those little skill dots, you gain a Skill Level, but also an Ability Point, and this is where Chapter 7 comes into play.

You can spend Ability Points at any time to buy the abilities on the list below. Your GM may insist that you do it at the end of the session in order to speed up gameplay, so check your house rules before you buy anything. And, as always, ask your GM if there are any abilities related to any special setting you may be playing, or any changes to the abilities already listed.

When you gain five Ability Points, a magical and beautiful thing happens. It's a normal part of your character's growth, so don't feel ashamed or frightened. You may notice five extra Vitality and five extra Mana, accompanied by new hair and maybe some vocal changes, but this is completely normal. You may even find yourself attracted to spells and techs that you may have found intimidating when your character was younger. It

happens to every character every five ability points, and it's part of your character becoming stronger. If you're really nervous about these unexpected changes, talk to your GM or another player you trust.

Once you get the hang of things and start developing a clear picture of the person you want your character to become, it's a good idea to put together a "shopping list" of Abilities so that you can speed up the process. While shopping, though, remember that taking a spell as an ability or making a Tech will cost one ability point, so make allowances for those!

Certain abilities can be taken multiple times, and their effects will just keep adding up. Stackable abilities like these are marked with an asterisk (*) below.

ENHANCEMENT ABILITIES

Combat Mobility (1) (Int 4, Speed I)

In the thick of the fight, it takes speed and brains to move around without getting hurt. This ability increases your Shift by one, letting you move a little further without provoking reflexive attacks.

Lightning Reflexes (2) (Init 4)

You start any combat, as long as you're aware of your opponents, with a Reflexive action. This stacks with Decisive, allowing you a reflexive action followed by the first turn.

Potent (3) (*)

You receive an additional 6 + your Will in Mana. If your Will increases later on, then

the amount gained from taking Potent will retroactively increase as well. (For example, if you've taken Potent twice, and then your Will goes up by one, then you would gain two Mana when your Will increases.)

Speed I (1) (Agi 3, Str 1)

Your Run Speed increases by 2, which increases your Sprint by 4

Speed II (2) (Agi 4, Str 2, Fort 1)

Your Run Speed increases by 4, which increases your Sprint by 8

Speed III (3) (Agi 5, Str 3, Fort 2)

Your Run Speed increases by 6, which increases your Sprint by 12

Not Human?

When making pre-requisites for these abilities, we've assumed that you're playing a regular human character, which may or may not be the case. You may be making a monster, or playing a non-human race. If you're using these abilities for something with bonuses or penalties to stats (due to size, for example), then adjust the pre-requisites in the same way.

For example, if you're making a monster whose size gives it +3 to Strength, then assume the pre-requisite for Speed I is 4 instead of 1. If you're making a monster with -1 Strength, then assume the pre-requisite is 0.

The same applies to the costs for stat boosts, so if you're trying to raise your Strength when playing a monster with +3 Strength, assume your value is 3 lower for the purpose of figuring out how much that stat increase will cost.

Stat Boost (*)

You can increase any of your Stats by 1 permanently by spending ability points. How many you spend depends on your current stat, as well as how important that stat is to your character.

Regardless of the final value, you must always pay a minimum of one Ability Point.

Costs:

Primary: Current Stat - 1

Secondary: Current Stat

Tertiary: Current Stat + 1

For example, if you are trying to raise a stat in your Primary group from 4 to 5, the cost would be 4 - 1, or 3. Trying to raise a stat in a Secondary group from 4 to 5 costs 4 points, and trying to raise a stat in a Tertiary group would cost 5.

Vigor (3) (*)

You receive an additional 6 + your Fortitude in Vitality, and 1 additional Wound point. Increases to Fortitude also work retroactively. (For example, if your Fortitude increases by one and you've taken Vigor twice, then you can add two more points of Vitality to make up the difference.)

MAGIC ABILITIES

Combat Casting (2) (Init 3)

You can avoid provoking a reflexive action while casting a spell with the Combat Cast parameter.

Combat Cast (+3)

The spell does not provoke a reflexive action, even against a target in melee range.

Disease Spell (2) (Will 4)

You can use the Disease damage parameter in spells.

Disease (+5)

Duration: None

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill damage

Add 1 to the base damage of a spell each time this is added. A spell does not have a base damage unless this effect is added at least once. The “base damage” of a spell is either your level in the magic skill or your casting stat, whichever is higher. The damage type depends on the magic used to produce the effect. Damage bought using this parameter cannot be healed until this effect is dispelled (see Page 96)

Dispeller Apprentice (2) (Will 3)

When you make a dispel attempt (see Page 96), your spell’s DT is reduced by 3, and the resist DT for your dispel attempt is increased by 1.

Diviner Specialist (1) (Level 1 in a Magic Type that includes the Divination parameter)

Choose a specific subject, such as the dead, the past, money, or anything else that can be divined. The DT for spells you cast to divine on your favorite subject is reduced by 5.

Energy Weapon (3) (2 Levels in a Magic Type)

You can manifest your magic as a physical weapon, one that you can either fire in a blast or swing like a melee weapon. When you take this ability, you start with one Energy Weapon Form for free, although you must buy any additional weapons separately. (see Page 142)

Energy Weapon Form (1) (Energy Weapon)

Make an additional Energy Weapon form.
(see Page 142)

Force of Will (2)

Resist DTs for your spells are all increased by 1. After the first time you've taken this ability, it can only be taken again every five levels in your magic skill. (Level 5, 10, etc.)

Imbue Spell: (2) (Level 2 of any type of Magic)

Allows use of the Imbue Spell shaping parameter in spells.

Imbue Spell (+3)

Duration: Instant

Base Range: Weapon's range

The spell trial is made during the Preparation phase, but the spell is cast during the Initiation phase with a strike from your weapon. The spell hits the same target as the weapon attack, and the caster can choose the order in which the effects of the spell and attack happen. If the attack misses or is not made by the end of the turn, a single-target spell dissipates into the air harmlessly. A shaped spell discharges centered on the weapon.

Lasting Pain: (2) (Will 4)

You can use the Lasting Pain damage parameter in any damage-dealing spell.

Lasting Pain (+2)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill damage

Add 1 to the base damage of a spell each time this is added. A spell does not have a base damage unless this effect is added at least once. The "base damage" of a spell is

either your level in the magic skill or your casting stat, whichever is higher. The damage type depends on the magic used to produce the effect. The damage bought with this parameter occurs every turn during normal spell duration or until dispelled.

Slow Recovery (2) (Will 4)

You can use the Slow Recovery healing parameter in any healing spell.

Slow Recovery (+2)

Duration: Will in rounds if resisted, in minutes otherwise.

Base Range: 6 + Will meters

Base Effect: Level/skill vitality restored

Add 1 to the base healing of a spell each time this is added. A spell does not have a base healing unless this effect is added at least once. The “base healing” of a spell is either your level in the magic skill or your casting stat, whichever is higher. The vitality restoration bought with this parameter occurs every turn during normal spell duration or until dispelled.

Magic Specialization - Apprentice (1) (Will 3) (Level 2 of the desired Magic type)

Choose a magic skill; any spell you cast using this magic skill has the DT lowered by 1, and you may use the second level parameter for this Magic type. You may only specialize in up to 2 Magic types in this way.

Mind Control (2) (4 Will)

When you use the Charm parameter, you are no longer limited to the code “Must aid caster”; you can create any Code you like, and at any level (1 to 3). Normal Code rules apply (the target can still choose freely among Codes of the same level, for example.) The cost of Charm becomes 3 times the Code level you choose to create. (3, 6, or 9)

Spell Ability (1) (Level 1 in a Magic Skill)

This is a spell that you've prepared, memorized, and planned, or written in a spellbook. It's not open to improvisation, but preparation opens you up to a host of new abilities. You can use tech limiters (see chapter 6), as well as some special parameters from this chapter. You can also use the reflexive parameter.

Reflexive (+0)

Duration: Instant

The spell can only be used as a Reflexive action.

Spell Proficiency (1) (A Spell Ability)

By spending an additional Ability Point on a Spell taken as an Ability, every time you gain a level (that is, every time you gain five ability points), you are able to add 2 DT worth of parameters or remove 2 DT worth of penalties or limiters. You can save these points up to add or remove bigger parameters.

Telekinetic Adept (1) (Level 1 in a Magic with both the Push and Pull Parameters)

You can use a maintained Telekinetic effect at -5 DT, though your effective Strength will start at -1 instead of at 0. For rules on Telekinesis, see Page 95

Telekinetic Mastery: (1) (Level 2 in a Magic with both the Push and Pull Parameters, Telekinetic Adept)

You can use a maintained Telekinetic effect at -10 DT, though your effective Strength will start at -2 instead of at 0. For rules of Telekinesis, see Page 98

Archmage (4) (Will 7, Level 5 or higher in 5 different Magic types, Mage)

You gain Magic Specialization - Adept for every type of magic.

The cost and effect of this ability may change depending on the magic in your campaign; ask your GM.

Dispeller Adept: (2 Points, Will 5, Dispeller Apprentice)

When you make a Dispel attempt, your spell's DT is reduced by 6. The opposing spell's Resist is raised by 2.

Dispeller Magus: (2 Points, Will 7, Dispeller Adept)

When you make a Dispel attempt, your spell's DT is reduced by 10. The opposing spell's Resist is raised by 3.

Expand Barrier: (1 Point, Level 3 in any magic capable of the Barrier parameter)

Instead of targeting an individual with your barrier, you can create a spherical barrier, which redirects all damage going in or out to your Mana supply. This works exactly as the Barrier status effect, except that you may also increase the DT by 1 per extra meter diameter of the sphere. The barrier cannot move, which means it cannot avoid attacks, but this rigidity doubles its Toughness.

Should someone within the barrier try and escape, they can Resist the spell like any other unwanted status effect. This will also reduce its duration to rounds. If an area of effect spell destroys the barrier and damages multiple targets inside, reduce the damage for each character separately.

Expanded barriers don't change the costs or basic rules of the Barrier parameter. Choose either when you make your spell.

Greater Summoning: (2 Points, 5 Levels in Pact Magic per level in Greater Summoning desired)

Every time you take Greater Summoning, you are able to summon creatures of a size category

one greater than your own, ranging from -5 to +5 within that size category. However every time you take it you must have 5 more levels in Pact magic.

Made Magic Adept: (2 Points, Level 4 of a Made Magic Craft Skill)

You can choose one more Magic Parameter to add to your Parameter list for Made Magic (with your GM's approval) and the DTs to resist your spells increase by 1.

Mage: (2 Points, Will 4, Level 3 or higher in 3 different Magic types, cannot have Magic Specialization Adept in any Magic Type)

You gain Magic Specialization - Apprentice for every type of Magic; however, you can no longer gain specialization abilities above Apprentice.

Magical Daze: (1 Point, Wis 4, Level 4 Focus, Level 3 of any type of Magic)

When casting a spell, you enter a daze, from which it is hard to wake you. When making a Focus trial to maintain a spell, you get a bonus of 2.

Magical Trance: (1 Point, Wis 6, Level 7 Focus, Level 5 of any type of Magic, Magical Daze)

When casting a spell, you enter a trance from which it is hard to wake you. When making a Focus trial to maintain a spell, you get a bonus of 5.

Magic Specialization - Adept: (2 Points, Will 5, Level 4 of the desired Magic type, Magic Specialization Apprentice of the desired Magic Type)

Choose a magic type; any spell you cast from this Magic type is at 2 less DT, Resist DTs increase by 2 and you may use the third level parameter for this Magic type. You may only specialize in up to 2 Magic types in this way.

Magic Specialization - Magus: (3 Points, Will 7, Level 6 of the desired Magic type, Magic Specialization Adept of the desired Magic Type)

Choose a magic type; any spell you cast from this Magic type is at 3 less DT, Resist DTs increase by 3 and you may use the fourth level parameter for this Magic type. You may only specialize in up to 2 Magic types in this way.

Persistent Illusions: (1 Point, Will 4, Level 3 in any Magic Skill that can produce illusions)

When you cast an Illusion spell, you can add 2 to the DT to make the Illusion permanent. The Mana for the spell is invested, rather than being spent. (Invested Mana cannot be regained until the spell is dispelled.) You may dispel the illusions at any time.

Save Spell: (2 Points, Will 4, Level 3 in any type of Magic)

When casting a multi-part spell, failing one roll does not cause the whole spell to fail. Instead, the entire spell's mana cost is spent and the spell is cast without the parameters on the failed skill roll.

Skill Magic Adept: (2 Points, Level 4 of a Skill Magic Skill)

You can choose one more Magic Parameter to add to your Parameter list for Skill Magic (with your GM's approval) and the DT to resist any of your spells increases by 1.

Stealth Spell: (1 AP, 3 levels in Stealth or 6 levels in a Magic Type)

Your spells are undetectable, unless you are seen casting a spell, or the opponent's level in Sense is equal to or greater than your level in either Stealth or the Magic type being used (whichever is higher). And opponent who can sense it will still suffer a penalty of 5 to their Sense roll.

Summoning Adept: (2 Points, Etiq 4, Level 3 Pact Magic)

You are experienced in summoning and gain a +2 to any attempt to summon a creature, they also cost 2 less Mana to control (minimum of 1).

Summoning Magus: (3 Points, Etiq 6, Level 5 Pact Magic, Summoning Adept)

You are very skilled in summoning and gain +4 to any attempt to summon a creature, they also cost 4 less Mana to control (minimum of 1).

TECH ABILITIES

Growing Tech: (1 Point, a tech)

When you make a tech, you can spend an additional point to make it grow with you. Every time you gain a level (five ability points), you can modify the tech roll, either by adding 2 DT worth of parameters or by removing 2 DT worth of limiters. You can save these points up to add or remove larger parameters.

Improvisational Adept: (3 Points, Init 3)

When you create a tech on the fly, the parameters add three times the usual cost to the DT, instead of four.

Mana Boost: (2 Points, Level 2 in a Magic Type)

You gain access to the Mana Boost tech parameter.

Mana Boost: (-1 DT)

Adds a 2 Mana cost to the tech, paid when the tech trial is successfully rolled.

Prepared Attack: (1 Point, 5 Levels in Intuition Skills)

You gain access to the Prepared Attack tech parameter.

Prepared Attack: (-10 DT)

The tech requires precision. So much, in fact, that it takes a full turn in complete focus with a stationary target (no more than a meter's movement over the course of the turn). If you are the target of an attack over this turn, you must make a Focus trial, with the DT set at the total damage dealt, or the tech will fail. The tech will go off on the Initiation Phase of your next turn; you can spend the Preparation phase as you please, including on another attack or tech.

Technique: (1 Point, Level 1 in a weapon skill)

You gain a new tech.

Counter: (1 Point, Agi 3, 10 Levels in Nimbleness Skills)

You gain access to the Counter tech parameter.

Counter: (+10 DT)

Can only be used on a reflexive tech. If you succeed at dodging an opponent's attack after using this tech, you can then attack them on their own turn.

Improvisational Master: (3 Points, Init 7, Improvisational Adept)

When you create a tech on the fly, the parameters add twice the usual cost to the DT, rather than the normal four.

Redirect: (1 Point, Agi 4, 6 Levels in Melee Weapon Skills)

You gain access to the Redirect tech parameter.

Redirect: (+10 DT)

Can only be used on a reflexive tech. Not

only can you defend yourself from attack, but actually deflect the attack as you choose. If you succeed at dodging an opponent's attack after using this tech, you can choose another target within the attacker's range, forcing the attacker to re-roll their attack against this new target.

Technical Fighter: (1 Point, 5 Ability Points invested into techs and tech abilities)

Due to your experience with martial techniques, you gain a +1 bonus to any tech trial, and the Resist DT of any effects of your techs goes up by 1.

Technical Master: (2 Points, 10 Ability Points invested into techs and tech abilities, Technical Fighter)

Due to even more experience with martial techniques, you gain a +2 bonus to any tech trial, and the Resist DT of any effects of your techs goes up by 2. This does not replace the effect of Technical Fighter.

PROFICIENCY ABILITIES

Dual Wielding Proficiency: (2 Points, Dex 3)

When fighting with two weapons, you no longer receive any penalties.

Shield Bash: (1 Point, Level 2 Brute Weapons, Shield Proficiency)

You are able to use your shield as a Brute Weapon with Damage equal to its Toughness and Accuracy/Tech bonuses equal to your bonus to Dodge.

Shield Proficiency: (1 Point)

You become proficient with using a shield and therefore no longer suffer the additional -3 penalty to Dodge, Nimbleness and Athletics when using a shield.

Assassin's Strike: (2 Points, Dex 4, Level 3 Knowledge Biology, Level 5 Weapon Skill, Careful Strike)

The range of the roll needed for special attacks increases by 2. (For special attacks, see page 61). When you auto-roll an attack, your result is two higher than it would normally be for the time you took. Finally, you add 2 damage to all Finesse and Ranged attacks. Add this damage after your roll, but before Toughness.

Careful Strike: (1 Point, Dex 2, Level 1 Knowledge Biology, Level 3 Weapon Skill)

The range of the roll needed for special attacks increases by 1. (For special attacks, see page 61). When you auto-roll an attack, your result is one higher than it would normally be for the time you took. Finally, you add 1 damage to all Finesse and Ranged attacks. Add this damage after your roll, but before Toughness.

Dual Wielding Mastery: (3 Points, Dex 5, Dual Wielding Proficiency)

When fighting with two weapons, you gain a +1 to both attacks, to a maximum of your natural weapons skill.

Marksman: (3 Points, Dex 5, Level 3 in a Ranged Weapon)

Any range penalties for Ranged Weapons trials are cut in half.

SKILL ABILITIES

Common Knowledge: (2 Points, Int 4)

Being as worldly and knowledgeable as you are, you may make Knowledge trials untrained, even when there is no library.

Defense I: (1 Point, Agi 1, Level 1 Dodge)

When you are attacked multiple times in a round, you get the cumulative -2 penalty to Dodge after the second attack, rather than after the first.

Intuit: (2 Points)

You can use your Wisdom for Intelligence-based rolls. If you roll a 6 or lower, you fail automatically, having completely misread the situation.

Jack of All Trades: (3 Points, Wis 3, Int 3, Level 1 in 3 different trained Skills in 3 different Areas)

From your experience in among different skills and your knack in understanding how things work and work together, you can use any skill untrained, albeit with a -2 penalty.

Skill Acuity: (1, 2 or 3 Points, Level 2 in the desired Skill)

Choose a single skill: any trial made using that skill gets a +1 bonus. This ability costs 3 Points for a Weapon Skill, 2 Points for Dodge or Resist, cannot be acquired for Magic Skills, and all others cost only 1 Point.

Studied: (2 Points)

You can use your Intelligence for Wisdom-based rolls. If you roll an 8 or lower, you fail automatically, having completely misread the situation.

Wrestler: (2 Point, Level 3 Brute Weapons)

Whenever rolling a trial for a grapple action, your Strength counts as 2 higher. For grappling rules, see Page 62.

Alertness: (2 Points, Level 4 Awareness)

You still get to add your skill to Awareness trials when you are asleep, and are allowed to roll twice to detect someone using Stealth and take the better result.

Armorer: (2 Points, Level 5 Dodge, Level 5 Craft Armorsmith, Shield Proficiency)

Any armor you create, provided it's properly fit to the wearer, has the penalty to skills and Dodge lowered by 1, to a minimum of 0.

Combat Medic: (1 Point, First Aid Level 3)

You are able to perform emergency first aid over the course of 1 full round, rather than minutes, at a -5 penalty.

Command: (4 Points, Cha 5, 15 Levels in Interaction)

You are a natural born leader and people listen when you tell them what to do, without question or hesitation. You can once per turn shout a command at someone during your Initiation Phase which, if they follow, they will gain a bonus equal to your Leadership skill to their own trial.

Defense II: (2 Points, Agi 3, Level 3 Dodge, Defense I)

When you are attacked multiple times in a round, you only get the cumulative -2 penalty to Dodge after the third attack, rather than after the first. You can also make Dodge attempts, using only your skill, when you cannot see an opponent, and the DT to shoot you increases by your skill level in Dodge.

Defense III: (3 Points, Agi 5, Level 5 Dodge, Defense II)

When you are attacked multiple times in a round, you no longer receive a penalty, no matter how many times you are attacked. You can also dodge normally when you cannot see your opponent, and can add your total skill level in Dodge to any DT when someone attempts to shoot you.

Demon's Ire: (1 Point, Level 3 Intimidate)

By making a very unsubtle threatening gesture, you can create an effect similar to Fear. It lasts for a very short time, and cannot be used in combat. The target will seek to get away from you at their earliest opportunity, or cower for up to a minute. They can resist this effect with a Resolve against your Intimidate trial result.

Evade: (2 Points, Agi 3, Level 3 Dodge)

Once per turn, when you dodge an attack, you may move up to your Shift.

Fast Talk: (1 Point, Level 3 Lie)

If you fail a Lie trial, you may try again. If the second trial succeeds, you have successfully build a flimsy back-up story to your original lie that makes it believable for a limited amount of time, usually falling apart as soon as the character you're lying to checks the evidence or has some time to think about it.

Feral Empathy: (1 Point, Level 3 Empathy)

From a better understanding of animals, you can use your empathy skill to determine the emotional state of animals and monsters. If you have a way to communicate with the animal or beast, you can use Influence Skills on it outside of combat.

General's Voice: (3 Points, Charm 4, 10 Levels in Interaction)

You are a commanding figure and people cannot help but do as you say, at times even when it is not possible to do so. Once per round, you can use your reflexive action to shout at someone suffering from a status effect and force them to re-roll their Resist, with a bonus equal to your Charm.

Inspire: (2 Points, Pre 4, 3 Levels in any sort of Musical Skill)

You are able to improve the actions of others from simply playing music. Once per round, if you do nothing but play music, you can add your Level in Perform to one action done within earshot of your song.

Judge: (1 Point, Level 3 Assess)

Whenever you meet a person who has intentions to betray or harm you, you are entitled to one Assess trial to detect this even if you didn't suspect them. You may roll twice on all other Assess trials to actively detect falsehood and take the better result.

Magical Signature: (1 Point, 10 Levels in Intuition, Level 3 Sense, Level 2 of any type of Magic)

You are familiar enough with magical signatures to be able to tell the caster of a spell you successfully Sense, if you are familiar with their magic (for example, you have been targeted by a spell from the same caster, or rolled a successful Sense against an effect). You can roll two Sense trials to determine if magic was used in an area recently and take the better result.

Mana Absorb: (2 Points, Will 5, Level 4 Resist)

Whenever a Spell is cast with you as a target, you gain 1 Mana for every 10DT of the spell, rounding up. This works whether the spell is resisted or not, and the spell carries on normally.

Poison Specialist: (2 Points, 3 levels in a Poison Craft)

You are adept at making poisons, and the DT to resist any poison you've created is increased by 1.

Poison Expert: (2 Points, 5 levels in a Poison Craft, Poison Specialist)

You are really quite exceptional at making poisons, and the DT to resist any poison you've created is increased by 2.

Skill Category Adept: (2 Points, 15 Levels in the desired Skill Category)

Choose a Skill Category (cannot be Magic or any of the combat skills, though it can include Professions or Allegiances) and due to your experience, you gain a +1 bonus to any roll made with any of the skills in it.

Skill Category Expert: (3 Points, 25 Levels in the desired Skill Category, Skill Category Adept in the desired Skill Category)

Choose a Skill Category and, due to your experience, you gain a +2 bonus to any roll made with any of the skills in it.

Skilled Acrobat: (2 Points, Agi 5, 10 Levels in Athletics)

Whenever you try to run or jump past someone and are targeted by a reflexive attack, you can make an Athletics trial against a DT of 10 + their levels in the weapon skill they are using. If you succeed, the reflexive attack fails.

Social Insight: (1 Point, Level 3 Empathy)

You automatically get an Empathy trial to detect when someone has been coerced by any means, such as Intimidate, Influence, or some sort of Magic. The DT is equal to either the Resolve DT of

the magical effect or the result of the Intimidate or Influence. When using the Empathy skill to judge someone's emotional state, you may roll twice and take the better result.

Weaponry Expert: (2 Points, Level 5 Craft Weaponsmith)

A true master smith, your weapons stand out as masterpieces; any weapon you have created has an additional bonus point to assign.

Expert Bowyer/Gunsmith: (1 Point, Level 5 Ranged Weapons, Level 3 Bowyer or Gunsmith)

Your bows or guns are clearly the work of a master; any ranged weapon you have created has an additional bonus point to assign.

EQUIPMENT

GONE SHOPPING

If you're coming here to shop for a newly-created character, congratulations! This is the last stop on your creation tour of the manual. We're sorry for making you run around so much, but this one should be quick and painless.

How painless? Well, there are only ten kinds of weapons, and five categories of armor. You select your weapon category, and then you can freely assign that weapon's bonus points to denote the difference between a rapier and a broadsword. It's up to you whether to use a deadly accurate weapon with a modest damage score, or a savage killing machine that can rarely connect. Not only that, but you don't have to worry about money; your character is assumed to have career-appropriate gear at game start.

As usual, a lot of this is under the watchful eye of your GM. If the GM doesn't want a politician to have a two-handed sword, then you're out of luck on the zweihander. Likewise, weapons are affected by the setting. If your character has a profession that requires a weapon, like the Hunter example in Chapter 3, you will definitely start the game with that weapon.

First, select your weapon. Next, choose what type of damage you want your weapon to deal and, if possible, choose what weapon skill you will use for the weapon. Weapons categories sometimes do not specify the skill used. In general, you should select the weapon skill when you create the weapon and stick to it.

A weapon has three main attributes. The weapon's Damage is added to your relevant stat after an attack trial has succeeded. The weapon's Accuracy is added to your initial attack roll to ensure a hit. The weapon's Tech value modifies any tech trials made with the weapon. Finally, each weapon has a certain amount of Bonus points. Look up the number (It's probably three) on the table. These points can be distributed among the weapon's other attributes, such as its damage or accuracy, but you can also spend them on special modifications to your weapon. Once all your Bonus points are spent, the weapon is finished!

The damage type for melee weapons is based on your description of the weapon and how it is used. For example, a sword obviously deals slashing damage, and a glaive can deal either piercing or slashing damage. Ranged Weapons are always Piercing Damage.

Armor does not deal damage or require a skill, but choosing armor follows the same process.

Now while this list will cover almost all of your needs, there are always obscure or unique weapons such as a blowgun that may fall outside what we have. If you want to make such a weapon, just make sure that you have your GM's approval for the effects before running out into the world with it.

MELEE WEAPONS

Brawling Weapons: (Brute or Finesse) The common characteristic of all of the weapons in this category is that they are meant to increase the strength of your own body without changing your fighting style. These are weapons like the Cestus, Brass Knuckles, Punching Daggers or Knife Boots.

Range: Immediate melee

Damage: +2

Accuracy: +1

Tech: +1

Bonus: +3

Other Rules: Brawling weapons can be used without penalty in a grapple.

Short Weapons: (Brute or Finesse) The common characteristic of all of the weapons in this category is that they are all incredibly short and can also be thrown with decent accuracy. Daggers, Knives, Shuriken or Saps are examples of weapons you'd find here, and they're all very close range.

Range: Immediate melee

Damage: +1

Accuracy: +1

Tech: +1

Bonus: +3

Other Rules: Short weapons, such as knives, can be thrown using a ranged weapon skill.

One-Handed Balanced Weapons: (Brute or Finesse) The common characteristic of all the weapons in this category is that they are one-handed, but sacrifice power for ease of use and speed. In here you would find weapons ranging from a Rapier to a Short Sword, Club, Scimitar, or even a Cane.

Range: Up to 1 meter

Damage: +5

Accuracy: +0

Tech: +0
Bonus: +3

One-Handed Heavy Ended Weapons: (Brute)

The common characteristic of all the weapons in this category is that they are meant for sheer force, unlike the Balanced one-handed weapons. Here you would find War Axes, Maces, Throwing Axes, or Tomahawks.

Range: Up to 1 meter
Damage: +8
Accuracy: -2
Tech: -2
Bonus: +3

Two-Handed Light Weapons: (Finesse)

The common characteristic of all the weapons in this category is that they are for the most part spears. Bo staves, Voulges, Guisarmes and Spears are the mainstays of this category.

Range: Up to 1 meter
Damage: +7
Accuracy: 0
Tech: +1
Bonus: +3

Other Rules: Although you can use a Two-Handed weapon in one hand, doing so gives you a -6 penalty to all trials made with it, and you count as having 3 less Strength.

Two-Handed Balanced Weapons: (Brute)

The common characteristic of all the weapons in this category is that they are for the most part swords. Between Spears and Axes for both power and mobility, they are some of the most popular weapons in the world. Here you would find the Greatswords, Katanas, Bastard Swords, Zweihanders and any other sword that would require 2 hands to use properly.

Range: Up to 1 meter

Damage: +10

Accuracy: -2

Tech: -1

Bonus: +3

Other Rules: Although you can use a Two-Handed weapon in one hand, doing so gives you a -6 penalty to all trials made with it, and you count as having 3 less Strength.

Two-Handed Heavy Ended Weapons: (Brute)

The common characteristic of all the weapons in this category is that they are all massive Axes or Maces you would really rather not get hit by. You will find Mauls, Great Axes, Battle Axes and massive Clubs in this section, where power is key and accuracy is thrown out the window.

Range: Up to one meter

Damage: +12

Accuracy: -3

Tech: -3

Bonus: +3

Other Rules: Although you can use a Two-Handed weapon in one hand, doing so gives you a -6 penalty to all trials made with it, and you count as having 3 less Strength.

Whips: (Finesse) The common characteristic of all the weapons in this category is that they are at some point connected by a chain or a rope which makes them very different in use but also very versatile. Often they are shorter when the focus is on damage, such as with a Flail, and when the focus is on technique the weapon will get longer such as a Whip or a 3-Sectioned Staff.

Range: Up to two meters.

Damage: +2

Accuracy: -1

Tech: -1

Bonus: +6

RANGED WEAPONS

Using a ranged weapon penalizes your Dodge, since you need to be standing still to use it correctly and can't exactly use it for parrying. The amount depends on the weapon being used, but this penalty can never be reduced past 0.

Bow and Arrow: Bows are simple, versatile weapons made by stringing together the ends of a flexible piece of wood, used to launch arrows. They can be very short, meant to be used from horseback, or very long, meant to defend castles from high places.

Range: 20 times Damage rating. (Default 60)
Actual damage decreases by 1 every 20 meters.

Damage: +3

Accuracy: -2

Dodge Penalty: -2

Bonus: +6

Crossbows: The crossbow's invention completely changed combat. Although heavy and time-consuming to reload, crossbows meant that bowmen no longer needed as much specialized training, and could fire much heavier bolts with much more force than most bows.

Range: 10 times Damage rating. (Default 50)
Actual damage decreases by 1 every 10 meters.

Damage: +5

Accuracy: -1

Dodge Penalty: -2

Bonus: +6

Pistols: For our purposes, a pistol is a gun small enough to be used in one hand and carried around easily. Caliber varies from model to model, as do any number of other details, and pistols of every stripe are some of the commonest ranged weapons used in the service.

Range: 60 meters

Damage: +5

Accuracy: +1

Dodge Penalty: 0

Bonus: +3

Capacity: 12

Rifles: A rifle's longer barrel makes it more accurate than a pistol over a longer range. Although they are not convenient weapons to carry around on foot, they are excellent for hunting or in other situations where accuracy at a distance is required.

Range: 150 meters

Damage: +8

Accuracy: +3

Dodge Penalty: -4

Bonus: +3

Capacity: 2

Shotguns: Rather than firing a single bullet, a shotgun disperses many smaller pellets from a wide barrel, dealing devastating explosive damage at a very close range but largely ineffective much further than that.

Range: Close range. -1 Accuracy and Damage for every 2 meters away

Damage: +10

Accuracy: +2

Dodge Penalty: -2

Bonus: +3

Capacity: 2

Explosives: Dating as far back as the invention of gunpowder, explosive weapons have been used. From paper rockets to modern grenades, these weapons create a shockwave in the air that can prove lethal to the target, even if no additional debris is flying around.

Range: 30 meters. Explosion radius is Damage rating in meters (Default 8)

Damage: +8
Accuracy: -3
Dodge Penalty: -5
Bonus: +3
Capacity: 1

Energy Weapons

Instead of using an actual physical weapon in attacking someone, some mages have learnt to absorb ambient energy from the air around them and concentrate it into a magical blast.

To use an energy weapon, first make sure you have the Energy Weapon ability (see Page 118). Next, spend an ability point and choose a weapon type above. Build your energy weapon like you would any other weapon, and note its attributes. Instead of Strength, an energy weapon uses your highest mental stat for damage.

When summoning a melee energy weapon, invest mana equal to your highest magic skill or your casting stat, whichever is higher. Summoning a melee energy weapon takes an initiation phase, but the weapon will last until you dismiss it or are disarmed.

ARMOR

Armor is varied like weaponry, but tends to be far simpler in its design. Armor is meant for simple overall protection and most of the time, that protection comes at the cost of maneuverability. The main difference in Armor is the thickness, as well as the coverage of the body. A piece of armor has two main attributes: Toughness, or how much it adds to your High Tough, and the Agility Skill Penalty, or how much the armor hampers your

movement. Most armors will penalize any skill, such as Dodge or Nimbleness, rolled using the Agility stat.

Armor automatically adds a single damage type to your High Tough, chosen when created. Another one can be bought with bonus points.

Very Light: Very Light armor is meant to seem as though it isn't even there while offering some very slight protection. This essentially falls to capes, which may seem like nothing more than posturing.

Toughness: 0

Agility Skill Penalty: -1 (except Dodge, see below.)

Bonus: +1

Special: Dodge bonus of +1.

Light: Light Armor offers bare minimal protection at minimal expense to mobility. Leather Armor, Very Thick Clothing and other such pieces of equipment would likely fall under this category.

Toughness: +3

High Tough: 1 default, 3 bonus points to add

Agility Skill Penalty: -2

Bonus: 3

Medium: Medium Armor slows down your movements but offers better protection for your vital organs. Here you will find Chainmail or even a Breastplate.

Toughness: +6

High Tough: 1 default, 2 bonus points to add

Agility Skill Penalty: -3

Bonus: +3

Special: -1 each Strength and Agility

Heavy: Heavy Armor covers most of your body and, depending on how much protection you

go for, you are looking at anything from a Half Plate of Mail to a Full Plate.

Toughness: +10

High Tough: 1 default, 1 bonus point to add

Agility Skill Penalty: -4

Bonus: +3

Special: -3 Strength and Agility

Bucklers: Bucklers are very small shields which attach to an arm but allow the hand to be free.

Toughness: +0

Agility Skill Penalty: -1 (Except Dodge)

Bonus: +1

Special: +1 Dodge

Shields: Shields range in size and weight from a small wooden shield to a large Tower Shield which makes movement rather awkward to say the least.

Toughness: +1

Agility Skill Penalty: -2

Bonus: +3

Special: -1 Strength and Agility

SPECIAL ABILITIES

You may use the bonus points for your weapons, instead of changing its attributes, on some extras to add versatility to your weapon. Ask your GM if there are any other weapon abilities within your setting.

Additional Damage Type: (2)

It's awkward, but you can add a butt spike or a flaming rag to just about anything these days. This ability adds a third attack option to your weapon, or a second for a ranged weapon.

Hollow Section: (1)

In any weapon with a hilt or a handle, you can have a small section hollowed out to store something very small. Anything bigger than a vial or a piece of paper may cause the weapon to break prematurely.

Throwing: (1)

The weapon is balanced to be thrown but, depending on the weapon, the accuracy and distance may be severely limited. Discuss with your GM.

Semi-Automatic: (1, Firearms, Not Explosives)

The gun fires 3 shots per round, as opposed to 1 (you still only make one attack roll). It gains a +3 bonus to Accuracy.

Fully Automatic: (1, Pistols Only)

The gun fires 10 bullets each round (you still only make one attack roll). You gain -1 Damage and +5 Accuracy.

Silencer: (1, Pistols and Rifles Only)

Guns are normally kind of loud, but a silencer can be used reduce the sound a high pitched whizzing.

Sniper Scope: (1, Ranged only, Not Shotguns)

The gun's range is doubled, and the range penalty to DT is halved if you spend a round aiming your shot.

Rocket Ammo: (2, Explosives Only)

Instead of firing a grenade which arcs, the gun now fires a rocket propelled grenade which has double the range and burst as normal as well as +2 Damage. It also suffers only +1 DT for each 5 Meters distance between you and the target instead of +2. However it also takes very large ammo, which is difficult to transport and takes 2 rounds to reload.

Expanded Clip: (Varies, see below)

Bonus points can be used to adjust the default clip size of a firearm. Reducing a pistol to a six-shooter gains an additional bonus point, rather than costing anything.

Pistol Clips

- 1 – 6 Bullets
- 1 – 30 Bullets
- 2 – 60 Bullets

Rifle Clips

- 2 – 6 Bullets

Shotgun Clips

- 2 – 8 Bullets

Explosive Clips

- 3 – 4 Bullets

Spiked: (Free, Shield Only)

Your shield's Damage is twice its Toughness score when used with a shield bash, but the spikes make it harder to deflect oncoming attacks or to manoeuver. This ability increases your shield's Agility Skill Penalty by one.

Equipment for Different sizes

When equipping something dramatically different from a human, halve the base Damage, Accuracy, Toughness and Str/Agi penalties for each complete size category smaller than Human, and double them for each complete size category larger. For example, a weapon with damage 5 made for a Giant creature would deal 10 damage, and the same weapon made for a Small creature would deal 3.

RUNNING THE GAME

THE GAME MASTER

If you've been selected as the Game Master and this is your first time playing the game yourself, let us extend our condolences. It can be difficult to run a game even if you're familiar with it, and picking up a new manual and trying to run a game straight out of it can be at least ten times harder. This last chapter is for you, the Game Master, as our little way of saying "Hey. Sorry for making a game that lets your players do so much stupid crap."

We have notes about our settings, as well as notes to help you create your own. We have everything you need to make monsters, and in the next chapter you can look at some sample monsters we've already put together. Hell, we've got some notes on different players and play styles, and how to GM around them. Most importantly, we have the Golden Rule. Behold it in all its glory.

YOU CAN ALWAYS SAY NO

Some abilities, traits, and other parameters say that you need to give a player permission to use them. Quirk, for example, is a good trait to watch, because players will try and get a free stat point for saying that their character gets -1 to all rolls in the presence of people whose names start with "J".

Watch what the players take, and don't be afraid to tell them that, in the light of your campaign, their idea won't work. This being said, your power isn't tied to those little "GM discretion" brackets; you can say no to anything. You can even say no to completely reasonable requests – if you don't want players to use two-handed weapons, ban them by all means! Have a grudge against cleric characters? Ban Life magic! Why not? You're the one who's setting the stage for a campaign, which means you're the one who makes the rules.

You can hear a lot of people saying "Absolute power corrupts absolutely", and when you do, you envision Napoleon, or Stalin, or Hitler, or any number of ludicrously decadent French kings (Louis XVI comes to mind, doesn't he?). Of course, they're referring to political power.

But what you don't know is that it can happen to you too. As GM you have the aforementioned absolute power, and if you're not careful, it can absolutely corrupt you just as surely as it did Louis. You control the events and the storyline, but you need to keep in mind that you're playing *with* the players, not against them. It's your job to challenge them, yes, but the challenges you provide should be possible, no matter how difficult. Don't expect the players to read your mind, and be flexible enough to throw them a bone if they're really not following your reasoning.

Be gentle and patient with your players. At times, they can be misguided, even a little bratty, but you're all sitting around the same table, having fun as friends. Try not to drive a wedge between yourself and the players, or let the players drive wedges amongst themselves. Games are for playing, after all; if nobody's having fun, then you're playing it wrong.

Making Things More Challenging

If you set up an encounter with a wall, and you set the Climb DT so low that the character with 0 Strength manages to succeed, no one is going to be enjoying themselves. The players will be bored because the encounter was a single Climb with a low DT, you will be frustrated because they're tossing your encounters aside like a Twinkie wrapper, and the game will wear on everyone. Most players prefer a challenging game, one that forces them to make use of their strategies and pushes them to think harder about their situation, but coming up with such a game is easier said than done most of the time.

Many, many, many GMs fall into a trap here. They get frustrated by how easily the players overcome the challenges they set, so they increase all the numbers to make things harder. If the players succeed, the GMs only get madder, until they just do their best to make the task impossible. The players get frustrated because, really, what's the point of even making a character sheet if the GM has all the DTs set to 50? If your character sheet doesn't matter, then you're not even playing the game anymore.

As a GM, there is another important rule to remember. It does not reflect poorly on you if the players succeed. If the players succeed in a matter of a few seconds, it doesn't mean you're a bad GM. It means that you need to present more *complex* challenges, not more difficult ones. However, if the players fail everything because you abuse your godly powers, and suddenly the game stops being fun? *That* means you're a bad GM.

So, here, the key is complexity, not difficulty. The source of frustration for players when an encounter is “too easy”, and the frustration a GM feels when the players breeze through the campaign, isn’t about the difficulty of the task at all. It’s about the amount of time taken to complete the task.

When players sit down to a campaign, they expect to spend time with their friends, solve some puzzles, and overcome some challenges. A GM hopes to occupy them, to keep the party going, so to speak, by maintaining these challenges. So, if you don’t manage to fill your evening, of course everyone will feel unsatisfied! Even Monopoly requires more than one dice roll to complete; though the game is often very easy, it doesn’t simply hand victory to the first person to roll two sixes. When your campaign is less complex than Monopoly, you leave your players feeling cheated. When your players complain that they feel cheated, you feel frustrated, and you run the risk of falling into the trap described above.

No matter how hard the die roll is, if it’s just one die roll, it will always be too easy.

Remember it. Write it on the top of all of your planning sheets. Record yourself saying it so you can listen to it on an infinite loop while you sleep. Small, simple tasks will never be enough to satisfy players for an entire night, no matter how high the DT is. If the DT gets too high, the players will look for a way to circumvent it, and if they can’t find one, they’ll feel cheated because you’re not letting them play the game. If the DT is possible, they’ll feel cheated because all it took was one roll of the dice, and suddenly play was over.

Of course, very few GMs will literally make an encounter a single roll. But, many of them do place too much importance on the DTs, which will never be a good enough way of providing a challenge. Rather than raising the numbers, you should be giving the players more to do, more to figure out.

This extends beyond DTs. Any time you funnel the players into a single action, roll or not, you'll wind up disappointed. If you have a magic door that requires a correct password, and the door is unbreakable, the lock is unpickable, the surrounding earth and walls are completely impenetrable, and there's nowhere to fit a crowbar, the situation will only end in tears. Although it's tempting to make the players backtrack to the password you wrote under the king's throne cushion because of the effort you put into the puzzle, remember that exploring different options is what makes the game interesting! When you back players into a corner, they don't feel as though they're making their own choices and solving things for themselves. They feel as though you've scripted them, and, once again, they feel cheated. This is not a video game; players expect to have complete control over their actions.

Sample Skill DTs

10 – The task can be completed easily by most anyone barring clumsiness or serious problems with the task

15 – The task is of a reasonable difficulty and can be done about half the time by most people

20 – The task is difficult to complete, and you need to know what you are doing for a reasonable chance

25 – The task requires a fair bit of skill to complete. In order to succeed, you need a good stroke of luck, or to have done similar tasks many times before

30 – The task is exceptionally difficult, and you need to be an expert

35+ - The task is very hard to complete, even for those who are considered experts in the skill. They have to take their time and even then might not be able to do it properly. Ability to succeed at these tasks sets you a cut above the rest.

Yes, there are a lot of pitfalls. At the end of the day, being a GM is very, very difficult. All of the easy ways of running a game will drive your players insane and cause you a lot of undue stress. When you get stressed out, you just want to “beat” the players, forgetting entirely that the players are supposed to enjoy the game too!

What you do to keep the players happy depends on what your players enjoy, and what you like to run. But, a good idea is not to focus too hard on the exact course of action you want the players to take. Instead, focus on the task to be done. You can make it so that the players will have an easier time of things if they follow your plans, but if you “railroad” them, they’ll only be more likely to try and break your storyline.

Making Things More Interesting

Fact is, different playgroups have different styles, and so do different GMs. What one group will find challenging and engaging may drive another group to distraction. Some GMs are better at writing and running dungeon crawl-style campaigns than they are at writing intrigues and mysteries. Try and find a style of campaign that you enjoy writing and that your group enjoys playing.

The first step to putting together a good campaign is to closely study your character sheets. It also helps if you've played with this group before. What are the players' strong points? Is there a possible encounter that no one in the party is prepared to handle? Is there a possible encounter that one or more of the party members would just annihilate? If you know the group's history, do they strategize well in combat situations? Does one player get bored if he's not beating on something or someone?

An ideal campaign will present opportunities for everyone in the party to use their skills. Looking at the character sheets will let you know when each player gets their time to shine, so pay attention to fringe skills that not everyone in the party has taken, or to professions. If the character hasn't taken anything unique, perhaps you could introduce an NPC who will respond well to them for backstory reasons, like a relative.

There's no silver bullet for this; just like all GMing, it takes practice. Get to know how your players play, and keep it in mind. Make sure everyone has something to do, and listen to the players! If they're bored, then just make a note

that something about the campaign style doesn't engage them, and change things up.

In a group of hardcore strategists, a dungeon crawling campaign probably won't be received as well as a session spent fortifying a castle against an impending attack. Likewise, players who love action and combat won't respond well to roleplay-heavy mystery campaigns where they are discouraged from attacking anyone. If you've been with your group for a long time, you probably already know what kinds of games they like, and if your players have been playing for a long time, even if not together, they'll be able to tell you if you ask. So, first, try asking your players what kinds of games interest them.

First-time gamers probably don't already know what they like. So, keep an eye on them. Are they getting distracted during the game? Are they complaining, or withdrawing? If they're not actively participating, you might just be putting the wrong bait in front of them. Here are some basic kinds of challenges used in most role-playing games, as well as some motivations; find out what works for your team!

CHALLENGES

Strategy and Planning: Strategy and planning campaigns appeal to careful players who like the feeling of solving a puzzle in their own way. To run a campaign like this, just place a large obstacle in front of the players and leave them to figure out ways of solving it. You don't even have to figure it out yourself; just watch what the players come up with, and complicate their plans a little every now and then to keep things from running

too smoothly. It's usually a low-combat challenge, so players who need a lot of action may be in trouble. Watch your players to make sure everyone is contributing; sometimes, in a strategy campaign, one or two voices will take over for the others.

Combat: Combat challenges, when well-balanced, give the players the rush of having their backs to the wall. Ideally, for a major climactic encounter, the players should be forced to pull out all the tricks in their bag, responding turn-by-turn to threats as they arise. This can involve a lot of tension, but it can go south quickly if the balance is off. Keep the numbers flexible on your end, and don't be afraid to secretly adjust the enemy's attributes if things go poorly. Too easy, and most players will get bored. Too difficult, and players may get frustrated and give up. Change the game up by using terrain, unusual magic effects, or other extenuating circumstances to a fight if players are just doing the same thing over and over. Finally, try and avoid long combats if the party is larger than five players; time spent waiting on someone else's turn isn't time spent playing!

Mystery: Much like a strategy campaign, a mystery campaign involves patience and clever thinking, and it will likely appeal to the same kinds of players as a strategy challenge, despite being much harder to write. A rewarding mystery makes complete sense; the best way to put a mystery campaign together is to think of an incident, then write out what happened along with the side effects or evidence that was left every step of the way. This is a great kind of challenge to draw a map for, to make sure that everything is consistent. Again, like a strategy campaign, watch your players to make sure nobody is getting drowned out or bored, and throw your players a bone if they wander too far from your beaten track.

Dungeon Crawls: Sticking your players into a labyrinth is a classic roleplaying challenge, and one that a lot of gamers really enjoy. Ideally, before doing this kind of challenge, you should have the dungeon mapped out, and its rooms either filled or fillable; many GMs swear by their encounter tables. Players who are more interested in storyline challenges have a tendency to get bored in dungeons, so if you've got some of those in your party, make sure to also put clues and information in the dungeon, giving them something to mull over while the others are wrestling with the graph paper. Some GMs also run dungeons as survival challenges, trying to get the players lost or denying them healing and rest while they're inside. Try and get a feel for how grueling your players like their dungeons, because every group is different.

Roleplay: Depending on your acting chops, this can be either very easy or very hard to improvise. Just write down who the character is and what motivates them, as well as a couple relevant stats. Some players really enjoy interacting with NPCs, trying to figure out what they're up to, or trying to talk their way out of a sticky situation. Keep an eye on the character sheets; a player who always makes sure to take "socialize" or "lie" might be aching for the right chance to use those skills! Players who are more interested in combat will certainly get bored, so try not to let these segments get out of hand if the whole party's not on board with them. Many innocent NPCs have died because a GM tried too hard to force a roleplay encounter when the players just wanted to kill someone!

MOTIVATIONS

Duty: Players who enjoy the roleplaying aspect of the game are often very receptive to being told their character has a special duty. Take a look at everyone's Codes, and see who's got something ranked at 3, then put them in a situation where they have to fulfill that code. A bodyguard character, for example, may suddenly find that her charge has gone missing.

Loot: Many players are motivated primarily by power. In lots of games, this means money, but it can also mean weapons, equipment, or magic. Players who don't respond well to in-character motivations are often more than happy to embark on an adventure in search of something that will make their characters stronger. To them, the point of the game is to create a powerful character. Instead of getting frustrated when a player doesn't obey the king's orders, try offering a magical artifact instead.

Fear: Be careful with this one. If you're trying to convince your players that the only way for them to survive is for them to follow through with your plot, you're presenting them with a challenge. Whenever anything drops down in front of your players and threatens them, they're going to take it as a challenge, and they will immediately try to push back against it. This can work really well for survivalist campaigns, where the players find themselves in a disaster situation and have to try and live through it, but there are many players who hate it when it's used to motivate them on a quest. If you use a powerful NPC to try to scare them into obedience, most groups will either kill this NPC or be frustrated when they can't.

Revenge: This is one of those few motivators that works both in-character and out of it. If a monster or an NPC does something terrible enough to the party, the players and the characters alike may wind up burning for revenge. When you make a challenge personal, your players may just leap into it wholeheartedly! Look for NPCs the players are attached to and have them kidnapped or injured, or have the enemy destroy one of their other objectives or ruin their plans. The hard part is making the enemy strong enough to escape them the first time but not impossible for them to kill the second time.

Goals: Failing all else, just ask your players before the campaign starts to list three things that their characters want to accomplish. Between this and their Codes, you should be able to get a good idea of what in-character rewards or threats you should offer in order to get the players to act. Offer them their desires, or, if their desires are simple and easily attainable, threaten to ruin them entirely.

MAKING MONSTERS

For the most part, making a monster is exactly like character creation, except slightly more complicated. If you're intimidated by the process, don't worry; we've made sample monsters in the next chapter, and you can always have your players encounter other characters instead.

First, there are some things to consider. You need to select the size, movement type, mind, age, and power. The last two, age and power, will vary within a species, but if you're just making a general monster, just use Adult and PC. If you want to make a whole race of monsters, see Races below.

Movement

Movement type is the difference between a snake and an airplane. Creatures that don't typically move on land but still have legs (creatures who swim, for example, or fly almost exclusively) can be considered crawling on land. They get a $\frac{1}{2}$ Agi shift, and you can ignore a negative Strength when calculating their speeds.

	Shift	Walk	Run	Sprint
	None or	$6 + \frac{1}{2} \text{ Str} +$		
Crawling:	$\frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$	$\frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$ $10 + \frac{1}{2} \text{ Str}$	2x Walk	None
Slither:	$\frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$	$+ \frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$	2x Walk 2x Walk	None
Biped/Swim:	$\frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$	$6 + \frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$	$+ \frac{1}{2} \text{ Str}$ 2x Walk	2x Run
Quadraped:	$\frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$	$10 + \frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$	$+ \frac{1}{2} \text{ Str}$	2x Run
6+ Legs:	$\frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$	$8 + \frac{1}{2} \text{ Agi}$	4x Walk	None

Mind

The mind modifier tells you what kind of thought processes the monster has. It can be either mindless and have no thoughts at all, acting simply as a stimulus response engine. Bestial minds are animalistic, capable of thought and learning but often just acting for pure survival. Humanoid minds are those of an average human while superior minds are, obviously, superior to our own.

Mindless: Mind and Charm Stats are all irrelevant, all behavior is mechanical and predictable while all perception is based solely on whether or not stimuli is in the range of chemical perception around you. Skills are genetically

inherited, not learnt and often have little relation to the number of ability points in naturally occurring creatures

Bestial: Int and Etiq begin at -2, Int and Charm Stats cost double to improve, including at creation. Int limited to 1 at creation, Wis and Charm Stats limited to 3 at creation.

Human: Mind and Charm Stats start at 0 and have a max of 5 at creation.

Advanced: Mind and Charm Stats start at 2 and have a max of 8 at creation.

Age

Infant: At this stage the monster is considered helpless and essentially paralyzed. It cannot attack or defend itself from danger, nor can it truly react to its surroundings beyond making noise. At this stage, the creature is from 1/8th to 1/4th of the size of an average adult (approximately) and is both immobile and easily killed.

Child: At this stage the monster is between helplessness and full adulthood, a wide spectrum which will be represented for simplicity by halving most values an adult would have. Children are considered to be from 1/4th to 1/2 the size of an adult. In order to represent the full spectrum of movement speed from infancy to adulthood, use the Slow traits or Speed abilities to represent the differing speeds, both given for free. Finally Children receive only 1/2 the base skills, abilities and stats that an adult would normally receive.

Adult: At this stage the monster is at peak maturation both physically and mentally and the rest of its growth will be determined by training. These creatures are created as regular in all ways.

Elderly: At this stage the body is shutting down, though the creature may be healthy enough to slow it down or not feel it quite so badly. Decide how many “stages” of elderly it has entered and for each one, reduce the base walk speed by 1, lose 1/5th of its total Vitality and Wounds and reduce 5 of its stats by 1.

Power

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Ability Points
<u>Powerless</u>	0	0	0	0
<u>Weak</u>	2 (3)	1	0	1
<u>Below Average</u>	4 (6)	2	0	2
<u>Average</u>	5 (7)	3	1	3
PC	6 (8)	4	2	5

Size

If you don't want to worry about the more complex table, just use the first one below. Each size category carries with it changes in physical stats; look those up on the table. “Damage” is only damage derived from physical stats, obviously; magic is unaffected. If you want to get more specific, or you want to change something's size with a Polymorph spell, see the full size charts.

	Str	Fort	Grace	Resist	Walk/ Shift	(Long)	(Tauric)
							1.8
<u>Insect</u>	-7	-7	-7	-1	-1	3 inches	inches
<u>Small</u>	-3	-3	-3	0	-1	1' 10"	1' 1"
<u>Human</u>	0	0	0	0	0	6' 0"	3' 7"
<u>Giant</u>	+10	+10	+10	+2	+3	18' 0"	10' 10"
<u>Enormous</u>	+30	+30	+30	+6	+9	54' 0"	32' 5"
<u>Bigger?</u>	+60	+60	+60	+12	+27	162' 0"	97' 2"

A human being and a tiger, you may notice, are both in the “Human” category. This being said, a tiger is probably a good deal larger than you. Even within the same size category, there are variations, and that is what these daunting charts are all about. Even human beings themselves usually span the area between “Human -1” and “Human +1” on the chart.

If, for some reason, everyone in your campaign is the same non-human size (For example, if you were running a fairy campaign populated by insect-sized creatures), it would probably be simplest to just set the average PC size to “Human”. Easier on the players, easier on you.

If you want to create a creature which is a different size category, you can treat the transition as a 2-point trait, either positive or negative depending on the relation to the average. This means that, for a Polymorph spell, a change of a single line on the chart below is worth +6 DT.

Str, Fort, Agi

The larger you are, the higher your Strength, Fortitude and Agility will seem to creatures smaller than yourself, and vice versa when you are smaller. Imagine yourself as a human watching an ant come at you. The ant is very slow and there is no way you'd simply let it hit you. If it did, you wouldn't really be injured enough to worry about, but if you so much as touched it, it would be crushed. Creatures that are enormous to you would have the same considerations, and this should be taken into consideration when facing them. While fighting amongst themselves however, they would be evenly matched much as we are.

When determining any DT which requires the use of Str, Fort or Agi, add the Size Modifiers to determine relative difficulty for the creature.

Damage/Tough:

Bigger weapons deal more damage, and thicker armor takes more punishment. A hand axe can damage less than a great axe and when it is held by a 40 foot tall creature, the even larger weapon will be able to do more damage. A piece of plate mail made for a giant will be much thicker than what we wear. This also affects natural weapons, such as claws and fangs, and is added on top of any size bonuses or penalties.

Height

Height represents the average height within a species, not the height of any individual within the species. While a Human could range anywhere between 4 feet to 8 feet tall, they would not receive any of the bonuses or negatives for those heights because their race is considered to be 6 feet tall

on average. Height can refer to how tall someone is, how long they are if they are a creature like a snake. Creatures like horses, which are kind of rectangular in shape, use the Tauric measurement.

	Str	Fort	Grace	Resist	Walk/ Shift	(Tall/Long)	(Tauric)
-5	-9	-9	-9	-2	-1	2 mm	1.2 mm
-4	-8	-9	-9	-2	-1	7 mm	4.2 mm
-3	-8	-8	-9	-1	-1	15 mm	9 mm
-2	-7	-8	-8	-1	-1	1''	15 mm
-1	-7	-7	-8	-1	-1	2''	1.2''
Insect	-7	-7	-7	-1	-1	3''	1.8''
+1	-6	-7	-7	-1	-1	5''	3''
+2	-6	-6	-7	-1	-1	6''	3.6''
+3	-6	-6	-6	-1	-1	8''	4.8''
+4	-5	-6	-6	-1	-1	10''	6''
+/-5	-5	-5	-5	-1	-1	1' 0"	7''
-4	-4	-5	-5	-1	-1	1' 2"	8.3''
-3	-4	-4	-5	-1	-1	1' 4"	9.6''
-2	-3	-4	-4	-1	-1	1' 6"	10.9''
-1	-3	-3	-4	-1	-1	1' 8"	1' 0"
Small	-3	-3	-3	0	-1	1' 10"	1' 1"
+1	-2	-3	-3	0	-1	2' 0"	1' 3"
+2	-2	-2	-3	0	-1	2' 3"	1' 5"
+3	-2	-2	-2	0	-1	2' 6"	1' 6"
+4	-1	-2	-2	0	-1	2' 9"	1' 8"
+/-5	-1	-2	-2	0	0	3' 0"	1' 10"
-4	-1	-1	-2	0	0	3' 7"	2' 2"
-3	-1	-1	-1	0	0	4' 2"	2' 6"
-2	0	-1	-1	0	0	4' 10"	2' 11"
-1	0	0	-1	0	0	5' 5"	3' 3"
Human	0	0	0	0	0	6' 0"	3' 7"
+1	+1	0	0	0	0	6' 7"	4' 0"
+2	+2	+1	0	0	0	7' 2"	4' 4"
+3	+3	+2	+1	0	0	7' 9"	4' 8"
+4	+4	+3	+2	+1	+1	8' 5"	5' 0"
+/-5	+5	+4	+3	+1	+1	9' 0"	5' 5"

-4	+6	+5	+4	+1	+2	10' 9"	6' 6"
-3	+7	+6	+5	+1	+2	12' 7"	7' 7"
-2	+8	+7	+6	+1	+2	14' 4"	8' 7"
-1	+9	+8	+8	+2	+3	16' 2"	9' 8"
Giant	+10	+10	+10	+2	+3	18' 0"	10' 10"
+1	+12	+11	+11	+2	+3	19' 10"	11' 11"
+2	+13	+13	+12	+3	+4	21' 7"	13' 0"
+3	+14	+14	+14	+3	+4	23' 5"	14' 0"
+4	+16	+16	+16	+3	+5	25' 2"	15' 1"
+/-5	+19	+18	+18	+4	+5	27' 0"	16' 2"
-4	+21	+21	+20	+4	+6	32' 5"	19' 5"
-3	+23	+23	+23	+5	+6	37' 10"	22' 8"
-2	+26	+25	+25	+5	+7	43' 0"	25' 10"
-1	+28	+28	+27	+6	+8	48' 7"	29' 2"
Enormous	+30	+30	+30	+6	+9	54' 0"	32' 5"
+1	+33	+32	+32	+6	+10	59' 5"	35' 7"
+2	+35	+35	+34	+7	+12	64' 10"	38' 11"
+3	+37	+37	+37	+7	+13	70' 2"	42' 1"
+4	+40	+40	+40	+8	+15	75' 7"	45' 5"
+/-5	+44	+43	+43	+9	+17	81' 0"	48' 7"
-4	+47	+47	+46	+9	+19	97' 2"	58' 4"
-3	+50	+50	+50	+10	+21	113' 5"	68' 0"
-2	+54	+53	+53	+11	+23	129' 7"	77' 9"
-1	+57	+57	+56	+11	+25	145' 10"	87' 6"
Bigger?	+60	+60	+60	+12	+27	162' 0"	97' 2"

Races

A race is less a “monster” than it is a “collection of traits”. If you like, you can give a race the full monster-creation treatment listed above, but it’s much simpler to assume races will be Human sized, with PC power and Human minds.

Once you’ve put together the traits that make up your race, you will know what effect these traits will have on the stat pool. If a character is made

with all of those race traits, then that character will count as a member of the race. It's easy.

Beyond mere race traits, it's a good idea to have some idea of your race's culture. This lets you set limits to your players' PST choices, and mandatory skill selections. For some sample skills, see the Mod Classic setting earlier in the GM chapter.

Power Level

As a GM it can be very difficult to determine how powerful a monster or NPC is and what your party can face, especially when there are no predetermined levels. However, there are some ways to get a general idea of how powerful a creature or player is with some basic math.

Character DT: To get any creature's Character DT, take an average of their Vitality and Mana. $(Vit + Mana)/2$. You can use this to figure out how hard it is to summon a creature or just as an estimate of its ability.

Power Rating: A creature's Power Rating (A made-up number you can use to help balance encounters) is the total of:

- Ability Points used
- Levels in combat Skills (Magic included)
- Build
- Grace
- 2 highest Mental Stats.

A level one character can have anywhere from 10 if they have no combat ability or 18 if they focus on it. You can also add 3-5 depending on armor or subtract the same amount if they completely lack a decent means of attack. To be even more precise you could average this number with Summon

difficulty and add character level, but it almost always leads to nearly equivalent ratios.

SETTINGS

One of the most rewarding things that can be done with this game is the creation of your own campaign setting. It's easier than you might expect, because instead of creating a spell list or a list of character classes, you just need to create small modules, like spell or tech parameters. Balancing is no longer a matter of carefully examining, re-examining, and playtesting a whole list of new elements; now it's a matter of carefully tweaking small numbers associated with discrete parameters. The players will make the spells for your new setting, and each character will create their character class as they play.

What sort of game do you want to play? This time you're not limited by the things the game's already promised you. If you want, you can even try and make a game setting based on a novel, TV show, or video game you enjoy. Making game rules to suit an existing world is a great exercise in building the rules to match an idea. If you can't think of anything, try asking your players; they may well have something in mind, a place they've always wanted to play in, or even an original idea of their own.

Once you've got an idea, the first thing you need to do is decide if you're creating any new mechanics. The key question here is, *what makes this world go around?* Then, make a rule that translates this important factor into the game's logic so that it can influence gameplay.

For example, let's say we're making a pirate setting. To a sailor, the weather is crucial; the ability to predict changes in the weather and cope with severe weather conditions can prove the difference between life and death. So, for a pirate setting, you'll want to make rules about weather conditions. When and how the weather changes, and what effects it has on people and on ships.

Then, once you've made a mechanic, the rest is easy. Make spell parameters (maybe even entire magic skills!) that influence or are influenced by the weather, and maybe even some tech limiters. Maybe make an ability that allows a player to sail through a storm as though the weather was perfectly clear, or one that allows a player to sense upcoming changes in the weather. You can also modify or remove existing items in the game to fit better in your world, like making an experience system based on money gained instead of on skill usage.

When you're making a parameter, a trait, or an ability, pay attention to the cost. Try and balance it based on the other items we've already got in the book; think about whether it compares well to other items with the same cost.

Two Points Left

A trick to help you balance costs is to imagine a player that only has exactly enough points for whatever you're trying to balance. Maybe she won't be able to cast the spell if it's too expensive, or only has a few ability or trait points. Then, look at other items with the same cost.

For example, is a player with only two trait points to spend going to take your new trait or Decisive? The goal is to make it a hard choice, so adjust the costing if one's obviously more beneficial than the other.

Finally, if you're making a fantasy world, you may want to populate it with non-human races or monsters. Give them cultures and backgrounds if you like, and let your players know at the start of the game that they don't have to play human beings.

You can repeat this all as much as you like, until you feel like you've created everything your players will need to get around in your world.

PRINTING

YOU DO IT.

We're planning a bigger release of the Mod basic manual, one with sample settings, missions, characters, spells, and a lot more! This little book is our initial launch, and we're just glad that you were interested enough to check it out. Thanks so much!

It's built for mobile, but if you want to have a physical copy for your own use, go ahead with our blessing. The pages are half letter size (5.5 X 8.5), and 176 of them means that you'll need 44 sheets of paper total. You can print it in black and white (or in color, but that will just keep that blue TOC link as a reminder of the PDF's lost functionality). Taking it to your local print shop is probably the best way to make sure the booklet winds up in order and the bindings are nice.



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