

# GEAS PLAYTEST PACKET 5: RULES

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GEAS PLAYTEST PACKET 5: RULES .....	1
<b>COMMON TABLES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THE IMPORTANT BITS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Challenge Rolls</i> .....	5
<i>Calculating Dice Pools</i> .....	6
<i>Helping</i> .....	7
<i>Calculating Damage</i> .....	7
<i>Combat Quick Guide</i> .....	8
<i>Action Economy</i> .....	8
<i>Additional Successes</i> .....	8
<b>GLOSSARY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>"You"</i> .....	9
<b>GAME MECHANICS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
FOUNDATIONS OF THE GAME .....	11
<i>Boxcars!</i> .....	11
<i>Willfully Failing an Ability Check</i> .....	11
<i>Trading In</i> .....	11
<i>Action Points</i> .....	11
<i>Status</i> .....	13
VITALITY, VIGOR, AND DEATH.....	13
<i>Recovering Vigor and Vitality</i> .....	14
<i>Desperation Points</i> .....	14
<i>Heroic Points</i> .....	15
ROLE-PLAYING (INTERACTING) .....	15
<i>Reactions</i> .....	15
EXPLORING .....	15
<i>Time</i> .....	16
<i>Movement</i> .....	16
<i>Vision</i> .....	19
<i>Resting</i> .....	20
<b>COMBAT .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>Battlefield Positions and Surprise</i> .....	21
<i>Creature Size</i> .....	21
COMBAT ATTACKS .....	22
<i>Damage Types</i> .....	22
<i>Defense and Damage Reduction</i> .....	23
<i>Durational Affects</i> .....	23
<i>Taking Half</i> .....	23
<b>GM SECTION .....</b>	<b>24</b>
HAZARDS.....	24
<i>Natural Hazards</i> .....	24
<i>Desecrated Ground</i> .....	25
<i>Traps</i> .....	25
<i>Puzzles</i> .....	26
<i>Monstrosities</i> .....	26
<i>Poison, Venom, and Disease</i> .....	27
MORALE .....	27
AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP).....	28
<i>Experience Circles</i> .....	28

STRUCTURES .....	29
CREATING THE ADVENTURE.....	29
<i>Urban</i> .....	30
<i>Wilderness</i> .....	30
<i>Dungeon</i> .....	31
<i>Building the Combat Encounter</i> .....	31
<i>Mixed Balancing</i> .....	31
<i>Choose the Scenario</i> .....	32
<i>Designing Villains</i> .....	32
<b>GM TRAPS TO AVOID .....</b>	<b>33</b>

# COMMON TABLES

Action	Point Cost
Aiming	4
Attacking with a heavy rated weapon	5
Attacking with a light rated weapon	3
Attacking with a medium rated weapon	4
Casting a spell	varies
Combat Maneuver (trip, disarm, etc.)	4
Disarming a trap	6
Disengaging	4
Dodging	6
Doffing heavy armor	8
Doffing light armor	2
Doffing medium armor	4
Donning heavy armor	10
Donning light armor	4
Donning medium armor	6
Drinking a potion	4
Flipping a table	5
Loading a crossbow	3
Picking a lock	5
Picking up or pulling out a weapon	3
Reading a scroll	6
Speaking 5 words	1
Throwing an object (other than weapon)	4
Tossing a rope	3

## Proficiency Die

Circle	PD	If You Are Proficient in the Sub-Ability
1	d8	2 PD + 1PD for each Ability modifier
2	d10	
3	d12	
4	d20	

Status	Description
Blinded	You can't see and fail any ability check that requires sight. Your DEF decreases by 4, and your attack rolls have a -2 PD penalty.
Confused	Your mind is muddled. Spellcasting or using maneuvers is prohibited.
Cursed	You are under the effects of a curse. The results vary depending on the specific nature of the curse.
Deafened	You can't hear and automatically fail any ability check that requires hearing.
Difficult Terrain	Twice the AP cost to move the same distance. -1 PD penalty to all Physical ability checks.
Fatigued	Your AP pool is reduced by half (rounded up).
Frightened	You have a -2 PD penalty on ability checks and attack rolls.
Glamourised	You can't attack or target the creature that glamourised you with harmful abilities or effects. The charmer has a +1d20 bonus on any Presence checks against the charmed.
Invisible	Invisible creatures gain a +4 bonus to their DEF against melee attacks, and +6 DEF bonus to ranged attacks.
Incapacitated/Paralyzed	You can't take any actions or responses. Attack Challenge Rolls against you gain a +1d20 bonus and if successful, are considered critical successes.
Petrified	You are made from stone, and cannot move or take actions. You are not aware of your surroundings. Any damage to your statue form will carry over to your fleshy form if a <i>stone to flesh</i> spell revives you.
Poisoned/Diseased	Your AP pool is reduced by 2, and you suffer a -1 PD penalty on all Challenge rolls.
Prone	You gain a +2 DEF bonus against ranged attacks, but a -2 DEF penalty against melee attacks. It costs 3 AP to stand from prone.
Restrained	You cannot move or cast spells. Any attacks you make are at a -3 PD penalty while attacks against you are at a +3 PD bonus.
Stunned	You can't take any actions or responses. Attack Challenge Rolls against you gain a +2d20 bonus.
Winded	You can use desperation traits.

# THE IMPORTANT BITS

## CHALLENGE ROLLS

Whether you have attacked, cast a spell, used an ability, or are making an ability check, you will attempt a Challenge Roll. Roll your dice pool that has been determined for that action and compare it to the highest value of your opponent's die pool. Many things such as ability checks don't have an opponent, but they do have a Target Challenge Number (TCN) you need to beat to succeed.

### Common Examples:

1. You are attacking with sword (DP: 3d8) against an orc (DEF: 2d8). You roll a 5, 4, and 2. The orc rolls DEF and gets a 4 and 3. Your 5 beats their 4 so the attack hits. Damage is rolled.

2. You are casting an area of effect spell that requires two targets in the area to make an Agility check. You roll your Arcane Spell Pool (ASP) of 2d12 and get a 9 and 2. The targets roll their Agility checks (each uses 2d10). The first's highest die is an 8 and the second's highest die is a 10. The first

*rolled lower than you so it takes the full effect of the spell, and the second rolled higher than you, avoiding the spell's effect.*

*3. A creature with an attacking dice pool of 2d10 is attacking you. Your DEF is 3d8. The creature rolls a 7 and a 3. You roll a 7, 2, and 1. Your highest die tie, so the tie goes to you and the attack misses since the instigator didn't beat your roll.*

*4. You are casting a spell that covers a large area where six creatures are. Each creature must succeed on a Will ability check to avoid the spell. Rather than roll for each creature, the GM decides to "take half". The take half value of the creatures' Will dice pool is 6. Your ASP is 2d12 and you roll a 7 and a 3. Lucky for you, your 7 beats the 6, so every creature is affected.*

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## CALCULATING DICE POOLS

### Ability Checks

Calculating Your Pool: Depending on your Circle, you use a particular die type for your pool. This is called your Proficiency Die (PD). If you are not proficient in the type of check you are asked to make, you roll only one PD in your pool. If you are proficient in the type of check you are being asked to make, you start with two PD and add an additional die type for every modifier you have in the appropriate ability.

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*Example: Your PD is a d8, you have a Physical modifier of 2, and are proficient in Endurance. When called to make an Endurance check, you roll 4d8. If asked to make an Agility check (you are not proficient), you roll only 1d8.*

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### Attacks

Calculating Your Pool: Your base pool includes one of your Proficiency dice, then you add an additional die based on any maneuvers, traits, or other factors that would impact this. If you attack with a weapon you are not proficient in, your die type would be one category less.

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*Example: Your PD is a d8. You have a maneuver that grants a +1 PD bonus on all attacks. When attacking, you roll 2d8. If you attack with a weapon you are not proficient in, you roll 2d6.*

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## Defense (DEF)

Calculating Your Pool: Start with 1 PD. To this, add your shield bonus (if applicable) plus any features or traits that grant a bonus. The result is the dice pool you use when defending against attacks. If your DEF is zero PD or less, then you would still roll 1d6 at minimum.

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*Example: Your PD is a d8. You have a shield that grants a +1 bonus to DEF and a trait that grants you a +1 PD bonus to DEF if using light or no armor. Your final DEF pool would consist of 3d8.*

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## HELPING

When attempting an ability check to disarm traps, lockpicking, recall information, or similar, an ally can help you. If an ally does help you, you gain a +1 PD bonus to your roll.

## CALCULATING DAMAGE

### Light Weapons

These weapons cost 3 AP to make an attack, and melee light weapons can be used in your off-hand when dual-wielding. WDP = 1 CD.

### Medium Weapons

These weapons cost 4 AP to make an attack. WDP = 2 CD.

### Heavy Weapons

These weapons cost 5 AP to make an attack. WDP = 3 CD. They require two hands to wield.

**Calculating Total Damage** is pretty simple. Whenever you successfully land an attack, you roll your WDP and choose which of those die you want to use for damage. This is typically the highest dice, but doesn't need to be.

If you have bonus damage, then you roll the dice in your BDP in the same way you do your WDP. Choose which of those dice to use as *bonus damage*. This is additional damage you inflict to your target beyond the die you chose for your WDP.

Once you've determined the damage from your dice pools, you finally add your physical modifier (and any other bonus damage you might have) to this value.

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*Example: Bob has a Physical modifier of 2, d8 CD, and is attacking with a longsword (medium weapon--2 CD). Bob rolls 2d8 for his WDP, getting a 7 and 2. Bob chooses the 7, then adds 2 for his Physical modifier, for a final damage of 9 points.*

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*Example: Bob is attacking with a halberd now (heavy weapon--3 CD) and succeeds in his attack roll. He also has a specialty maneuver that allows him to add 2 CD to his BDP. He now rolls a total of 3 d8s in his WDP, getting an 8, 4, and 2. He rolls his BDP of 2d8 and gets a 4 and 1. He chooses the 8 from the WDP and 4 from the BDP, adds 2 for his Physical modifier, for a total of 14 damage inflicted.*

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# COMBAT QUICK GUIDE

## Step 1: Determine Combat Order

Each participant rolls a d10. The players and GM then organize all the participants from highest to lowest. The lowest result is set as the baseline. The next highest result chooses if they want to go before or after the baseline. The next highest result chooses where they want to go in the order, and so on until all participants have chosen.

**Step 2:** If there is a triggering event outside of your turn, you may choose to use your response. Or, on your turn, spend AP to do what you want to do, keeping any AP in reserve if you think you may need them for responses later on. You recover spent AP at the start of your turn.

**Step 3:** Resolve any defensive measure you may be called upon (DEF for being attacked, ability checks to resist spells, etc.). If you suffer damage or use vigor, make the appropriate adjustments.

**Step 4:** Resolve the Combat Round and begin a new round.

## ACTION ECONOMY

**Action Points:** Every action costs AP. Deduct the cost from your AP pool when you take them. Take actions on your turn.

**Response:** Sometimes you have an option to take an action outside of your turn. These are called “responses”. Most are triggered by a certain scenario, and you only get one response every round. If the response doesn’t tell you what the trigger is, you can use your response whenever you like. You still need to pay the AP cost, if applicable, however.

## ADDITIONAL SUCCESSES

Whenever you make a Challenge Roll, if you have more than one dice result that beats the highest die/value of the TCN, you have completed additional successes.

Additional successes are great, because they allow you to empower your attempt to greater results than normal. You “spend” additional successes to add varying benefits. The below are some common ways to spend additional successes, but feel free to come up with your own at your table. Keep in mind that not every option may be available and they should align with the type of Challenge Roll made (ability check, attack, spell, etc.).

That is, if you’ve achieved an additional success for an attempt to jump a crevasse, it doesn’t make sense to spend an additional success on adding a die to your WDP--that doesn’t make sense and thus wouldn’t apply.

### Spend 1 additional success to:

- add a CD to the attack/ability/spell’s effect (if it uses a CD as part of the original description).
- reduce the AP cost of your next action against the same target by 1 until the start of your next turn.
- reduce the vigor cost of your next action against the same target by 1 until the start of your next turn.
- increase the duration of the ability/power/spell by 50% (rounded up).
- increase the range of the ability/power/spell by 50% (rounded up).
- increase the jump distance, climbing/swim speed, etc. by 25% (rounded up).

### Spend 2 additional successes to:

- add +2 CD to the attack/ability/spell’s effect (if it uses a CD as part of the original description).
- reduce the vigor cost of your next action against the same target by 2 until the start of your next turn.
- reduce the vigor cost of your next action against the same target by 1 until the start of your next turn.
- double the duration of the ability/power/spell.
- double the range of the ability/power/spell.
- increase the jump distance, climbing/swim speed, etc. by 50% (rounded up).
- gain resistance to the damage type prompting your CR until the end of your next turn.
- impart vulnerability to the target of the damage type of your attack until the start of your next turn.

### Spend 3 or more additional successes to:

- add +3 CD to the attack/ability/spell’s effect (if it uses a CD as part of the original description).



add 1 CD to your BDP of the attack or spell.  
reduce the vigor cost of your next action against the same target by 2 until the start of your next turn.  
reduce the AP cost of your next action against the same target by 2 until the start of your next turn.  
recover the vigor cost of the action you just took.  
triple the duration of the ability/power/spell.  
triple the range of the ability/power/spell.  
double the jump distance, climbing/swim speed, etc.

## GLOSSARY

**+XdY:** The amount and type of bonus you apply to your Challenge roll. That is, “+2d6” means you add 2 six-sided dice to your pool when rolling your dice pool.

**AP:** Action Points. Each action you want to perform on your turn costs action points. You are assigned a number of AP, which reset at the start of every round.

**AP Pool:** Action Point Pool. The total number of action points available to you at the start of each of your turns in which to perform actions.

**Arcane Spell Pool (ASP):** The type and number of dice used when casting spells.

**Bonus Damage Pool (BDP):** The number and type of die used in your bonus damage pool.

**CD:** Core die. Your vigor and weapon damage is based off of this die. See *How to Play* for further explanation.

**Circle:** A general level of skill and power of your character. A 4th Circle PC will be more experienced than a 1st Circle PC.

**CR:** Challenge Roll. Any time you attempt a task, it will need to beat the contested roll. This is called a “Challenge.”

**DEF:** Defense rating. Your DEF roll corresponds to the TCN the opponent needs to beat in order to successfully hit you.

**Dice Pool:** The total number and type of dice you use when making Challenge rolls.

**DR:** Damage reduction. For each point of DR you have, reduce damage from physical attacks (mundane and magical) by that amount.

**PD:** Proficiency Dice. The die type you use in your dice pool based on proficiency.

**SL:** Skill level. This value tells you what dice you use whenever you are making a Challenge Roll.

**TCN:** Target challenge number = the number rolled based on the skill level. I.e., if the difficulty of what you’re trying to do gives a dice pool of 3d8, and the highest value is 6, then the TCN = 6.

**Weapon Dice Pool WDP:** Weapon Dice Pool. The number of dice of the weapon type you are using to determine damage. After rolling your WDP, you choose which die to use for damage.

## “YOU”

Often in this guide, you will read the reference to “you.” This is shorthand for “your character.” Naturally, you would not be under the effect of an imaginary factor in the game, but your character would be! Thus when you read this manual, you are reading it from the perspective of your character, and not you as the player.

# GAME MECHANICS

The rules described in this section are here for guideline purposes only.

You will likely run into a scenario during the game where a specific rule does not apply. In these cases, use the guidelines and rules you have to devise a fair solution. This may be a narrative solution where no dice are rolled, or it might be a solution where the GM decides a Challenge roll is needed.

The important thing to remember is that the goal is to have fun. Imagination and creative thinking should be rewarded! If something sounds cool or fun, then allow it!

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## *Example of Mechanical and Narrative Solutions*

*GM: The door to the tavern bursts open and several brutish orcs rush in, wicked grins on their pig-like faces and rusted axes raised!*

*Hagar the Barbarian: I'm going to flip the table, forcing them to go around.*

*GM: Ok. It's a long and heavy table, and made of thick oak. I'm to ask you to make a Power check against a TCN of 5 to see if you can flip it. (Mechanical solution).*

*Hagar, rolls his dice pool for Power and his highest dice is a 7: "I got a 7, so, I make it."*

*GM: OK, the table flips over on its side, spilling the contents that were on it all over the floor in front of you.*

*Raven the Expert: I'm upstairs on the balcony, so I'd like to leap to the chandelier, swing over, and drop behind the orcs, stabbing one with my sword as I land!*

*GM: That sounds like a tough maneuver, and normally I'd say it takes all of your AP to swing on the chandelier, but it also sounds really cool!*

*I can see how you might have the opportunity to bring your sword down as you land. You're very acrobatic and I love your idea, so I'm going to say you are able to do that maneuver. (Narrative solution). Make your attack roll when you land, at a +2 bonus since you are behind the orc.*

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# FOUNDATIONS OF THE GAME

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Interaction, Exploration, and Combat make up the three foundations of the game. Depending on your preferences, you may spend most of your time in one of the three more than the others. That's OK. The point of the game is to have fun and don't let any particular rule get in the way.

## Interaction Foundation

The vast majority of actual role-playing falls under this foundation, as it covers the interactions one PC may have with another or with NPCs. Some sessions may almost exclusively fall in the interaction foundation as groups of PCs interact with various NPCs to solve a mystery or interacts with a dubious noble.

## Exploration Foundation

This segment of the game focuses on movement and exploring. Traveling through fetid swamps, icy mountain passes, or musky dungeons all are parts of the Exploration foundation.

## Combat Foundation

The most used foundation for most gaming tables, the combat foundation consists of the actual combat encounters and is the segment where violent means are used to overcome challenges and opponents.

## BOXCARS!

If it is mathematically impossible for you to beat a TCN before anyone rolls their dice pools, you can invoke this rule. Roll 2d6, and if both dice come up as 6s, you succeed! Note that this rule only applies if the GM is using the Take Half rule above, because if the GM is rolling, there is always an opportunity (even very slim) that you might succeed.

## WILLFULLY FAILING AN ABILITY CHECK

Anyone can willfully choose to fail an ability check without any roll or check needed.

## TRADING IN

Your dice pool is the collection of dice that you use for your Challenge Rolls. This pool may at times contain several dice depending on the various modifiers you may apply to it. In alignment with the design philosophy of "every resource can be used in multiple ways", you have the option of flexibility with how you use your dice pool.

At any point, you can trade in two of the same type of dice to add one dice of a die type higher than those you traded in. Thus, if your dice pool included 3d8, you could trade in two 8-sided dice for one 10-sided dice, making your dice pool 1d8+1d10. You must declare this before you roll your dice pool. You cannot trade d20s, as they are the highest die type in a dice pool.

Conversely, you can trade down, turning one die into two die of the next lowest step. I.e., you could trade in 1d20 to get 2d12.

## ACTION POINTS

Actions Points (AP) are what drives your actions during your turn, and in some cases, outside of your turn. Everything you do during an encounter costs Action Points unless it is designated as a **free action**. Every other action will cost a certain amount of points that you deduct from your AP pool when you complete them. Left over AP remain until the start of your next turn, when you recover spent Action Points as well. Typically this means you start with a fresh full AP pool at the start of every one of your turns.

Some actions, called **responses**, also take a varying amount of AP, but can be used outside of your turn. Most responses can only be done if something triggers them, unless explicitly specified otherwise. For example, a sorcerer might use their response to cast

the *counterspell* spell as a response to seeing an enemy casting a spell. Like all actions, you must have available AP in your pool to afford the cost. If you do not have enough AP in your pool, you cannot do the response. Regardless of your AP, you can only use one response per round.

If a response does not tell you what the triggering scenario is, then you can use the response at any time during the round.

If you do not have enough action points in your **maximum** pool to do an action and it's the only action you want to attempt, you can still do it as long as the action isn't double your total pool, but you will go last in the round after everyone else and can do nothing else in that round. If it does more than double your total pool, you don't complete it until the end of the following round, and again as long as you do not perform any other actions.

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*For example, if you only have 8 AP in your pool but donning heavy armor costs 10 points, you can complete putting it on at the end of the round as long as you take no other actions that round.*

*If your total AP was 4, then the 10 points needed is more than double your total, so you wouldn't complete putting on your armor until the end of the following round, as long as you weren't doing anything else.*

*Note that this rule is only if your Maximum AP pool isn't enough to do the action, not your current pool. You couldn't spend 5 AP, leaving 2, and then get an extra attack costing 3 AP until you refreshed your AP pool.*

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Free actions include things that are very quick to resolve, such as dropping an item or weapon, shouting a few-word phrase, etc. Other common actions and the AP cost is defined below:

Action	Point Cost
Aiming	4
Attacking with a heavy rated weapon	5
Attacking with a light rated weapon	3
Attacking with a medium rated weapon	4
Casting a spell	varies
Combat Maneuver (trip, disarm, etc.)	varies
Disarming a trap	6
Disengaging	4
Dodging	6
Doffing heavy armor	8
Doffing light armor	2
Doffing medium armor	4
Donning heavy armor	10
Donning light armor	4
Donning medium armor	6
Drinking a potion	4
Flipping a table	5
Loading a crossbow	3
Picking a lock	5
Picking up or pulling out a weapon	3
Reading a scroll	6
Speaking 5 words	1
Throwing an object (other than weapon)	4
Tossing a rope	3

# STATUS

Often your character might be affected by a status. There are three types of statuses:

**Situational** (blinded, deafened, restrained, poisoned, glamourous, etc.)

**Character** (background, ancestral, profession, etc.)

**Environmental** (muddy, snowstorm, gas, heat, etc.)

Some statuses are beneficial, while others are detrimental. If you are under the influence of a status, you will apply the status impacts until the status ends. These will be explained in greater detail under the specific status description. Multiple statuses of the same type cannot stack. Thus you couldn't have a poisoned status from one factor, and then get another poisoned status on top of that existing one until the first is ended.

Status	Description
Blinded	You can't see and fail any ability check that requires sight. Your DEF decreases by 4, and your attack rolls have a -2 PD penalty.
Cursed	You are under the effects of a curse. The results vary depending on the specific nature of the curse.
Deafened	You can't hear and automatically fail any ability check that requires hearing.
Difficult Terrain	Twice the AP cost to move the same distance. -1 PD penalty to all Physical ability checks.
Fatigued	Your AP pool is reduced by half (rounded up).
Frightened	You have a -2 PD penalty on ability checks and attack rolls.
Glamourous	You can't attack or target the creature that glamourous you with harmful abilities or effects. The charmer has a +1d20 bonus on any Presence checks against the charmed.
Invisible	Invisible creatures gain a +4 bonus to their DEF against melee attacks, and +6 DEF bonus to ranged attacks.
Incapacitated/Paralyzed	You can't take any actions or responses. Attack Challenge Rolls against you gain a +1d20 bonus and if successful, are considered critical successes.
Petrified	You are made from stone, and cannot move or take actions. You are not aware of your surroundings. Any damage to your statue form will carry over to your fleshy form if a <i>stone to flesh</i> spell revives you.
Poisoned/Diseased	Your AP pool is reduced by 2, and you suffer a -1 PD penalty on all Challenge rolls.
Prone	You gain a +2 DEF bonus against ranged attacks, but a -2 DEF penalty against melee attacks. It costs 3 AP to stand from prone.
Restrained	You cannot move or cast spells. Any attacks you make are at a -3 PD penalty while attacks against you are at a +3 PD bonus.
Stunned	You can't take any actions or responses. Attack Challenge Rolls against you gain a +2d20 bonus.
Winded	You can use desperation traits.

## VITALITY, VIGOR, AND DEATH

**Vigor:** Vigor represents your staying power in the fight and overall ability to keep pushing yourself once taxed physically and mentally. It is based on a Core Die (CD) and Physical modifier.

Starting vigor = the maximum value of your CD. When you spend XP on Vigor, you roll your CD and add that to your previous maximum total. This becomes your new maximum. Your vigor can never exceed this amount unless explicitly specified.

If your vigor drops to zero or below, you become *winded* and gain a desperation point. You also start with a bonus vigor equal to your Physical modifier, and each time you buy a new vigor increase, you also increase it by an amount equal to your current Physical modifier.

**Vitality:** Vitality is your actual life energy, and is determined and increased in the same way vigor is. If your vitality reaches zero or below, you are unconscious for up to a number of rounds equal to your Physical modifier. At the end of this time, you perish.

### Winded

If your vigor drops to half or less, you become *winded*. While *winded*, you are able to spend your desperation points as long as you are in a *winded* status. You suffer a -1 penalty to your AP pool if *winded*.

## Massive Damage

If you suffer an amount of damage from one source in a single round that is more than your maximum total vitality, you instantly perish.

## Sacrifice

As a free action during your turn, you may sacrifice 1 CD (per Circle) of vitality to recover a like amount of vigor, up to your maximum. Take care however, as if your vitality goes to zero or less, you become unconscious and may perish soon!

## RECOVERING VIGOR AND VITALITY

There are several ways you can recover vigor and vitality, many of them through abilities, magic, or enchanted items. You may also recover them through natural rest, as described in the *Resting* section of this book.

## Using vigor

At any time, you can use your vigor to amplify an action or adjust a scenario. You must have enough vigor currently to meet the cost before invoking the benefit. Several profession abilities use vigor, but other generic examples include:

### Circle 1:

- Grant a bonus level die = 1 vigor for each bonus die level, up to your Circle.
- Increase movement = 1 vigor for every 5 feet, up to your Circle.
- Increase damage = spend 5 vigor to add 1 CD to your BDP on your next attack.
- Gain Damage Reduction (DR) of 1 for every 5 vigor spent until the end of your next turn.

### Circle 2:

- Recover a spent ability = 5 vigor per Circle of the ability.

### Circle 3:

- Grant an ally you can see within 50 feet the option of using one of your Profession Circle abilities = 25 vigor

### Circle 4:

- Spend a response costing 1 AP to nullify any one attack, spell, or effect that impacts you = 30 vigor.

Example: Bob has 12 vigor and wants to give himself a +3 bonus level to a Challenge Roll (+1d10). That leaves him with 9 vigor. On his next turn, he would like to recover a spent Circle 2 ability but does not have at least 10 current vigor, so he cannot until he recovers additional vigor.

## DESPERATION POINTS

Every time your **vigor is reduced to half** of your maximum and again when it hits zero or below, you acquire a Desperation Point. Desperation Points are used to fuel Desperation Traits, and can only be used if you are in a *winded* status. Think of it like the fight is going really hard, you're beaten down, and in desperation, you are able to tap into resources to achieve extraordinary tasks. Each time you use a Desperation Trait, you spend one Desperation Point. After you complete a rest, your desperation points are reduced to zero regardless of how many you may have had.

Using a Desperation Point does not cost AP; they are free actions that can be taken on your turn, but no more than one trait can be used per round. Desperation Traits include the following:

**Damage Reduction:** Gain Damage Reduction of 1 point per Circle until the end of your next turn.

**Burst:** Increase your movement rate by 20 feet until the end of your next turn.

**Focus:** Gain a +1 PD when you attempt any Challenge roll.

**Recovery:** End a negative status on you.

**Arcane Boost:** Boosting spells costs one less vigor per boost effect.

**Desperate Strike:** Gain a bonus CD per your Circle Level. Apply this as separate additional damage to an attack roll you have successfully landed. Use this maneuver after landing the attack.

# HEROIC POINTS

**Heroic Points (HP)** may be given by the GM for things like great role-playing, participation, cool ideas, epic wins, or anything else that your table finds worthy. Use HPs to reroll your die pool, for example. You can also spend a HP at any time to recover your vigor or vitality by 1 CD per Circle you are in, or to force an opponent to reroll their dice pool or damage.

**Villain Points** are similar to heroic points, only they are used by evil creatures and monsters. Much like HP, the GM can use them to reroll dice pools or to force a player to reroll one of their dice pools!

## ROLE-PLAYING (INTERACTING)

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Before delving into the dungeons, slaying the monsters, and taking the treasure, you must first gain the quest. This is the **interaction foundation**. Whether in a tavern listening to rumors or a grand quest given by a wealthy noble or monarch, the role-playing happens as the first thing in most RPGs the minute character generation is done.

There are very few rules or guidelines for this foundation of the game. Nor should there be. In its most basic form, it's simply playing pretend or theater, which varies from one person to the next with how comfortable they are and how invested they want to be in their characters' personalities.

Some guidelines, however, almost always fall under using an ability check to resolve. It is encouraged that you role-play scenarios with your players and let things resolve that way organically. If that is not possible, or preferred, use the ability check system to resolve any challenges. The example above with Hagar is a perfect example of using a rule to resolve a challenge in the Interaction Foundation.

When role-playing, it helps to do the following:

- Describe your character's attitude and behavior
- Pay attention to their intent and demeanor as others would perceive it
- Provide as much embellishment as you like and are comfortable with

## REACTIONS

Turning the corner of a dank and musty dungeon passage, you find yourself face to face with a group of goblins. You stare at each other for just a moment.

What happens? How do you react? How do they react? In most cases, this can simply be handled via role playing the situation out, or one side will immediately attempt to be hostile (most parties seem to want to fight first and ask questions later it seems). But combat doesn't always have to be the foregone conclusion.

The table below is a quick way to determine how the NPCs/Monsters react to the party based on a predispositioned attitude. For example, a group of goblins in their lair suddenly finding intruders will most likely be initially hostile.

Die Roll (d10)	Initially Hostile	Initially Neutral	Initially Friendly
1-5	Violent	Neutral	Trusting
6-7	Hostile	Wary	Amicable
8-9	Wary	Friendly	Neutral
10	Neutral	Hostile	Wary

## EXPLORING

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Once your players have their goal, like rumors of a secret treasure hidden deep within a lost jungle dungeon, they need to get there. And once there, they need to explore the dungeon. This is handled in the **Exploration Foundation**.

The following rules and guidelines assist you in resolving challenges that may occur within this foundation.

# TIME

**Time** is measured differently, depending on if the party is exploring a ruin, engaged in combat, or traveling overland. While exploring ruins or dungeons, time is measured in minutes. While traveling overland, it is measured in hours. In combat, however, time is measured in rounds.

Minutes and hours are self-explanatory. A **Round** is the time it takes for all participants of the combat encounter to resolve their actions, and accounts for roughly 6 seconds.

# MOVEMENT

Every creature has a **speed rating**. This is the number of feet your character may move on their turn for each AP they spend. For most humanoids, the rate is 10 or 15 feet for every AP spent, but this may change or vary depending on creature type. Out of combat, the creature can move up to 30x its movement rate per minute, or 1x its rate in miles per day on even flat terrain.

You can **climb** or **swim** at a rate of 1/4 of your speed rating, rounded up, unless you have a specific climb or swim speed stated. Thus, if your speed is 15 feet per AP, then your climb and swim speed is 4 feet per AP spent.

**Difficult terrain** is that terrain that slows movement down to one-half of normal. This may be from deep snow, loose shale, thick undergrowth, or other scenarios the GM determines.

You can perform a **long jump** equal to 10 feet plus twice your Power modifier without needing to make an ability check roll. Jumping costs 2 AP. Suppose you are encumbered or trying to jump an extra distance beyond that. In that case, your GM may assign a TCN number for you to try to beat to succeed.

You can **high jump** up to 5 feet plus your Power modifier.

You can **hold your breath** equal to your Endurance modifier in minutes (minimum of 30 seconds). After this time has passed, you become unconscious and begin dying. Unless you are stabilized and gain access to air by the start of your next turn, you perish from suffocation.

When attempting to **move stealthy**, you must move at half your movement speed or less and make a Agility ability check, adding any relevant modifiers. The result from this Challenge roll is the TCN value any creature attempting to find you must beat to detect you, using its perception (Intuition) roll. You can attempt to be stealthy as long as no creature you want to hide from can see you when you make an attempt and you have appropriate cover and/or concealment. You can't just hide in the middle of an empty room; you need something to hide in or behind, such as deep shadows, a large rock, etc.

Attempting any attack or casting a spell reveals you, unless otherwise noted. Creatures that aren't actively searching still have a chance to detect you. Some creatures, such as many beasts, will have a Detect trait that identifies the TCN number they will automatically succeed at detection with.

---

*For Example, Raven wants to move stealthily while exploring a dungeon. She rolls her PD pool resulting in a 6. Any creature attempting to discover her needs to make an Intuition ability check against a TCN of 6.*

*A badger has a Detect trait of 7 out to 30 feet. Because 7 is higher than Raven's 6, if Raven comes within 30 feet of the badger, she is automatically detected even if the badger isn't actively searching for her.*

---

## Moving Through Creatures

Unless you have a specific trait or maneuver, you cannot move through a space that is occupied by a creature unless you are two sizes smaller than the creature in the space.

Thus, if you are a small-sized creature, you are allowed to move through the space of a large-sized or bigger creature, but cannot for medium-sized or smaller creatures. If you end your movement in the same space as a creature, that creature gains a +2 PD bonus to its attack Challenge Rolls against you.

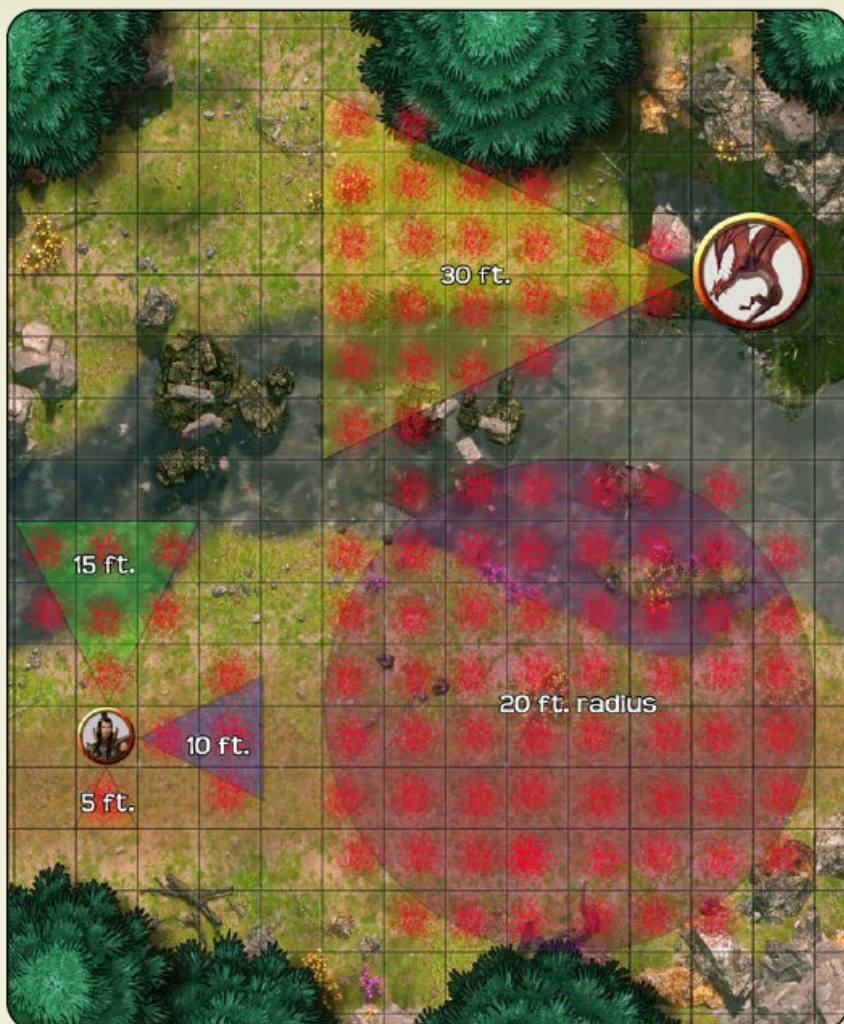


## Using a Grid

Each square typically represents 5 feet when using a grid or battle map. Thus, if you spend 2 AP to move 30 feet, you can move 6 squares, which may be diagonal unless a corner or tree fills the space.

### USING A GRID

Each square represents 5 feet on a typical grid. Moving diagonally is also 5 feet. Yes, math nerds, the Pythagorean Theorem would say otherwise, but for simplicity of play, just roll with it.



There are two ways to calculate which creatures are impacted by an area of effect spell or ability. If you are not using a grid, then any creature touched by spell or effect will be impacted.

If you are using a grid, then any square that has the spell or effect passing through it will be impacted.

Reference the image to the left as an illustration of this in play.

## Overland Movement Table

Base Speed Rate	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Miles per day, road, water (on a boat)	5	7	10	13	15	17	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
Miles per day, flat grassland	3	5	7	10	12	15	17	22	27	31	35	40	45
Miles per day, gentle hills	2	3	5	7	9	12	15	18	20	23	26	30	33
Miles per day, forest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	11	13	15	17	19
Miles per day, heavy forest/moderate snow	.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Miles per day, badlands/hills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	11	13	15	17	19
Miles per day, deep snow/swamp	.25	.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6
Miles per day, mountains	.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Miles per day, treacherous mountains*	.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

\* *treacherous mountains* includes one or more of the following in addition to typical mountain travel: very narrow and steep trail, strong winds in passes, deep snow, or potential falling rocks.

## Sea Vessel

Various waterborne vessels will have the following base movement rates, assuming a full crew:

Vessel	Speed	Hull Points	Crew Needed	Length
Barge	5	50	2	30 feet
Canoe	10	15	1	15 feet
Caravel	50	300	30-50	75 feet
Cog	30	200	20	60 feet
Dromon	20	400	200	100 feet
Galleon	40	1000	200-400	150 feet
Kayak	15	10	1	10 feet
Longship	40	200	10-20	70 feet
Raft	10	25	1	20 feet
Rowboat	10	35	1	15 feet

If hull points are reduced to half or less, the movement rate is reduced by half. If hull points are reduced to zero or less, the vessel sinks.

## Aerial Movement

Many creatures, and a few spell effects and magic items, have a fly speed. As a general rule, movement in-flight follows the same movement speeds as inland, just in all dimensions. Thus, a creature with a flying speed of 20 feet can move 20 feet in any direction while flying for 1 AP. If a creature has both land and aerial speed, they can split them up appropriately. For example, if a creature has a land movement rate of 15 feet, and a flying speed of 30 feet, it can spend 1 AP to move 15 feet on the ground then another 1 AP to fly 30 feet.

Note that atmospheric factors can impact aerial movement. In strong winds, the movement rate is reduced by half. In a blizzard or severe storm, the rate is reduced to 10%. And in hurricane strength winds, flight is impossible.

## Encumbrance

### (Optional Rule)

For most of you, there doesn't need to be a hard or fast rule around encumbrance, and you can make a ruling based on common sense as to when a PC becomes encumbered. A PC carrying 500 pounds of treasure? Probably not likely or realistic. In many games, encumbrance rules are detailed, complex, and slow the game down. If you prefer not to deal with encumbrance rules, feel free to use your best judgment.

For those who would like guidelines while still keeping it fairly simple, the below rule will help:

Every PC can carry 50 pounds of gear or equipment without becoming **encumbered**. For every Physical modifier, an additional 50 pounds is added. Thus, a PC with a Physical modifier of 2 can carry up to 150 pounds without becoming encumbered.

While encumbered, your AP pool is reduced by half. This reduction lasts as long as you are in the encumbered status. The following table is a guideline as the general weight of items:

Item	Weight (in lbs.)
Arrow	8 = 1 lb.
Boots	2 lbs.
Clothing	2 lbs.
Coin	50 coins = 1 lb.
Flask of oil/water	1 lbs.
Heavy Armor	60 lbs.
Heavy Shield	25 lbs.
Heavy Weapon	8 lbs.
Light Armor	25 lbs.
Light Shield	5 lbs.
Light Weapon	2 lbs.
Medical kit	5 lbs.
Medium Armor	45 lbs.
Medium Shield	10 lbs.
Medium Weapon	4 lbs.
Rations, 1 week	25 lbs.
Rope, 50 ft.	10 lbs.

For ease of play, assume a pack with typical gear weighs 40 lbs. rather than adding it all up separately.

## Becoming Lost

It may be likely that the party will become lost while traveling the wilderness if they deviate from an established road or path. If not following a clearly defined route, have one player make an Intuition ability check every day of travel against a TCN of 1d12. A failed check means they have become lost and have instead traveled in a random direction (if using a hex map, have them move to a random hex and do not tell them which direction they went, only describe the terrain they have entered). The TCN can be modified by the following scenarios, which is cumulative:

Lost Table	
Scenario	TCN modifier
Adverse weather, moderate	+1d10
Adverse weather, severe	+1d12
For every week of sustained travel	+1d8
Landscape is the same, such as a desert or ocean	+1d20
Party has a map	PC gains +1d20 bonus
Sky mostly obscured (from sun or stars)	+1d8
There are clear landmarks	PC gains +1d12 bonus

## VISION

**Vision** is essential when adventuring. Lightly obscured areas, such as dim light, light foliage, or intermittent mist imparts a -2 penalty to all Intuition perception checks that rely on sight. Heavily obscured areas, such as darkness, dense fog, or thick foliage blocks vision completely. A creature in a heavily obscured area is effectively blinded (see *Statutes*).

**Bright light** grants normal vision to most creatures. This includes sunlight, cloudy or even gloomy days, torch and lantern light within the radius, and some spells can generate bright light.

**Dim light** creates shadows and is considered lightly obscured. It typically includes the boundaries between bright light and darkness, such as the edge of a torch's light, moonlight, or twilight.

**Darkness** creates a heavily obscured area, and most creatures cannot see anything unless they have night vision.

A creature with **blindsense** "sees" its surroundings by sensing vibrations or echolocation, and does not rely on traditional sight. Darkness has no effect on limiting the blindsense of these creatures.

**Night vision** is a trait of many creatures, particularly those who live underground. Creatures with night vision can see in darkness as if it were dim light and dim light as if it were bright light up to their defined radius. Note that night vision is only in shades of grey; color is not discerned.

## RESTING

Every adventurer must rest sometime. The game has two types of rests: **breathers** and **rests**.

A **breather** is a period of downtime lasting 10 minutes. While engaging in a breather, you cannot do any strenuous activities such as combat. After completing a breather, you recover some vigor as you catch your breath and recover. You can only take two breathers between rests.

The amount of vigor recovered equals one roll of your CD type per Circle + your Physical modifier, up to but not exceeding your maximum vigor total.

For example, Raven is a 2nd Circle operator with a Physical score of 1. *After completing a breather, she would recover up to  $2d8+1$  vigor. She rolls a 4 and a 3 on the d8, resulting in 8. However, she is only 5 vigor below her maximum total, so she only gains the 5 to bring her back to maximum.*

**Rests** require at least eight hours of uninterrupted rest, with six of those hours sleeping. When completing a rest, the character recovers all lost vigor and 50% of their maximum vitality (if applicable). Any accrued desperation points are lost. Only one rest per 24 hours is allowed to gain these benefits.

# COMBAT

The third foundation is Combat. During gameplay, combat has the most variation of actions and abilities that are impacted by random chance. This section provides those rules and guidelines to help resolve a combat encounter.

**Combat Order** is the mechanic you use to determine the order of the fight—who goes first, who goes last, and everyone else in between. At the start of the combat encounter, each participant rolls a d10 and adds any modifiers that might apply to that roll. The players and GM then organize all the participants from lowest to highest. The lowest result is set as the baseline. The next highest result chooses if they want to go before or after the baseline. The next highest result chooses where they want to go in the order, and so on until all participants have chosen. Combat order is rolled only at the start of the encounter, it is not rolled at the start of every round. Keep the same order from round to round.

If a creature enters combat after it has already begun (reinforcements coming later, etc.), they will enter the combat order last. If they have any modifiers or bonuses to their combat order, they can move up that number of spots if they wish.

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*It is highly recommended to use playing cards or other pieces of paper with numbers on them to keep track of the combat order.*

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**During your turn**, you can perform several actions, including moving and attacking. These actions are described under the **Action Points** section above.



# BATTLEFIELD POSITIONS AND SURPRISE

Several scenarios may grant a bonus to an attack roll. These include but are not limited to surprising an opponent, attacking from behind, and attacking an opponent who was knocked prone.

The GM will determine any additional scenarios that may grant modifiers. A surprised creature cannot attack the opponent who surprised it in that round even if it hasn't taken its turn yet.

Target's Situation	Attacker's Dice Pool Bonus*
Surprised	+1 category**
Flanked	+1
Attacked from Behind	+2

\* The Attacker's Dice Pool Bonus is the number of dice (PD or NPD) added to your dice pool.

\*\* When attacking with surprise, increase your die type by one category. I.e., d6s become d8s, etc. If you already have d20s, add 2d20 to your pool.

# CREATURE SIZE

Each creature takes up a certain amount of space on the battle map. The following size categories show how much space each creature takes up:

Size	Space	Example
Tiny	2 ½ by 2 ½ feet	Snake, sprite
Small	5 by 5 feet	Giant rat, goblin
Medium	5 by 5 feet	Human, wolf
Large	10 by 10 feet	Ogre, horse
Huge	15 by 15 feet	Triceratops, young dragon
Gargantuan	20 by 20 feet or larger	Kraken, ancient dragon



# COMBAT ATTACKS

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In a broad sense, an action you take to target a creature is considered an attack. **Melee attacks** include those with a weapon, object, spell delivered by touch, or unarmed blow.

Most creatures have a five-foot range when attacking with a melee attack unless otherwise specified. Unless otherwise noted, all **unarmed attacks** inflict 1 + Physical modifier damage.

**Ranged attacks** are those made from a distance, either with a thrown weapon, a ranged weapon like a bow, or a ranged spell. The range at which these attacks are effective depends on the attack used and will be described under that specific weapon or spell.

**Opportunity attacks** are those against a creature leaving your melee range and who has not taken the **disengage** action first. Suppose an opponent leaves your melee reach without taking the disengage action. In that case, you can get a free one-time attack upon it with your equipped melee weapon.

Opportunity attacks use a response with an AP cost of 2. If you do not have enough AP at the time of the withdraw, you cannot perform an Opportunity attack.

---

*For example, Raven is fighting two orcs. She kills one on her turn and has 2 AP left unused, and on the orc's turn, it decides to take a swipe with its dagger before fleeing. The orc misses its attack and moves away from Raven. Since it did not take the disengage action on its turn, Raven gets a free attack of opportunity against it as it runs away if she chooses to spend her response in doing so.*

---

Sometimes you may not want to attack with a weapon but want to **grapple** or strike with an **unarmed** attack. This will be explained under the *Unarmed Maneuvers* section.

Many PCs choose to wield a weapon in each hand when fighting instead of using a shield. Some rules must be followed if you choose to engage in **two-weapon fighting**. The first is that both weapons must be one-handed. Second, the off-hand weapon must be light-rated. If you are dual-wielding, you reduce the AP cost to attack with the off-hand weapon by 1 during your turn.

if you choose to **dodge** on your turn, you gain a +1 PD bonus to your DEF per Circle.

## DAMAGE TYPES

The following is a list of the types of damage:

- Physical (blunt, piercing, slashing)
- Psychic
- Heat
- Necrotic
- Divine
- Cold
- Electrical
- Corrosion
- Poison
- Force

Some creatures may be **resistant** or even **immune** to certain types of damage! For example, swamp dragons are immune to corrosive damage, and skeletons are resistant to piercing damage. If a creature is resistant, then the damage die type is reduced by one category. Thus, if WDP is normally 2d8 heat damage and the target is resistant, then the WDP is 2d6 damage instead. Immunity nullifies all damage of that type of course.

If there is more than one type of damage in an attack, then you reduce the damage die type by one category for each type of damage the target is resistant to.

If the creature has an immunity and you're attacking with multiple damage types, then you do the above *and* reduce your WDP by one die for each immunity it has.

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*For example, if you're attacking a creature with a rune spell that inflicts corrosive, electrical, and heat damage with a WDP of 3d10, and that creature is resistant to heat and corrosive damage, then your WDP die type is reduced two steps. You would roll a WDP of 3d6 instead.*

*Let's say you're attacking with the same spell against a creature that is immune to heat and corrosive damage. Instead of 3d8, your WDP becomes 1d6.*

---

Other creatures have **vulnerability** to a certain damage type. If a creature is vulnerable to a damage type, they will suffer double normal damage from that type.

## DEFENSE AND DAMAGE REDUCTION

There are two kinds of protection that will typically apply to you when you are being attacked: **Defense (DEF)** and **Damage Reduction (DR)**.

DEF tells you what dice pool you would use when defending against an attack, and is based on your shield value and any magical item or effect you may be under, all added to 1. Thus, if Bob has a medium shield (DEF +2 dice) and his PD is a d8, then his final DEF pool is 3d8.

**Damage reduction** is the number of points of damage that can be ignored from each separate attack that lands. Certain armor, magic, or traits will grant DR.

## DURATIONAL AFFECTS

Oftentimes a spell or ability will have text along the lines of, "...for up to 1 round per Circle level." How long exactly does the affect last? Unless ending early for some reason (dispelled, canceled by the caster, etc.), the affect will last until the end of the turn on the appropriate round of the creature/feature that imposed the effect.

That is, if a sorcerer causes an effect to a target that lasts for 5 rounds, on the fifth round after the spell was cast at the end of the sorcerer's turn, the effect ends.

## TAKING HALF

To help make your life simpler, many things on the GM side of the house will have a Challenge Roll Skill Level (SL) instead of set dice pool. Monsters and my traps or hazards will have a SL assigned to them. This value tells you what dice would be in the pool, and what the "Take Half" value would be if you don't feel like rolling a dice pool.

For example, if a monster has a SL of 5, that means for attack rolls, ability checks, and any spell-like powers would use 2d10 as it's dice pool, or you would just use a 7 as the value if you do not want to roll the pool.

Challenge Roll Skill Chart

Skill Level	Dice Used	Take Half
0	1d6	3
1	2d6	4
2	3d6	5
3	2d8	6
4	3d8	7
5	2d10	7
6	3d10	8
7	2d12	8
8	3d12	9
9	1d20	11
10	2d20	14
11	3d20	16
12	4d20	17

# GM SECTION

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*The following section contains additional rules that are the purview of the Game Master. Players won't need to worry about learning these rules.*

*Please note that this manual does not include a rule for every scenario that could possibly come up in a game. A book of that scope would be several hundred pages long! Instead, the core framework of the rules is contained herein. Every game table plays a bit differently, so a situation might likely occur where you can't find a rule or the given rule doesn't feel right to you.*

*In those cases, you are absolutely empowered to modify or create a rule for that situation that seems fair for you and your players. Hopefully, with the guidelines and rules already established, it will be a relatively easy task for you to get a good idea of how to modify or create your own.*

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## Some Advice

Remember, the most essential aspect of the game is to have fun. As the GM you have several roles: arbitrator, storyteller, and referee. What you are is *not* the opponent of the players. You control those creatures who might oppose the PCs, but there's a difference between a PC and a Player. The best piece of advice I could give a GM (and I've been GMing myself for 40 years) is that you're all there to have fun. I would argue the success of a GM is if the players are having fun with your story.

## HAZARDS

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No dungeon or lost crypt is without its hazards. These include sinister traps, clever puzzles, and animated monstrosities. The most common type of hazard a party might face are traps, ranging from the basic pit trap to more complex traps that have working gears and sadistic ways in which they kill or maim the poor creature who set it off. They also include natural hazards, such as rockslides, lava, gas leaks, etc.

## NATURAL HAZARDS

### Falling

Whether it's a pit trap, a cliff, or a wall, for every 10 feet of distance fallen, 1d6 is rolled for damage.

### Swimming & Drowning

For ease of play, and assuming PCs are exceptional compared to the normal person, it is assumed every adventurer has learned to swim at some point. Treading calm water isn't all that difficult. However, if the water is rough, or if the PC is wearing heavy gear, then it becomes much more challenging.

As a baseline, every PC can swim 5 feet for every 1 AP spent unencumbered. If encumbered, wearing heavy armor, or in turbulent water, you may enforce a Endurance check at the start of their turn against a TCN you find most appropriate for the situation. Failure results in the PC becoming too fatigued and is beginning to drown (see below).



### Sample TCN values

Encumbered/wearing gear	TCN 2d12
Wearing heavy armor	TCN 1d20
Rapids/turbulent water	TCN +1d12
PC has floatation device	+1d20 to PC's DP

Any character who fails their ability check will begin suffocating. As a base rule, a character can hold their breath without impact for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Endurance modifier (minimum 30 seconds).

At the start of its turn after this point, the creature drops to zero hit points and is incapacitated for a number of rounds equal to its Endurance modifier. The creature will remain unconscious until it gains a breath, or dies at the end of the duration.

## Mud/Rock Slides & Avalanches

Traveling the wilderness, especially in harsh conditions, can be dangerous for the party. If a character finds themselves in the path of a mudslide or rock avalanche, they are in dire straits indeed! If caught in a mudslide, the PCs must make a Agility ability check or fall prone, possibly resulting in them being covered by the mud completely and pushed “downriver” of the mud flow. The TCN SL value of this check equals 3 for every foot in depth the mudslide is.

Even with a successful check, they may find themselves knee or waist deep in mud, being completely restrained. If the mudslide is greater than half their height or so, they will automatically be knocked prone and covered with mud. Unless there were precautions made or some other magical prevention, rules for drowning would apply.

As a general rule for falling rocks, each rock the size of a fist or larger that the character would have a risk of being struck by would require the character to make a Agility check against a TCN of the GM's determination. A failed check results in damage being taken depending on the size of the rock:

4-6inch diameter:	1d6 points
7-10 inch diameter:	1d8 points
11-16 inch diameter:	1d10 points
2-3ft diameter:	2d8 points
3-5ft diameter:	3d10 points
5-10ft diameter:	5d10 points
10+ft diameter:	5d20 points

**Avalanches** work in the same way as mudslides, with the exception that PCs have twice as long to breathe before suffering drowning effects.

## Quicksand & Tar Pit

Any creature that manages to find itself in a tar pit or quicksand will find itself begin to sink at a slow rate. The character will sink 1 foot per round unless helped in some manner. Once submerged, the character will suffer the effects of drowning.

## DESECRATED GROUND

When you think of hazards, desecrated ground probably isn't one of those that leap to mind. However, if an area has been desecrated through vile means, it takes on an actual evil taint to it that impacts everything in the area. Typically an area becomes desecrated when something of great evil took place there, such as large-scale sacrifice and demon worshipping, or other forms or extreme brutality, or when the graves of the dead have been repeatedly disturbed.

Any good-aligned creature within a desecrated area will suffer a -2 penalty to all Challenge rolls as long as the area remains desecrated.

## TRAPS

Traps come in many different variations and forms, from pitfalls, log traps, animal traps, trapped locks, or more complex larger traps that may take up an entire room or larger. All traps are meant to either harm intruders or prevent them from continuing on. Some would argue that the impact of traps is just as great, if not greater, than actual monsters in the adventure. No dungeon delver worth their salt would go into a dungeon or monster lair and not expect some sort of trap.

In the table below, typical damage based on the difficulty of the trap is given. Unless otherwise stated, most of the damaging effects of traps can be reduced or avoided with a successful Agility ability check.

Trap Difficulty	WDP
Easy	1d6
Moderate	2d8
Hard	3d10
Very Difficult	3d12
Near Impossible	3d20

**Basic Pit Trap:** This is your garden variety simple pit dug into the ground, often covered up by camouflaging material to hide it. Unsuspecting individuals who step into the trap area will fall through to the depth of the pit. The walls of the pit are generally hewn smooth to prevent someone from easily climbing out. Often these pits are filled with other hazardous materials.

**Crushing Block/Wall Trap:** This trap is most often represented by the walls moving inward, or the ceiling moving downward, to crush whoever is caught in the area. It also includes those traps where the ceiling just releases and falls onto the ground, damaging anything underneath it.

**Gas Trap:** These devious traps are usually built within a chest or other object that the owner doesn't want to be opened. A hidden mechanism will shatter a vial that contains a dangerous gas. Once triggered, the cloud will instantly fill a 10-foot diameter area. Any creature within the area will have to make a Endurance ability check or suffer the effects of the gas. This can vary from poison gas, to hallucinatory gas, to sleeping gas, or anything else the GM desires.

**Poison Needle Trap:** These types of traps are typically hidden within locks or other mechanical devices, such as a single poisoned needle. When sprung, the needle will pierce the person attempting to manipulate the object, and if a Endurance ability check is not made, they will suffer the type of poison's effects.

**Spike Lined Pit Trap:** This is basically a standard pit trap that is lined with sharpened stakes or spikes along the floor.

**Swinging Spiked Trap:** This trap comes in several variations, but they all have in common the basic mechanics. That is a heavy spiked ball, or tree limb, or log that swings down from the side in a spring trap, hitting the creature that triggered it.

**Teleportation Trap:** A very unusual trap, and one rarely encountered due to the challenges in creating it, the teleportation trap will instantly teleport any creature that triggers it to a predetermined area. A particularly devious version of this trap is to have the teleportation trap at the bottom of a long pit, teleporting them back to the top, repeating forever.

## PUZZLES

While puzzles are similar to traps in that they are meant to halt the progression of the party, they generally are not harmful like traps. That doesn't mean they aren't devious or difficult. Puzzles include such things as riddles, visual memorization clues, mechanical puzzles, and optical illusions.

## MONSTROSITIES

Not all hazards are naturally occurring or considered a trap. The horrors of a dungeon include many monstrosities that are better-considered hazards rather than monsters you would combat in a typical fight. These are considered monstrosity hazards and are some of the most feared hazards an adventurer could encounter.

**Sentient slime:** This hazard typically covers a 10-foot square area, often clinging to a ceiling hoping living creatures walk underneath it unnoticed. While sentient, it does not have any actual intelligence; it's slightly more responsive than a predatory plant like a Venus Fly Trap. If any creature walks underneath the slime, it will drop to envelop that creature, using its natural corrosive ability to eat away at the organic tissue of the prey.

The slime will dissolve 2 inches of wood or 1 inch of metal per round (essentially making armor worthless after 1 round). It cannot be brushed away but can be burned or frozen away (the victim also takes the same damage) once it suffers a total of 10 points of damage. A *lesser* or *greater recovery* spell will immediately kill the slime. It is immune to all other forms of attack. The unfortunate victim will turn into a green slime themselves after 1d6+1 rounds have transpired if they do not take action to remove it. The slime can move 10ft per round.

**Poisonous Fungi:** This fungus comes in all shapes and sizes, but one thing that is consistent is that any creature that comes within 10 feet of this “creature” will cause it to expel a cloud of spores. Unless a Endurance ability check is made, the creature will suffer 2d6 poison damage.

**Rot Maggots:** This dungeon horror appears as a normal maggot one would find in any decaying material. However, they have a horrible trait not shared by their lesser cousins—they have an intense desire for fresh blood. As soon as any skin is exposed to a rot maggot, the grub will begin to bore into the body of the poor creature. The maggot travels at one foot per round, tunneling toward the target’s heart. Once the heart is reached, the victim will die. A *lesser recovery* spell will instantly kill any infested grubs, but short of that, unless quick action is taken in that first round, the victim may be forced to view amputation as an option.

**Screeching Fungi:** These are large fungi appearing as mushrooms covered in hollow chambers on their cap. Whenever they sense a creature moving within 15 feet of them, the fungi will begin to contract quickly, and a loud screeching noise will emit from the cavities of their caps.

## POISON, VENOM, AND DISEASE

Adventuring into lost and unexplored locales would be rife with the danger of poison and disease in a normal world, but in a fantasy world, it’s even more problematic. Not only do you have normal poisonous and venomous creatures, and normal ways of contracting a disease, but you’re adding in man-made traps and fantastical creatures and monsters that have venomous or disease-inducing abilities. There are literally hundreds of different types of poison, venom, and disease, but for simplicity of gameplay, they will be categorized into two statuses.

### Poisoned/Diseased Status

If a creature becomes poisoned, it will remain so until a successful Endurance ability check is passed. A new attempt may be made at the start of the poisoned creature’s turns. Three failed attempts in a row result in the creature being poisoned for 24 hours or until cured. A poisoned creature suffers their AP pool being reduced by 2, and it suffers a -1 PD penalty on all Challenge rolls.

A creature that contracts a **disease** will suffer the diseased status in addition to any special effects as described by the disease. TCN 10 or less diseases are treated in the same manner as poisons. TCN 11 or higher diseases also reduce the Physical modifier by an additional 1 point and cannot be cured outside of magical means.

### Poison/Venom Damage

There are many varying degree of deadliness of poisons and venoms in our real world: from contact poison to neurotoxins. In a fantasy realm, this variety increases exponentially as fantastical creatures exist that may carry poison or be venomous.

Rather than list them all here, reference the below table to get a good idea of the types of poison or venom effects that may impact an unwary or unlucky creature in addition to or a replacement for the poisoned status above.

Rarity	WDP
Common (asp, toadstool)	1d8
Uncommon (scorpion, poisonous frog)	2d8
Rare (giant spider, cyanide)	3d10
Very Rare (manticore stinger)	3d12
Legendary (arch-fiend)	3d20

## MORALE

Few creatures are unaffected by the swings of battle. If the battle is going well, they may be motivated to new heights. If the battle is going very badly, they may be discouraged or even flee in distress!

PCs are controlled by the players, and thus as a general rule will not make morale checks during the course of a combat encounter. It is important for the players to retain this agency. Effects like fear or confusion upon PCs are typically only impactful when forced via magical effects or creature abilities rather than general morale.

For GM controlled creatures, morale may very well have an effect. When and how the GM determines this is largely up to adjudication on the part of the GM, as it really depends on how the battle is going and the type of creature(s) involved. There are simply too many factors to consider to come up with a simple clean rule.

Instead, some general guidelines will be provided based on the table below:

Morale	Scenario	Effect
Exuberant	Clear victory is imminent with little or no loss to your side.	+1 AP, +1 DR, +1 PD to all ability checks.
Encouraged	Your side is doing well with little loss.	+1 AP
Neutral	Neither side seems to have an advantage.	none
Discouraged	Your side is suffering losses	-1 AP
Panic	Your side is suffering major losses	-1 AP. Make a Will ability check (GM determine TCN) at the start of turn or flee for your action.

Note that non-intelligent creatures will either fight to the death, or flee as soon as they suffer more than half of their vitality, depending on the creature's basic instinct (predator vs. prey).

Also note that morale is impacted by the infrequent. That means that if the PCs are frequently in a position with a clear victory with overwhelming success, they will have become used to it and won't benefit from Encouraged or Exuberant states. If there is little challenge, there isn't enough to get encouraged by. Typically positive motivation only comes when you're overcoming a tough challenge.

## AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP)

Experience points are accumulated by the PCs, and when enough are gained, the PC may advance to the next Circle level after finishing a rest. These points are awarded in the following manner:

- Defeating a monster
- Overcoming a challenge
- Creative role-playing or solution finding
- Story advancement award

**Defeating a monster** is when the party has nullified the threat of a creature. This often means defeating it in combat, but may also include finding a way to bypass or avoid the creature. In either case, the XP award can only ever be awarded once.

**Overcoming a challenge** covers many scenarios, and XP rewards are usually reserved for those really special scenarios where the PC does something extraordinary. Simply passing an ability check typically does not warrant XP awards.

**Creative role-playing or solution finding** experience points are awarded where the players do an exceptional job getting into character, or coming up with creative solutions to a problem.

**Story advancement** is an option where you ignore tracking individual experience, but award level advancements at certain points in the adventure or story.

## EXPERIENCE CIRCLES

As you gain experience and meet certain thresholds, you may advance to the next circle. The Circle Table below advises how many XP is needed in order to do this. This table factors in the total XP you have been awarded, regardless if you've spent it or save it.

Thus, if you've been awarded a total of 10 XP in your adventures, and even if you haven't spent all 10 points, your total XP equals 10 which is enough to advance to the 2nd Circle.

Regardless of how many XP you have, you may only advance to the next Circle when you have an opportunity to complete a rest.

When you advance to the next Circle, not only do you get the XP to spend that got you there, but a new tier of abilities for you to choose from is opened up.

## Circle Table

Circle	XP Needed	Title
1st	0	Explorer
2nd	10	Adventurer
3rd	20	Hero
4th	30	Legend

## Completing Your Progression

If you have acquired enough XP to purchase every option from your Specialty, for each additional XP you are awarded, you increase your vitality by one CD.

## STRUCTURES

A stone wall is not the mechanically same as a wooden wall. While in most cases the heroes won't be going around destroying buildings, it is likely at some point that a structure will be either directly or indirectly damaged. Breaking down a barrier, for example. Or an *earthquake* spell.

For simplicity, every structure will have an amount of damage it can take before being destroyed. These are called **Structural Points (SP)**. Note that unlike creatures, which essentially have the same fighting power whether they have 1 vitality or 100 vitality, every point of damage to a structure has a visual effect. If a bridge is brought to half of its SP, it will have pieces hanging off it, the crossing area may be narrower, or the weight allowance might be reduced. The GM will need to use their best judgment on what the impacts are.

The below chart will list out the SP of common types of structures, and if the damage type has an impact. A wooden structure would be more susceptible to fire than stone for example, and thus the modifier might be x2, meaning fire damage inflicts double damage.

Structure	SP	Fire/Elec	Shatter	Acid	Cold
Small wooden bridge	30	x2	-	x2	x 1/2
Large wooden bridge	75	x2	-	x2	x 1/2
Small stone bridge	50	-	x2	-	-
Large stone bridge	150	-	x2	-	-
Hut	35	x2	-	x2	-
Wooden house	75	x2	-	x2	-
Stone House	125	-	x2	-	-
Brick House	100	-	x3	x2	-
Large wooden building	100	x2	-	-	-
Large stone building	200	-	x2	-	-
Castle wall, 10 ft. section	50	-	x2	-	-
Palisade, 10 ft. section	20	x2	x2	x2	-
Wagon	20	x2	x2	x2	-
Window	5	-	x3	-	x2

## CREATING THE ADVENTURE

The majority of your adventures will take place in one of three settings: wilderness, urban, and dungeon (including keeps and forts). Each has unique features that will need to be fleshed out as you create the adventure, and in many cases, will be tied into each other along the way as the story and plot progress.

The first thing you need to determine is the overall plot of the adventure you are planning. There are many guides available out there, so I will keep this section fairly succinct, and leave that up to better writers than myself. Proper guidance on this topic would

also easily double this manual in size with the wealth of good information out there, so that is another reason I'll leave the details up to you and your additional research that you feel is warranted.

In a nutshell, you need to determine the overall plot, filling in details as you think will be relevant and determined by your preferred play style. Do you like to keep things linear and detailed, or do you like a shared narrative with your players, only having an outline and letting the players also flesh out the story as you go along? Do you want the adventure hooks to be clearly identified and followed, or do you want a sandbox campaign where there are many hooks and the players decide which ones they will follow? These are things that need to be determined straight away.

Once you have that, you can start crafting the adventure itself. Which locals will it occur in? Starting in a town, then going into a forest before culminating in the exploration of a set of ruins? Below are some important factors when determining how you will craft your adventure based upon these three categories.

## Basic Steps to Create the Adventure

1. Choose the setting
2. Draw the maps
3. Place the towns and areas of interest
4. Identify political/ethnically-controlled areas
5. Flesh out additional details
6. Create the encounters
7. Give the players a reason to be where they are

Don't worry so much about the fine details of a plot, worry more about creating situations. When presented with scenarios and situations, the players will often follow their *own* plot.

## URBAN

Most adventures get their start in an urban environment, and many entirely take place in urban environments. These are towns, villages, cities, and immediate surrounding urban areas. Important things to factor in are how large of a settlement you are focusing on, as that determines population density, population demographics, availability of various shops and resources to the players, guild presence, and law enforcement.

### Settlement Population

Village	20-200
Small Town	200-2,500
Large Town	2,500-10,000
City	10,000-25,000
Large City	25,000+

## WILDERNESS

Once the party leaves the city, often they will enter the wilderness. The most diverse of the three categories, wildernesses include settled and non-settled lands of every terrain type, from rolling grasslands to arctic mountains, from ocean sailing to parched deserts. The first and foremost challenge the party will face in the wilderness is travel: how far they can travel, will they get lost, and what happens along the way. Much of this is described above under the movement section.

If getting lost and being attacked by monsters wasn't dangerous enough, the party will also have to face dangers such as exposure or starvation. Adventuring is dangerous indeed! It also explains why guides were/are so important.

The first danger is exposure. This includes all hostile environments, from hot and humid jungles to arctic regions, to parching deserts. For simplicity, a single rule will apply to all of these, even if how you describe it may be different. This is called **fatigue**. If the players are in the arctic, they may encounter hypothermia or frostbite. If in the jungle, they may have contracted a disease. If in the desert, they may face heat stroke, etc.

The basic rule is this: unless the party has taken appropriate measures to be prepared for a particularly hostile environment, for every day they are exposed, each PC will need to make an Endurance ability check against a TCN 6 (which may be modified based on the severity of the climate). Failure means they will have their AP pool reduced by 1.

A new check will need to be made each additional day, where additional failures will result in increases in AP reduction. The PC will need to rest in a comfortable environment for a full day for them to recover and gain 1 AP back for each day rested.

# DUNGEON

Ah, the classic dungeon crawl. In many adventures, this is the final stop of the three foundations. PCs start in a town, travel through the wilderness, and finally find the lost dungeon of what's-his-name to find the treasure and steal...er..."treasure find" it. For purposes of design, "dungeon" is used to describe actual dungeons, as well as lairs, ruins, or individual buildings.

When designing a dungeon, the first thing you need to do is draw it out. Is it a cave complex? A ruined keep? Once that is done, how did it come to be there? Who or what lives in it now? These details need to be fleshed out, and if this is the focal point of your adventure, will take up the most time and paper space. If the PCs are expected to explore it, then you'll want to flesh out every area in detail and make good notes. Place the creatures and individual encounters, and detail how each of them relates to each other.

Note that inhabitants of dungeons rarely just sit in their encounter area and never move. These are living creatures, some intelligent, others driven by instinct. It's your job to figure out how they all work and live together in relative peace. Do rival clans have truces? Are unintelligent monsters walled off by other inhabitants? Just randomly plopping monsters down (as was common in the early days) may work for you if you prefer the dungeonhack experience, but you might have players question how a hill giant got into this tiny room, and why the black jelly didn't kill all of the goblins by now.

## BUILDING THE COMBAT ENCOUNTER

There are three categories of encounter difficulty when designing encounters. Please note these are just guidelines, and you may find that your group of players may find "medium" encounters very easy, or "easy" encounters difficult, depending on their play-style and coordination. You know your group the best, so feel free to adjust as needed.

**Easy** encounters don't put a strain on the PCs resources or put them in real danger.

**Medium** encounters might be risky, and may take up some valued resources, but are typically victorious for the PCs.

**Hard** encounters have a very real risk of things going sideways for the party. It is almost assured that several resources will be spent trying to overcome these. These encounters very well may be deadly to one or more of the PCs.

When designing encounters, have a good mix to keep the game interesting and not predictable. Balancing encounters from a mechanics or rules perspective is very difficult, as party make-up and the make-up of their opponents can vary both in number, and in power. That is, you might end up with a party of 4 PCs with varying XP amounts (or even in difference Circles!) fighting against monsters of varying power.

Because of this, and many other factors that may show up (player experience, environment, surprise, etc.), coming up with a simple encounter balancing formula is near impossible. These are guidelines only, and feel free to use your best judgment and gut feeling to make adjustments you feel are necessary.

The first thing to do is to compare the Circle levels of the party against the **Monster Circle** (MC) of their opponents. The MC will have a designation like "1 Low (1L)". That tells you that the monster would be relatively on par with a PC who is at the low end of the First Circle--someone who hasn't acquired many XP yet. By comparison, a monster with "High 1 (1H)" would be on par with a PC still in the First Circle, but at the high end, with nearly enough experience to reach the Second Circle.

## MIXED BALANCING

Naturally many encounters will include creatures of varying power. It's entirely possible for a party to face one 1H creature along with a few 1L creatures in the same encounter. This is where effective balancing gets tricky.

If the creature's MC matches or is greater than the experience of the PCs, then it's simple to figure out. That would be considered a hard encounter. For everything else, a bit of math is required.

The first step is to give the PCs a designation similar to the MC. Each step of MC equals 1 point. Total up all of the party's values and total all of the creature's values and compare. If the monster's values are equal to or greater than the PC's values, the encounter is hard. If the PC's values are higher than the monsters by 1-25% (rounded up), then it's a medium encounter. If the PC's values are greater than 25% higher than the monster's, then the encounter is easy.

When awarding XP, as a general rule it takes 10 easy encounters, 5 medium encounters, or 2 hard encounters to earn one XP.

*The party consists of four PCs, all in 1st Circle. They have the following XP totals: 6, 5, 5, 4, which puts them all about mid-1st Circle (1M). 1M is the third step, so multiply 3 by each PC (3x4=12 points). They are fighting a 1H and three 1L creatures. The monster totals are 4+2+2+2 = 10 points. The party is higher by 2 points, but is less than 25% higher, making this a medium encounter.*

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## CHOOSE THE SCENARIO

Making the maps, populating the landscape, and fleshing out the dungeon does not an adventure make. Most importantly, you must give the PCs a reason to be there, and reasons to take the adventure hooks. Some common examples include:

- Exploring the Unknown: An unexplored and unknown region exists, and the party is hired to explore and map this area. Perhaps there are rumors of treasure or valuable resources, or maybe the king wants to expand his domain.
- Attacking an Outpost: Enemy creatures have established an outpost too close for comfort. The PCs are hired to wipe out this outpost.
- Clearing Out Ruins: The party had heard of an ancient set of ruins that is now inhabited by chaotic creatures. These creatures need to be cleared out so the ruins can be re-established. Perhaps they are part of the ruins of a city that was recently discovered.
- Visiting a Lost Shrine: Perhaps one of the PCs or something they have been hired to care for is cursed, and they must find an ancient shrine to remove the curse.
- Fulfilling a Quest: The party has been tasked by a local ruler, council member, or noble to accomplish a task. This can be any task, from delivering a package to clearing out monsters, to finding a lost object.
- Escape: The party is pursued, and in the process of escape, they have found themselves in a new unexplored area.
- Rescue: The party has been tasked to rescue prisoners being held by a great evil.
- Magic Portal: The party has been transported through a magic portal to a new land.

## DESIGNING VILLAINS

The key to a great adventure is a great villain. A nemesis that creates the quest for the PC whether they realize or not, who thwarts and challenges the PCs for the duration of the campaign. Designing a memorable villain is a challenging task.

Most villains are evil. Some may be wholly reprehensible; some may have not always been evil but had a tragic backstory. All must have motivations and personalities.

### The Four Categories of Villains

Villains can be broken down into four categories: Big Bad Evil Guy (BBEG), mini-boss/chapter boss, henchmen, and goons.

**BBEG and Mini/Chapter bosses:** Come up with a concept, their motivation, and the relationship it has with others. The BBEG is the final villain at the end of the campaign, the creature how is the mastermind behind the entire adventure. **Mini/Chapter bosses** are those adversaries that work directly for the BBEG, and generally are confronted at the end of side quests, chapters, or when a significant event of the campaign is completed.

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*Example: ZaGatul is an evil necromancer who created an undead army that is sweeping through the area wiping out villages (concept). They were once a sickly wizard who has a great fear of mortality and history of being abused and bullied. Years of relentless study and discovery of lost artifacts has allowed them to reach lich-dom and now they seek revenge on those who harmed them (motivation).*



*ZaGatul's old adventuring ally Markus is still alive but assumes ZaGatul died long ago, and he has two generals whom lead his armies: Blavic and Selene (relationship).*

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**Henchmen and Goons:** Henchmen are NPCs the Chapter bosses might have hired, or otherwise have a short term impact to the adventure. Give them a name, why they were hired, and a statblock and you should be fine. Goons are similar, but even simpler. These are the cannon fodder and lowest ranking troops. Simple stat blocks is all that is needed for these creatures.

## Types of Villains

While the personality of a villain can be described as either psychopath, radical fundamentalist, or redeemable evil, there are types of skills each villain that sets them apart:

**Genius/mastermind.** Classic Lex Luther type of villain. The genius who uses and exploits the system to achieve power and wealth.

**Shadowlord.** This villain keeps to the shadows and never reveals itself. The players most likely won't know who or what it is that is driving the campaign. Secret organizations are a classic example.

**Tyrant.** A classic villain, the tyrant rules with brutal power and ruthlessness to achieve their goals. Demon lords, dictators, and powerful monsters can fit under this type.

**Betrayer.** This villain was once a trusted friend or ally to the cause, but something caused them to betray their allies and take on the mantle of evil.

# GM TRAPS TO AVOID

Many GMs tend to find themselves falling into certain traps of adventure design. None of these traps means you're a bad GM or you did something wrong, as they are natural human traits. Most GMs learn to recognize these only after years of experience, but they are conveniently listed here to help give you and your table a head start!

**Railroading.** One of the most common traps GMs fall into is railroading their players. This most often occurs because you've spent all this time an effort into creating your adventure, that you get tunnel vision on how it should progress. What happens is that you end up applying pressure to the players to do certain actions and to follow certain paths. From a player's perspective, this takes away fun because it takes away agency. A good GM will only give carrots and clues, and be prepared how the players choose to react and progress in their story.

**GM vs. Player.** Another common trap is for the GMs to view the relationship between them and the PCs as adversarial. The GM runs the monsters and opponents, sure. But you should never view the players as your enemy. After all, you have the power to add a million monsters and crush the PCs if you want, so it's not accomplishment for the GM to beat the players. You'll end up with fewer people wanting to play with you. Instead, run their opponents intelligently and fairly, but don't cheer the PCs' demise, and celebrate with the players when they do something cool!

**Ignoring PC Motivations.** You don't have to cater to all of the player's whims, but a good GM will listen and recognize what is motivating for them as a player and for their PC. The players are helping you here! They are giving you ideas to use in your campaign. Find ways to integrate those motivations into the game. Everyone will have more fun!

**Expecting Perfection.** GMing is daunting on its own. Doubly so if you're starting out. Even long time GMs don't always get it right. Allow yourself to be bad before you should expect yourself to be good. Just like any other skill or talent.

**Too Many Players.** We all like to play with all of our friends, but it's important to know your limit. Too many players can bog the game down as other players may end up waiting forever for their turn, and it's very hard to manage as a GM with so many other players there. Know your comfort zone and stick to it.