

PERILOUS WORLDS

WHAT IS THIS

This is a game designed to let you explore perilous fantasy worlds of sword and sorcery, where adventurers embark on dangerous quests and do battle with formidable foes. The theme and core of this game is quite obviously based off of Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson's classic role-playing game and the various iterations of it that followed. Mechanically, the game takes many influences from the works of Vincent Baker, John Harper, Eric Provost, Kirin Robinson, Adam Koebel, Sage LaTorra, Jason Morningstar, Clinton R. Nixon, and Michael Wight.

At its core, the game's adventuring system is largely inspired by World of Dungeons and its predecessors. For combat, Old School Hack served as the primary model for phased rounds and combat zones. Experience is driven by a system derived from The Shadow of Yesterday. The relationships between the adventurers are culled from various Fiasco playsets. The style is of classic dungeon-delving, dragon-fighting, old-school adventure. I'll admit it is mostly constructed with borrowed materials, tweaked and slapped together into a fantasy frankenstein of sorts, but I thought there was enough here to warrant a name and layout.

DUNGEONS AND DINNER TABLES

Perilous Worlds is an "old-school renaissance" role-playing game. It's kind of like a group story-telling game with rules to help facilitate how the events of the story play out, how the world behaves, and how the actions of the main characters effect what happens. You and your friends weave epic tales of bravery and adventure, experiencing the world vicariously through the point of view of the heroes and through the narration provided by everyone playing. This is done via conversation between the players, drawings, descriptions, questions, ideas, and plenty of imagination. Every game is different, so each group essentially gets to experience their own unique, personalized fantasy world.

The game requires one person to take on the role of the Danger Master, who acts as the game's host, helping everyone at the table to interface with the fictional world and the rule systems. It will also need between one and eight people to be the Players who control the protagonists referred to as the Player Characters.

As a player controlling a Player Character (PC), you will take on the role of a brave adventurer, delving into ancient ruins, exploring untracked wilderness, fighting horrific monsters, gaining a life of fame and fortune, or finding peace in Death's warm embrace. You will not face these dangers alone, however. You and your fellow PC's create a cohesive unit, an adventuring party connected with strong background ties generated during character creation. Each of you is uniquely suited for a life of peril, and each has their own special motivations that drive their advancement. Together, you'll be a force to be reckoned with, but you'll need to be tough and smart to survive, for the Danger Master will seek to challenge you at every pass.

One other player assumes responsibility of Danger Master (DM), acting as a host and facilitator of the game. Their job is part referee of the game's rules and part narrator, describing and controlling the locations, non-player characters (NPCs), monsters, hazards, and everything else the PCs encounter. The DM has rules to follow too, with an agenda to portray a perilous world full of trouble and excitement, but remain a fan of the Players and make the game fun for everyone.

Together, the DM and the Players get to experience the lives of the characters through conversation and group imagination. It's designed for sandbox-style, using a world of your design or an optional Adventure Campaign Set, which is a kit designed to allow the PCs to freely explore an open area pre-populated with adventure elements like dungeons and cities, story hooks and event triggers, faction descriptions and relationship matrixes, maps and treasures, and more.

STUFF YOU WILL NEED

To play Perilous Worlds, you'll need a bunch of dice - that is, d4's, d6's, d8's, d10's, d12's, and d20's. You'll need plenty of pencils and erasers, plus printed out character sheets and any supplemental sheets you find useful. You'll need paper to draw maps on. It's not necessary but it's helpful to have miniatures, figurines, or character icons to represent the locations of PC's, NPC's, and monsters. Otherwise you can just pencil in the locations on the maps. You'll need something to represent the Experience Points (XP) that will handed out during play, such as gaming gems, poker chips, or you could even use coins. The DM will want to have the Game Management sheets printed out, plus paper for note taking. If the group is going to use an Adventure Campaign Set, the DM will want to have printed that out and read most of it before starting play. Otherwise, the DM can use a Campaign Planner to create their own custom Adventure Campaign Set.

ART AND LICENSING

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This is Playtest v0.08

HOW TO PLAY THIS GAME (No, Seriously)

A role-playing game is one where a group of friends get together to create a fictional world and make choices to help define what's going on in that fictional world. The goal is to generate this fiction in an entertaining and interactive way. You don't win the game by getting enough points or defeating the other players. Rather, everyone gets to win by having fun and creating an exciting story that they enjoy contributing to.

You gather as a group, typically around a table, with some rule-references and worksheets on hand to help everyone play fairly and do their job. The DM and Players create a shared imaginary world along with the situation and the characters that exist within that world. This is done via conversation between the players and the DM, as well as interaction with the rules system. Outside of a combat situation, there is no reason to take turns – the group does their best to let everyone have a chance to speak up and contribute in a loose format. Everyone should be adding to the collaborative fiction, building off of each other's ideas, and giving each person a chance to speak. The DM will usually address the players by their character's names, and will often speak to them as if they were that character. I even refer to your character as "you" in the rules.

Through discussion and agreement, the group generates a shared image of the world and what all the characters are doing in it. This is referred to as "the fiction." It is everyone's job to help generate the fiction, with the DM being responsible for acting as a moderator in order to create concurrence among the group, resolve disagreements, and generally solidify all of the suggestions and contributions into a concrete, accepted "truth" about the fiction.

No one person is in complete control of the fiction – everyone simply utilizes the tools of their trade to influence it. The players influence the fiction by playing the part of the main characters of the story. They have control of a powerful crew of capable professionals who have quite a few tools at their disposal to leave their mark on the world and take control of the fiction in significant ways. The focus is always on them and the exciting stuff they get into, almost like a camera that's always following them around, zooming in on the interesting stuff, zooming out from the less interesting stuff, and skipping over the boring stuff.

On the other hand, the DM influences the fiction by controlling the supporting cast, the villains, and the environment. There a number of principles that the DM must follow, and an agenda that helps keep them stay focused on the goals and prevent abuse of their authority. The goal is always to play in order to find out. The story is created during play, not beforehand during the preparation. The DM should be thought of as a supportive and proactive director helping to coordinate and lead an improv theater troupe to produce an exciting show, not as a frustrated playwright struggling to get the actors to do what they want and follow a pre-written script.

The fiction created by the group links up like a puzzle piece with the rules of the game. You take the fiction being created by the group, filter it through the game's mechanics, and out comes some indication of how things resolve. You don't actually engage with the mechanics until you generate an appropriate fictional situation that triggers them. The results of the mechanical process determine what happens in the fiction. You don't interact with the game's mechanics unless the fictional situation calls for it.

If you're brand new to role-playing games, it's recommended that you do a bit of research to get a clear understanding of how things should go. You can check out the Example of Play coming up to get a good feel for things and you can visit some notable websites like www.story-games.com to engage other gamers and learn about the hobby.

THE BUY IN

Although this is mandatory reading for all players, it is primarily meant for people that have played a bunch of RPGs before and may come to the table with certain expectations. It is very important that everyone in your group get onboard with the following principles:

- ◆ Cooperating and having fun are the primary goals of playing, not winning or losing.
- ◆ Everyone needs to do their best to be amicable at all times (have a spirit of friendliness and helpfulness)
- ◆ Friendly competition amongst the players is fine, but nobody should ever be trying take advantage or show up another player.
- ◆ The role of the players is to explore the world and give their characters strong motivations that they proactively pursue.
- ◆ Doing the smartest thing for your character's survival sometimes isn't as fun and exciting as other choices influenced by the story and the character's motivations.
- ◆ Player characters are expected to work together, so conflicts between them are mostly for show.
- ◆ This game runs best when the players take time to create characters that are built to face challenges using the mechanics, given strong motivations, and tied into the other characters as allies.
- ◆ The DM's role is to follow the rules, present the window into the world, and act as a facilitator for the collaborative story-telling.
- ◆ The DM prepares things like maps, props, characters, monsters, and initial kick-off situations. They never pre-plan a story, make decisions for the characters, or force them down a certain path or plotline.
- ◆ In order to really have fun with this game, the rulebook is something that all the players should at least know the basics of. The DM should take the time to read everything and have a full understanding of the rules.
- ◆ If anyone forgets any of these principles in play, it is the job of the entire group to kindly point it out and steer the game back in the intended direction.

If everyone agrees to these terms before you even start playing, it can help reduce misunderstandings about what each player was expecting the game to be about, even if they didn't realize they were expecting it.

THE BASICS

Perilous Worlds uses a hybrid of game mechanics designed to appeal to players who enjoy a loose but evocative adventuring system that is driven by the fiction and helps produce interesting twists, as well as a tactical but not-too-crunchy combat system that supports plenty of strategic choices.

You normally play the game in sittings of about two or three hours. This is called a session. In the fiction, the PC's will assume goals and take on quests. The journey and all the events that led up to the resolution of that goal or quest is called an adventure, which might span multiple sessions, or might just be a one-session gig, depending on how long it takes to resolve the situation. When you continue to play with a group of characters over multiple adventures all strung together, it's called a campaign.

Then there is the campaign setting, which is all of the fictional locations where your adventures take place. The scale of the campaign setting can range from a small town and the surrounding wilderness to an entire world rife with adventure. It is always recommended to start small and build out from there, but it's possible to send the adventures on epic journeys across continents if you have the will for it. Maps are key to a campaign setting, and the players are encouraged to explore and help populate them during play. All of the detailed information about the campaign setting can be created by the DM and players during preparation, or you can use an Adventure Campaign Kit.

Adventuring Basics

This general mechanic can be used for almost all dangerous or high stakes actions outside of combat. As a player, when you do something risky, roll 1d20 and add the bonus from the Attribute that makes the most sense for that action. If you have an advantage through preparation or fictional positioning, add +3.

- ◆ If you roll a 20+, you get a **Critical Success**. You get to narrate your triumph. You and the DM come up with an extra bonus or positive outcome.
- ◆ If you roll a 15+, you get a **Full Success**.
- ◆ If you roll a 10+, you get a **Partial Success**.
- ◆ If you roll a 9-, you get a **Failure**.

A Critical Success means you pull off your action with some kind of additional benefit or bonus outcome. A Full Success means you complete your action without any trouble or consequences. A Partial Success means you barely manage to succeed at your action - the DM will escalate the situation by Plotting Against You. A Failure means you completely botch your action - the DM will hit you hard by Imposing Their Wrath.

If you have a Skill applicable to the action, you can never get a Failure. When you roll a 9 or less, you get a Close-Call instead. A Close-Call means you just manage to scrape by and pull it off somehow, but with some major twists and turns involved. The DM gets to Plot Against You twice!

When you get a Partial Success, the results say the DM should Plot Against You. This means they're making what is often called a "soft move" or a "setup move". That is, they're adding additional challenges or twists to the results of the action that you'll need to deal with or at least be aware of. Often, the DM will escalate the tension of the situation by offering a tough choice or escalating the danger with some impending threat that, if not dealt with very soon, will turn into in to a very bad thing for your character. In other words, it means the DM is going to bring a new challenge into the situation that you still have a chance to react to before it gets out of hand.

Likewise, the results of a Failure say that the DM should Impose Their Wrath. This prompts the DM to make what is called a "hard move" or a "direct move". In this case, the DM immediately hits your character with something bad and you have no choice but to suck it up and take it. You don't get a chance to stop the danger from coming to fruition - it happens and the best thing you can do it try to recover or keep it from getting even worse.

As the DM, you'll have to take into consideration the risky actions that the PC's are undertaking, and interpret the partial successes and failures into interesting but challenging consequences. Plotting Against Them is your setup move to expose and display the PC's to the sharp edges and gritty realities of the dangerous world that they live in. Imposing Your Wrath is your hard and direct move, where slam the PC's with a hard choice,

Combat Basics

Most dangerous situations can be handled with the adventuring system presented above, but Combat begins when two or more opposing characters draw their weapons to exchange blows or start casting nasty spells against each other with the intention of killing or least putting their enemy out of commission forcefully. In most cases, it will be pretty clear when a combat scene begins.

When a combat begins, the free-flowing fictional passage of time that is normally used in the game stops and we zoom in to play out the action in a freeze-framed, moment-to-moment, blow-by-blow fashion using Rounds. A Round represents a moment of time in combat. Each round is further subdivided into eight Phases that help determine whose action takes place first based off of what they are doing. This is the combat sequence:

1. **Focus** - If you are using a Focus action this round, you begin the period of concentration now and if you manage to avoid taking any damage until phase 8, your action succeeds. That means you maintain Focus even when Pushed or Pulled, unless damage is a result.
2. **Defend or Protect** - If you Defend, your enemies get -3 to attacks against you. If you Protect an ally in your zone, attacks against that ally are automatically directed at you instead. In either case, if an enemy hits you while your Defending or Protecting, you get a Counter-Attack on them. You can only Counter-Attack once per round.
3. **Quick Attack** - If you're using a Quick Weapon, you can Attack an enemy in this phase.
4. **Move or Impede** - You can move about freely within your current zone, but if you want to transition to a different zone, you must use the Move action to do so. Otherwise, you can attempt to Impede an enemy in your zone, preventing them from transitioning to another zone, by succeeding at an Initiative roll for this phase.
5. **Push or Pull** - Push allows you to force an enemy or group of minions in your zone to an adjacent and accessible zone. Pull allows you force an enemy or group of minions to move into your zone from an adjacent, accessible zone. You must roll for these actions for the attempt.
6. **Strong Attack** - If you have a Strong Weapon equipped, you can Attack an enemy in this phase.
7. **Focus Results** - If you started a Focus action in phase 2 and your concentration was not broken by taking any damage throughout the Round, your Focus action succeeds during this phase. You may have to roll Initiative to see whose Focus action occurs first.

When combat begins, the DM will create a map of the battlefield. Rather than using a grid, the combat arena is divided into multiple, distinct Combat Zones. A Combat Zone, or just "zone" for short, is an abstract area of the battlefield in which characters can fight. It can be as big or as little as makes sense for the scene, and each zone has a different Zone Type that helps define the features of that area. For example, a hallway in a dungeon might be a Tight Zone, while a clearing in the forest might be an Open Zone, and a rock outcropping surrounded by lava will probably be a Hazardous Zone.

Each type of weapon you can wield gets a bonus in a different type of zone. Weapons and spells do damage when they hit an enemy, so you'll be rolling dice to see how many Hit Points (HP) worth of damage you do to your target. When you inflict damage, if the enemy has any armor on then the armor's Soak value will be subtracted from the total damage before it reduces their HP. When an enemy is dropped to 0 HP, you either kill them or you can choose to just knock them out. Likewise, when an enemy hits you with damage and drops your HP to 0, you may fall unconscious or even die, performing one last powerful special death move.

A LIFE ADVENTUROUS

While gold and glory may be the things people remember about stories of heroes, there is a lot more to it than that in the life of an adventurer. Most of it is hard work, sobering realities, death defying close-calls, and there's a good chance you'll spend twice as much time slogging through dragon dump as you will counting your coins.

Dungeons

Let's get one thing straight. We're not talking about the jail below the palace where the king keeps his prisoners chained to the wall. That's a sunny vacation compared to the places you'll visit as an adventurer. Nay, the dungeons we're talking about are counted among the darkest and most dangerous places in the world, where every step you take could lead to an agonizing death or worse. For most people, it isn't glory or gold they find in the bowels of the dungeon. It's death. Good for you, you're not most people.

In Perilous Worlds, a "dungeon" is any location where the monsters are in control. Maybe it's the lair of an evil dragon high up in the cloudy peaks of a mountain range, a sinister temple where a coven of demon worshiping cultists sacrifice innocent captives, the encampment of a bandit clan planning their next raid, a forgotten mine overrun with goblins and trolls, a cursed graveyard teeming with the walking dead, an ancient ruined stronghold swallowed by the sea, a putrid sewer infested with giant mutant rats, or any other forlorn stronghold of monstrous evil. These are the dungeons we're talking about.

There are many reasons an adventurer might brave the dark and descend into a dungeon. Perhaps a loved one or mentor went lost in there, leaving no choice but to mount a rescue. Maybe they seek revenge against the evils that lurk in that dark place, determined to eradicate them. It's possible that they were hired by the locals to clear out a threat, returning safety to the area. Sometimes they'll find their way into a dungeon on accident, or get dragged there against their will. But let's face it. More often than not, what draws a man to the depths of peril is gold.

Dungeons are the perfect place to hide treasure. They're dangerous, out-of-the-way places that most people wouldn't dare ever to set foot in. In a dungeon, it is the monsters that are in charge, and they aim to keep it that way. Without many disturbances, they are free to hoard their riches, setting traps and ambushes for anyone brave or foolish enough to trespass and plunder. One must tread carefully, and not their greed get the better of their judgment. There are a few things to keep in mind when you inevitably venture into the depth of a dungeon.

First and foremost – they are dynamic and ever-changing places. The monsters in the dungeon will not sit idly by while you demolish their home, kill their loved ones, and loot their coffers. You'll quickly realize that attacking a dungeon and then retreating over and over again only gives the denizens more time prepare for your next pass. Just because you slaughtered the guards standing in the grand chamber doesn't mean they aren't going to get replaced by even more guards next time you try. Recklessness and bravado will only earn you a quick death, but poking and prodding will never get you to the heart of the dungeon where the real prizes await.

Oh, and they'll have more time to set traps too. Monsters love traps. Most of the critters that inhabit dungeons aren't all that excited to meet a band of heavily-armed adventurers head-on, preferring to use traps and guerilla tactics to try and whittle down the intruders, weakening them from a distance to gain an advantage. You'll need to be ever alert and cautious while in a dungeon to avoid surprises. Countless adventurers have lost life and limb to so many deadly traps. It was an uncredited adventurer that coined the phrase "I wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole!"

Monsters

Behind every great dungeon are great monsters. The word 'monsters' is used a bit loosely here. Yes, we're indeed talking about the eight-eyed slithering serpent that shoots fireballs from its nose and lives on a pile of skulls, but we're also talking about all the other nasty creatures, humans included, that lair in the dungeons and creep in the dark of night. Any living thing that has the express purpose of killing the adventurers is considered a monster. To the enemy staring down your blade, it is you who is the monster to them.

Monsters come in all different shapes and sizes. Humanoids are more or less "human-shaped", such as humans, elves, dwarves, shadowborn, goblins, orks, trolls, giants, and even krakens. Beasts are vaguely animalian but far more terrifying. They usually have stuff like fur, feathers, scales, fangs, tails, and claws. Examples include basilisks, giant spiders, razorhawks, dragons, wargs, manticores, and naga. Constructs were created and crafted by skill or magic, such as golems and elementals. Otherworldly creatures come from another plane of existence or dimension entirely. And then there is the undead, probably the most feared of all monsters.

When you enter a combat, it's because you're coming face to face with some monsters and you aim to come out swinging. Monsters are cunning and treacherous, but they are mortal and will not always fight to the death when outnumbered or after watching their comrades die. The DM will play the monsters according to their tactical preferences and will not pull any punches. As an adventurer, you need to be careful to size-up your adversaries before charging full steam ahead. The world is not scaled to your level, so you may come up against things that are too powerful for you to take out in a single battle. For skilled monster hunters, preparation and research are key to finding the edge you might need to come out on top. If you're not careful, you'll wander into a fight you can't win.

The Wilderness

The world is vast and untamed, covered in ancient forests, towering mountains, frozen tundra, rolling hills, sprawling grasslands, dense swamps, rainy jungles, barren deserts, and everything in between. This is the wilderness. Whenever the characters are not in a city or some other kind of settlement, and not in some dank dungeon, they're in the wilderness. Adventurers must brave the wilderness often, and many become expert survivalists as a result.

While not the lairs of scum and villainy that dungeons are, wilderness areas are still dangerous, home to many terrible beasts and monsters. Some parts of the wilderness even blur the line and step into dungeon territory. Besides that, nature is harsh. Weather can turn at any moment. Natural disasters can be sudden and devastating. If not prepared, you can become quite vulnerable in the brutal conditions.

The City

Most commoners either demonize adventurers as greedy, heartless mercenaries or glamorize them as courageous heroes with hearts of gold. Truth is, most adventurers are probably a little of both, but each one has the potential to fully pursue either path.

THE ADVENTURING PARTY

In Perilous, you and your fellow Players create your own band of wandering mercenary adventurers. Yours is a motley crew made up of sell swords, outcasts, criminals, cutpurses, treasure seekers, crusaders, cavaliers, mystics, bounty hunters, and everything in between. You travel together taking on odd-jobs, dangerous missions, important quests, and even some dirty work where ever the pay right or the motivation is there. You'll explore dungeons, fight monsters, solve mysteries, discover treasure, and earn glory. You might help others, or you might take from them. The choice is yours. You and your fellowship determine your own course, encountering danger and intrigue around every corner.

ELEMENTS OF A PLAYER CHARACTER

Your character is made up of nine elements. They are: Class, Race, Attributes, Derived Statistics, Skills, Talents, Inventory, Catalysts, and Connections. Then there is all of the associated information that should be noted on your character sheet for quick reference.

Class

An adventurer's class reflects their career choice and area of expertise. You get to choose one of these eight options:

- ◆ **Cleric** (devout warrior priests that are bolstered by their deity in combat and can heal their allies with prayer)
- ◆ **Druid** (mystical shape-shifters that act as protectors and wardens of the wilderness)
- ◆ **Fighter** (specialists in combat that wield heavy armaments to guard their allies and demolish their foes)
- ◆ **Mage** (powerful scholarly wizards that study ancient arcane tomes in order to weave the threads of magic)
- ◆ **Paladin** (dedicated knights of the guiding light that seek out evil to judge and execute it)
- ◆ **Ranger** (expert hunters and survivalists that make their home in the wilds, serving as trackers and scouts)
- ◆ **Rogue** (stealthy agile thieves that specialize in infiltration and assassination)
- ◆ **Warlock** (cunning and shadowy spell casters that summon of powerful creatures and bend the nether to their will)

Race

Your character will be a member of a species common in the known world. You'll choose one of these eight options:

- ◆ **Dragonkin** (an ancient and misunderstood people that resemble dragons and tend to make their homes in high mountain forests)
- ◆ **Dwarves** (a stoic and proud people that make their home underground and in mountain caverns)
- ◆ **Elves** (a reclusive and wild people that make their home in ancient forests and deep mountain enclaves)
- ◆ **Halflings** (a wily and jovial people that make their homes on rivers and islands, and are also known for assimilating into other cultures)
- ◆ **Humans** (an ambitious and zealous people descended from the titans who make up the most plentiful race in the known world)
- ◆ **Lycans** (a mistrusted people who resemble feline, canine, or avian humanoid that live mostly solitary lives in grassland or forested locations)
- ◆ **Shadowborn** (said to have been created from the seed of the first vampire, shadowborn are a dusky, horned people that are known for their connection to the nether)
- ◆ **Stone Wardens** (a massive and hulking people who are literally made of stone said to once have been an army of earth elementals that evolved into an intelligent race)



Attributes

Every adventurer has six primary attributes that influence what they're good at in the field. You'll assign each Attribute a score which is also referred to as a bonus. These Attribute Bonuses will come into play frequently and help define in a general sense what your characters strengths and weaknesses are. The Attributes are:

- ◆ **Strength** (brawn, muscle mass, bulkiness, physical power)
- ◆ **Dexterity** (speed, reflexes, coordination, balance)
- ◆ **Constitution** (endurance, healthiness, stamina)
- ◆ **Intelligence** (acuity, problem solving, cunning, wits)
- ◆ **Wisdom** (common sense, perceptiveness, knowledge)
- ◆ **Charisma** (presence, personality, social influence)

Derived Statistics

There are a number of derived statistics that are determined by your Attributes. They can also be modified by Talents. They are important scores, bonuses, and values that be referred to often during your adventures. The derived statistics are:

- ◆ **Max Load** (The number of heavy objects you can carry without becoming Encumbered.)
- ◆ **Initiative** (A bonus added to Initiative rolls in combat.)
- ◆ **Max HP** (The maximum amount of damage you can take before becoming Incapacitated.)
- ◆ **Alertness** (Represents how well a character can notice things while not actively paying attention or searching.)
- ◆ **Intuition** (Represents how well a character can read other people and sense their motives during social interaction.)

Skills

These are special areas of expertise held by your character. If you have an applicable skill, you can never fully fail a related Attribute roll, getting a Close-Call instead. Here are a few example skills:

- ◆ **Athletics** (Performing feats of physical brawn like lifting, climbing, swimming, running, or jumping. Usually rooted in Strength.)
- ◆ **Deception** (Deceiving and manipulating others with charm, wits, guile, and a fast tongue. Usually rooted in Charisma.)
- ◆ **Sense Motive** (Reading people and sensing their motivations, useful in social interactions to determine if someone is lying or trying to manipulate you. Usually rooted in Charisma.)
- ◆ **Lore** (Remembering and researching knowledge of the legendary, mysterious, or ancient as well as reading and speaking ancient languages. Usually rooted in Intelligence.)

Talents

Talents are things like special abilities, techniques, powers, and spells. Each race comes with a Talent, and each class has many to choose from. Players select three Talents from their class at 1st level. Here are some example talents:

- ◆ **Fighter's Weapon of Choice** (+3 Damage with one type of weapon and zone bonus gets +1 – one week training to change)
- ◆ **Mage's Magic Missile** (Once per zone, Focus Action, attack up to three enemies in your zone or adjacent zone, 3d4 damage, can divide dice among the targets)
- ◆ **Cleric's Smite** (Once per zone, add +1d8 to damage from an attack against undead or an enemy you know to be evil)
- ◆ **Rogue's Sneak Attack** (When you attack an enemy that is currently Focusing or has already attacked someone else this round, you get +1 to your attack roll and +3 to damage if you hit.)

Inventory

Adventurers always begin the game with starting set of tools and weapons. Here are some example items they may use:

- ◆ **Light Weapon** (1d6+Dex damage, Quick Attack, Main-hand or Off-hand, Thrown, +2 in Tight zones, Examples: Short Sword, Dagger, Stiletto, Rapier, Hatchet, Quarterstaff, Javelin, Wakazashi.)
- ◆ **Leather Armor** (Soak 2, Bulk 1, Examples: Banded Leather, Studded Leather, Thick Smock, Hide, Ironbark, Jack of Plate, Brigandine.)
- ◆ **Heavy Shield** (Per Combat – Soak up to 10 damage, Heavy Item, Examples: Iron Shield, Steel Bulwark, Tower Shield.)
- ◆ **Traveler's Kit** (Traveler's Outfit plus Backpack with All-Weather Blanket, Compass, Maps, Bedroll, Belt Pouch, Flint & Steel, Tinder Box, Hooded Lantern with Oil, Trail Rations for 7 days, Tent, Waterskin.)

Catalysts

Each character starts with three Catalysts. They get one by default and two of choice. By fulfilling the requirements of a Catalyst, you can earn Experience Points to level up. Here are some examples:

- ◆ **The Adventurer** (Mark XP when you complete a quest, defeat a vile monster, or unearth a cache of treasure)
- ◆ **The Rebel** (Mark XP when you put yourself at risk to fight oppression or corruption in the government.)

Connections

Connections represent the relationships between the characters and how they're associated with each other. By bringing the significance of a Connection into the spotlight during play, player's earn Experience Points. Here are some examples:

- ◆ **Former Guards** (You were once both guards for a powerful faction. What event lead to your dismissal and why does your former faction have a bounty out on your heads?)
- ◆ **Outcasts** (You were both cast out of your former home on bad terms and are not allowed to return. Where did you live that you were forced from and why were you cast out?)

TALENT TYPES

Each class has a distinct set of Talents. Talents come in different flavors which determine when and how often they can be used. A detailed explanation of Talents and their types can be found in Chapter 3 – Action and Adventure.

Here are the different types of Talents:

- ◆ **Passive** (Always on or can be used at-will.)
- ◆ **Per Zone** (Can be used once per zone - When you transition to a new zone, the Talent recharges. You can use a Hero Point to force these Talents to recharge.)
- ◆ **Per Combat** (Can be used once per combat – When a new combat scene begins, the Talent recharges. You can use two Hero Points to force these Talents to recharge.)
- ◆ **Per Day** (Can be used once per day. After resting successfully, the Talent recharges. You can use three Hero Points to force these Talents to recharge.)
- ◆ **Hour Ritual** (Requires an hour of uninterrupted focus to use. Cannot be used during combat and does not need to be recharged.)
- ◆ **On Death** (Occurs when your character dies during combat.)
- ◆ **Focus** (Requires that the character Focus during combat, avoiding taking any damage or else the Focus is broken and the action does not succeed.)
- ◆ **Spells** (Mages and Warlocks can cast Spells – These require a *free hand* to execute so one-handed weapons are favored by these classes.)
- ◆ **Prayers** (Clerics can cast Prayers which require that the PC has a Holy Symbol in their inventory.)
- ◆ **Chants** (Druids can cast Chants which require that the PC not be wearing any armor made of metal – this means no Mail or Plate armor.)

CHARACTER SHEETS

The character sheets for Perilous Worlds were designed so that each class has their own special sheet. The character sheets can be found in the back of this book and you may photocopy them for personal use. Otherwise, download them from the website and print them out for best quality. As you follow the Character Creation Checklist, record the information on your character sheet in the appropriate locations. Take a look at the pre-made characters in the back of the book for examples on how to note the information.

Be sure to update your character sheet during the game with new information, especially when you level up. Some people like to use a separate piece of scrap paper to take notes and keep tallies of things like Hit Points in order to keep the character sheet. Also, before beginning play, the DM will want to review each player's character sheet and take down important notes for reference during the game.

GROUP CHARACTER CREATION

A major goal of character creation is to pursue a sense of unity among the adventuring party. They're encouraged to butt-heads and have the occasional entertaining disagreement, but ultimately the PC's should have each other's backs and cooperate when the going gets tough. Connections are a mechanical element designed to help establish strong ties between the characters, but one of the best things you can do to create a well-rounded group of adventurers is to go through the character creation process as a group, including all of the players and the DM collaborating during the process.

The game is designed to tell the ongoing story of a group of competent professional adventurers, following them as they journey to mysterious places, go on exciting adventures, discover amazing secrets, defeat vile monsters, strike it rich, or die trying. To give your characters the best chance of survival, you'll want to strive for synergy in your adventuring party. In other words, you want to make sure each character has an important role in the crew and that the character concepts do not clash fictionally when coupled with one another.

So, before you even touch the Character Creation Checklist, you'll want to brainstorm a character concept and present it to the group. Your concept is just a rough idea of what kind of character you want to play. Look over your options and pick out a few ideas that are interesting to you. Be sure to leave yourself open to other options though. Don't get too hung up on a specific idea prior to discussing it with your fellow players and the DM.

It is highly recommended that each player chooses a class that nobody else has chosen. This is because each class has unique qualities that set them apart from others in the group, allowing each player to have a chance shine in the spotlight. Each class has the ability to fill a niche, and two people playing the same class depreciates what that class brings to the table. If two people want to play the same class, you'll need to compromise and work it out like mature adults. There are four essential roles filled by the eight classes, so consider an alternative – for example, if someone else picked The Fighter, why not try The Paladin?

Unless you're playing a solo game, avoid creating characters that would be considered "loners". They make great protagonists in novels and films, but this is a game about a cohesive team that more or less gets along, so your concept shouldn't be too anti-social. Likewise, unless your group agrees to run an "evil campaign", you should avoid character concepts that center around being evil. Having a mix of good and evil characters tends to lead to dysfunction within the group.

The DM should play the role of facilitator during this process, coordinating the players, helping to mediate any disagreements, providing suggestions that might be helpful for synergy, and generally acting a guide for the players. The DM's agenda demands that they not pre-plan any story to come, instead providing a sandbox world for the players to explore. That said, the choices made for the PC's Catalysts and Connections can provide some hints at what lies in their past, and what the future might bring.

CHARACTER CREATION CHECKLIST

The character creation checklist to the right will walk you through each essential step in the process. Once you've gotten the hang of creating characters, the checklist will prove a useful reference to quickly build your PC. If this is the first time you're building a character, review the steps listed in the checklist, and then continue to read through the rest of this chapter in order to get a clear understanding of each step. When it comes time to create your characters as a group, the DM should help walk everyone through the checklist as a team.

The Checklist

Follow these steps when you create a character. A detailed description of each step follows in the next section.

- 1. Select a Class**
 - ◆ Choose a Class Skill
 - ◆ Note Proficiencies
 - ◆ Note Inherent Talent
 - ◆ Choose Three Class Talents
- 2. Select a Race**
 - ◆ Choose a Racial Attribute Bonus
 - ◆ Note the Racial Talent
- 3. Assign Attribute Bonuses**
 - ◆ Assign +3 to your Primary Attribute
 - ◆ Assign +2 to your Secondary Attribute
 - ◆ Assign +1 to your Tertiary Attribute
 - ◆ Assign +0 to the remaining Untrained Attributes
- 4. Determined Derived Statistic Values**
 - ◆ Max Load = Strength
 - ◆ Initiative = Dexterity + Intelligence
 - ◆ Max HP = (10+Constitution) x 2
 - ◆ Alertness is = 10 + Wisdom
 - ◆ Intuition = 10 + Charisma
- 5. Select a Personal Skill**
 - ◆ Choose Any Skill of Your Choice
 - ◆ Rogues and Rangers Get Another
- 6. Select your Inventory**
 - ◆ Choose a Weapon in Which You are Proficient
 - ◆ Choose an Armor in Which You are Proficient
 - ◆ Choose a Kit of Your Choice
 - ◆ Choose 1d4 Personal Trinkets (if desired)
 - ◆ Start Play With 2d4x10 Coins
 - ◆ If you are a Cleric, Get a Wooden Holy Symbol
- 7. Select Catalysts**
 - ◆ You get The Adventurer
 - ◆ Choose Two More of Your Choice
- 8. Select Connections**
 - ◆ Choose a Starting Connection with Each Other Player in the Group

STEP 1 – SELECT A CLASS

The first step to creating a character is to choose a class. The following section outlines each of the eight classes, describing who they are, where they typically come from, what role they play in the group, why they might take to a life of adventure, what types of equipment they favor, and what Attributes you should focus on when assigning bonuses in Step 3.

Each class has its own unique character sheet where a lot of the class-specific information has already been noted for you. Once you've discussed it with your group and have chosen a class, retrieve the class's character sheet. If you've never seen a Perilous Worlds character sheet before, take a few moments to explore the contents before proceeding.

Classes come with a few Qualities – they are Class Skill and Proficiencies. The first thing you'll want to do once you've selected a class is choose a Class Skill from those listed for that class. You'll then want to note on your character sheet what Proficiencies your class provides. Proficiencies represent proper training with different types of weapons and armor that allow you to wield those items without penalty. When selecting Starting Inventory for your character, you'll want to pay close attention to what Proficiencies your character has.

Next, each character automatically gets the Inherent Talents for their class. There is a role based Talent that reflects their position in the group, as well as a Death Talent is used when the player dies in combat. Note the talents on your character and then pick two Talents of your choice from those listed for your class. Each time you Level Up, you'll get to pick a new Talent from the list.

THE CLERIC

The Cleric is a devout warrior priest that is able to call on divine prayer to produce miracles granted by their patron deity. In the past, Clerics have served as missionaries, guardians, protectors, inquisitors, pastors, scholars, and monks. Others are chosen representatives for their god or deity and many make their living as undead or vampire hunters.

Many Clerics set out for a life of adventuring because they wish to spread the word of their god, seek out and defeat enemies of their faith, protect and serve others they care about, or maybe because they were cast out of their temples or churches and set into the world for reasons known only to their superiors. Some Clerics are encouraged to travel to accumulate wealth for their temple or perish.

Clerics are close combat support specialists, able to hold their own at the front lines while bolstering their allies with healing prayer and buffs to aid their abilities. They favor Mail armor for the added protection without the intense weight.

Clerics can use Prayers that benefit from a high Charisma score. Since Cleric Prayers are effective at close-range, Clerics will need a decent Strength in order to wear Mail Armor and wield heavier weapons. All adventurers benefit from a high Constitution score.

Clerics get these **Qualities**:

- ◆ **Class Skill** (Choose between Divinity and Treatment.)
- ◆ **Proficiencies** (Light, Martial, Reach, and Short-Ranged Weapons. Cloth, Leather, and Mail Armor. Light Shields.)

Clerics get these **Inherent Talents**:

- ◆ **Mystic** (You can turn a Failure into a Partial Success or a Partial Success into a Full Success once per day.)
- ◆ **Life Blossom** (On Death – In one last burst of light, healing energy streams from your body, mending the wounds of all of your allies on the battlefield. Each ally that can see or hear you heals 2d8 HP before you die.)

Clerics can pick from these **Talents**:

- ◆ **Bless Weapon** (Per Day Hour Ritual – Empower a weapon with divine retribution, adding your Charisma as a bonus to damage with that weapon for the remainder of the day.)
- ◆ **Blinding Light** (Per Zone Prayer – When you Defend, enemies get -3 to attacks against allies in your zone as well.)
- ◆ **Godly Fire** (Per Combat Focus Prayer - a column of fire ignites an enemy in your zone dealing 2d8+Charisma damage to an enemy.)
- ◆ **Healing Aura** (Per Day Focus Prayer – Heal yourself and all allies in your zone for 2d4 + your Charisma HP.)
- ◆ **Orator** (By giving a passionate speech for at least a few minutes, you can inspire a group of people so that they get +1 to Wisdom or Strength or up to one hour, or you can simply take +5 to a Charisma roll.)
- ◆ **Penitent** (Passive - When you take at least 4 damage from an attack, get a bonus to damage on your next successful attack equal to 1+Charisma.)
- ◆ **Redemption** (Per Zone - When you successfully attack an enemy with a melee weapon in combat, deal 1d4 extra damage and heal yourself or an ally in your zone for the same amount.)
- ◆ **Templar** (You gain proficiency with Great Weapons, Plate Armor, and Heavy Shields.)



- ◆ **Turn Undead** (Per Day Focus Prayer – While you are focusing, undead minions cannot attack you. Non-minion undead must get a Full Success on a Constitution check to attack you or an ally in your zone. When your Focus is complete, you do 3d6 damage to an undead enemy in your zone.)
- ◆ **Purify** (Per Day Hour Ritual - You can turn a Cursed Item or an Infernal Item into an Enchanted or Holy item, respectively. You can also remove a disease, poison, or curse from a creature once per day.)
- ◆ **Shield of Faith** (Focus Prayer – You can summon a shield of holy power for yourself or an ally in your zone. The holy barrier counts as a Heavy Shield that floats freely next to the character, not requiring a hand to use. Like a Heavy Shield, the recipient can use it to soak up to 10 HP from a single attack per combat. You can only have one Shield of Faith summoned at a time. If you summon a new Shield of Faith, the old one dissipates immediately.)
- ◆ **Mark of the Chosen** (You can use your Divine Intervention Inherent Quality twice per day instead of only once. In addition, you can reroll any one roll per day, such as an Attribute, Attack, or Damage roll. You can take the results of whichever roll is better.)

THE DRUID

The **Druid** is a resourceful and dynamic shape-shifter that is empowered with mystical abilities by the nature spirits they revere. Throughout history, Druids have been known as wardens of the wilderness, protecting the plants and animals from undue harm brought on by civilization and encroachment of chaotic humanoid tribes. They also serve as guides and spiritual mentors, and are common among elves and lycans.

Druids often find themselves among adventurers for complex reasons, such as being forced from their natural homeland for some reason, or because they wish to travel and see the world. Maybe they feel they can protect nature better if they actively seek out threats rather than waiting for them. Often, Druids find company with Rangers who share their love for the wild places.

Druids prefer to fight from a distance over joining the frontlines, but their shape-shifting abilities make them more versatile than other ranged classes. They are capable healers and are also quite useful in adventuring situations. They avoid metal armors like Mail and Plate, instead preferring the protection of natural Leather Armor.

Druids can use Chants that benefit from a high Wisdom score. Having a decent Dexterity score will allow you to take advantage of your animal forms as well as Light and Ranged weapons. Strength can also be useful for Combat Form. All adventurers benefit from a good Constitution score.

While in animal form, you get access to natural weapons like claws and fangs. You cannot use Focus actions while polymorphed. Any non-metal items on your person meld into your animal form as if they were a part of your body. Any small metal items (such as coins) must be kept in a cloth or leather bag in order to meld properly, otherwise they are immediately dropped. You can polymorph back to your humanoid form by taking a Defend Action and declaring it.

Druids get these **Qualities**:

- ◆ **Class Skill** (Choose between Survival and Treatment.)
- ◆ **Proficiencies** (Light, Martial, Short-Ranged, and Long-Ranged Weapons. Cloth and Leather Armor.)

Druids get this **Inherent Talent**:

- ◆ **Mystic** (Per Day - You can turn a Failure into a Partial Success or a Partial Success into a Full Success.)

Druids can pick from these **Talents**:

- ◆ **Rejuvenation** (Per Day Focus Chant – Heal yourself or an ally in the same zone or an adjacent zone for 1d10 HP + Wisdom. If you roll an even number on the d10, roll a second time and add the two values together.)
- ◆ **Combat Form** (Per Day Free Action – Morph into a powerful and deadly beast such as a bear, a wolf, or a wild boar. While in this form, your natural weapons function as a Martial Weapon and you get +1 to armor soak.)
- ◆ **Stealth Form** (Per Day Free Action – Morph into a quick and stealthy beast like a panther or a snake. While in this form, you get +2 to Acrobatics and Stealth checks. Also, your natural weapons function as a Light Weapon with no Offhand or Ranged capabilities.)
- ◆



- ◆ **Whispering Winds** (Per Day Out of Combat – You can consult the spirits of the wind, the keepers of many ancient secrets. By spending a few minutes listening to the breeze, you can automatically take a Full Success on an Arcanum, Divinity, or Lore roll.)
- ◆ **Swarming Vines** (Per Zone Focus Chant - You summon a writhing mess of choking vines that entangle an enemy in your zone or an adjacent zone. The enemy takes 1d6+Wisdom damage and is Impeded the following round.)
- ◆ **Tornado** (Per Combat Focus Chant – You summon a great, swirling tornado that shoves enemies away from a location. Choose your zone or an adjacent zone. That zone becomes a hazardous zone until the end of combat. Any enemy starting their turn in that zone must get a Full Success on a Dexterity roll or immediately get Pushed into a random adjacent zone. While the tornado is in effect, Ranged attacks against creatures in the zone are at -4.)
- ◆ **Warden** (You gain proficiency in Reach and Great Weapons, as well as Mail Armor. Remember, you must pick a non-metal mail armor such as Ironbark Mail.)
- ◆ **Flight Form** (Per Day Free Action – Morph into a great winged creature such as a giant owl, eagle, or even a winged-serpent. While in this form, you gain access to the Open Air zone above the battlefield. Also useful out of combat for traveling faster and gaining access to high places.)

THE FIGHTER

The Fighter is a tough and highly trained combat expert that decks themselves out with heavy armor and powerful weaponry to act as the vanguard of a fighting unit. Fighters are commonly seen serving as soldiers, body guards, bounty hunters, thugs, sell swords, and any other profession that requires hard and direct violence.

The reasons for a Fighter to join an adventuring group are numerous and often simple. They tend to gravitate towards lucrative careers that call for hard work and bloodshed. Glory and fame are other goals they seek, more often than not. Yet, some find the life of adventure freeing and romantic, wanting nothing more than to find their own way and discover the world.

Fighters are a natural and integral part of the adventuring party. They serve the role of defenders, able to protect their less durable allies and take a beating, as well as strikers, wielding deadly weapons with skill to dispatch foes quickly and efficiently. Fighters favor Plate Armor for the unmatched protection.

Fighters benefit the most from purely physical abilities. A high Strength allows the fighter to wear the heaviest armor and use the heaviest weapons. A good Dexterity score is useful in combat for Initiative. All adventurers benefit from a high Constitution score.

Fighters can use Stances. Stances are triggered when you take the Defend or Protect action during combat. Once you enter into a Stance, the effects of that Stance last until you cancel it as it free action you can take at any time, or when the combat ends.

Fighters get these **Qualities**:

- ◆ **Class Skill** (Choose either Athletics or Leadership.)
- ◆ **Proficiencies** (All Weapons. All Armor. All Shields.)

Fighters get these **Talents**:

- ◆ **Defender** (You can negate one attack against you per combat – Focus actions are still interrupted.)
- ◆ **Final Vengeance** (On Death - Choose an enemy in your zone or an adjacent zone. You charge in for one final last ditch attack, automatically scoring a Critical Hit. After you land the hit, you keel over and begin dying.)

Fighters can pick from these **Talents**:

- ◆ **Reckless Stance** (When you take the Defend Action, you can switch into Reckless Stance. While in Reckless Stance, you cannot use shields and your armor does not soak any damage, but you get +4 to damage.)
- ◆ **Defiant Stance** (When you take the Defend Action, you can switch into Defiant Stance. While in Defiant Stance, if you make a successful attack with a melee weapon, immediately inflict a Glancing Blow on another enemy in your zone. If you get a Miss on your attack, you still inflict a Glancing Blow on the main target.)
- ◆ **Balanced Stance** (When you take the Defend Action, you can switch into Balanced Stance. While in Balanced Stance, your weapon gets a zone bonus in all zones.)
- ◆ **Deadly** (When you inflict a critical hit, you inflict double your normal maximum damage.)
- ◆ **Disarm** (Per Combat – When you get a Full Hit on an attack, you can disarm them of their currently equipped weapon. They cannot use that weapon for the remainder of combat.)
- ◆ **Knock-back** (Once/Zone, successful attack also Throws the enemy.)
- ◆ **Tactical Stance** (When you take the Defend Action, you can switch into Tactical Stance. While in Tactical Stance, you and all allies in sight get +5 to Initiative rolls.)



- ◆ **Weapon of Choice** (Pick a weapon type. While wielding a weapon of that type, you get +1 to all attacks and +2 to all damage. If you want to change your weapon of choice, you must spend a week training with the new weapon type.)
- ◆ **Guarding Stance** (When you take the Protect Action, you can switch into Guarding Stance. While in Guarding Stance, you can make two Counter-Attacks per round and can Counter-Attack any enemy that attacks you, even if they don't land a hit.)
- ◆ **Toughness** (You get +10 to your Max HP.)
- ◆ **Tank** (You can use a shield Per Zone instead of Per Combat.)
- ◆

THE MAGE

The Mage is an enlightened and meticulous spell-caster who weaves the threads of ethereal mana to spectacular effect, as opposed to their Warlock counterparts who violently tear them apart. Mages are usually hired as advisors, mystical servants, sages, diviners, spell-swords, and mentors for apprentice magicians. They are both respected and feared for their powerful abilities.

Mages are almost always power hungry, and adventuring can seem like a quick path to that dream. In addition, most mages are trained by a more accomplished wizard, and long years spent cooped up as an apprentice serving their mentor usually leads to them feeling caged in. As a result, mages often leave behind the towers of their mentors, yearning for freedom and chance to prove themselves with an adventuring company.

Mages provide extremely useful magic to an adventuring group and any party of mercenaries is at a disadvantage without one. They may not be as apt to battle on the front lines as other classes, but their spells can be destructive, incredibly handy, and often times both. Mages require the light weight and ease of movement provided by Cloth Armor.

Mages can use Spells that are bolstered by a good Intelligence score. A high Dexterity Score can be useful for winning Initiative rolls during the final phase in combat where Focus Spells are completed. Dexterity also favors Ranged Weapons, which mages prefer in order to stay out of the thick of combat. All adventurers benefit from a high Constitution score.

Casting Spells requires a free hand to gesticulate and enact the spell somatically, so mages usually stick to one-handed weapons. However, some special magic items tagged **Fetish** allow you to cast Spells via that item as opposed to having a free hand. All Spell-based damage is Armor Piercing.

Mages get these **Inherent Qualities**:

- ◆ **Class Skill** (Choose between Arcanum and Lore.)
- ◆ **Proficiencies** (Light and Short-Ranged Weapons. Cloth Armor.)
- ◆ **Caster** (Per Combat, you can ignore a Focus interruption. You still take the damage if any.)
- ◆ **Mana Explosion** (A lifetime of magical energy escapes your physical form in a deadly rush. Each enemy in your current zone takes 2d10 damage, after which you fall and begin dying.)

Mages can pick from these **Talents**:

- ◆ **Magic Missiles** (Per Zone Focus Spell - Attack up to three enemies in your zone or an adjacent zone, dealing 3d4 + Intelligence damage to a single target or splitting those dice up among up to three different targets. If you split the dice up, you only apply the Intelligence bonus damage to a single die.)
- ◆ **Flaming Sphere** (Per Combat Focus Spell – You summon a flaming sphere into your zone or an adjacent zone. That zone becomes Hazardous for the remainder of combat. Any creature that starts a round in that zone must make an immediate Dexterity check. On a Failure, they take 1d6 + Intelligence damage. Allies get +3 to such Dexterity checks.)
- ◆ **Shards of Ice** (Focus Spell – Cast against an enemy in your zone or an adjacent zone. You do 1d6 + Intelligence damage and the enemy is Impeded the following round.)
- ◆ **Mage's Shield** (Passive – So long as you're wearing Armor that you're proficient in, you get +1 to your Armor Soak while Focusing.)



- ◆ **Potency** (So long as you're wearing armor you're proficient in, you get +3 Damage to any Focus Spells you cast that deal damage.)
- ◆ **Mystical Familiar** (You've trapped and trained, or maybe even created, a small mystical pet such as a dragonling, faerie, homunculus, or intelligent animal. The mystical familiar is able to assist you in risky or tricky situations by providing the benefit of a Skill for Attribute rolls. Select a Skill possessed by your familiar. So long as you describe how your pet is able to help with their Skill, you gain the benefit of that skill for applicable Attribute rolls. If for whatever reason your familiar is lost or dies, it takes a week to train and train, or create, a new one.)
- ◆ **Spellsword** (You gain proficiency with Martial Weapons and Leather Armor. In addition, your enhanced skill in combat gives you +1 to Damage when you're attacking an enemy in your zone.)
- ◆ **Bastion** (Per Day Hour Ritual – When your group Hunkers Down, you weave a camouflage bubble around your camp that makes it more difficult to spot, giving your group +3 to the Make Camp roll. You conjure enough food and water to fulfill ration requirements for everyone to Break Bread. Also, you summon two Faithful Watchdog spirits that provide +3 to the group's Take Watch roll.)
- ◆ **Sleep** (Per Combat Focus Spell, put an opponent or any number of minions in your zone to sleep. They will sleep through any noise but a shake or swift kick will wake them up. Lasts for up to ten minutes)

THE PALADIN

The Paladin is an honorable but zealous knight who embraces a life of danger to protect that which is good in the world. They act as judge, jury, and executioner – taking it upon themselves to seek out and destroy evil wherever it hides. Their dedication to their cause strengthens their abilities and provides them with supernatural powers. It is said their pure hearts and brave exploits are empowered by the kind-hearted gods, whether they worship them actively or not. Paladins are often seen making their way as protectors, law enforcers, vanguards, and monster hunters.

Paladins are drawn to a life of adventure primarily as a method to align themselves with like-minded individuals who also seek to eradicate chaos and evil. They find strength in numbers and are usually driven by their code of honor. However, not all paladins are above getting paid for risking their lives and not all of them are driven by governmental lawfulness. If "law" is brought into their code, it's a very personal vision of the law. Paladins have been known to butt heads with other adventurers that are more apt to break the law, but loyalty encourages them to turn their head the other way most of the time.

Regardless of their source of power, Paladins are strong front-line combatants whose deadly attacks and inspiring presence buffs their allies. They are also capable of mending wounds with pure faith and make excellent defenders. Paladins favor Plate Armor for the unmatched protection.

Paladins benefit from a high Strength score in order to allow them to don the heaviest armor and weapons. Charisma is also very important as many of their abilities make use of it. All adventurers benefit from a good Constitution score.

Paladins get these **Inherent Qualities**:

- ◆ **Class Skill** (Choose between Divinity and Leadership.)
- ◆ **Proficiencies** (Light, Martial, Reach, Great, and Short-Ranged Weapons. All Armor. All Shields.)
- ◆ **Defender** (You can negate one attack against you per combat – Focus actions are still interrupted)

Paladins can pick from these **Talents**:

- ◆ **Lay on Hands** (You lay your hands upon yourself or a comrade and wounds are mended before your eyes. Per Day Action – When you Protect an ally, you can heal yourself or the ally you're protecting for 1d12+Charisma HP.)
- ◆ **Inquisitor** (By taking a few moments to shine the guiding light onto the aura of a creature or object, you can determine whether or not it is evil despite any attempts it makes to hide its true alignment. If it turns out to be evil, you get +1 to attacks against that entity from then on.)
- ◆ **Holy Weapon** (Choose one weapon that you imbue holy energy into. This requires a twenty-four hour ritual. After the ritual, that specific weapon becomes Holy. With the Holy Weapon, your Glancing Blows do 1d6)
- ◆ **Axiomatic**
- ◆ **Sunder Armor** (Per Combat Focus Action, reduce an opponents armor by 3 until the end of combat)
- ◆ **Consecrate**
- ◆ **Judgment** (Per Zone – Automatically get a Full Success on a Pull Action and +3 damage to the first successful attack you make against that target.)



THE RANGER

The Ranger is an expert scout and explorer that dedicates his or her life to protecting the wilderness or at least maintaining a balance between nature and civilization. They are renowned for being adept trackers, hunters, archers, survivalists, guides, trappers, and pathfinders. Nobility occasionally hire Rangers to lead their hunts, blaze trails for new roads, run scouting missions for military units, or to trap and train wild animals. While most Rangers detest such work, some prefer to take charge of these potentially destructive activities to ensure they don't get out of hand – after all, it's going to happen regardless, so best leave it in the hands of a skilled ranger that intends to leave the smallest footprint.

Generally speaking, Rangers are known for being solitary folk, preferring a lonely existence among the wildlings to the hustle and bustle of civilized life. However, not every Ranger is content to a hermit's lifestyle and many join adventuring parties as a way to find fellowship, make traveling safer, earn coin for someone they care about, or cover more ground in their quest to protect nature and the wild creatures they hold such reverence for.

In combat, Rangers are proficient archers and gain many useful benefits in ranged combat. In addition, they are particularly good with dual wielding melee weapons and striking with great speed. They are useful during adventuring situations for their skillfulness in dealing with danger. Rangers favor Leather Armor for its balance of flexibility and protection.

Rangers benefit from a high Dexterity that supports Ranged Combat. In addition, they have the Weapon Finesse Talent that lets them apply that Dexterity to heavier weapons like Martial or Reach weapons. Select a secondary Attribute based on what skills you'd like to excel at. All adventurers benefit from a good Constitution score.

Rangers get these **Inherent Qualities**:

- ◆ **Class Skill** (Choose between Acrobatics, Awareness, and Survival.)
- ◆ **Proficiencies** (Light, Martial, Reach, Short-Ranged, and Long-Ranged Weapons. Cloth and Leather Armor.)
- ◆ **Expert** (You get one extra Skill of your choice at 1st level.)
- ◆ **Last Gambit** (Choose an enemy in your zone or an adjacent zone. You pull off one last feint, catching that enemy off guard and throwing them off balance. All allies get +5 to hit that enemy until the end of combat.)

Rangers can pick from these **Talents**:

- **Dualist** (Get +1 to armor when wielding two melee weapons at the same time)
- **Scout** (Get +2 to Stealth rolls while in the wilderness. In addition, you leave no tracks behind.)
- **Slayer** (Choose one type of enemy or monster (such as bandit, cultist, kobold, ork, dragon, ect). You get +1 to attack and +2 damage against that type of enemy.)
- **Rend** (When you score a Critical Hit, the enemy takes an additional 1d6 damage during phase 7 of the following round.)
- **Daring** (Ignore any hazardous conditions while being in a Hazardous Zone)
- **Penetrating Attack** (Once per zone, when you successfully attack an enemy, ignore their armor)
- **Animal Companion**
- **Hunter**



THE ROGUE

The Rogue is a sly and cunning stealth expert who specializes in infiltration and assassination. They are skilled tricksters, able to use their agility and personality to snake their way past any obstacle. Rogues are common amongst both civilized and tribal cultures, often seen as cut-purses, thieves, spies, scouts, or treasure-hunters. They are notorious for their tendency towards illicit activities, and many are stereotyped as greedy bandits, though a few have grown famous for robbing from the rich to give to the poor. At least, that's the appearance they want to give.

Rogues are quite common among adventuring groups. Their skills are highly sought after and the benefits they provide in combat are invaluable. Most rogues are happy to join up with adventurers because of the constant opportunity for wealth and power. They also prefer to work alongside others for protection and distraction, so they can go about their business while their comrades deal with whatever is standing in their way. Despite their reputation as cut-throat and greedy, most rogues make a serious attempt at maintaining good relations with their fellow party members so as not to be kicked-out of the group, or worse.

Rogues are unique in the way they approach combat, always looking for a way to get the advantage on their enemies. To them, fighting fair is asking for a quick death. They prefer to fight from a range at first; only slinking into the thick of battle to deliver a devastating sneak attack their enemies won't see coming, then quickly retreating to safety behind their tougher allies.

Rogues benefit from a high Dexterity that supports Ranged Combat and Light Weapons. Select a secondary Attribute based on what skills you'd like to excel at. All adventurers benefit from a good Constitution score.

Rogues get these **Inherent Qualities**:

- ◆ **Class Skill** (Choose between Acrobatics, Deception, and Stealth.)
- ◆ **Proficiencies** (Light, Martial, Short-Ranged, and Long-Ranged Weapons. Cloth and Leather Armor.)
- ◆ **Expert** (You get one extra Skill of your choice at 1st level.)

Rogues can pick from these **Talents**:

- ◆ **Back Stab** (Focus action, you can attack an enemy that is being Protected by another opponent, bypassing the protection and doing 1d6+Dex damage.)
- ◆ **Cloak of Shadow** (As long as you can position yourself in a dark or shadowy place, you get +1 to armor)
- ◆ **Deep Pockets** (Once per day, even after being thoroughly searched, you can produce a single small useful item on your person. If necessary, this could be a small light weapon such as a dagger.)
- ◆ **Disguise** (You can prepare and implement amazing and convincing disguises with uncanny speed. You're trained in changing your mannerisms, expressions, and voice to really make it believable. You get +2 to Charisma rolls for disguising yourself and once per day you can reroll a failed Charisma check while disguised.)
- ◆ **Heel Rip** (When you score a Critical Hit, the target is Impeded for the remainder of the round. Next time they Move, they take 1d6 damage.)
- ◆ **Jack-Of-All-Trades** (Get +1 to any Attribute rolls that you are not using a Skill with.)
- ◆ **Pinpoint Weakness** (Once per combat, Focus Action, you and allies get +1 to attack that target until the end of combat)



- ◆ **Quick Hands** (Once per combat, when you successfully attack an enemy in your zone, you can steal any visible item that they are not actively holding. Alternatively, you could plant a small object on them, if you had a reason to do so. Either way, they don't immediately notice what you did, usually until it's too late. You can ask the DM to see what is available to pilfer from the enemy, if anything, prior to using this Talent.)
- ◆ **Sneak Attack** (When you attack an enemy that is currently Focusing or has already attacked someone else this round, you get +1 to your attack roll and +3 to damage if you hit.)

THE WARLOCK

The Warlock is a shadowy and powerful spell-caster that cautiously walks a thin line between light and darkness. While their mage cousins weave threads of mana drawn from the ethereal plane, Warlocks rip them apart to devastating effect, unleashing the magical energy in a chaotic explosion of power, as opposed to a graceful blossoming. Commonly thought to all be evil, most Warlocks tend to have neutral alignments, often seeking to harness their potentially deadly powers not to abuse them, but to learn from them and put them to good use serving their personal agendas.

Warlocks typically work alone, but they have started becoming more common amongst adventuring bands in recent years. Since adventurers rely on one-another for protection and survival, very few Warlocks travel with a group that doesn't have some level of trust in them, and the Warlock must always earn that trust. While some may truly be evil and seek to betray their comrades, most adventuring Warlocks find too much benefit in keeping their allies on good terms, even if they don't always want to. Warlocks and Mages often find themselves at odds given their starkly contrasting methodology when it comes to casting spells, but when they find themselves working with each other in a group, they can usually set their differences aside and appreciate what the others bring to the table.

Warlocks are vicious in combat and serve similar roles to Mages. They prefer Cloth armor for the maneuverability and extremely light weight, relying on their allies for protection and generally trying to stay out of the fray. They are most efficient when skirting the rim of the battle and casting their devastating spells with little interruption.

Warlocks can use Spells that are bolstered by a good Wisdom score. A high Dexterity Score can be useful for winning Initiative rolls during the final phase in combat where Focus Spells are completed. Dexterity also favors Ranged Weapons, which Warlocks prefer in order to stay out of the thick of combat. All adventurers benefit from a high Constitution score.

Casting Spells requires a free hand to gesticulate and enact the spell somatically, so Warlocks usually stick to one-handed weapons. However, some special magic items tagged **Fetish** allow you to cast Spells via that item as opposed to having a free hand.

Warlocks get these **Inherent Qualities**:

- ◆ **Class Skill** (Choose between Arcanum and Deception.)
- ◆ **Proficiencies** (Light and Short-Ranged Weapons. Cloth Armor.)
- ◆ **Caster** (Per Combat, you can ignore a Focus interruption. You still take the damage if any.)

Warlocks can pick from these **Talents**:

- ◆ **Bane** (Focus Spell - Enemy gets -2 to attack and -2 to damage rolls until it moves to a different zone.)
- ◆ **A Feast of the Mind** (Much to your comrade's chagrin, you can ingest the flesh or blood of a dead humanoid to gain a Skill possessed by that creature for the next 24 hours.)
- ◆ **Summon** (Per Combat Focus Spell - You immediately summon a monster, mystical beast, or undead creature to savagely fight for you and your allies. It counts as an Elite Henchman, lasting until they die or until the end of combat.)



- ◆ **Dark Metamorphosis** (Per Combat Focus Spell – Your form shifts into a blurry, smoky, shadowy haze, making it more difficult for enemies to hit you. While in this shadow form, you get +2 to damage and enemies get -2 to attack you.)
- ◆ **Shadowstep** (Per Zone Spell – When one of your spells or attacks downs an enemy, you can immediately take a Move action to transition to a different zone.)
- ◆

Step 2 – Select a Race

There are thousands of intelligent species in the known world, but none have truly ascended in history and left their mark like those known as the 'Kindred Races'. They have dominated the mortal world for ages. With similarities both physical and cultural, their histories have long been intertwined, sharing countless chapters - some bloody, some glorious. They often speak the same languages and read the same alphabets. More importantly, the Kindred Races are far and wide known for rallying under the banner of adventure and getting along well enough to succeed.

When you create your character, you'll select one of the eight available races. Each race comes with a Racial Talent.

The Humans

Humans are a relatively young but extremely ambitious people whose high reproduction rate leads to them being the most plentiful civilized race in the world. The oldest records indicate that humans were once the creations and servants of the titans before the gods destroyed the titans and freed them into the world to live with the dwarves and elves. Of the dozens of powerful empires that have risen and fallen since the first age, the vast majority of them have been led by humans. Today, the humans as a race are known as conquerors and imperialists who build massive armies and follow petty leaders. However, many individual humans have gained the respect of the kindred races through good deed and fellowship – enough to the point that the others don't immediately distrust a human when they meet one.

Humans get this **Racial Talent**

- ◆ **Adaptable** (You are versatile and have been able to pick up a special ability rare for someone with your background. Choose one extra Talent from any class other than your own.)

The Elves

Elves are an illustrious people who descend from the ancient and mysterious race known as the eladrin. While the eladrin have long since left this world behind, the elves remain and thrive. In centuries past, they built many great empires that rose and fell. Today, elves tend to remove themselves from the national stage, staying secluded in their wilderness enclaves and protecting their territory. Elves are slender and typically taller than humans, with long pointed ears. They often have sharp, almond shaped eyes with slightly incandescent irises of strange hues.

Elves get this **Racial Talent**:

- ◆ **Sylvan** (You can speak with wilderness creatures like bears, birds, rodents, or even lizards. You have a natural affinity for living in the wilderness and get +2 to Survival checks. You do not need to sleep, only requiring three or four hours of semi-alert meditation. This gives you +2 to Take Watch rolls while Hunkering Down.)

The Dwarves

Proud, stubborn, and fiercely loyal, the dwarves are one of the oldest known species, predating even the elves (though not the eladrin). They have long standing traditions and look down on others of their kind who do not honor their heritage. In the first age, the dwarves were hated by the titans and were forced below the earth. The race has since adapted and even flourished in their subterranean strongholds, growing rich on treasures mined from the mountains and building the largest cities known to the world. Dwarves are shorter than most other kindred races, but are generally as heavy with broad frames and bulky, muscular bodies. The males wear great beards and the females wear their hair in thick braids.

Dwarves get this **Racial Talent**:

- ◆ **Cavernborn** (You are an expert at navigating caverns and other underground locations, never losing your sense of direction and using your darksight to see in the shadows – you get +2 to Dungeoneering checks. You are like an anchor and cannot be Pushed in combat, though can still be Pulled. Also, you can drink any non-dwarves under the table like it's nothing.)

The Halflings

The halflings are a peaceful and curious people who are known for their affinity for good drink, good smoke, and good company. They are jovial and outgoing, famous for their ability to always remember someone's name and never forget a face. Halflings emerged around the same time as the humans, set free from their former titan masters by the usurping gods. Unlike humans, halflings found comfort in small, tight-knit communities that prefer to stay out of complex politics and wars. Now-a-days, halflings have found their way out of the closed society of their ancestors and are now common in any major civilization that will have them.

Halflings get this **Racial Talent**:

- ◆ **Heritage** (Whenever you visit a sizable town or city for the first time, or if it's been a half-year or more since visiting, roll 1d10. On a 1 or 10, you receive word that a family member or distant relative is also in town. If you roll a 10, the family member is helpful or at least accommodating. If you roll a 1, the family member is unhelpful or even borderline hostile. Halflings are small and agile, known for being sneaky and cunning – you get +2 to Stealth checks. Also, they never forget names and faces.)

The Dragonkin

The Dragonkin are an imposing but honorable race that resemble humanoid dragons. Sadly, the Dragonkin are a dying race. After a long and bloody war with the chromatic dragons that created and enslaved them, their race was bitterly cursed with near total infertility. With reproduction a rarity, this has all but eradicated the race. Still, those that remain do their best to bring honor to their names. While other races might hide for fear of extinction, Dragonkin proudly face their inevitable fate and carry on their long legacy as expert soldiers and tacticians.

Dragonkin get this **Racial Talent**:

- ◆ **Wyrmblood** (The blood of dragons ruins through your veins – this means you possess a breath weapon. Per Combat Focus Action, unleash your dragon's breath on an enemy in your zone dealing 3d6 damage.)

The Shadowborn

The Dragonkin are an imposing but honorable race that resemble humanoid dragons. Sadly, the Dragonkin are a dying race. After a long and bloody war with the chromatic dragons that created and enslaved them, their race was bitterly cursed with near total infertility. With reproduction a rarity, this has all but eradicated the race. Still, those that remain do their best to bring honor to their names. While other races might hide for fear of extinction, Dragonkin proudly face their inevitable fate and carry on their long legacy as expert soldiers and tacticians.

Shadowborn get this **Racial Talent**:

- ◆ **Wyrmblood** (The blood of dragons ruins through your veins – this means you possess a breath weapon. Per Day Focus Action - Unleash your dragon's breath on an enemy in your zone dealing 3d6 damage.)

STEP 3 – ASSIGNING ATTRIBUTES

The next step in creating your character is to Assign Bonuses to your Attributes. You assign bonuses based off four priorities: Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, and Untrained. Attribute bonuses come into play often during the game, influencing just about everything you do. Your class description recommends some suggested Attributes to focus on for an optimal match, but feel free to be creative since your character should be relatively effective in any case, just in different ways depending on your selection.

There are six Attributes that govern the different aspects of your character's natural abilities and tolerances.

- ◆ **Strength (STR)** – Strength measures your character's brawniness and physique, including muscle mass and effective physical power. This influences melee combat, the Athletics Skill, and situations that test pure body power.
- ◆ **Dexterity (DEX)** – Dexterity measures your character's agility and physical deftness, including balance, nimbleness, quickness, and hand-eye coordination. This influences Initiative, ranged combat and Skills like Acrobatics and Stealth, as well situations that test pure grace of movement.
- ◆ **Constitution (CON)** – Constitution measures your character's healthiness and physical endurance, including fortitude, stamina, and endurance. This influences how much damage you can take and keep standing, as well as the Endurance Skill and any situation that tests pure physical tolerances and limits.
- ◆ **Intelligence (INT)** – Intelligence measures your character's wits and problem-solving skills, including things like mental acuity, memory, comprehension, and analyzation. This influences many Skills like Crafting, Dungeoneering, and Lore, as well as any situation that tests mental intellect.
- ◆ **Wisdom (WIS)** – Wisdom measures your character's mental depth and connection to the world around them, reflecting things like common sense, perceptiveness, resolve, and spirituality. This influences Skills like Awareness, Divinity, Survival, and Willpower.
- ◆ **Charisma (CHA)** – Charisma measures your character's personality and ability to influence others with charm, deceit, seduction, manipulation, intimidation, or attractiveness. It influences Skills like Deception, Diplomacy, Leadership, and Street Savvy.

Assigning Bonuses by Priority

When it comes to determining your starting Attribute bonuses, you do so by assigning priorities. When you create a character, you choose a Primary Attribute, a Secondary Attribute, and a Tertiary Attribute, assigning each one a +3, +2, and +1 respectively. All other Attributes are considered Untrained and start at a +0. Remember you check your class description for recommendations on what to prioritize with your character's Attributes. The following chart shows the priority levels and the related bonus.

Priority	Bonus
Primary	+3
Secondary	+2
Tertiary	+1
Untrained	+0

First, select which Attribute you want to be your Primary Attribute, and write +3 on your character sheet next to that Attribute. Then, select your Secondary Attribute, writing in +2. Choose a Tertiary Attribute, write in +1, and then write in +0 for the other three Attributes that have no priority.

STEP 4 – DETERMINE DERIVED STATISTICS

Now that you have your Attribute bonuses assigned, you can determine all the statistics that are derived from these bonuses. Each Attribute contributes to one of the Derived Statistics. There are five Derived Statistics that come into play during your adventures:

- ◆ **Max Load** – This determines how many Heavy Items you can carry on you without becoming Encumbered. If you're carrying more Heavy Items than your Max Load, your character is encumbered. Your Max Load is equal to your Strength bonus.
- ◆ **Initiative** – This is rolled during combat when you and any number of opponents are acting in the same phase of that round to determine who gets to complete their action first. Your Initiative is equal to your Dexterity and Intelligence bonuses added together (DEX + INT).
- ◆ **Max HP** – This is your maximum Hit Points (HP). It determines how much damage you can take before becoming Incapacitated. You determine your Max HP by adding ten to your Constitution bonus, and then multiplying that by two (10+CON x 2).
- ◆ **Notice** – This is your passive awareness ability and reflects how well you can notice important things when they are not actively paying attention. Notice is equal to ten plus your Wisdom bonus. (10+WIS).
- ◆ **Sense Motive** – This is your passive intuition ability and reflects how well you can sense when someone else you're interacting with socially is lying or trying to manipulate. Sense Motive is equal to ten plus your Charisma bonus (10+CHA).

Find the values of all your Derived Statistics and note them on your character sheet. As you Level Up and add to your Attribute bonuses, be sure to re-evaluate your Stats to determine which have changed, updating them as necessary. Some Talents may affect your Derived Statistics, so be sure to note those changes as well.

STEP 5 – SELECT YOUR SKILLS

When you pick a class, you get to choose between two Class Skills. Choose a class Skill from those available. You also get to select a Skill of your choice at 1st level. Rogues and Rangers get to start with two Skills of their choice.

Possessing a Skill in a certain field is very valuable. When you make an Attribute roll and the Skill applies to the situation, you can't roll a Failure – instead getting the Close-Call result, which means you still manage to barely pull it off, but with some serious consequences attached (which is better than failing).

List of Skills:

- ◆ **Acrobatics** (Performing feats of extraordinary agility, balance, and coordination. Usually rooted in Dexterity.)
- ◆ **Arcanum** (Recalling or researching knowledge of the occult and magical phenomena, as well as deciphering arcane runes and identifying magical or cursed items. Usually rooted in Intelligence.)
- ◆ **Athletics** (Performing feats of physical brawn like lifting, climbing, swimming, running, or jumping. Usually rooted in Strength.)
- ◆ **Awareness** (Using your keen perception, watchfulness, and senses to be aware of your surroundings. Usually rooted in Wisdom.)
- ◆ **Crafting** (Knowledge of building materials and techniques applied to construct useful items. Usually rooted in Intelligence.)
- ◆ **Deception** (Deceiving and manipulating others with charm, wits, guile, and a fast tongue. Usually rooted in Charisma.)
- ◆ **Diplomacy** (Negotiating or appealing to others with influence, personality, or camaraderie. Usually rooted in Charisma.)
- ◆ **Divinity** (Reciting or researching knowledge of ancient titans, gods, deities, and demons, as well as deciphering divine scripture and identifying blessed or infernal items. Usually rooted in Wisdom.)
- ◆ **Dungeoneering** (Providing food, water, and shelter, as well as navigating caverns and tunnels in dungeons locations. Usually rooted in Intelligence.)
- ◆ **Endurance** (Dealing with pain and exhaustion, weathering physical toil with stamina and durability. Usually rooted in Constitution.)
- ◆ **Sense Motive** (Reading people and sensing their motivations, useful in social interactions to determine if someone is lying or trying to manipulate you. Usually rooted in Charisma.)
- ◆ **Leadership** (Giving orders to others to lead them in battle or dangerous situations. Usually rooted in Charisma.)
- ◆ **Lore** (Remembering and researching knowledge of the legendary, mysterious, or ancient as well as reading and speaking ancient languages. Usually rooted in Intelligence.)
- ◆ **Stealth** (Sneaking, hiding, or otherwise attempting to make your movements or actions go unnoticed by others. Usually rooted in Dexterity.)
- ◆ **Street Savvy** (Providing food, water, and shelter, as well as navigating back streets and gathering information from the ruffians while in urban city locations. Usually rooted in Charisma.)
- ◆ **Survival** (Providing food, water, and shelter, as well as navigating trails and weather watching in wilderness locations. Usually rooted in Wisdom.)
- ◆ **Treatment** (Providing care and healing techniques to wounded or dying patients. Usually rooted in Intelligence.)

STEP 6 – SELECT STARTING INVENTORY

Player Characters don't start with much at 1st Level, but they can acquire new items during their adventures.

New characters begin play with a **Starting Inventory**:

- ◆ 1 Weapon in which they are Proficient
- ◆ 1 Armor in which they are Proficient
- ◆ 1 Kit of your choice
- ◆ 1d4 personal trinkets (if desired)
- ◆ 2d4x10 Coins
- ◆ If you are a Cleric, a Wooden Holy Symbol

Kits are starting allotments of useful equipment in a backpack, each with its own theme. These are the kits available:

- ◆ **Burglar's Kit** (Burglar's Outfit plus Backpack with Bedroll, Belt Pouch, Crow Bar, Hip Lantern with Oil, 40' Rope & Grappling Hook, Lock Pick Set, Caltrops, Trail rations for 7 days, Disguise Make-Up Box, Wool Sack, and a Waterskin.)
- ◆ **Explorer's Kit** (Explorer's Outfit plus Backpack with Bedroll, Belt Pouch, Chalk, Hip Lantern with Oil, 40' Rope, Signal Whistle, Telescoping 10' pole, 5 Iron Pitons, Mallet, Trail Rations for 7 days, 2 Flares, Waterskin.)
- ◆ **Healer's Kit** (Healer's Outfit plus 3 Healing Poultices, 2 Flasks of Anti-Venom, 5 Candles, 10 Tinderflicks, Empty Jar, Mirror, Bar of Soap, Hour Glass, Cauterizing Rod, Bedroll, Trail Rations for 7 Days, Waterskin.)
- ◆ **Hunter's Kit** (Hunter's Outfit plus Fishing Line and Hook, Bait, Bedroll, Belt Pouch, Flint & Steel, Whetstone, Trapping Gear, Nets, 40' Rope, Skinning Knife,.)
- ◆ **Scholar's Kit** (Scholar's Outfit plus Backpack with Bedroll, Belt Pouch, 5 Candles, 10 Tinderflicks, Ink Well, Quill, 100 Parchment Sheets, Sealing Wax, Signet Ring, Sun Dial, Magnifying Glass, 7 Days of Trailer Rations, Waterskin.)
- ◆ **Traveler's Kit** (Traveler's Outfit plus Backpack with All-Weather Blanket, Compass, Maps, Bedroll, Belt Pouch, Flint & Steel, Tinder Box, Hooded Lantern with Oil, Trail Rations for 7 days, Tent, Waterskin.)

Characters get a number of starting Coins equal to 2d4x10. These coins cannot be spent until after the game begins, when the character has a chance to go shopping. These coins and their starting gear will be all the adventurers' have to live off of until they manage to score some work or find wealth otherwise.

If desired, each character can start with 1d4 personal trinkets that represent the things they carry on them that make them more than just an adventurer with a bunch of soulless gear. These are little items of mostly sentimental value, like simple jewelry, portraits of loved ones, mementos, tokens of the past, or other memorabilia that is special to who the character is, but doesn't exactly have any utility.

Step 7 - CATALYSTS

Catalysts are experience triggers for your character. They are special character qualities that, when you role-play them or add them into the fiction in a significant way, trigger an XP award. They represent specific motivations and qualities that drive your characters to reflect on themselves and evolve as people. Mechanically, your catalysts are your tools for gaining experience and leveling up.

All characters get this catalyst:

- ◆ **The Adventurer** (mark XP when you complete a quest, defeat a vile monster, or unearth a cache of treasure)

And then you can pick two catalysts from the following:

1. **The Affectionate** (mark XP when you get intimate, physically or not, with another character)
2. **The Ambitious** (mark XP when you gain status or fame with a desired group of peers)
3. **The Apprentice** (mark XP when you take a risk or accomplish something that your mentor would be proud of)
4. **The Avenger** (mark XP when you put yourself at risk to further your path to revenge)
5. **The Benefactor** (mark XP when you help those less fortunate than you)
6. **The Brokenhearted** (mark XP when you get lost in nostalgia or turn away the affection of others)
7. **The Broker** (mark XP when you make a deal or facilitate a negotiation)
8. **The Controller** (mark XP when you put others under your control or manipulate others to do your will)
9. **The Commander** (mark XP when you make a tactical plan or give orders to carry out that plan)
10. **The Coward** (mark XP when you avoid danger or put an end to a fight using non-combat methods)
11. **The Curer** (mark XP when you make progress to cure a vicious disease or other ailment)
12. **The Daring** (mark XP when you put yourself at risk for fun or the thrill of it)
13. **The Dependable** (mark XP when you hold up your end of the bargain or provide assistance to someone who depends on you)
14. **The Escapist** (mark XP when you take action to distance yourself from your old life style)
15. **The Exorcist** (mark XP when you locate and banish demons or evil spirits)
16. **The Ex-patriot** (mark XP when you take action to distance yourself from your homeland or culture)
17. **The Explorer** (mark XP when you discover a new location or blaze a new trail)
18. **The Free Spirit** (mark XP when you take a risk to protect your freedom)
19. **The Greedy** (mark XP when you use your skills and cleverness to earn a decent amount of coin or valuables)
20. **The Gregarious** (mark XP when you gain favor with or impress a peer with your jovial and friendly attitude)
21. **The Grifter** (mark XP when you swindle or manipulate someone using confidence tricks and deception)
22. **The Guardian** (mark XP when you put yourself at risk in order to protect someone or something important to you)
23. **The Hero** (mark XP when you take a risk or stand up to threats so someone weaker doesn't have to)
24. **The Homebound** (mark XP when you further your journey back to your homeland)
25. **The Honorable** (mark XP when you take action to protect or restore honor to yourself, your family, or your cause)
26. **The Hunter** (mark XP when you track down or intercept your prey)
27. **The Imposter** (mark XP when you convince someone you are someone or something you secretly are not)
28. **The Knowledgeable** (mark XP when you share an important fact or produce a useful piece of information)
29. **The Land Lord** (mark XP when you gain new holdings or expand existing ones)
30. **The Lawful** (mark XP when you uphold the law or instruct others in the law)
31. **The Lost Finder** (mark XP when you discover new clues as to the location of a lost item of significance)
32. **The Lost Love** (mark XP when you find clues or pursue finding a love lost to you long ago)
33. **The Mercenary** (mark XP when you get paid to fight under a patron's banner)
34. **The Missionary** (mark XP when you take action to pursue or further your personal mission)
35. **The Outcast** (mark XP when you suffer or are forced into danger due to the fact that you are an outcast)
36. **The Paragon** (mark XP when you put yourself at risk for justice and equality for people)
37. **The Penitent** (mark XP when you do something significant to make amends for a wrong you committed)
38. **The Preacher** (mark XP when you spend significant time spreading the good word or if you manage to convert someone)
39. **The Preserver** (mark XP when you take action to prevent harm from coming to nature or wildlife)
40. **The Prover** (mark XP when you take action to prove to others that you are not what they think you are)
41. **The Rebel** (mark XP when you put yourself at risk to fight oppression or corruption in the government)
42. **The Sage** (mark XP when you learn of an ancient secret or expand your repertoire of occult and mythical knowledge)
43. **The Savior** (mark XP when you put yourself at risk to save the life of someone that you think deserves it)
44. **The Scoundrel** (mark XP when you use your charm and guile to get the better of someone)
45. **The Settler** (mark XP when you take action to make a wild area into a more civilized and developed area)
46. **The Spy** (mark XP when you gather information via stealth and trickery)
47. **The Strict** (mark XP when you decline comfort, pleasure, or safety for the sake of maintaining your personal code of conduct)
48. **The Surmounter** (mark XP when you perform a tricky task despite a relevant disability)
49. **The Survivor** (mark XP when you take action to provide shelter or sustenance in wild or unknown terrain)
50. **The Teacher** (mark XP when you teach others something they didn't know or assist someone with a task you're skilled in)
51. **The Thief** (mark XP when you use your skill and cleverness to steal something of value to you)
52. **The Traveler** (mark XP when you encounter a new culture or see a landmark for the first time)
53. **The Trickster** (mark XP when you use your cunning and guile to get the better of others)
54. **The Truth Seeker** (mark XP when you discover new clues to that lead the truth you wish to uncover)
55. **The Venerable** (mark XP when you use the knowledge you've acquired through age to avoid or overcome a problem)
56. **The Veteran** (mark XP when you recall your experiences to avoid violence or to protect someone)
57. **The Witcher** (mark XP when you get paid to kill monsters or beasts of great power)

STEP 8 – CONNECTIONS

When you create your group of adventurers, you must establish relationships or bonds between each member of the group. These bonds are called Connections and help clarify how the characters know each other. In addition, you can mark XP when you bring a connection into the spotlight during a scene.

Each person should go around the table, getting with each other player and agreeing on a connection that makes sense for the two characters. Consider the relationships already established between other characters. It can also be useful to look at the characters' catalysts and use those as a baseline for a cohesive set. Here are the bonds that you can choose from:

1. **Activist Friends** (You two met years ago protesting – peacefully or not – against a powerful organization. What or who were you protesting against and why did you have to abandon your efforts?)
2. **Arranged Marriage** (You're married, but not by choice. Who arranged the marriage, why are you still together, and do you plan to remain together?)
3. **Artist and Fan** (One of you was once a fairly popular artist of some kind, while the other was their biggest fan. What art form did the artist practice, why don't they practice it anymore, and how did the fan prevent the artist's reputation from being slandered in the past?)
4. **Blood Brothers/Sisters** (You are bonded through a ritualistic sharing of blood. What threat drove you two together and how did that lead to you bonding in blood?)
5. **Brothers in Arms** (You two served in the same military unit and weathered many a day of hardship together. Who were you fighting for and who were you fighting against?)
6. **Brothers/Sisters in Faith** (You both follow the same faith or worship the same deity. How did your shared religion bring you together and what event could test your faith most?)
7. **Business Partners** (You two once endeavored on a mutual joint venture to make money. What was the business and why did it fail?)
8. **Caravan Mates** (You two once traveled together in caravan over a long distance. Where were you going and what strange person or creature did you encounter while on the road?)
9. **Childhood Friends** (You two have been close friends since you were knee-high to a bugbear. What promises did you make to each other as kids which have been broken or are about to be broken?)
10. **Co-Conspirators** (You two were once part of a mysterious conspiracy. What was the conspiracy and who or what was it conspiring against?)
11. **Common Enemy** (While you may not be friends exactly, you are united by a common enemy. Who or what is this enemy and how do you plan to stop it?)
12. **Cousins** (You are cousins by blood and have spent many of your youthful years together. What troublesome situation has led to the two of you setting out on your own as adventurers?)
13. **Dealers** (You two once sold some kind of illegal drugs or substances. Who did you screw over and why were you forced to leave that place?)
14. **Distant Relatives** (You are related, but are on opposite sides of the family tree. What family issues have driven the two of you to each other's side?)
15. **Drinking Buddies** (You two have frequented the same taverns and shared more than a few drunken nights together. Which drunken story comes to mind that has loose ends that were never tied up?)
16. **Fake Family** (You pretend to be family members of some kind, but you're really not. Why do you pretend to be related and who knows your secret?)
17. **Former Boss and Hireling** (One of you was once an employee of the other. How did the business fail and how did you help each other move on?)
18. **Former Cell Mates** (You two once shared a cell in prison and have been comrades ever since. What threats did you two deal with there that might come back to haunt you?)
19. **Former Enemies** (For one reason or another, you two were once bitter enemies. What changed the nature of your relationship and how do you feel about each other now?)
20. **Former Gambler and Broker** (One of you was once a habitual gambler while the other facilitated their bets. What deal went south that sent you both on the run?)
21. **Former Guards** (You were once both guards for a powerful faction. What event led to your dismissal and why does your former faction have a bounty out on your heads?)
22. **Former Servants** (You were once both servants to a powerful figure. What event led to the death of that figure and why are you two on the run now?)
23. **Former Slaves** (You were once both slaves to an oppressive master. Who captured you initially, who was your master, and how did you gain freedom?)
24. **Foster Parent and Child** (One of you was once an orphan but the other adopted you. What happened to the orphan's parents and what drove the adopter to take them in?)
25. **Friendly Rivals** (The two of you are good friends but find it fun and exciting to compete with one another, sometimes taken to the extreme. In what structured event did you first cross paths and in what circumstances does friendly competition turn too serious?)
26. **Grifters** (You two were once con artists, making your living by tricking others into giving you access to their valuables. Who caught on to your ploy and how did they send you on the run?)
27. **Guildmates** (You were once both part of the same guild. What guild were you a part of and why are you no longer a member?)
28. **Healer and Wounded** (Once in the past, one of you endured grievous wounds that nobody thought you'd live from. The other managed to heal and nurse them back to health. What caused dire wounds or affliction and how did they repay the healer?)
29. **Hesitant Bedmates** (Despite the fact that you really don't like each other, you two just can't stop getting frisky. What don't you like about each other and what keeps drawing you back in?)
30. **Keepers of a Secret** (You two once held a valuable secret that only a few people knew of. What was the secret and how did the secret get out?)
31. **Lawman and Criminal** (You two first crossed paths as opponents, one being pursued by the other for arrest. What circumstances led to the two of you finding yourselves on the same side after all and what is the fallout?)
32. **Loan Shark and Debtor** (One of you was once in serious debt to the other. How was the debt settled and why was adventuring the natural progression of your relationship from there?)
33. **Married** (You two have taken the vows of marriage and regard each other as life partners. How did you meet and what single thing has been threatening your bond?)
34. **Odd Couple** (At first glance, people would never think you two were together, but despite adversity you remain romantically involved. What has been the biggest challenge to your relationship and how are you still attempting to overcome it?)
35. **Off the same Farm** (You were born and raised in the same backwoods village and have known each other for years. What event drove the two of you to leave your home town and set off on a life of adventure?)

36. **Officials** (You were once both in a mutual position of authority for a government body. Why position did you two hold and why were you driven out of the government hostilely?)
37. **Old Flames** (Long ago you were romantically involved, but something happened and you split up. What caused the split up and what in what situation might you rekindle the flame?)
38. **On-Again, Off-Again** (For years, the two of you have gone back and forth alternating between getting involved romantically and breaking it off. What situation might drive you apart forever or what might bring you together permanently?)
39. **Only Survivors** (You are the sole survivors of some horrific incident. What did the two of you manage to survive and how does it haunt you to this day?)
40. **Orphan and Caretaker** (One of you was once an orphan and the other took them as a caretaker. Why was the orphan alone and why did the caretaker decide to welcome them into their home?)
41. **Outcasts** (You were both cast out of your former home on bad terms and are not allowed to return. Where did you live that you were forced from and why were you cast out?)
42. **Parent and Child** (One of you is the son or daughter of the other. What happened to the other parent and how did that event drive the two of you into a life of adventure?)
43. **Peddlers** (You were once both dirty poor, having to beg for money in the streets. Where did beg and how did you both end up leaving that place and taking up a life of adventure?)
44. **Perfect Strangers** (You two don't know each other very well – perhaps you met yesterday – but you seemed to clique right away. What topic did you two discuss that brought you together and what things still make you curious about the other?)
45. **Political Partners** (You two were once allies on the political stage or mutual associates of a powerful noble. What threat drove you from your positions and how does your former liege feel about your absence?)
46. **Reluctant Allies** (Despite coming from two very different points of view, you seem to always find yourselves on the same side. Why do you distrust one another and what common threat keeps you on the same team?)
47. **Savior and Savee** (In the past, one of you stepped in and provided aid for the other that ended up making a huge positive difference in their life. What was threatening the savee's life and how did the savior step in?)
48. **Secret Lovers** (The two of you are romantically involved, but very few, if any, people know. What threat prevents you from revealing your relationship and what might happen if the truth is uncovered?)
49. **Separated** (You two were once married but have since separated. Why do you two still remain in the same adventuring company and what single thing might drive you back together or further drive you apart?)
50. **Shared Culture** (While you two may not be the closest of friends, you find a common bond in your shared heritage. What things about your shared culture do you yet disagree on?)
51. **Shipmates** (You were once shipmates aboard a seaborne vessel. What was the name of the ship, what favorite tall tale do you bring up at the campfire all the time, and what happen to the crew that caused them to scatter?)
52. **Siblings** (You share parents and have grown up together as family. What member of your family has always been a thorn in your side and how has this kept the two of you together?)
53. **Smuggling Partners** (You two were once part of a band of smugglers. What were you smuggling, where to, and what event caused the band to scatter?)
54. **Spy and Target** (One of you was once given the responsibility to spy on the other. Who was the spy working for, why were they spying on the other, and why did they end up both running from the spy's former employer?)
55. **Think You're Kin, But You're Not** (You have grown up thinking that the two of you are family, but unbeknownst to you, you're not family at all. What situation in your past led you to believe you're kin and what clues have you been ignoring that suggest you aren't?)
56. **Thug Brothers** (You were once part of a rough and tumble street gang. How did you two get bootied out of the gang and who out there still wants to see you dead?)
57. **Tribemates** (You two come from a common tribe and have spent much of your younger years together. What is your home tribe like and why did you leave your tribal territory?)
58. **Twins** (You are either fraternal or identical twins and have spent your life together. What strange rumors have you heard about occult implications of you being twins?)
59. **Twins Separated at Birth** (You are either fraternal or identical twins, but were separated at birth. What caused the separation and how did the two of you find each other again?)
60. **Vagrants** (You two were once aimless wanderers with no home and no goals. What even changed your lives and drove you to adventure?)
61. **Would Be Lovers, But...** (All the signs point to the two of you getting together romantically, but something is preventing you from doing so. What is preventing you from getting together and in what circumstances would you ignore that barrier?)

GEAR AND EQUIPMENT

Once the game has begun, players can use their starting Coins to purchase individual or special items from the following list. The list is organized by type and price. So for example, each Simple Item listed in parenthesis costs 1 Coin. A piece of gear from the Basic Gear list costs 5 coins. If someone wants an item that isn't listed, just eyeball the price category.

- ◆ **Simple Gear for 1 Coin** (5 Tinderflicks, Iron Piton, Waterskin, 1 Day of Trail Rations, Flint & Steel, Belt Pouch, Sealing Wax, 25 Parchment Sheets, Quill, Candle, Torch, Fishing Line and Hook, Bait, Empty Jar, Wool Sack, Tub of Shaving Cream, Wooden Bucket, Pound of Coal, Set of Dice, Clay Jar, Pint of Lard, 100 Nails, Simple Razor, 50' String, Serf's Outfit, Wooden Holy Symbol, Pint of Ale, Big Loaf of Bread, Pint of Brandy, Simple Meal, Bottle of Fruit Juice, Bottle of Mead, Bottle of Milk, Block of Cheese, Pot of Tea, Cup of Coffee, Room at a Flop-House.)
- ◆ **Basic Gear for 5 Coins** (Lantern Oil, All-Weather Blanket, Signet Ring, 40' Rope, Flare, Bar of Soap, Shaving Razor, Walking Stick, Hatchet, Wood Chopping Axe, Hammer, Hacksaw, Caltrops, Whetstone, Skinning Knife, Signal Whistle, Deck of Cards, Hammock, Mallet, Ink Well, Iron Pot, Simple 10' Pole, Clay Jug, Ounce of Pipeweed, Pliers, Sewing Set, Spade, Shovel, Tinder Box, Empty Vial, Empty Flask, Burglar's Outfit, Explorer's Outfit, Healer's Outfit, Hunter's Outfit, Scholar's Outfit, Traveler's Outfit, Sailor's Outfit, Chime, Pipes, Vial of Holy Water, Pitcher of Ale, Bottle of Brandy, Glass of Wine, Bottle of Cider, Warm Meal, Bottle of Coffee, Room at a Cheap Inn, Cheap Intimate Company)
- ◆ **Advanced Gear for 10 Coins** (Bedroll, Crowbar, Back Pack, Grappling Hook, Cauterizing Rod, Healing Poultice, Nets, 20' Chain, Crampons, Iron Drill, Pot of Glue, Wooden Barrel, Bell, 10' Ladder, Jar of Paint, Pick Axe, Smoking Pipe, Ounce of Numbweed, 25' Ironweb String, Sundial, Cloth Armor, Painting Canvas, Wineskin, Merchant's Outfit, Artisan's Outfit, Flute, Horn, Gong, Drum, Iron Holy Symbol, Wooden Raft, Wagon Wheel, Bottle of Wine, Jug of Cider, Sumptuous Meal, Gallon of Ale, Room at a Decent Inn, Live Chicken.)
- ◆ **Professional Gear for 25 Coins** (Lock Pick Set, Disguise Make-Up Box, Telescoping 10' Pole, Flask of Anti-Venom, Mirror, Perfume, Hour Glass, Trapping Gear, Hip Lantern, Magnifying Glass, Compass, Pulled Cart, Blank Journal Book, Walking Cane, Padlock and Key, Pulley, Signal Rocket, Lock Pick Set, Light Weapon, Short Ranged Weapon, Leather Armor, Light Shield, Artistic Paint Set, Smith's Outfit, Hookah, Lute, Mandolin, Small Canoe, Ship Sales, Dog Sled, Bottle of Decent Wine, Delicacy Meal, Room at a City Inn, Decent Intimate Company, Live Donkey.)
- ◆ **Special Gear for 50 Coins** (Spyglass, Anvil, Mail Armor, Martial Weapon, Reach Weapon, Great Weapon, Long Ranged Weapon, Heavy Shield, Fine Intimate Company, Noble's Outfit, Harp, Violin, Silver Holy Symbol, Large Canoe, Wagon, Bottle of Fine Wine, Expensive Meal, Keg of Ale, Riding Horse.)
- ◆ **Exquisite Gear for 100 Coins** (Water Clock, Plate Armor, Royalty's Outfit, Piano, Simple Carriage, Bottle of Exquisite Wine, Exquisite Meal, Room at an Exquisite Inn, Kayak, Small Fishing Boat, Basic Magic Items, War Horse.)

All of the above gear is available in any sizable city with multiple temples and lots of shops. In smaller cities, everything should be available, but Exquisite and Special Gear might take a little longer to locate. In townships, Exquisite and Special Gear are rare in a shop, but individual owners may be willing to sell if you can find one. In small villages, Special and Exquisite Gear are exceedingly rare, while Professional Gear is only sold in specialty shops. In a tiny hamlet, even Simple Gear may be tough to find.

Weapon Types

You may pick any one weapon at character creation.

- ◆ **Light Weapon** (1d6+Dex damage, Quick Attack, Main-hand or Off-hand, Thrown, +2 in Tight zones, Examples: Short Sword, Dagger, Stiletto, Rapier, Hatchet, Quarterstaff, Javelin, Wakazashi.)
- ◆ **Martial Weapon** (1d8+Str damage, Strong Attack, Main-hand, +2 in Tight and Open zones, Examples: Mace, Long Sword, Club, Battle Axe, Scimitar, Falchion, Katana.)
- ◆ **Reach Weapon** (1d10+Str damage, Strong Attack, Two-handed, Enemies get -2 to attacks against you, +2 in Hazardous zones, Counts as a Heavy Item, Examples: Poleaxe, Spear, Longstaff, Glaive, Voulge, Halberd, Flail, Naginata.)
- ◆ **Great Weapon** (1d12+Str damage, Strong Attack, Two-handed, +2 in Dense Zones, Counts as Heavy item, Examples: Great-Axe, Two-Handed Sword, Great-Club, Zweihander, Claymore, Nodachi.)
- ◆ **Short Ranged Weapon** (1d6+Dex damage, Quick Attack, Main-handed, Ranged, +2 to attack enemies in Open Zones, Examples: Short Bow, Sling, Hand Crossbow, Matchlock Pistol.)
- ◆ **Long Ranged Weapon** (1d8+Dex damage, Strong Attack, Two-handed, Ranged, +2 to attack enemies in Open Zones, Examples: Long Bow, Field Crossbow, Matchlock Rifle.)

Armor Types

You may pick one armor when creating your character.

- ◆ **Cloth Armor** (Armor Soak: 1, Examples: Thick Robes, Padded, Stud-Padded, Hardened Canvas, Doublet, Barbarian's Loincloth.)
- ◆ **Leather Armor** (Soak 2, Bulk 1, Examples: Banded Leather, Studded Leather, Thick Smock, Hide, Ironbark, Jack of Plate, Brigandine.)
- ◆ **Mail Armor** (Soak 3, Bulk 2, Heavy Item, Examples: Chainmail, Ringmail, Scalemail, Banded Mail, Splintmail, Cuirass.)
- ◆ **Plate Armor** (Soak 4, Bulk 3, Very Heavy Item, Examples: Field Plate, Full Plate, Banded Plate, War Plate.)
- ◆ **Light Shield** (Per Combat - Soak up to 5 damage. Examples: Buckler, Wooden Shield, Kite Shield.)
- ◆ **Heavy Shield** (Per Combat - Soak up to 10 damage, Heavy Item, Examples: Iron Shield, Steel Bulwark, Tower Shield.)

Equipment Tags

Weapons and armor are noted with tags which represent the features of that item. Here are the tags:

- ◆ **Zone Bonus** (Each weapon has a zone bonus, noted as: +2 in Tight zones. When you character is attacking an enemy in that zone type, you add the +2 modifier to your attack.)
- ◆ **Damage** (Roll the dice noted for damage and add the key Attribute. If you're not proficient with that weapon type, you do not add the key Attribute.)
- ◆ **Quick Attack** (This weapon can attack during the Quick Attack phase of combat. You can also delay your Quick Attack to the Strong Attack phase, participating in Initiative if necessary, but get +1 to your attack roll.)
- ◆ **Strong Attack** (This weapon can attack during the Strong Attack phase of Combat.)
- ◆ **Main-Handed** (This weapon can only be equipped in your main hand. You cannot wield two main-handed weapons at the same time without Talents.)
- ◆ **Off-Handed** (This weapon can be equipped in your off hand. Wielding an off-hand weapon allows you to reroll your main-hand weapon's damage at 1d6 damage on a Full Hit.)
- ◆ **Two-Handed** (This weapon requires both hands to wield.)
- ◆ **Thrown** (This weapon can be used to attack an enemy in an adjacent zone, but after you throw it, you must Move to that zone in order to retrieve it and use it again.)
- ◆ **Ranged** (This weapon can attack the same zone, or adjacent zones.)
- ◆ **Heavy Item** (This Item counts for 1 Load.)
- ◆ **Very Heavy Item** (This item counts for 2 Loads.)
- ◆ **Armor Soak** (When you take damage from an attack, subtract your armor's soak from the total damage. If you are wearing armor you are not proficient in, subtract 1 from the armor's soak value.)
- ◆ **Bulk** (When you wear an armor with Bulk, subtract the bulk from attribute rolls wear the armor's restrictiveness could hinder you, such as Acrobatics, Athletics, or Stealth rolls. If you are wearing armor you are not proficient in, add +2 to the armor's Bulk value.)
- ◆ **Shields** (Once per combat, you can use a shield to soak some damage by subtracting the shield's soak from the total damage from a single attack.)

Proficiencies

When you are Proficient with a Weapon or Armor Type, you can use that item as listed. However, when you use a Weapon you are not proficient with, you do not get any zone bonuses and you do not add the root Attribute to your damage roll. When you wear armor you're not proficient in, you add +2 to the Bulk and reduce the Armor Soak by 1.

Encumbrance

Your character's Max Load specifies how many Heavy Items you can carry without being encumbered. Usually, you can carry a number of Heavy Items equal to your Strength modifier. If you're carrying more Heavy Items than your Max Load, your character is struggling under the weight and is considered Encumbered. While Encumbered, you get -5 to all rolls – that includes Attribute rolls, Attack rolls, and Damage rolls. Items that count against your Max Load are noted as Heavy Items and Very Heavy Items.

Ammunition

Ammo is not tracked for simplicity and balance. Unless the circumstances are unique and the DM has good reason to rule you're out of ammo due to the fiction in place, your character is assumed to always have enough ammunition for their Ranged Weapons. It's also assumed your character retrieves any salvageable ammo from fallen enemies at the end of a combat.

RESTING

Most tasks can be handled using the general Adventuring system and a little imagination. However, resting is a special situation because it is through the characters getting rest that they Heal Up, Level Up, and evolve their characters via Catalysts and Connections. When the adventuring party is resting in a dangerous and uncivilized place, like in the middle of the wilderness or in the bowels of a dungeon, they must Hunker Down in order to rest and gain access to these benefits.

Hunkering Down

When you Hunker Down to rest in the wilderness or in the bowels of a dungeon, first you Make Camp, then you Break Bread, then you Take Watch.

Making Camp

When you Make Camp, designate someone in the group to make a Wisdom (Survival) roll and have them describe how your group sets up the encampment securely.

- ◆ On a Full Success, get +2 to the Take Watch roll.
- ◆ On a Partial Success or a Close Call, get +1.
- ◆ On a Failure, get -2.

Breaking Bread

When you Break Bread, you must consume a ration or other meal to be eligible to Heal Up and Level Up if you get the chance after Taking Watch. With or without food, Breaking Bread also reflects the campfire talk the group gets into afterhours. This is an opportunity to change up your Catalysts and Connections.

Consider each of your Catalysts and decide if each of them is still relevant to your character and interesting to you. If you want to, you can drop a Catalyst and replace it with a new one that makes sense for your character. Likewise, consider each of your Connections and discuss with the other player if the Connection still makes sense. You can drop, add, or change Connections as you see fit by role-playing or describing how they evolve.

Take Watch

After Breaking Bread, you must Take Watch. Choose who is taking first shift. That player must make a Wisdom (Awareness) roll.

- ◆ On a Full Success, you avoid detection and get some much needed rest. Everyone that consumed a ration can Level Up and Heal Up.
- ◆ On a Partial Success, you avoid detection but your rest is troubled. Everyone can Level Up and Heal Up, but your Heal Up die is a d4 instead of the normal d8.
- ◆ On a Close-Call, your rest is cut short by a Random Encounter, but your watchman spots the threat before it gets the drop on you. You can't Level Up or Heal Up.
- ◆ On a Failure, your rest is cut short by a Random Encounter and you fail to see it coming. It surprises you. You can't Level Up or Heal Up.

Resting in a Safe Place

When you rest in a safe place with a warm bed and a meal, you can Break Bread, Heal Up, and Level Up no problem. Just describe how it all goes down.

Healing Up

When you Heal Up, roll 1d8+Constitution and heal that many HP. If your rest was troubled, roll 1d4+Constitution instead. If someone in the group has the Treatment Skill, add that character's Level to your roll.

Leveling Up

If you've marked off twenty boxes on the Karma Track on your character sheet, you can Level Up. When you do so, you get to increase your level and upgrade your character's abilities. See Leveling Up in the next section.

LEVELING UP

Your character's advancement is driven by Karma. There is a Karma Track on your character sheet to help you keep track of your Karma. By tapping into your Catalysts and Connections, you earn Karma Tokens, and when you spend these tokens, you mark a box on your Karma Track. After you mark off twenty karma, you can Level Up after resting.

Level	Talents	Skills	Attributes	Max HP
1	3+1	1+1 (2*)	Assign	(10+Con)x2
2	+1		+1	
3	+1	+1		+5
4	+1		+1	
5	+1	+1		+5
6	+1		+1	
7	+1	+1		+5
8	+1		+1	
9	+1	+1		+5
10	+1		+1	

* Rogues and Rangers get an extra Skill at 1st Level

THE KARMA CYCLE

Sitting in the middle of the gaming table should be a bowl full of tokens. This is the **Karma Pool**. The tokens inside are called **Karma Tokens**. Every time you start a new game session, put a number of tokens into the pool roughly equal to ten times the number of players in the game.

The handing out of these tokens is a group effort, and Catalysts and Connections are your tools to earn these Karma tokens. When you fulfill the requirements of a Catalyst, you can pull a token from the pool. If you and another player manage you bring a Connection into play in a meaningful way, you can each pull a token.

As a player, you can use your karma tokens a few different ways, outlined below. When you use your Karma token, you mark a box on your Karma Track, then hand it to the DM and it becomes **DM Karma**. The DM can then use the DM Karma to do dastardly things like pump up enemy damage, call in reinforcements, heal the boss monster, and otherwise make the situation difficult for the players above and beyond the norm. When the DM uses a Karma token, they throw it back into the Karma Pool. This is the Karma Cycle.

You can bank your unused Karma. At the end of each session, the DM and the players take note of how many tokens they're each currently holding. At the start of the next session, you put the starting tokens in the bowl and everyone pulls out however many they left off with last session. No single player in the game may hold more than ten tokens at a time, including the DM. Tokens earned beyond the maximum ten are tossed back into the Karma Pool.

SPENDING KARMA TOKENS

You can spend the Karma tokens you earn in order to give your character an edge during the game in various ways. The more tokens you spend, the bigger the edge. You can use them to give you bonuses to rolls, to use Talents that you've already expended again, or to use Talents you haven't learned yet. Here is a list of all the things you can do with Karma.

Token Cost	Payoff
1	Add +2 to an Attribute or Attack roll Add +3 to a Damage roll
2	Use a Per Zone Talent that you've already used or you don't have yet
3	Use a Per Combat Talent that you've already used or you don't have yet
4	Use a Per Day Talent that you've already used or you don't have yet

DEATH AND DYING

When your character takes any amount of damage that drops them to 0 HP, they become Bloodied. They remain Bloodied until they are healed to at least 1 HP. A Bloodied character is battered, bruised, and bleeding, having sustained considerable injury. Taking any further damage while Bloodied results in you having to make a choice. Either you can go Incapacitated in hopes of getting Resuscitated, or if you choose to let your character die instead, you can perform your class's Death Talent.

When you choose to become Incapacitated, your character falls unconscious, mortally wounded. You cannot take any more actions while Incapacitated, other than maybe choking up a few whispered, bloody words. An Incapacitated character will die in 1d4 hours if left unattended. So long as someone gets to their side before they die, they can attempt to Resuscitate them.

During combat, healing magic can restore your HP and bring you back from an Incapacitated status, in which case you're back in the fight the following round. You must take a Debility. Even when not in combat, healing magic is still a good option if available. Focus healing spells always succeed out of combat as long as the caster has a few seconds of concentration. If no magical healing is available, allies can spend an uninterrupted hour to Resuscitate you.

Resuscitate

When you spend an hour without interruption to tend to a wounded character, you remove their Incapacitated status and you must roll 1d20+Wisdom.

- ◆ On a 9-, you heal the character back to Bloodied status
- ◆ On a 10+, you heal the character back to 1 HP
- ◆ On a 15+, you heal the character for 1d6 HP
- ◆ On a 20+, you heal the character back to half Max HP

If you have the Treatment Skill, a roll of 9- counts as a 10+ when rolling to Resuscitate.

Debilities

These represent bothersome, lasting wounds that permanently lower one of your Attribute scores. You can never get that Attribute point back and you can never get rid of the Debility; at least not in any ordinary way. Select any of the three Debility options, just be sure to explain in the fiction what kind of wound the Debility really is and why it reduces the Ability bonus. Each Debility will affect one of two different Ability bonuses. You get to choose which one. Once you've taken all three Debilities, you can no longer go Incapacitated and must face death.

Debility	Attribute Effected
Crippled	Strength or Dexterity
Shattered	Intelligence or Wisdom
Disfigured	Constitution or Charisma

DANGER MASTERY

As the DM, you have biggest task ahead of you, but arguable one of the most enjoyable. Your presence in the game provides a pivotal source of guidance, mystery, unbiased opposition, and excitement all at the same. You instill a sense of discovery to the game. The players control the main characters in the story. You must support their protagonist role and always be a fan of their characters. However, they can't be protagonists without peril and challenge to test themselves against. It's your job to push them and pressure them, beat them up and portray the sharp edges of the world, but in the end you're on their side.

Being a DM is fairly easy to learn, but difficult to master. There is a lot of pressure on you to be very proactive in the game for long periods of time. You'll have to play a whole bunch of characters at once, run the combat as an announcer and referee, describe everything the PC's can see and interact with, and react to each and every thing the players do for the entirety of the session. It can seem daunting, but it's actually a blast.

It's the DM's job to read this entire book to get a solid grasp of the rules so that you can run the game session smoothly and help the players out with specific questions they might have during play. You will want to be present when the group creates the adventuring party so you can help guide them into a cohesive, united crew. You might choose to utilize an Adventure Campaign Kit, create your own, or start from scratch right at the beginning of play, that part's up to you.

The DM's Goals

- ◆ **Portray a perilous world**
- ◆ **Make the lives of the PCs exciting and heroic**
- ◆ **Play to find out what happens**

Portray a Perilous World: You are the characters' senses when it comes to exploring and experiencing the world. You must be honest with your descriptions, always trying to instill an atmosphere of perilous fantasy and make the world feel dangerous. Tell them how rowdy the tavern is and how it smells like stale beer and body odor. Tell them how the scraggly trees seem to seem to lean over them in the dark, ancient woods. Tell them about the noise the ghoul's claws make against the stone walls as it tears its way through dungeon corridor. Tell them about how the troll's den under the bridge smells like rotting fish and dung. Tell them how it gets hotter and more humid every step they take deeper into the bowels of the dragon's lair. And when you can't think of anything, turn it around and ask them what they see, hear, smell, feel, or taste, then build off of it.

Make Their Lives Heroic: The DM's control over the monsters gives them a pseudo-adversarial role, where the players are trying to survive the deadliness of combat, but you're not actively trying to get them killed. It's a conflicted role by design. They are heroes because they stand up to your challenge, but without you to challenge them, they wouldn't be heroes. Keep the players on their toes, give them heroic but risky opportunities, pressure their resources and relationships with NPCs, and expose them to the harsh realities of a dungeoneer's life, but always let them triumph when they've earned it and give them what they've worked hard for.

Play to Find Out What Happens: Find out what happens, don't pre-plan it. You have a responsibility to your friends not to play tricks on them or step on their creative freedom. Don't force them into a pre-written plot or give them choices that don't really matter. Make sure that when you come to the table, you're coming in with an open mind, with no pre-conceived expectations about how the players should react when you start presenting them with challenges. Have a plethora of tools at your disposal, like simple adventure ideas and story hooks, triggered events and interesting character maps, as well as the campaign setting details that acts as a fallback of descriptive information and background flavor.

The DM's Guidelines

- ◆ **Expose them to the sharp edges of the world**
- ◆ **Address them as if they were their characters**
- ◆ **Be creative and obfuscate your plotting and wrath**
- ◆ **Everything is mortal and always in danger**
- ◆ **Name the NPCs and make them feel real**
- ◆ **Ask questions and build on the answers**
- ◆ **React with danger and reveal the rewards**
- ◆ **Support their roles as the protagonists and heroes**
- ◆ **Think about the big picture**
- ◆ **Sometimes, let them make the decisions**

Expose them to the sharp edges of the world means always think about how you can ramp of the situation, challenge them, and threaten the things that make their lives normal. Make them fear the dungeon and the monsters they face. Remind them of the ever present dangers and difficulties of the line of work that makes them so many shiny coins.

Address them as if they were their characters means talk to them like you're talking to the adventurer, not the player sitting across the table from you. Call them by their character's name. Refer to their character as "you". Always tell them what's going on and what they have to deal with, then ask, "What do you do?"

Be creative with your plotting and wrath means feel free to come up with your own ways to Plot Against Them and Show Them Your Wrath. Take the examples and think about them figuratively instead of literally.

Plotting Against Them or Showing Your Wrath

Sometimes, things spell trouble and toil for the characters. This is usually because the players roll the dice and get either a Partial Success or a Failure. Other times it just makes sense – either the heroes screwed up or the story just demands some excitement and conflict at that point. This is when you start Plotting Against them or Showing Them Your Wrath. Plotting Against Them is considered a soft move because the characters have a chance to react to the challenge or danger prior to it smacking them in the face. Show Them Your Wrath is considered a hard move, however, since the players don't have an opportunity to react, they just have to suck it up and deal with it.

DM: When You Plot Against Them

Here you are challenging their situation, moving things towards trouble and difficulty. You are pushing the story, the environment, and the supporting cast back against them. They are presented with danger, but they have a chance to react and deal with it before it gets really bad.

Choose one, mix and match, or come up with your own:

- ◆ **Turn their action back on them** – their attempts to disarm a trap sets it into a countdown, they secure themselves in but the threat has a secret way inside, a noble throws a fit and calls the guards when they try to confront her.
- ◆ **Delay them or hold them up** – they take a blow to the head and are stunned momentarily, they drop their things and must gather them before venturing forth, their torch goes out and they must relight it to proceed.
- ◆ **Divert their attention** – distract them with nearby commotion, they don't spot the trap up ahead, a beautiful courtesan draws their eyes away from the lurking assassin.
- ◆ **Reveal misery and horror** – show them disturbing scenes, expose them to terrible truths, give them a glimpse at an awful future, let them realize something bad is their fault.
- ◆ **Escalate the situation** – the crowd panics and turns to stampede against them, the fire gets worse and spreads to their escape route, the flood continues into the room and times starts running out, the storm intensifies and the lightning kicks up.
- ◆ **Exaggerate the experience or the danger** – give them a false sense of security, give signals to make them paranoid, make an enemy seem friendly, make an ally seem dangerous.
- ◆ **Impair them with conditions** – give them a temporary -1 penalty to actions, negate a special ability or a running bonus, take away a useful tool or weapon.
- ◆ **Slow them down or block their path** – trip them up with debris or obstacles, a tree falls into their only pathway, a chain snaps and the portcullis slams shut.
- ◆ **Make them compromise** – they must accept an inconvenient or upsetting side-effect in order to succeed.
- ◆ **Increase the danger** – have the enemies taunt them or goad them into action, introduce some peril and ask "What do you do?"

DM: When You Show Them Your Wrath

When you show them your wrath, the threat is realized immediately and manifests before they can stop it. The danger is presented but they only get to feel the effects and take it from there.

Choose one, mix and match, or come up with your own:

- ◆ **Divide the group** – have one of them kidnapped or pulled into a back alley, have one of them fall into a chute or hole that goes to places unknown, have a monster grab one and drag them away while the others are distracted.
- ◆ **Hide something important or beneficial** – they miss the secret door that houses a pile of treasure, they don't notice the goblins sneaking up behind them in the darkness.
- ◆ **Alter what they think they know** – have them accidentally mistake an ally for an enemy, turns out the magistrate is actually a lich with powerful illusions
- ◆ **Corrupt or taint them** – a befouled magical item gives them terrible visions and horrific nightmares, a witchdoctor puts a hex on them, their actions trigger an ancient curse that haunts them
- ◆ **Slander or defame them** – the guards show up just in time to see the characters standing over a dead body and blame them, the duke misunderstands their words and pegs them as thugs
- ◆ **Inflict damage or lasting conditions** – they take a nasty fall and hit hard, the spell backfires and burns their blood, a poison needle slows their minds and bodies
- ◆ **Harm, lose, or destroy something they need or love** – they drop a useful weapon or item while crossing the rope bridge, one of their favorite NPCs is kidnapped or killed by a villain
- ◆ **Turn the odds against them, leaving an opportunity** – they are overwhelmed by minions but there is an escape route
- ◆ **Halt their progress** – the bridge they expected to cross is destroyed by the enemy, a gate is completely rusted shut, a spell holds a door closed magically
- ◆ **Bolster the enemy forces** – the small group of bandits is joined by another and becomes a large group, the cultists complete a ritual to give them unnatural powers
- ◆ **Use their assets against them** – a henchmen gives away their position, their pack gets caught on something while they attempt to flee, their armor is too heavy to swim in