

ROB'S DUNGEON GAME

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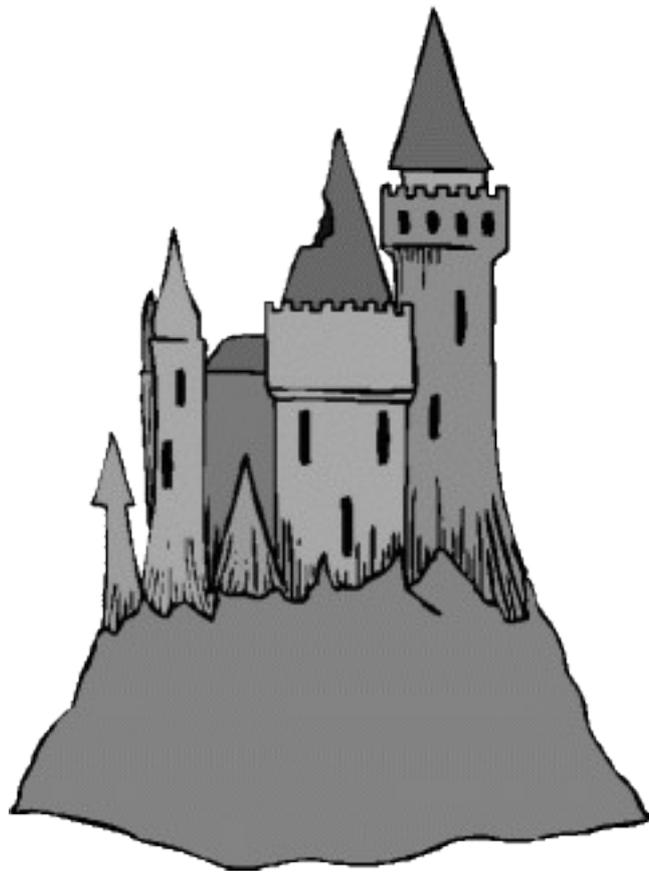


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1 Preliminaries

1.1 License

This document is released under the Open Game License version 1.0a, which is reproduced in full in section 16.1 along with a description of which content is considered to be Product Identity (as defined by the OGL).

1.2 Credits

- Primary author: Stephan Beal (<http://wanderinghorse.net/home/stephan/>)
- This game is named after my oldest friend, Rob Huwar (<http://happy2cu.com>), with whom i've spent hundreds and hundreds of hours scouring dungeons.
- It was largely inspired by the free game Labyrinth Lord (<http://www.goblinoidgames.com/labyrinthlord.htm>).
- Several of the core game mechanics are adapted (or directly borrowed) from the Fudge System (<http://www.fudgerpg.com>)
- Much of the material is rehashed from an uncountable number of RPG sources.
- The font used for the majority of this document is Soutane, and I found it at www.webpagefonts.com.
- This master version of this document is maintained in OpenOffice Writer (<http://www.openoffice.org>). Some of the tables are maintained in OpenOffice Calc.

1.3 A Brief History

Rob's Dungeon Game really began its life way back in 1984, when I was introduced to *Dungeons & Dragons* by two schoolmates. I still clearly remember my step-dad taking me to the department store at the corner of Highway 6 and Jones Road in Houston, Texas to buy my first copy of the *Basic D&D* set ("the red box"). Over the next 10 years I spent a great deal of time playing D&D, most of it with my old friend Rob Huwar, after whom this work is named. We eventually graduated to other games, like *Star Frontiers*, *Marvel Heroes*, *AD&D*, *Gamma World*, *GURPS*, and several home-grown games (the most successful of which was based on the film *Red Dawn*). Each game got a bit more advanced and took a bit more time to set up and play. As so often happens, the intricacies of real adult life tend to push one away from such hobbies, and have left little time for gaming.

I'm too old and tired to deal with huge tomes of rules.

This game started taking concrete form in early 2009, but much of it describes ideas I've been considering for some years. Very little, if any, of it can be considered original, most of the mechanics and themes being directly adopted from familiar sources. It is an attempt to reintroduce myself to roleplaying games by going back to the roots. Rather than re-invent D&D, which has been done countless times, this is an attempt to provide a similar background but using simplified (in my eyes) mechanics. If you think the old D&D rules are as simple as it gets, you probably haven't used the *Fudge System*, which is the engine which these rules most closely resemble. It is much more flexible and provides us with simple, consistent mechanics which can be reused in many different contexts.

This work has no specific end goal. It is meant to entertain, and to that end its success can be measured in the amount of entertainment value it provides.

1.4 The Obligatory Disclaimer regarding Gender

This work uses a rather arbitrary mixture of he/she and his/hers, depending on context. Contrary to recent popular convention, we normally refer to a player or GM as "he", rather than "she". Given RPG player demographics, it's just statistically more correct than the other way around.

2 Introduction

Rob's Dungeon Game is a simple fantasy roleplaying system which tends towards an "old school" or "retro" feel (i.e. of the type popular in the 1970's, the early years of RPGs), with a strong nod to the "original" dungeon games (who's names we won't mention, but you know which ones we mean). It is by no means an original work – it adopts mechanics and themes from several (and, incidentally, very disjoint) game systems.

In this game, players take on the roles of the warriors and wizards of fantasy, fighting for Good or Evil¹, as they choose. The Game Master (GM) mediates all play, and is in essence the director of a story in which the players find themselves.

This book provides a *framework*, and a GM will be required to add a bit of his imagination in order to make full use of this material.

This book assumes some previous RPG experience, and does not detail common conventions, such as how dice rolls are denoted. In other words, if you don't know what "2d6" means, it would be helpful to look that up before continuing.

2.1 The Game World

The specifics of the world this game takes place in are not described in detail in this book – those are for the GM to hash out (or maybe for a later book). We can, however, tell you with absolute certainty that this world was created (and quite probably destroyed and recreated, possibly several times) by the elusive Gods. Many are their numbers and vast are their powers and influence. Though they do not show their faces day to day, they prove their existence continually. Particular deities are the source of all clerical magic. The vast majority of the fantastical creatures in the world were created by gods or demigods for their own purposes - perhaps to harass adventurers or perhaps to support their evil priests' efforts to build armies. (And the rest were created not by evolution, but via magical meddling of some sort.)

The gods have their own senses of honor, law, and rules, and they often quibble amongst themselves, just as mankind does. This world often hosts the gods' plays, games and battles. Their actors, pawns, and soldiers are often the heroes and adventurers whose names we hear in legends.

3 Numbers and Dice

The dice system used for action resolution is called d6HL (or dHL), where H and L stand for High and Low, respectively. The mechanism is sometimes called "d+-5" and sometimes "d6MinusD6".

It's really simple: pick two six-sided dice which are visually distinct from one another (e.g. different sizes or colors). Designate one as the *High Die* and one as the *Low Die*. Roll both dice and subtract the designated Low die from the designated High Die. (Note that we mean to subtract the die which was *designated* as the "Low" die, regardless of which die rolls the lowest value!)

The results will be in the range -5 to +5, with the average being 0. The odds are good (2/3rds chance) that any roll will be between -3 and +3. The exact odds of rolling any given number are summarized in section 3.3.

In this system, a +1 or -1 adjustment is quite significant. A +2/-2 is very significant, and +3/-3 should be about the maximum for most modifiers.

A natural (unadjusted) roll of -5 is always a failure (optionally a critical failure), and a natural roll of 5 is always success (optionally a critical success). Optionally (at the GM's discretion), any *unadjusted* roll of 4 or more less than the required target number is automatic (or critical) failure, and any *unadjusted* roll of 4 or more higher than necessary is automatic (or critical) success.

This system normally uses only 6-sided dice. However, if a roll should use dice other than d6, it is denoted using conventional notation, e.g. 2d6 or 3d4, or d4HL (meaning roll 2d4 and subtract the High Die from the Low Die).

When sample dice results are given, they are listed in the form *HxLy*, where x is the value of the High Die and y the value of the Low Die, e.g. H3L2 is a result of +1.

3.1 Situational Rolls

A GM will sometimes make (or require from the players) a Situational Roll. Simply roll dHL, adding any modifiers the GM determines are suitable, and interpret the result relative to the current situation. On a positive result, the situation will be more favorable for the PCs (the higher the result, the more favorable), whereas a negative result is unfavorable to the PCs (the lower, the worse).

This can be used to determine NPC reactions, the outcome of "blind luck" situations, and to provide answers to spontaneous questions from PC during play. For example, Bugli is outnumbered by three kobolds, but he's got a

1 Or not fighting at all, though that rather defeats the purpose of playing a dungeon-hacking game.

plan. He asks the GM, "do I see any rope or chains lying about?" The GM might use a Situational Roll to determine whether the PC can find some rope or chain.

(We never did learn what Bugli wanted to do with that rope.)

3.2 Adjectives

Each point in the -5 to +5 range has an associated adjective, which can be used when describing just about anything, from character attributes and difficulty ratings to damage levels.

Values below -5 are described as Abysmal-1, Abysmal-2, etc. Likewise, values above Legendary are described as Legendary+1, Legendary+2, etc.

Using this system a monster which is described as having Great strength has a Strength score of +2, whereas one with Poor strength has a Strength score of -2. This makes it easy to "import" monsters, characters, weapons, and such from other games systems by determining whether their attributes are "Average", "Good", etc., relative to their native game system.

Value	Adjective
-5	Abysmal
-4	Negligible
-3	Terrible
-2	Poor
-1	Mediocre
0	Average
1	Good
2	Great
3	Superb
4	Amazing
5	Legendary

3.3 Dice Statistics

The statistics of the dHL mechanism are summarized here:

High:	Low: -1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6
1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4
3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2
5	4	3	2	1	0	-1
6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Result	N:36	Percentile
-5	1	2.78
-4	2	5.56
-3	3	8.33
-2	4	11.11
-1	5	13.89
0	6	16.67
1	5	13.89
2	4	11.11
3	3	8.33
4	2	5.56
5	1	2.78

As one can see, extraordinarily high (+5) or low (-5) results don't happen all that often – about once in 24 rolls, on average.

4 Character Attributes

Each character has a set of so-called Attributes which describe general... well, *attributes* of a character. Each attribute describes one overall aspect of the character – how strong or how smart he is.

4.1 The attributes

4.1.1 Strength (STR)

How tough are you?

Large, but weak, creatures partially make up for lower strength via their mass. e.g. a horse (Scale 6 or so) with Mediocre Strength is still very strong compared to a human.

STR is often used as a basis for checking whether a PC can move heavy objects, force open doors, wrestle free of (or hold) an opponent.

4.1.2 Agility/Dexterity/Speed (DEX)

How agile/flexible/dexterous are you?

DEX is often used as a basis for avoiding traps, climbing, dodging, and performing fine-detail work like fixing machinery.

4.1.3 Constitution/Health (CON)

How healthy, or able to ward off disease and damage, are you?

CON is often used as a basis for avoiding or mitigating the effects of disease or poison.

4.1.4 Mind/Intelligence/Wisdom (INT)

How smart/witty/wise/mental adaptable are you?

INT influences how many spells wizards can cast. It is often used as a basis for checks involving overall brainpower, e.g. noticing something out of place, understanding foreign magics.

4.1.5 Personality/Charisma (CHA)

This is basically a measure of one's "presence," "grace," natural likability, and leadership. Some people have it, some don't. Natural charisma often spans racial boundaries. e.g. a charismatic human is normally just as charismatic to a random elf as he is to a random human (though racial prejudices or situational modifiers may apply, if the GM desires).

Charisma normally plays a heavy role in negotiations and is often significant for clerics.

4.1.6 Lawfulness Attribute (Optional)

This optional approach to Alignment can work alongside the normal Alignment rules (section 4.4) or replace them altogether, and provides a consistent scale of alignments which might be easier to apply than the more abstract form.

Each PC has an attribute, called Lawfulness, which measures, in effect, how Good or Evil the PC is. The PC may *choose* his starting Lawfulness level, but it must be between -2 and +2 (greater levels of evil or good have to be *earned!*). The GM may prohibit Evil PCs if she wishes. The PC may be required to pick a certain Lawfulness value, e.g. a cleric must "be in alignment with" his deity and church, in which case the limit of -2/+2 may be waived (or the cleric may have to earn her way to a higher alignment to join that faction).

We call this Lawfulness instead of Alignment because then it fits well with the Adjectives system (page 5, section 3.2). e.g. the meanings of Great or Terrible Lawfulness are much more clear than Great or Poor Alignment (which don't really mean anything at all).

We can roughly describe the levels of Lawfulness like so (presented in order of mildest to most extreme):

- **Average (0)** = Neutral/Ambivalent. These beings will generally try to get along with their neighbors. They may occasionally try to cheat on their taxes, but don't make a habit of doing so.

- **Good (+1)** = They try to be good neighbors. They won't cheat on their taxes unless they really feel they must.
- **Mediocre (-1)** = These beings won't hesitate to fudge a small amount on the tax claims. They'll try to be halfway neighborly if it's not too much bother.
- **Great (+2)** = These beings feel strongly for the greater good, and won't willingly violate the law unless there is a pressing need. Joining law enforcement might require a Lawfulness of 2 or higher.
- **Poor (-2)** = Regularly cheats (or tries to cheat) the tax man. Will do what he must to survive, betraying all but his closest friends/allies if necessary.
- **Superb (+3)** = These beings not only obey the law but also go of their way to make sure others do, too. They will never betray another Good being.
- **Terrible (-3)** = These guys not only blatantly disobey the law, but they encourage others to do so. Will betray anyone but their immediate master(s) without a second thought.
- **Amazing (+4)** = As for +3, but also devotes much time and energy (perhaps full-time, even professionally) to organize others in the ongoing Eternal Struggle.
- **Negligible (-4)** = The stark opposite of +4, these folks organize and run human slave rings, order assassinations on a whim, and will burn a baby halfling to death just for a giggle. Even their masters, unless extremely powerful, are not safe from their eventual betrayal.
- **Legendary (+5)** = These beings dedicate their entire existence to the service of the Higher Cause. They actively recruit for, organize, *and* take part in the Eternal Struggle. They are often direct agents (or pawns) of a deity, or are actual deities.
- **Abysmal (-5)** = The opposite of Legendary, these beings dedicate their entire existence to the destruction of everything but their own comfort and power bases. They are often direct agents (or pawns) of a demon, or are actual demons.

While only clerics are *directly* affected by personal Lawfulness/alignment changes, other PCs who actively follow the ways of a particular deity *might* also be punished somehow for changing alignments.

Ways in which the Lawfulness attribute can be used include:

- Beings with Lawfulness scores within +/-1 of each other will tend to get along. Beings of Lawfulness scores differing by two or more probably don't get along (the bigger the difference, the bigger the personality conflict). The absolute difference in Lawfulness levels can be used as a modifier when determining NPC reactions.
- When praying for divine intervention (or similar), the difficulty is modified by the absolute value of the difference of the Lawfulness scores of the caller and the deity. e.g. a deity with +3 Lawfulness would react at -1 to either a caller with either +4 or +2 Lawfulness, would react at -2 to a +1 Lawfulness, etc. It's not about how Good or Evil the caller is, but how closely aligned he is to the deity.
- Certain magical items might allow themselves to be used only by someone with the same Lawfulness, or maybe within +/-1. They might even damage (or act in other malignant ways) if the alignment is too different or diametrically opposed.
- When a cleric deviates from his deity's Lawfulness, all clerical skills have a penalty equal to the difference between his "ideal" Lawfulness alignment and his current Lawfulness.

The GM may find other creative ways to use the Lawfulness attribute.

4.1.6.1 Converting Lawfulness to Alignment

When used in conjunction with the more conventional Alignment terminology, the Lawfulness/Alignments conversions are:

- Lawfulness -2 or lower corresponds to Evil
- Lawfulness -1, 0, or +1 corresponds to Neutral
- Lawfulness +2 or higher corresponds to Lawful

The Lawfulness level is inherently more descriptive than the three Alignment types. For example, a Lawfulness of -1 can be interpreted as "Neutral with Evil tendencies."

4.2 Attribute Checks (Saving Throws)

Characters will often be forced to make attribute checks (sometimes called *saving throws*). These are resolved as follows:

- GM assigns the attribute to be checked and a difficulty level.
- Player rolls his dice and adds his attribute level.
- If the player matches or beats the target then he succeeds, else he fails.

For example, the GM declares that Bob must pass a Good CON check. Bob has a Good CON. He rolls his dice (H3L4, for -1), adds his CON (+1), for a total of 0. He has failed the check.

Later on Bob finds a stuck door. The GM declares that the door is badly stuck, needing a Great (+2) STR check to pass. Bob rolls H3L1 (=+2) and adds his Good STR (+1), for a total of +3, so he beats the roll by 1.

Bob's part-time counterpart, Chuck Les, has a Poor (-2) INT score. He is asked to make an Average INT check (or "save vs. INT"), and he rolls H2L1 (=+1). He *would* have made the roll if he were a bit brighter, but his -2 INT brings the total down to -1.

4.3 Attribute Contests

In an attribute contest, two or more contenders must roll dHL and add the attribute being tested. The winner is the one with the highest result.

For example, Juluabuba, with is Poor STR, has been grasped by a troll. To GM rules that to avoid being pulled in to he troll's foul moth, Julu must win a contest of STR+Scale. Julu (Scale 0) rolls 5H3L, adding his STR (-2), for a total of 0. The troll, with Scale 1 and Good STR, rolls 2H3L, plus Scale and STR, for a total result of 1. The troll pulls Julu to him and starts munching his head.

4.4 Alignment

Some GMs may wish to use the Lawfulness attribute (section) as a replacement or supplement for the rules presented here.

A character's *Alignment* refers to his overall tendency towards Good or Evil, Law or Chaos. Choosing an Alignment is, unless the GM decides otherwise, optional. The exception to this is cleric characters, which must pick (and live up to) the Alignment of their deity/deities.

The Alignments are:

- *Law/Good*: the greater good is more important than the individual. Those who enslave or maliciously harm others are seen as evils to be eliminated.
- *Neutrality*: The Swiss invented it, but it's universally popular. Neutrals tend to go with the flow, possibly for the greater good as long as it's not too risky. The vast majority of average citizens fall somewhere between Neutrality and Lawfulness.
- *Evil/Chaos*: personal gain and power is the name of the game. While most evil beings cannot normally manage to form any lasting bonds or alliances, it is not uncommon to find imposing Evil leaders with hoards of weak-willed followers who obey their every whim.

Though choosing an alignment is (normally) optional, the GM may reward characters with extra XP if they choose an alignment and do a superb job of roleplaying its ideals. An unaligned PC is assumed to be Neutral if a certain scenario requires an Alignment. Alternately, the GM may decide the alignment on a case-by-case basis, based on the PC's previous behaviors.

No *single* action, unless it is *extremely* significant, should be enough to move a character from Neutral to Lawful or Evil to Neutral. For example, one cannot raise his Alignment level by simply saving an old lady from her burning house. He must also arrange for her dog's funeral (who was burned in the fire), and help to build her a new house. Even then, if the acts are not done with sincerity then they won't help the PC - the character cannot truly become "a better humanoid" by feigning good behavior! On the flip-side, the path to Evil is a slippery slope which is all too easy to descend (or fall down!).

When a PC alignment change is being considered, the GM should weigh the *honest intentions* of the character more than the actions. The true intentions behind the actions are more significant for purposes of determining Alignment than the actions themselves are.

4.5 Non-attribute Abilities or Disabilities

The GM is free to introduce special abilities or disabilities to help individualize or balance out characters. In some game systems these are called Advantages and Disadvantages, and in others they are known as Gifts and Faults.

It is recommended that each Gift or Fault equate to one or two attribute levels, depending on how beneficial or detrimental it is. For example, the Gift of Excellent Vision (+1 to all vision checks) might be worth one attribute

point, and a Fault of Poor Vision (-1 to vision checks and ranged attack rolls) might be worth -1. Powerful Gifts are normally supernatural or divine in nature, and should be worth two (or even more) points. Very detrimental Faults (e.g. complete blindness) should be worth two points, and *extremely* limiting Faults (e.g. the PC consists of only a brain inside a jar, trapped by powerful magic) might be worth three or four.

Whether or not PCs may trade Gifts/Faults for attribute points is up to the GM.

5 Size and Scale

(This mechanism is directly borrowed from the Fudge System, but uses a slightly different base mass value.)

Humans represent the average creature size, called Scale 0. Each scale higher than 0 is *approximately* 1.5 times the *mass* of the previous scale. Each level lower than 0 is a similar fraction of the previous scale level. Scale 0 is assumed to be centered around approximately 75kg. While it is unusual for adults of a given species to be of different scales (with the exception that in some species one gender is appreciably larger than the other), most creatures do pass through different scale levels during the maturation process.

A list of points of comparison for size/mass Scales is provided below.

The size of a creature is closely tied to its overall strength and ability to absorb damage. Combatants of the same Scale can ignore their Scale levels for purposes of damage (since they even out). A combatant attacking a larger creature will, however, do less damage. Likewise, a larger creature will do more damage to smaller creatures. This mechanism makes large creatures powerful, formidable foes, above and beyond any hit points they might have.

Beings may not be able to use armor or weapons made for other scales, even if the forms are similar. When armor, weaponry, jewelry, and such is randomly found, assume it is of the scale of its last owner (presumably the being which the characters just slew). Some magical items can grow or shrink to fit a range of sizes.

Though the concept of Scales can be used for several purposes (see below), when the word Scale is used by itself in these rules it is assumed to mean Mass/Size Scale.

In a campaign centered around non-human races, e.g. elves or fairy, the GM may assume that the scale of the most common race is Scale 0. The game effect is the same as using the "absolute" scale values, as only the *relative* distance between scales is significant.

5.1 Scale examples

The following table summarizes a wide range of mass scales. Numbers which go off of this chart can be calculated by multiplying (if positive) or dividing (if negative) by 1.5 per level.

Scale	Approx. Avg. Mass (kg)	Examples
-15	0.17	
-14	0.26	
-13	0.39	
-12	0.58	
-11	0.87	Big rat
-10	1.3	
-9	1.95	Tiny Winged Folk
-8	2.93	
-7	4.39	
-6	6.58	Large house cat
-5	9.88	Fox
-4	14.81	Badger
-3	22.22	Coyote
-2	33.33	Halfling, goblin, medium-sized hunting dog
-1	50	Elf, large goblin, large dog
0	75	Human, orc, dwarf, really big dog
1	112.5	Large orc
2	168.75	Small ogre, black bear, average troll
3	253.13	Ogre, large troll
4	379.69	Grizzly bear
5	569.53	Medium horse, Centaur, wagon
6	854.3	Carriage, large horse
7	1281.45	Great white shark, giant troll
8	1922.17	Killer whale
9	2883.25	Allosaurus
10	4324.88	
11	6487.32	Elephant
12	9730.98	
13	14596.46	
14	21894.69	
15	32842.04	

While Scales can be, in principal, either arbitrarily large or small, there are actually some numeric limits. Someone much brighter than myself² once calculated that a proton has a Scale of about -162 and an electron has a Scale of about -181. On the other end, the earth's moon is about Scale 120, earth is about 131, earth's star about 162, and our known universe has a Scale of approximately 290³. Keep that in mind when considering introducing a Scale 100+ mega-monster – if such a creature shows up it's probably there to eat the planet.

5.2 Movement/Speed Scale

Movement Speed is a characteristic for which it is often useful to have a Scale. Unlike mass/strength Scale, each step up in Movement Scale is 1.4 times the previous level⁴. If GMs wish to have a Movement Rate attribute for characters, a reasonable default value is the average of their Scale, DEX, and CON scores.

When selecting Movement Scales for new races, one guideline for two-legged movement is simply the mass scale. Four-legged creatures are often much faster, however. Most small four-legged animals can easily outrun a human over short distances. Likewise, mice and cockroaches have tremendous speeds for their sizes. For such creatures, and for flying creatures, the Movement Scale should be determined⁵ independently of their Mass Scale.

Movement Scale can be used to adjust damage when a target is rammed by an attacker. Simply treat each higher level of movement as one level of Mass Scale for purposes of dealing damage. If two moving targets

² Peter Mikelsons: <http://plm.snow.org/fudge/scale.html>

³ Those calculations assumed Scale 0 centers around 150 pounds, rather than the 75kg we use here.

⁴ Note to Fudge players: this differs from Fudge, which uses a factor of 1.2.

⁵ Or guessed.

meet, add their speeds (if they are moving in the same direction) or subtract the lower from the higher (if moving in the opposite direction) to calculate the relative scale for damage purposes. If two moving targets hit at perpendicular angles, use the faster of their speeds for damage purposes.

Most creatures can sprint up to three times their "casual" speeds (see below) for short distances, but few can keep up such speeds for long. Some creatures can sprint much faster and some, e.g. turtles, can't sprint at all. For a human, the maximum running speed caps out at about a five-minute mile (though few have the endurance to actually run at top speed that distance, and a few gifted athletes can do better than that).

The table below summarizes the average "casual" (for humans, walking) speeds of various scales. It is based around average human walking speed (approximately 1.5 meters per second, or a 15-minute mile), which is considered to be Movement Scale 0.

Movement Scale	Meters/Second, casual speed	Meters/round	Meters/minute	Km/Hour	Miles/Hour
-11	0.04	0.37	2.22	0.13	0.08
-10	0.05	0.52	3.11	0.19	0.12
-9	0.07	0.73	4.36	0.26	0.16
-8	0.10	1.02	6.10	0.37	0.23
-7	0.14	1.42	8.54	0.51	0.32
-6	0.20	1.99	11.95	0.72	0.45
-5	0.28	2.79	16.73	1	0.62
-4	0.39	3.90	23.43	1.41	0.87
-3	0.55	5.47	32.80	1.97	1.22
-2	0.77	7.65	45.92	2.76	1.71
-1	1.07	10.71	64.29	3.86	2.4
0	1.50	15.00	90.00	5.4	3.36
1	2.10	21.00	126.00	7.56	4.7
2	2.94	29.40	176.40	10.58	6.58
3	4.12	41.16	246.96	14.82	9.21
4	5.76	57.62	345.74	20.74	12.89
5	8.07	80.67	484.04	29.04	18.05
6	11.29	112.94	677.66	40.66	25.26
7	15.81	158.12	948.72	56.92	35.37
8	22.14	221.37	1328.21	79.69	49.52
9	30.99	309.92	1859.49	111.57	69.33
10	43.39	433.88	2603.29	156.2	97.06
11	60.74	607.43	3644.61	218.68	135.88

5.3 Material Strength Scale (Optional)

It is sometimes useful to assign a durability rating to objects. This can be modeled with a combination of Material Strength Scale (how strong is it?), Mass Scale (how much of it is there?), and (optionally) Hit Points.

With this, we can say, for example, that an Average amount of Good-strength material needs a Good STR or Good amount of damage to penetrate, damage, or break it. The amount of STR or damage needed goes up or down by one point as the amount (Mass Scale) deviates from Average. An "Average" amount is necessarily object-specific. For paper we can use a normal piece of paper as the average. For metal we might choose some arbitrary weight, e.g. one kilogram.

A single sheet of paper, with a Material Strength of Negligible, can be torn effortlessly by a humanoid. For purposes of damaging paper, we can use a single sheet as the Average amount (Mass Scale 0, our reference point). Each 1.5 times the amount (mass) of paper adds, in effect, one Material Strength level, in the same way that Mass Scale effectively adds to a creature's STR score. Thus tearing a 56-page booklet in half (with a relative Mass Scale of 10, by my quick calculations) would require a *much* greater STR than most humanoids have⁶.

A very small creature, of a scale which makes its adjusted Scale+Strength lower than the Material Strength of a

⁶ I don't personally know anyone who can tear 56 sheets of paper at once, so this mechanic would seem to be somewhat reasonable (at least for paper!).

single piece of paper, would have to struggle to tear a single page out of that same booklet!

5.4 Other types of Scale

It is sometimes useful to apply a Scale to things other than mass, strength, or speed. This is often done implicitly, without us realizing it. For example, when we say, "he's a smart dog," the assumption is that we're comparing him to Dog Scale intelligence.

Scale should not be used to differentiate individuals within a species – that's what Attribute scores are for. Scales are more suitable at the special level.

6 Character Creation

To create a character:

- Pick a race
- Distribute attribute points (see below)
- Determine starting Hit Points (Section 6.2).
- Pick an alignment (if required or desired)
- Pick one level of any skill set (a.k.a. the character's "class") and apply any bonuses (e.g. new Hit Points).
- Buy any starting equipment.
- Venture forth...

Each PC "should" be fleshed out a bit, with a background story, descriptions of personal quirks, etc. A GM can use such information, e.g. as hooks to get the PCs involved in affairs they might not otherwise be inclined to get involved with.

6.1 Attribute Points

Each PC starts the game with all attributes having a score of 0. The PC gets one free level to add to any attribute. He may subtract up to two points from one or more attributes, and add those points to other attributes. No attributes may start out at higher than Great (2), including racial modifiers, but attributes may be improved to any level during play (within any limits set by the GM).

6.2 Starting Hit Points

Humanoid PCs start with 4-9 HP ($1d6 + 3$), plus their CON score, plus any adjustment granted by their first skill level, plus any racial adjustments, and GM's fiat. PCs never start with fewer than 3 HP, regardless of adjustments.

GMs may wish to allow PCs to start with maximum hit points ($9 + \text{CON} + \text{maximum class bonus} + \text{other modifiers}$), and then roll for HP increases as they increase in levels.

6.2.1 Design note – HP rationale

The baseline for determining HPs boils down to, "how many times can you get run through with a sword and survive?" In this game system we derive the combat system from the Fudge System rules, where the average sword does about 3 points of damage. So that is the baseline. Starting PCs shouldn't be killed outright the first time they are hit, but shouldn't be able to sustain too much damage. Higher-level PCs do gain hit points through advancement (unlike in the Fudge System, which doesn't use hit points at all), but the gains are relatively low compared to most dungeon games.

6.3 Sample PC: Bob

Bob is a first-level human fighter, ready to battle the unknown evils of the world.

STR: Good, DEX: Average, CON: Good, INT: Mediocre, CHA: Average

Skills: Fighter 1

HP: 8

Weapon: Longsword (ODF 3)

Armor: Leather (DDF 1) and a small shield (+1 DDF vs. one opponent per round)

7 Races

The standard races available as PCs are described below. Non-human races normally have certain benefits or penalties. GMs should not focus too much on balance in this regard – a first level dwarf fighter is simply tougher than a first level human fighter, and that's just a fact of life.

7.1 Dwarves

Dwarves, despite being short (average height is 145-155cm), are stocky and heavy, and thus Scale 0. Dwarves have a long history of living in harsh mountainous environments, and all dwarves get a +1 CON or STR at the start of play. They have Movement Scale -1 (section 5.2).

Due to their hardy nature, dwarves start the game with +3 HP, and always gain an additional +1 HP per level.

Due to their stout builds, they get a -1 to any DEX check requiring good balance or quick reactions (shuffling along a narrow ledge, juggling, dodging missiles, etc.). They do not get such a penalty for manual dexterity checks (e.g. building or fixing machinery).

When a dwarf gains enough skill levels to increase an attribute, he may instead increase his CON or STR in place of the attributes listed for the skill.

Dwarves are, by nature, poor spell casters, and when learning magical skills their level is counted as *half* of its real level.

7.2 Elves

The slender, graceful Elves are Scale -1 (average height is 160-170cm). They get +1 to DEX or INT, at the start of play.

Due to their natural grace and dexterity, they get a +1 to any DEX check requiring good balance or quick reactions (shuffling along a narrow ledge, juggling, dodging missiles, etc.). They do not get such a bonus for manual dexterity checks (e.g. building or fixing machinery).

When an elf gains enough skill levels to increase an attribute, he may instead increase his DEX or INT in place of the attributes listed for the skill.

Elves have keen eyesight and gain +1 to checks involving vision (e.g. spotting hidden enemies or searching for secret doors). They can see well in the dark, but not overly so. While they heal at about the same rate as humans, their wounds never leave visible scars (though deformities from massive injuries may be visible).

Elves gain a +1 bonus to checks related to many survival-related activities, e.g. hunting, tracking, and setting traps. Elvish Rangers are particularly good at these actions, since they get their racial bonus on top of their skill bonus.

Elves make good all-around warriors and mages, but they have relatively few organized clerical orders. Most religion in elvish communities is an inherent part of their leadership chain, as opposed to a separate church, and they tend to worship ancient gods who do not take an active part in the modern world (beyond the delegation of clerical spells through various agents). Elves do not, as a general rule, tend towards blind fanaticism, though most hold the concepts of Law and Order in high regard. By and large, elves are Lawful when it comes to interactions with other elves (they *rarely* betray one another) and Neutral in regards to other races. Despite their high intelligence, the elves produce few philosophers.

7.3 Halflings

Most halflings stay in their villages and tend to their farms and homes, but once in a while one gets a desire to do something more.

Halflings (sometimes called Hobbits), are shorter and stockier than elves (averaging 130-145cm in height) but less stocky than dwarves (Scale -2) and have a Movement Scale of -1 (section 5.2). They get +1 DEX at the start of play, but also get -1 to all rolls for gaining HP rolls (this will not reduce a roll to less than 1). For the initial HP roll, this penalty applies both to the die roll all PCs get and to the roll for his first class level.

When a halfling gains enough skill levels to increase an attribute, he may instead increase his DEX in place of the attributes listed for the skill.

Halflings gain at least a +1 bonus to checks related to sneaking around or hiding, as long as their environment is suitable (e.g. there are adequate bushes, curtains, a bed, etc.). They may get +2 if the environment is particularly well suited to hiding in (e.g. lots of bushes in the middle of the night).

The vast majority of PC Halflings should be rogues, thieves, or rangers. Organized religion is not practiced by halflings outside the level of village-specific priests, with the exception of some druidic orders (but druidic orders do not normally form organizations like most religious orders do). Halfling mages are rare, as most Halflings lack the patience for long studies, but they are not unknown. Halfling mages are held in very high regards by other Halflings, and often are often sought for council by other halflings.

7.4 Humans

We all know 'em and love 'em. Humans are the world average (the "basis for comparison", if you will), and get no special abilities or attribute adjustments.

7.5 Tiny Winged Folk (Ellyllon)

The Ellyllon (singular, Ellyl) are tiny, graceful winged folk who populate wooded areas. They range from 20-30cm tall and weigh just under 2kg (including their wings). Their butterfly-like wings (curvier and much more durable than butterfly wings) allow them maneuver in any direction, flitting almost as easily as fireflies do (they get +1 DEX at the start of play). Ellyl are minuscule in comparison to the larger races (Scale -9!) and highly magical. When flying they have a Movement Scale of 2 (section 5.2) but when on foot they have a Movement Scale equal to their Mass Scale.

They lack the size to make effective use of of melee weapons against large opponents, but most learn to use bows and spears. Regardless of their Alignment, they have no inhibition against using poisons to bring down larger foes (indeed, it is often their only choice aside from magic), and most ellyllon learn to concoct a poison or two from natural ingredients native to their homelands (toxic plants or animals).

Their villages are built in trees and can number anywhere from 30 to 2000 ellyllon. They use a range of magics and woodland creatures to keep their villages hidden and protected. Bringing a non-ellyl to an ellyllon village is normally a crime punishable by banishment.

Ellyllon are all Great at hiding, and get a +2 to any rolls involving hiding or camouflage as long as their environment offers a place to hide (an ellyl doesn't need much space!).

Culturally, the ellyllon tend to form communities similar to the elves, with a patriarch, matriarch, or both. They tend to focus more on magic and religion than elves, however, and any given village may in effect be ruled by a clerical order (Evil ellyllon are essentially unknown, so such villages will be Neutral or Lawful).

Ellyllon can fly at a maximum rate of about that of a running human. They can move in any direction and can fly backwards at one third of their normal rate. They can fly to essentially any height, but do not normally fly far above tree-level because birds of prey often attack ellyllon. Ellyllon cannot fly indefinitely, and must rest 10 minutes for each half hour (+10x CON minutes) of flight. Very ill or weak (CON of Terrible or lower) cannot fly at all. A Very Hurt ellyl cannot fly – he may attempt an emergency landing (Average DEX check), with a failure resulting in an unfortunate landing spot or even more damage.

Ellyl have an inherent fear of the underground, and will not venture into caves and the like unless their lives depend on it. When inside any building, they will instinctively locate the exits as the earliest opportunity, and tend to be uncomfortable if there is no accessible exit in sight.

Ellyllon have no blacksmiths, as long-term exposure to heat damages their wings. When they work metals they do so with magic.

A GM who imagines elyl which cannot be easily crushed by a human boot may treat their Scale as a different value for purposes of calculating the damage they take (e.g. Scale -4).

7.6 Other

The GM is free to create new races for his PCs (or limit them to NPCs). Some examples commonly found in other games include: Half-elves, Orcs/Half-orcs, and Ogres/Half-ogres.

When coming up with new races, the GM should keep in mind that Scale plays a large part in physical strength. For example, giving all half-ogres +2 STR is unnecessary, as their Scale (probably 1 or 2) inherently gives them greater-than-human strength. Likewise, halflings don't need a STR penalty compared to humans because their Scale (-1) gives them an equivalent of Mediocre human-level strength for most purposes.

8 Skill Groups/Classes

This game's character class system is a mix between a class-based and skill-based system. Each class is a broad skill group, providing a range of abilities to PCs who learn them. A PC starts with one skill group (i.e. one level in a class of his choice) and may use experience points earned during play to purchase arbitrary skill groups (assuming the GM allows a specific group or combination). A PC's *level* is his total number of skill levels. However, specialization has benefits, and a PC with 10 levels of Fighter skills is likely to mop the floor with another 10th-level character who has split his skills across multiple groups, e.g. 5 Fighter skill levels, 2 Thief skill levels, and 3 Cleric levels.

Each PC starts with one level of one skill group of his choice. This is called his "class." During play, levels of new skills can be gained in a manner determined by the GM (see page 23, section 11.2).

8.1 The Basic Classes

Below is a listing of the basic character classes. Some classes have prerequisites which must be met before one may learn a level of that class.

8.1.1 Fighter

Prerequisites: STR and CON of at least Average.

Fighter skills give these benefits:

- 2-4 Hit Points, plus CON, per level (minimum of 1 HP).
- For ever 3 full levels (3, 6, 9,...), one level of Proficiency with one armament of player's choice.
- For ever 4 full levels (level 4, 8, 12, ...), raise one of STR, CON, DEX, or CHA by one point.
- For every 4 full levels (level 4, 8, 12, ...): either one extra attack per round in *melee* combat or a +1 to his attack score for any one attack. Thus a 8th-level fighter may attack 3 times, or twice with a +1 to one of the attacks, or one time with a +2 to the attack.
- Each full 3 levels (3, 6, 9, ...) increases the protection of any armor or shield by 1 point *when actively defending*. Only one applies at any given time - not armor *and* shield - though a fighter with multiple bonuses can spread them around. e.g. an 8th level fighter could choose to get a +1 to his shield and his armor (in case doing so makes a difference for some reason).
- At 1st, 4th, 7th, 10th, etc., +1 to any any checks to perform military- or muscle-related actions, e.g. patching up armor and weapons, breaking down heavy doors, figuring out a good strategy for an upcoming fight, performing special combat moves (e.g. trying to KO an opponent instead of killing him), etc.



8.1.2 Ranger

Prerequisites: Fighter level 3, at least two of DEX, STR, or CON, must be Good or higher.

Ranger skills are very similar to Fighter skills, and give these benefits:

- 1-3 Hit Points, plus CON, per level (minimum of 1 HP).
- For every 3 full levels (3, 6, 9,...), one level of Proficiency with one melee or ranged weapon of player's choice.
- For every 4 full levels (level 4, 8, 12, ...), raise one of STR, CON, or DEX by one point.
- For every 4 full levels (level 4, 8, 12, ...): either one extra attack per round in melee or ranged combat or a +1 to his attack score for any one attack, as described for Fighters.
- Each full 4 levels (4, 8, 12, ...) increases the protection of any armor or shield, as described for Fighters.
- At 1st, 4th, 7th, 10th, etc., +1 to any any checks to perform survival-related actions, e.g. hunting, tracking, setting traps, finding/building shelter, etc.

8.1.3 Clerical Priest

Prerequisites: Alignment compatible with the Order/deity they serve.

Clerics are men and women who directly serve the interests of a deity (or deities). They gain their powers through devotion to a deity and must take on (and behave in accordance with) the Alignment of the deity. They are organized in the form of churches (called Orders), and all clerics are bound to a particular Order. Though the deity is *highly* unlikely to take an active role in the Order's activities, the deity (or its agents) provide support in the form of magical powers, and may from time to time demand a quest or similar. Most clerical orders are of Lawful alignment, though Evil Orders are not unheard of. Neutral Orders tend to be nature worshippers, e.g. druids. Priests never learn any combat skills, and are not likely to hold up long in combat.



Priest skill levels give these benefits:

- 1-2 HP, plus CON, per level (minimum of 1 HP)
- For every 4 full levels, raise one of INT or CHA by one point.
- Can cast up to twice his level number, +INT, of clerical spell *levels* per day. e.g. a 4th level Cleric can cast up to 8 spell-levels/day, e.g. 2 fourth-level spells, 8 first-level, 3 second-level and 2 first-level, or any similar combination.
- At 1st, 4th, 7th, 10th, etc., +1 to any any checks to perform cleric-related actions, e.g. research, interpreting omens, understanding foreign magics, figuring out how to use new magic items, understanding of the rules of the cleric's order, etc.

The GM is free to create specific Orders for the clerics in his world, with other bonuses, penalties, and clerical obligations.

A cleric who consistently violates his Order's rules may be denied spell casting abilities the deity who supplies them. Such a cleric will be banned from his Order, and may have to take on a difficult penance, such as a long quest on behalf of the deity, in order to have a chance at getting his abilities back.

8.1.4 Clerical Knight/Paladin

Prerequisites: At least one level as a Fighter. Lawful clerical Orders require a Clerical Priest level of 2-4. Evil Orders have no minimum priest level requirement (as they don't really care about the faith of those who fight for them). Neutral orders may or may not have a minimum priest level requirement (GM's call).

A Clerical Knight (often called a Paladin) is similar to a Priest, but takes an active part in the military- or defense-related activities of their Order. Some Orders specify limits on what weapons or armor their knights may use, the most common of which is that knights may not use weapons which directly shed blood (edged weaponry - swords and such).



Knights are typically recruited (or volunteer) from the lower-level clerics, and normally only priests of levels 2-4 are selected or accepted (older priests aren't well suited to combat). In Lawful orders (and some Neutral ones), first-level priests are not accepted as knights – they must first prove their faith through priesthood before they are allowed to become a knight.

Knights are often priests who either found the priestly lifestyle a bit too constraining, who yearned for adventure, who weren't ideal students and were "encouraged" to join the knights, or because they have some natural talent for the arts of war.

Level bonuses:

- 2-3 HP, plus CON, per level (minimum of 1 HP)
- For every 3 full levels (3, 6, 9,...), gain one level of Proficiency with a weapon of the PC's choice (a specific weapon might require approval by the knight's Order).
- For every 4 full levels, raise one of INT, CON, STR, or CHA by one point.
- Can cast up to his level number, +INT, of clerical spell *levels* per day. e.g. a 4th level Clerical Knight can cast up to 4 spell-levels/day, e.g. 1 fourth-level spell, 4 first-level, 2 first-level and 1 second-level, etc.
- May perform clerical actions, e.g. ceremonies, religious research, etc., as a cleric of half his level.

8.1.5 Wizard/Mage



Wizards (also called *mag*es or *magic users*) spend endless hours studying otherworldly languages and tomes of knowledge, in search of power over the force known as *magic*. Mages can, over time, learn to wield powers of incredible might.

Wizard skills give these benefits:

- 1-2 HP, plus CON, per level (minimum of 1 HP)
- Can learn spells of equal or lesser level.
- For every five full levels (5, 10, 15,...), raise one of INT or DEX by one point.
- For every two full levels (2, 4, 6, ...), the caster gains one level of Proficiency in one spell of his choice, up to a maximum Proficiency level of 3. The GM must determine the effects of Proficiency for individual spells.
- Can cast up to twice his level number, +INT, of wizard spell *levels* per day. e.g. a 4th level Wizard can cast up to 8 spell-levels/day, e.g. 2 fourth-level spells, 8 first-level, 3 second-level and 2 first-level, or any similar combination.
- Wizard's skill level is used as a basis for any checks to perform wizardry-related actions, e.g. research, understanding foreign magics, figuring out how to use new magic items, etc.

Higher-level wizards may develop completely new spells. The specifics must be determined by the GM, as they are very campaign-specific.

8.1.6 Thief/Rogue/Scout

This is a generic class for characters who rely heavily on stealth, finesse, and dexterity for their survival.

The "thief" skills give these benefits:

- 1-2 HP, plus CON, per level (minimum of 1 HP)
- For each four full levels, gain one level of Proficiency with one weapon of choice.
- For every five full levels, raise one of DEX, INT, or CON by one point.
- For every three full levels, +1 to any "thieving"-related actions, e.g. climbing, hiding, sneaking around, slight of hand, fast-talking, etc.

8.2 Skill proficiency

Some classes provide their students with the opportunity to become proficient in a weapon's use, via specialized training (or equivalent experience) with that weapon. When a character gets such an opportunity, he may choose a weapon of his choice (with the GM's approval), or may take a specialization with shields (assists in defense), or some other abstract area (again, with the GM's approval).

If one uses a skill he is "proficient" with (e.g. a weapon proficiency) then he may ignore one point *from the low die* for each level of proficiency. e.g. a fighter with one level of proficiency with the Continuum Transfunctioner decides to use it. He rolls a 4 (high) and a 1 (low). Because of his proficiency, one point of the low die can be ignored, for a total result of 4. If the same warrior rolled a 3 (high) and a 2 (low), the end result would be $(3-1) = 2$. No matter how high a Proficiency is, it never directly adds to a roll, it only reduces the effect of the low die. For example, four levels of proficiency will allow one to ignore a low die of 1-4, treat a low die of 5 as a 1, and treat a low die of 6 as a 2.

The GM is free to place a maximum level on proficiency (+3 is quite reasonable unless the GM wants a highly cinematic campaign).

8.3 Acquiring New Skill Sets

Some GMs like the idea of a single-class character system, and may limit PCs to sticking with the class they first choose. Others will allow PCs to study new classes as they gain the experience to do so.

When PCs acquire the first level of a new skill area, it is recommended that the PC be forced to leave play (or role-play the training!), as learning is certain to take time and effort. Magical skills, in particular, are not trivial to learn, and often require many hours per day of intensive study and practice. An "out time" of six months or more is not unrealistic for a PC learning a completely new magic skill set. PCs who start the game with magical skills are assumed to have those basics behind them (but they may require months-long physical training in order to gain a new level as a fighter!).

As always: GM's call.

9 Action Resolution

To perform an action, the GM assigns a difficulty level, the player rolls the dice, applies any modifiers applicable to the situation (GM's call), and tries to meet or beat the target number.

For example, Bob the Basher is in combat with a goblin. The GM decides that Bob must roll a Good (+1) result to hit the smaller, dexterous creature. Bob rolls his dice, adds any bonuses or skills, magic, and such (we'll assume he has a total of +1), and must get a +1 or better to succeed. The difference between the target number and the rolled result is called the *Relative Result*. For example, if Bob rolls a total of +3, he has beat the required target number by 2 points, so he has a Relative Result of +2.

Most actions simply succeed or fail, with the actual relative result not playing a significant roll (though the GM may use it for descriptive purposes). In combat the relative result is used in determining damage.

9.1 Combat Rounds

Combat takes place in rounds, where a round is assumed to be approximately 5-10 seconds (spell descriptions and such assume 10 seconds per round). A combat round consists of the following phases:

- Determine initiative
- Combatants act in the order of their initiative. Effects of combat (i.e. damage) are applied immediately unless otherwise noted (e.g. a spell with a delayed effect).
- Repeat until one side is victorious (all enemies are defeated, flee, surrender, or are otherwise no longer capable of combat).

9.1.1 Initiative

To roll for initiative, roll d6HL and add the DEX score. In combat, the combatants with the highest rolls go first. When there is a tie, the GM has at least these options (he should pick one and consistently use it):

- The tied combatants roll again, but only compare the results amongst themselves (as opposed to those with differing initiative values).
- Ties are broken by matching DEX scores or (for the same DEX scores) rolling 1d6 (high roll wins).
- Simultaneous action. All participants may act, but the results are not applied until all of them have acted (or opted not to act). Using this rule, it is possible for multiple combatants to hurt each other.

9.2 Attacking

To hit an opponent, the attacker must beat a difficulty assigned by the GM. For hand-to-hand combat between similarly-sized creatures, the default to-hit score Average, though the GM may decide to use the target's DEX score as the base difficulty (assuming the target is aware and can actively move). The GM may apply situational adjustments (e.g. attacker has the higher ground or partially hidden by tree branches). If the attacker succeeds, he *might* deal damage, as explained below. Armor reduces damage, but does not normally change the to-hit difficulty (the GM may decide otherwise for some cases, in particular when magic is involved).

Another mechanism for figuring out a to-hit difficulty is to use the difference in DEX scores (Defender - Attacker). e.g. an attacker with Good DEX (+1) attacking a defender with Average DEX (+0) would require only a Mediocre (-1) to-hit result. Two combatants with the same DEX scores would require Average to-hit scores.

9.2.1 Ranged Attacks

The difficulty for ranged attacks must normally be fudged by the GM, depending on such factors as range of the weapon, awareness and cover of the target, etc.

Here are some general guidelines:

Base to-hit difficulty is normally Average.

- Target is at Medium range: -1
- Target is at Long range: -2
- Target is aware of attacker and can actively dodge: -1
- Each 2 full Scale levels of target larger than the attacker: +1
- Each 2 full Scale levels of target smaller than the attacker: -1
- Target is stationary and unaware of the attacker or unable to dodge: +1
- Target has partial cover (50% or more): -1
- Attacker can concentrate (uninterrupted) a full round on aiming at the target (or small target area): +1 to attack on the next round. Cannot be combined across rounds for better odds.

The GM may rule that any given target cannot be hit by normal missile fire (e.g. he's hidden behind a tree).

9.3 Active defense (Optional)

No combatant is assumed to sit idly by while being smitten, and this is taken into account when the GM assigns to-hit difficulties. Characters may, with the permission of the GM, use *active defenses* to reduce their chances of being hit. Here are some guidelines:

A character who has Proficiency levels with his current weapon may add his Proficiency level to the difficulty of hitting him if (in the GM's opinion) the character can actively use the weapon to defend himself. This is particularly realistic for fencing weapons and staves, where a skilled wielder can easily fend off lesser foes. The GM may decide that the PC's weapon cannot parry a certain attack, or has a reduced chance of doing so. For example, while a fencing sword can hold its own against lightweight weapons, it won't do too terribly much to block a 15kg greataxe or an arrow.

If the PC has taken Shield Proficiency he can automatically apply this bonus if he has a suitable shield (GM's call).

The GM may use a character's DEX score as the base difficulty for hitting the character. Encumbered (with treasure or heavy armor) characters may have a reduced DEX for this purpose. Using this rule, a PC with Great DEX who can actively defend himself is a Great difficulty target for his foes!

When incorporating these options, keep in mind that in this game system being more difficult to hit implicitly reduces damage taken by lowering the attacker's Relative Result.

10 Hit Points and Wounds

All creatures have an inherent ability to absorb some amount of physical damage before they are slain. This is measured in Hit Points (HP).

10.1 Combat Damage

Damage is calculated as follows:

Melee Damage = (Relative Action Result) + ODF - DDF

Missile Damage = (Relative Action Result) + ODF - DDF

Where:

- **ODF = Offensive Damage Factors**, factors which cause or increase damage
 - For melee attacks, or ranged attacks powered by STR (e.g. thrown weapons), the base ODF is the STR score of the attacker.
 - Add the ODF of the weapon/spell/effect. If a weak attacker's ODF is less than 1, the GM may rule (depending on the weapon) that the ODF is 1 (this is particularly recommended for sharp weapons, and for a weak old man beating at a beast with his cane this need not apply).
 - Add attacker's Scale.
- **DDF = Defensive Damage Factors**, factors which reduce or negate damage.
 - Add the DDF rating of any armor
 - Add the defender's Scale.

The GM may apply other situational ODF or DDF modifiers.

Example: Bob, a Scale 0 human with Good STR, succeeds with a combat roll by 2 points and he has a weapon which does 3 base damage. His opponent has only light armor (DDF 1) but is much larger than Bob, at Scale 3. The damage is:

$$(\text{Relative Result} + \text{STR} + \text{Weapon} + \text{Bob's Scale}) - (\text{Armor} + \text{Defender's Scale})$$

Or:

$$(2 + 2 + 3 + 0) - (1 + 3) = 1.$$

A damage result of less than 0 is counted as 0 unless the GM rules otherwise. e.g. the GM might rule that an adjusted Relative Result of +3 or more finds a weak spot in the opponent's defenses. On a natural critical success (dH6L1), the GM should always give some form of bonus.

Damage is normally a function of the characteristics of a weapon, and base damage for most common weapons can be easily calculated using these guidelines:

- -1 ODF for unarmed combat
- +0 ODF for martial arts, brass knuckles, or similar.
- Small one-handed weapon: ODF 1
- Most medium one-handed weapons: ODF 2
- Most two-handed weapons: ODF 3
- Weapon is sharp/pointed/spiked: +1 ODF

10.2 "Scratching" large Targets (Optional)

Small-sized combatants will find that they cannot deal any appreciable damage to much larger foes. The average human is hard-pressed to damage anything of Scale 6 or so, especially if it has any sort of armor. If the GM finds this disturbing, he may opt for one of the following rules:

- When Scale is the only factor which prevents damage from being applied, one point of damage is applied.

For example: an attacker does 4 points of damage against a Scale 6 creature, two of which are blocked by DDF 2 natural armor. The rest would normally be absorbed by the target's Scale. The GM may rule in this case that one point of damage has indeed gotten through.

This option allows a large group of archers to bring down even the largest opponents in one or two rounds of combat, and may not fit with the GM's idea of how large creatures react to relatively small attacks.

A more complex, but more realistic option:

- When Scale is the only factor which prevents damage from being applied, no damage points are dealt but the hit is recorded as a single "scratch." When the target accumulates a number of scratches equal to his current scale, his scale is reduced by one level *only for purposes of damage reduction*. When that happens, erase all scratches and start again, using the *adjusted* scale for purposes of damage reduction *and* accumulating further scratches. This simulates a gradual wearing-down of a creature by administering large numbers of small, otherwise insignificant, wounds. As the target accumulates many flesh wounds, later attacks may land on those same spots, effectively increasing the severity of the wounds. Scale lost this way heals at a GM-determined rate (e.g. each Scale number of HP healed restores one level of effective Scale).

This option makes it possible for attackers (with a bit of time, and probably lots of arrows) to whittle down even the largest opponents. This formula doesn't work with Scales less than 1, however.

The GM may choose to apply the former rule for large-but-soft opponents (those with no armor nor especially thick skin) and reserve the latter for the tough creatures (e.g. dragons and the like).

10.3 Effects of Damage

A character's HP are divided as evenly as possible into three groups, with any extra points going into the first group. As a character takes damage, he is affected as follows:

- When a character loses the first 1/3rd of his HP he is Hurt, and gets a -1 penalty to *all* actions.
- When a character loses the second 1/3rd of his HP he is Very Hurt, and gets a -2 penalty to *all* actions (not cumulative with the -1 Hurt penalty).
- When a character is down to the last 10% of his HP he is Critically Hurt, has a -3 penalty to *all* actions, and cannot do much more than crawl and try to beg for mercy. Spellcasters cannot normally attempt to cast spells when critically hurt.
- At 0 HP, the character is no longer of this world. He may be revived via magic or divine intervention, as the GM's allows. The GM may allow a PC who has exactly 0 HP to be revived via first aid or minor healing magics, but a PC with a negative HP score is dead.

For example, Bob has a total of 19 HP. This breaks down into groups of 7, 6, and 6 HP. After Bob loses 7 HP he is Hurt, at -1 to all actions. If he is reduced to 5 or fewer (his second group of 6 has been eliminated) he is Very Hurt. If he ever gets down to 2 HP (10% of his total) he's on the verge of death, and probably wishing he had stayed home instead of venturing forth to battle Evil.

10.3.1 Optional: CON check to survive

An optional rule to death-at-zero-HP is this...

Each time the PC takes damage which reduces his HP to 0 or lower, he automatically falls unconscious but does not automatically die. He must make a CON check, with a difficulty equal to the inverse of his current HP. For example, if he's reduced to -1 HP then he must make a CON check at Good (+1) difficulty. At -3 he must make a Superb (+3) check. The check is made once for each time the PC takes damage which reduces him to 0 or lower HP.

An example:

Scotty the Scott is in combat with a foe and is at 2 HP. Critically hurt, he cannot defend himself when the foe bashes him in the head for 3 points of damage. This reduces Scotty to -1. Scotty has a Good CON and rolls 2H2L, for a total result of +1, which is just enough to save him. If his foe stops bashing him, Scotty will remain unconscious and dying, but for the moment still breathing. No such luck - his foe hits him again, but this time just a heavy kick for 1 point of damage. Scotty is now at -2 HP and thus must make a +2 (Good) CON check. He rolls 2H5L, plus his CON (2), for a total of -1. Bye, bye, Scotty!

An unconscious PC may or may not recover, as determined by the GM. If allies provide aid within a "reasonable" amount of time (by the GM's clock, of course), he may eventually recover.

10.4 Healing HP

Most beings heal remarkably well, given enough time. A realistic healing rate is about 1 HP per week of rest. However, most GMs will probably want to go with 1 HP/day to keep the game moving. Alternately, keep a long healing rate and force the PCs to rely on magics (clerics, healing potions, etc.) if they want to get out of bed sooner. No amount of healing, whether magical or otherwise, will raise a being above its normal maximum hit points.

Whether or not a given injury leads to a permanent scar or disability is up to the GM. Obviously, if a PC survives a Wompa pulling off one of his arms, the arm won't just grow back over time (though some magics might be able to bring it back). Limb loss might cost a PC some number of HP permanently, since the body part which would normally absorb damage is no longer there. Or the GM may decide that the pain and suffering of the process toughen up the PC to the point of making up for the lost limb.

10.5 Hit Points and Scale

If two differently-sized creatures with the same Hit Point values, and equivalent offensive/defensive capabilities do combat, the bigger (larger Scale) creature *will* have the advantage. Consider an Ellyllon, at Scale -9, vs. a Scale 0 human. One good whack from the human can kill most ellyllon (doing at least 8 or 9 points, assuming no armor is involved), while the ellyll cannot, without poison, magic, or the like, deal any damage to the human. While the ellyll is no physical match for a human, two ellyll in a fight would do an equivalent amount of damage to each other as two humans would do to each other.

Because of the side-effects of Scale, Hit Points can be considered to become equivalent to more or less relative damage as the Scale increases or decreases, respectively.

10.6 Death and Resurrection

Depending on the GM's campaign, returning from the dead via magically-induced resurrection may be possible (these rules assume it is).

Resurrections are always granted or declined on the whims of a deity or one of his agents, and they will normally only raise those of similar alignment and good standing (or at least not a bad standing) with the deity, but the deities work in strange ways and even a Lawful deity might resurrect an Evil PC if he had a long-term reason to do so. The Powers that Be will often impose a quest upon the newly-risen, which will be delivered through the priest(s) who perform the ritual.

To be resurrected, a PC's body must be in a relatively good state – capable of supporting the life which is transplanted into it from the netherworld. Resurrection is a complex process, normally performed at temples and requiring several clerics to perform the magics. At the moment the soul returns to the body, healing magics may (depending on any wounds the body has accumulated) need to be cast to stabilize the patient, otherwise his wounds (which cannot be healed while the body is void of life) might just re-kill him. If the PC died of poison, it is safe to assume that the poison quickly became inert in the corpse.

If a PC's body is not available, or is in *really* bad shape, the GM might allow his colleagues to arrange for a replacement body, either a magically-created clone or a from another deceased being. If the PC adopts a whole new body, he inherits all physical attributes of the new body (keeping his old Alignment and CHA score). If the GM does not allow souls to enter new bodies then a PC cannot be resurrected unless his body is available.

If a resurrection attempt fails with a critical failure, the raisers may believe it to have succeeded, but instead they have brought back a malign spirit. How long it takes before the switch is noticed (if ever) is up to the GM, as are the exact motivations and powers of the spirit.

Resurrection is, in any case, a painful and traumatic process for the one being raised (and an unnerving one for anyone who witnesses the raising). The newly-arisen are always very weak, and remain both mentally and physically feeble (-2 to all actions, not cumulative with penalties from real wounds) for several weeks (1d6-CON, minimum of one week) even if they are magically healed to their full HP.

11 Character Advancement

Over time, play is generally more satisfying when characters advance in abilities. Advancement basically means increasing attribute scores or skills, but "advancement" can take many forms, e.g. social status or rank within one's city, realm, guild, or church.

The exact forms of advancement used are up to the GM. Here is a summary of the more common variants:

- Experience Points (abbreviated *XP*) are accumulated indefinitely via adventuring, and upon reaching a certain threshold one's level goes up.
- *XP* can be saved and spent, like a currency, to purchase attribute or skill levels, or "buy off" handicaps or other penalties. Some GMs allow *XP* to be spent for one-time benefits, like bonuses to die rolls.
- The GM keeps track of which skills and attributes a PC uses most actively, and over time assigns increases to those skills.

Since GMs differ greatly on how they want PCs to advance, there is no "one unified system" for *XP* in this game. However, in the interest of playability, the following sections present a default system which can be used if the GM has no interest in developing his own.

11.1 Collecting Experience Points (XP)

As PCs solve challenges, whether via combat, solving puzzles, or creative role-playing, the GM assigns them Experience Points (*XP*). *XP* are accumulated, and may be saved indefinitely or they can be spent (and subtracted from the PC's total) to increase attributes, abilities, and skills.

The amount of *XP* gained for any given actions is determined by the GM. The system described here uses relatively low *XP* values compared to most dungeon games.

A suggested *XP* award for defeating monsters (whether killed, subdued, or forced to flee) is their HP score, plus the difference in scales between the victor(s) and the fallen monster (minimum of one point). The GM may add points for creatures with special abilities, especially high Scale, and the like. He should reduce or eliminate the award for defeating weak creatures which are no real threat to the PCs, and should increase it if they defeat monsters which obviously have the advantage over them.

XP should also be awarded for non-combat activities, such as solving problems or reaching important story milestones. Clerics who heal allies after an encounter might get 1 *XP* per HP of wounds they heal (they do not get *XP* for healing themselves).

PCs may also get *XP* when they succeed in a saving throw to avoid some ill effect. One *XP* per point by which the saving throw is made is recommended.

PCs should not get *XP* for collecting treasure. Though they might earn *XP* through the process of getting to the treasure, the treasure itself is its own reward and does not give any direct *XP*. In some stories recovery of a specific treasure might indeed be the goal, and would in that case be a cause for an *XP* reward.

11.2 Increasing Levels

The most basic use of *XP* is to purchase new skill levels. The following are *guidelines* for skill level costs, and the GM may freely modify it to suit his idea of how fast or slow PCs should gain new levels.

The classical approach increases the cost of each new level of a skill. If this is used, the recommended cost of a skill level is 100 *XP*. Thus the first level costs 100 *XP*, the second 200, third is 300, etc.

An approach which allows faster advancement, and which is used by several very successful video games, is a flat *XP* cost, irregardless of the level. In this case, 100 *XP* per level might still be reasonable if the GM wants PCs to advance quickly, or 500 *XP* if they should advance quite slowly.

The GM should tell his players which system he is using, then consistently stick to it. That said, the GM is free to give "bonus levels" via divine intervention or the effects of powerful magical items. Some powerful undead creatures can even steal levels or accumulated *XP* from targets.

11.3 Increasing Attributes

Attributes increase very slowly compared to skill levels. The skill/class system has built-in advancement of attributes related to the skill, and it is recommended that that be the primary method by which attributes increase in level.

GMs who want more flexibility can allow PCs to trade *XP* for attribute increases. The suggested cost of raising an attribute is:

(100 x New Level) + 500 XP

Thus moving from Poor (-2) to Mediocre (-1) would cost ((100 x -1 = -100) plus 500) = 400 XP. Raising from Good (+1) to Great (+2) would cost ((100 x 2) + 500) = 700, and Great to Superb would cost another 800.

However, the numbers used here assumes that each skill level has a flat (and relatively low) cost. If skills have higher costs as their levels increase, it is recommended that attributes also cost correspondingly more.

If attributes may be increased by spending XP then it is recommended that attribute bonuses via level increases be completely eliminated.

11.4 In-play Favors

GMs may optionally allow players to expend XP during play to get "in-game favors", such as healing wounds, bonuses to dice rolls, the ability to re-roll dice or even dictate their results.

Here are some ideas of ways in which this can be used (the given costs assume class levels cost 100 XP/level):

- Healing wounds ("Oh, hey! That knife wound wasn't as bad as I thought!"). Costs 2 XP per point healed.
- Adding to dice rolls, e.g. to-hit, reaction checks, attribute contests, or saving throws. Costs 3 XP per +1, or pay 15 to get an automatic critical success.
- Call for divine intervention. Clerics only, and should have a very high cost (perhaps about the cost of gaining a level).

Just about anything the GM desires can be "purchased" by players this way.

12 Magic

Magic is a cosmic force which can be wielded by those who can pick out its vibrations from the surrounding noise of the universe. Indeed, magic is a psycho-reactive energy and seems to *want* to be wielded, as opposed to sitting idle and unused as so many energies are. Clerics gain power of magic via the support of a deity. Wizards gain power over it via scientific analysis, study, and control.

Magical effects are often cataloged into what we know as *spells*. A spell is a formula with which a wielder of magic can reliably (or mostly reliably) reproduce some known effect.

Wizards and clerics can learn any number of spells, but may only conjure up enough energy to cast a certain number of spells per day, as limited by their levels (see the skill descriptions for the limits). Wizards often record their spells in books, and the GM may require them to⁷. Spell casters do not "forget" a spell once it has been cast (as some game systems assume). Casting simply uses up the energies needed to cast spells. Clerical spells are granted by the power of a cleric's deity (or deities), and in fact cannot be written down.

12.1 Spell Levels

For ease of categorization, spells are grouped by their overall complexity, called their *level*. From the point of view of studying magic, all first-level spells have approximately the same complexity, as do all fourth-level spells. No spell caster can cast spells of a higher level of complexity than his skill (i.e. his Level). Some magical items cast spells on behalf of the user, and they may be higher than the user (who might not even have the ability to wield magic).

12.2 Spell Casting

PCs who have learned magical skills, or beings who otherwise possess magical powers, can work magical energies for their own purposes. This is called "casting spells."

To be able to cast a spell, the caster must be able to move his hands freely and concentrate. He must declare his intention to cast a spell at the beginning of the round, and must concentrate until it is his turn to go (some spells may require longer concentration times). If the caster is attacked, he must make an INT saving throw with a difficulty equal to the damage, or his concentration is broken and the spell is lost (along with the spell points invested in it).

A GM may require certain conditions (e.g. an eclipse or a certain locale) or physical components (magical

⁷ Just to conform to wizardly stereotypes, if nothing else.

ingredients) for specific spells. This is particularly suitable for ceremonial spells which have long casting times.

Some spells have some base difficulty level. To succeed, the caster must roll 2dHL and apply any modifiers set by the GM. If the roll is equal to or greater than the target number then the spell succeeds. Each spell description will specify whether the Relative Result of the roll is a factor in the effect of the spell.

A full night's rest is normally enough to gain back the energies for a "full casting." PCs on a long adventure might allow spell casters to regain some points by resting for an hour or two. GMs may also allow the PCs to find (or purchase) "mana potions", which restore some number of levels of spell-casting energy immediately.

12.3 Spell Damage⁸

Spells may deal a wide variety of damage types. The GM will have to fudge somewhat when damage is dealt to creatures of differing scales. Here are some guidelines:

- Fire, lightning, and other energy-based damage simply ignore scale. For fire and lightning, this can be justified with larger creatures having more surface area to affect. Smaller creatures have less area to affect.
- Damage from external objects or weather effects, e.g. a rockslide, earthquake, tremendous winds, etc., will have a scale as set by the GM or described in the spell's description. The GM may rule that a given PC is hit by a small boulder (Scale -2) or a large one (Scale 5), for example, and may even roll dice to determine the scale of the damage.

12.4 Reversed Spells

Some spells may be *reversed*, cast in a form with an opposing effect. Many clerical spells have alignment requirements for both the original form and reversed form, and can only be reversed if the caster has the proper alignment. For wizards, and other rote-knowledge magic users, reversed forms are separate spells, and must be learned independently of the original forms.

Spells with reversed forms are normally listed with a separator in their names, e.g. "Light/Dark", where the Dark spell is the reverse of the Light spell. The spell's description will detail what the behavior of the reversed form.

12.5 Spell Prerequisites

Some spells list certain prerequisites, and the GM is free to assign others (e.g. rare components or certain casting conditions, such as only during an eclipse).

Spells which list an Alignment prerequisite can only be learned or cast by those with the given Alignment(s). Thus if a spell requires Lawful alignment then it can neither be learned by a Neutral caster nor can it be cast by one who was Lawful when he learned it but has since slipped to Neutrality.

12.6 Spell Durations

Many spells have instantaneous effects, while many others last a variable amount of time. Some take effect immediately and disappear, whereas some effects are permanent. Each spell describes its duration.

Any spell which uses the word Level to describe a duration implicitly refers to the level of the caster (as opposed to the target) unless noted otherwise.

12.7 Clerical Spells

Clerics are granted their spells by deity or deities. A cleric who is on good terms with his Order should have access to most or all spells, whereas a wavering cleric might have a reduced choice of spells, as the GM decides.

8 D-A-M-A-G-E

12.7.1 Level 1

12.7.1.1 Bless/Unbless

Prerequisite: Lawful Alignment (Evil for the reversed form)

Grants one target a +1 bonus to all initiative and to-hit rolls, and grants a +1 DDF. Lasts one combat round per level. Range is 5 meters per level of the caster. This spell may be reversed, with the opposite effect. The effect is not cumulative if cast multiple times, but the reversed spell can cancel out the normal form, and vice versa, for a number of rounds equal to the caster's level.

12.7.1.2 Cure/Deal Light Wounds

Prerequisite: Lawful or Neutral Alignment for healing, Neutral or Evil for the damage

Heals (or, in its reversed form, deals) 1d6+1 HP immediately. Requires physical contact (a mere touch directly to the body, and cannot work through armor or clothing). It cannot revive the dead. Neutral and Evil clerics may cast the reverse, Cause Light Wounds, and must successfully touch his target (via a melee attack).

12.7.1.3 Light/Dark

The caster summons forth a fist-sized glowing ball of light, initially in one of his hands, which emits a white light approximating a lantern (Scale is that of the caster). It can be carried or "stuck" to an object (e.g. the end of a staff) and burns (without heat) for up to 10 minutes per level (or it can be canceled at any time by the caster). The orb is weightless and can be moved around freely during its life, e.g. put down on a table or stuck to a wall. It will remain where it is placed (even floating in mid air) until moved (it is immune to wind, but any substantial being or object can move it around). The light level may be dimmed or restored by mental command of the caster, and requires no appreciable effort or concentration.

The reverse of the spell drains all light in the area of effect, with the same duration. During that time the caster may change the light level to anywhere from the ambient light level to pitch black.

12.7.1.4 Purify

Prerequisite: Lawful or Neutral alignment, or Neutral/Evil for the reversed form.

Purifies one meal-sized quantity of food, or four liters of liquid, per level of the caster, removing harmful bacteria and such, but not deadly poisons. Purified food is cleansed but still subject to further contamination and decay. This spell may be reversed to spoil (make inedible) the same amount of food or liquid.

12.7.1.5 Turn Undead/Holy

Prerequisite: Lawful Alignment, or Evil for the reversed form

Up to (Clerical Priest Level + CHA) levels of Undead creatures must roll a contest of Caster's (Clerical Priest Level + CHA) vs. (Target's Level). If a saving throw fails then the target must flee from the caster as quickly as possible for a number of minutes equal to how much the roll failed by. Any undead creature which fails the roll by more than N points, where N is the creature's level, is outright destroyed, its *unlife* force draining from it immediately. e.g. a level 3 Skeleton which fails its roll by four or more is outright destroyed.

Evil clerics may reverse this spell to affect Holy creatures (as determined by the GM).

GM's who rate Alignment as an attribute may give bonuses to highly Lawful characters.

12.7.1.6 Detect/Hide Alignment

The caster can detect the general alignment of one target (an object or creature) per level. Range is 5 meters per level and duration is instantaneous.

Neutral and Evil clerics may reverse this spell to Hide Alignment, affecting up to Level targets (scale plays no role), which causes Detect Alignment spells (and similar) to possibly give incorrect results (roll a contest of the casters' skill levels) for up to 10 minutes per Level.

12.7.2 Level 2

12.7.2.1 Cure/Cause Minor Disease

Prerequisite: Lawful or Neutral, or Evil for the reversed form.

This spell immediately cures most minor illnesses, e.g. the common cold, and cleans up infections in existing wounds. It will temporarily alleviate the symptoms of harder illnesses, like the flu, but won't cure them.

The reversed spell does just the opposite, causing a minor illness or infecting an existing wound unless the target makes a Good CON check. A minor illness might mildly hinder a character in some contexts, e.g. maybe a spell caster with a bad cold is at -1 to cast spells, or has reduced magical energies to draw upon.

12.7.2.2 Remove/Cause Pain

Prerequisite: Lawful or Neutral, or Evil for the reversed form.

Removes, from one target, all penalties due to pain (typically from being Hurt) for up to 10 times Level minutes.

The reversed form, *Cause Pain*, wracks a target with horrible pain. The target must make contest of Scale + Level against the caster's Scale + Level or suffer the effects of pain for 1 round per point by which the roll is missed. Missing the roll by 1 or 2 induces pain equivalent to being Hurt, and a higher miss is treated as Very Hurt. A critical failure on the roll is treated as Critically Hurt. If the target already has the equivalent wound level (or equivalent), then this spell adds an additional -1 penalty above any penalties due to pain.

12.7.2.3 Resist/Suffer Cold

One target, of no greater than two levels of Scale greater than the caster, up to 5 meters distant per level, becomes immune to the effects of freezing temperatures, up to about -15 degrees centigrade. Additionally, he gets a +2 bonus to any checks made to avoid damage from cold-based attacks or effects (e.g. dragon breath or cold-based spells) and takes only half damage from such effects.

Duration is one minute per level of the caster.

The spell can be reversed, requiring a contest of Levels between the caster and the defender. On failure, the defender becomes very susceptible to cold, doubling any cold-based damage which penetrates its defenses (which are unaffected).

12.7.2.4 Resist/Suffer Fire

As for Resist Cold and its reversed form, Suffer Cold, but provides the same benefits against flame effects. The immunity to fire damage applies to non-magical fires of the heat in the range generated by bonfires. Lava, forges, magical fire, forest fires, dragon breath, and the like do half damage.

12.7.3 Level 3

12.7.3.1 Holy Water

Prerequisite: Lawful Alignment

Enchants one vial's-worth of water into Holy Water. Each vial (about 100ml), when splashed on an undead creature, will deal 1d6 points of damage (Scale and armor protect normally). A vial of holy water remains viable until it is used or mixed with non-holy water.

This spell does not create a container to store the water in – it simply enchants the water.

12.8 Wizard Spells

Wizards learn to use magic through long studies, practice, trial, and error. Once any given spell is learned, it may be cast at any time by that caster, provided he has enough energy to cast it and conditions allow him to cast it (e.g. he's not bound and gagged).

Certain magics are normally outlawed or restricted in most civilized lands. This includes any form of deception magic (except for use in entertainment, for obvious reasons) and magic which harms property or other beings (though self defense is often an adequate alibi).



When a wizard starts out, the GM should allow him to choose a number of spells equal to his INT score. After that, he must learn new spells via a teacher, research, or find them as treasure. An lenient GM may allow a starting wizard to learn all of the first level spells.

12.8.1 Level 1

12.8.1.1 Detect/Hide Magic

The caster can detect the presence of any magical force or active spell within 5 meters per level of the caster. Duration is one minute per level and the caster must concentrate to detect anything (though he may go in and out of concentration during the spell duration).

The reversed form of this spell may make Detect Magic (and similar) effects give false results – roll a contest between the casters' levels. It affects up to Level magical items or creatures, though the GM may rule that especially large or small creatures count as more or fewer targets.

12.8.1.2 Dispel Magic

One of the first spells any wizard learns (so he can undo some of the damage he does while practicing), this spell is very useful for countering pesky magics cast by other spell casters.

The target of the spell is another enchantment. The caster makes a contest of skills between his level and the level of the caster who planted the spell. On success, the spell is broken. The caster may attempt multiple times against the same spell, but at a cumulative -1 on each attempt (ever, for as long as he lives).

12.8.1.3 Light/Dark

As the cleric spell of the same name.

12.8.1.4 Magic Missile

For each two full levels, fires one phantasmal arrow (Scale equal to the caster's) from the caster's fingertips. They require a to-hit roll (but an easy one, +2 to hit) and deal for 2+INT damage each (Scale and armor protect normally). The caster may split the attacks across multiple targets. Range of the missiles is 10 meters per level of the caster, but range plays no role in their chance to hit their target.

12.8.1.5 These are Not the Droids You're Looking For (a.k.a. Tandyf or Minor Suggestion)

Target intelligent being must make a Good INT check or be subject to a simple mental suggestion. The target cannot be ordered to attack friends or otherwise strongly betray its nature, but he can be convinced to turn his back for a moment, leave the building, go take a cigarette break, or similar. The difficulty is modified by +1 for each full 2 levels of the caster, and by -1 for each full 2 levels of the defender. Range is immediate vicinity – the caster must speak to the target and convey the suggestion (though the suggestion transcends languages, it cannot be heard by deaf targets). Duration is up to the GM, and largely depends on the suggestion; one minute per level by which the target failed his save is a reasonable guideline. On a critical success, the target may (GM's option) take the suggestion very seriously, possibly even permanently changing his life philosophies to accommodate it. (Powerful evil wizards have been known to use this to build up armies of fanatical low-level warriors!)

12.8.1.6 Sleep

One target must must make a contest Level vs. the caster's Level. If the check fails the target immediately falls asleep for one minute per point by which the check failed. Range is 5 meters per level of the caster. The target may be woken up via heavy shaking, slapping, etc., but will not be roused by any but the loudest noises (e.g. a lion's or dragon's roar in the vicinity).

12.8.2 Level 2

12.8.2.1 Be Quiet!

One target must make a contest Level vs. the caster's Level or be vocally silenced, unable to utter any sounds, for one minute per point by which the check failed. Range is 5 meters per level of the caster.

The target may still make noises by banging things together, clapping his hands, etc., but cannot speak. Silenced spell casters cannot cast spells.

12.8.2.2 Paralyze/Remove Paralysis

One target must make a contest of (Caster's Level + IQ) vs. (Target's Level + 1 per two full Scale levels larger than the caster) or be temporarily paralyzed, unable to move. Lasts one round per point by which the roll is failed, and the target is completely helpless during this time (if he's in water he may sink, and a flying creature will immediately crash!). Range is 5 meters per Level.

The reverse of this spell undoes the affect of a paralysis spell (roll a contest of casters' skill levels), and possibly other forms of induced paralysis.

12.8.2.3 Missile Shield/Magnet

Provides a field of energy which protects against missile attacks. This spell affects only physical missiles (arrows, stones, spears, and such), and has no effect on the Magic Missile spell or similar effects. Affects one target, out to a range of 5 meters per Level, for 10 minutes per level of the caster. All missile attacks made against the target (or which he happens to get in the way of) get a -1 penalty to hit and do -1 damage if they do hit (the shield tries to nudge attacks away from the vital organs).

The reversed spell automatically hits one target, which is at +1 to-hit with missiles and takes +1 damage from missile attacks.

12.8.2.4 Spark

A spark of electrical energy jumps from the caster's hand, out to two meters per level. It requires a to-hit roll (at +2 to hit) and does damage equal to the caster's INT. Neither Scale nor metal armor protect against this damage, and the caster gets an additional +1 to-hit against targets wearing armor made primarily of ferrous metal (GM's call). Creatures made of stone or metal are normally immune to this attack.

For each two full levels the caster may shoot one spark, and may divide multiple sparks across multiple targets.

12.8.3 Level 3

12.8.3.1 Minor Illusion

The caster can create a visible illusion. The area of the illusion should not exceed about 3 cubic meters (about 100 cubic feet, or 5'x5'x4') per level of the caster. The illusion cannot interact with the physical world and emanates no sound. If a viewer is unaware that he is seeing an illusion, he must win a contest of INT against the caster in order to notice it for an illusion (and act accordingly). Anyone who sees the illusion do something "impossible" (e.g. a sword passes right through it) will recognize it as an apparition and may ignore it. Even an ignored illusion may block sight, however. A creature with unusual senses might immediately recognize an illusion as unreal, e.g. a creature which sees solely in the infrared spectrum will simply not see the illusion, as it neither emits nor absorbs heat.

The illusion may be moved about and changed at will, up to a range of 5 meters per level, and an illusion will disappear if it goes beyond this range. It lasts for as long as the caster concentrates on it, during which time can move at half of his normal speed but cannot hold a conversation or cast other spells (he can speak in short sentences and listen to others if the topics are not too complex). As an exception, the caster may speak freely while maintaining the illusion if the illusion and his topic of discussion are directly related. For example, if telling a story about a castle surrounded by enemies, he may create an illusion of the castle (in miniature, unless the caster is exceedingly powerful) while telling his story.

This spell is often used for entertainment purposes, to frighten away small creatures, or to create a hiding place.

12.8.3.2 Sphere of Silence

Causes a field to form around the caster, within which no sound emanates. The field may envelope just the caster, or up to 2 meters per Level around him, and lasts 10 minutes per Level. He can change the size or cancel the effect at any time, but cannot change the level of silence to partially dampen sounds. No sounds will pass into the field, and nothing within the field will generate any sound. Spell casters within this field (including the one who cast this spell) cannot cast spells unless they have the ability to do so silently (e.g. innate spell-like abilities of a particular monster).

13 Weapons, Armor, and Gear

Every adventurer needs weapons with which to smite his foes and armor to help protect against being smitten. Below is a summary of the more common weapons and armor.

13.1 Sample melee weapons

Name	ODF (+STR)	Notes
Club, Mace, Staff	1	
Spiked Club, Mace	2	
Dagger, Shortsword, Fencing foil	2	Dagger can be thrown: 10/20/30m
Handaxe	2	Can be thrown: 5/10/15m
Spear, one- or two-handed	2	-1 to attack if wielded one-handed.
Spear, thrown	2	Ranges: 15/30/50m
Longsword, Broadsword	3	
Bastard sword, one-handed	3	-1 to attack for each STR level under Great.
Bastard sword (two-handed)	4	-1 to attack for each STR level under Good.
Greatsword, Battleaxe (two-handed)	4	-1 to attack for each STR level under Great.
Halberd or Pole-arm (2-handed)	4	-1 to attack for each STR level under Good.

It is recommended that the ranges of thrown weapons be modified by the STR *and* Scale of the thrower: add $(5*(STR+Scale))$, in meters, to each range category. e.g. ranges of 10/20/30 would become 5/15/25 for a Scale 0 PC with -1 STR. The GM may adjust this one a case-by-case basis for certain weapons (e.g. a heavy object might get a 1x or 2x modifier instead of a 5x). Very tiny races, like the ellyllon, cannot throw much of anything further than a couple meters.

Most weapons listed as being two-handed can be wielded for full effect with one hand if the wielder is two or more scale levels higher than the race/Scale the weapon was designed for. Likewise, one-handed weapons of two or more Scale levels higher than the wielder may required two hands for smaller wielders, and might be completely unwieldable (GM's call).

PCs and GMs are encouraged to come up with more colorful weapons, using these as a guideline for damage and ranges.

13.2 Sample Missile Weapons

Name	ODF	Ranges (S/M/L), in meters	Notes
Shortbow	2	15/30/50	-1 ODF per STR level under Mediocre
Longbow	3	20/50/80	-1 ODF per STR level under AVG
Greatbow	4	40/80/120	-1 ODF per STR level

Name	ODF	Ranges (S/M/L), in meters	Notes
			under Great.
Sling	1	10/20/30	-1 to-hit for each DEX level under Good.
Crossbow	3	30/60/90	Requires a Mediocre STR check and two full rounds to reload. (One round on a critical success.)

The listed ranges of missile weapons assumes Scale 0. Smaller weapons will have shorter ranges, and larger weapons may very well have longer ranges (or they may not, as the weight of their munitions goes up).

13.3 Sample Armor

Description	DDF	Notes
Pliable, non-metal armor	1	Heavy cloak, cloth- or soft leather armor.
Rigid non-metal, or pliable metal, most carapaces	2	Boiled leather, chainmail
Medium metal armor	3	Scale mail, light plate mail.
Heavy metal armor	4	Heavy plate armor. May give -1 to combat skills, due to hindered movement, at GM's discretion.
Buckler/small shield	+1 against 1 opponent/round	Shield Proficiency adds protection against one additional opponent per level.
Medium shield	+2 against 2 opponents/round	Proficiency gives bonus as for Small shield.
Large/Kite shield	+2 against any number of opponents. Provides partial cover from missile attacks.	-1 to all combat skills, due to unwieldiness.

13.4 Sample Adventuring Equipment

Here is a partial listing of the more common adventuring equipment.

Item	Description
Rope, 20 meters	No adventurer leaves home without it.
Rations, one day's worth	Dried meats and plant matter. Keeps fresh (or at least doesn't spoil) for several weeks.
Backback or large sack	Perfect for holding one's loot.
Grappling hook	A perfect accessory for one's rope.

Some GMs may allow PCs to purchase a variety of lower-level magical accessories, such as those listed below. The exact costs and availability are up to the GM.

Item	Description
Potion of Cure Light Wounds	1/10 th of a liter, tastes like cough syrup. Acts as the cleric spell of the same name.
Potion of Mana	½ liter, tastes like chalk. Restores 1d6+1 levels of spell-casting energy.
Holy Water	Does 1d6 damage to undead targets. Must be thrown at or splashed on the target.
Potion of Pain Killer	Removes 1 point of penalties due to being Hurt or Very Hurt. Lasts 1d6 x 10 minutes.
Forever-lantern	A permanent enchanted lantern, with shutters to adjust the light level. Some more powerful varieties have additional enchantments to reveal hidden objects, invisible foes, and such.
Bag of Holding	An enchanted sack which holds <i>way</i> more than it would appear to be able to.
Roslof's Rope, 20 meters	When held on one end, it will slither, coil, and bind or unbind itself as commanded. Cannot be used to attack, but could trip an opponent if used properly.

14 Miscellaneous Rules

It had to come some time – the dreaded Miscellaneous section. Here is where we consolidate rules which don't justify their own sections and don't fit neatly anywhere else.

No set of rules can cover all situations (and those which try quickly turn in to 50-book libraries). The GM and players will at times need to improvise, and are encouraged to do so and to have fun while doing so.

14.1 Grappling

Some creatures or effects can hold a target fast. As a general rule, breaking such a hold requires a contest of (STR + Scale) between the holder and the holdee, which can be made once per round in place of the target's attack.

Some effects similar to grappling (e.g. being tied up with rope, or certain spell effects) may require similar checks (maybe STR to break free or DEX to wiggle free), though materials such as rope should get a much higher Scale (relative to their mass) for purposes of this check.

14.2 Poison

Poisons come in all varieties, the exact effects of which are detailed in the rules which present them. Most do direct damage, sometimes immediately, sometimes delayed, and sometimes over a period of time.

The following rule can be applied to all (or most) types of poisons.

14.2.1 Delivery of skin- or blood agents

If a monster has a poisoned attack which requires contact with the skin or blood (e.g. a scorpion's tail, a snake's

fangs, etc.), the poison may affect the target even if the attack does no damage. If such an attack deals any damage or if the relative Scale was the deciding factor in preventing damage (that is, if damage would have been dealt if the target were not so large) then the poison is delivered. This represents the attacker landing a blow which is heavy enough to penetrate armor but not heavy enough to significantly damage the target. Since the target's flesh gets hit, however (absorbing some of the damage), the poison is assumed to enter the body through the otherwise superficial wound.

The same applies to PCs or NPCs wielding poisoned weapons.

For example:

Happybottom the Halfling (Scale -2) is being viciously attacked by a Scale -4 snake. HB has armor giving him DDF 1 and his Scale relative to the snake's gives him an additional 2 points of protection. The snake hits HB for 2 points of damage. The first point is absorbed by his armor. The second point is absorbed by his Scale. Because his Scale absorbs some of the damage, the poison has broken the skin and takes effect. Depending on the exact poison, Happybottom may get a saving throw to avoid some or all of the effects.

14.2.2 Tainted Weapons

A weapon which is tainted with poison will eventually lose its poison after it has hit enough opponents. Each time a tainted weapon hits (whether it does damage or not), make a Situational Roll, subtracting one for each previous hit. On a negative result, the poison has been wiped off (or washed off in blood) in the attacks.

14.3 Invisibility in Combat

If an attacker cannot see, or otherwise sense, his target, whether due to darkness, blindness, magical invisibility, etc., he is at -2 to hit the target in melee and cannot (except through a miracle or blind luck⁹) hit the target with ranged weapons (and then only if he aims in the proper direction). The unseen attacker gets a +2 to hit with melee weapons and may (GM's call) get an additional +1 to hit with missile weapons.

Some creatures have extraordinary senses which may reduce or eliminate this penalty in certain contexts. For example, a creature which sees in the infrared spectrum will have no problem sensing warm creatures in pitch blackness.

Any bonuses a "blinded" attacker may have for active defense (section 9.3) are halved when being attacked by an invisible opponent. If the target is completely unaware of the invisible attacker (because he hasn't been attacked yet) then he gets no active defense bonuses.

14.4 Falling Damage

Characters will sometimes fall. Maybe into a deep pit, maybe off of a cliff they're climbing, or maybe off of (or be dropped by) a dragon they're riding (or being carried away by).

When it comes to determining damage by falling, the GM is advised to simply fudge it. If someone falls a Great height (whatever that means for their scale), give them Great damage.

The GM may adjust damage based on factors like the surface one collides with (metal spikes hurt more than mossy ground), magical effects, whether or not the character is attached to a rope (which may slow the fall).

Remember that many, but not all, winged creatures simply don't fall unless their wings have been somehow disabled or hindered.

AAAARRRGGGHHHH!!!! The chart I added here was mysteriously lost!

14.5 Damage to Flying Creatures

As a general rule, creatures which use wings (or gasbags, or some other "tool") to fly cannot fly if they are Very Hurt. If such a creature takes wounds which reduce it to Very Hurt while flying, the flier must make an Average DEX check to make a safe crash landing (remember to count the Very Hurt penalty!). A failure may result in more damage, at the GM's discretion.

9 No pun intended

15 Treasures

Why do adventures leave their homes every day and risk their lives and immortal souls battling monsters and delving into dungeons? Most do it because it pays well. Adventurers are famous for finding hoards of riches of all sorts.

15.1 Money

Throughout the world's long history, one common theme as evolved when it comes to currencies: people *love* gold and silver. While each kingdom typically mints its own currency, the currencies are almost all based on gold, silver, and copper coins.

The typical coin is about the size of an American quarter-dollar, or about the same as a two-Euro coin, and weighs about 10 grams (so there are about 100 coins per kilogram).

The standard conversion rates for the coins are:

- 1 gold = 10 silver
- 1 silver = 20 copper

However, when moving around in different kingdoms, or when trying to use currency uncovered from an ancient tomb, PCs will often have to convert their finds into something they can directly spend. Such conversions often end up costing 10-20% of the total value.

The most common currencies are, by far, copper and silver coins. The average peasant may live his whole life without touching a gold coin.

Sometimes coins are minted in larger sizes, and will have an overall value equivalent to their total weight.

Major cities have banks to store one's money, offering a modest interest rate, and the larger merchants in such cities normally accept papers of credit from such banks as payment (the equivalent of writing a check).

15.1.1 Paying the Tax Man

When entering a large city of which the PC is not a legal citizen, he will be required to declare, and pay taxes on, any valuables he brings into the city. Such taxes can range from 5% to 25% of the overall value, depending on the kingdom. Intentionally trying to avoid such taxes, or using trickery to get around them, are serious offenses, and may be punished by stripping the PC of all belongings and throwing him in the dungeons or forcing him into hard labor for a time. Border patrol agents are well aware of magical items like Bags of Holding, and other magics used for hiding away goods, and will not react kindly to those who try to use such magics to sneak items into the kingdom.

PCs who are citizens of a given kingdom will not have to pay such "entry feeds", but will have taxes to pay, at a rate determined by the GM. PCs who are not citizens, but who work on direct behalf of a kingdom's lord, may receive papers awarding them tax-free passage within the kingdom.

15.2 Gems and Jewelry

Surpassing even gold in popularity, gems are worth relatively large amounts for their weight, but are not typically useful as a direct currency. Gems can range in value from virtually worthless trinkets to thousands of gold coins. Worked into jewelry, they become even more valuable.

Gems which are part of a non-random treasure should have a value set by the GM. When gems are randomly found, make a Situational Roll to determine the base value:

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Worthless	1 cp	1 sp	1 gp	10 gp	20 gp	50 gp	100 gp	200 gp	500 gp	1000 gp

Then make a second roll to determine the overall quality of the gem. For each point below 0, subtract 20% from the base value. For each point above 0 add 20% to the base value. If the GM wishes, he may roll again to determine the size (using the same +/-20% as for gem quality).

Uncut gems are worth much less than cut gems, and particularly pure gems may be worth much more.

Jewelry, crafted works of gems and other precious substances (normally metals), can be worth considerably

more than the gems they contain. Many pieces of jewelry are valuable not solely because of their precious content, but may have high sentimental or symbolic value to someone (or to a whole nation, in the case of crown jewels).

PCs may have problems finding a buyer for particularly valuable gems and jewelry – most buyers won't have the cash on hand to make such large purchases. The PCs might have to settle for trade, letters of credit, and such if they want to get rid of especially valuable gems or jewelry.

15.3 Magical Items

Powerful magicians, and sometimes deities themselves, often enchant magical power into common objects. Some of the more common types of magical objects are summarized below, but the options for magical items are virtually unlimited (several entire books of such items have been published).

Some powerful magical items may have their own personalities, an Alignment rating, and personal antics which are likely to annoy or interfere with the PC from time to time. Such items are likely to be a mixed blessing, at best, and may resent (or even seek revenge on) PCs who treat them carelessly, trade them away, or otherwise do not show the item proper respect.

Occasionally even a non-sentient item will be Aligned, and will only work when wielded by those of the same alignment.

Clerical magics require the intervention of a deity, or one of his agents, and cannot normally be stored in enchanted items like wizard spells can. The common exception is most healing spells – the healing power can be transferred into some chemical base and used later. The GM may rule that other clerical spells may be used in enchanting objects. Some clerical magics, like turning undead and performing blessings, explicitly require divine intervention (however minor), and cannot be "saved" in magical items or concoctions.

15.3.1 Weapons and Armor

Any type of weapon or armor can be enchanted. A typical enchantment adds +1 to the to-hit score of weapons or the DDF of armor. More powerful items might have a +2 enchantment, and the mightiest have the extremely rare +3 enchantment. Aside from making weapons and armor more effective, they are often enchanted with other effects, such as protecting against or dealing special types of damage (flame or cold, or do extra damage to a certain type of creature).

15.3.2 Wands, Staves, and Rods

Enchanted wands, staves, and rods are tools which allow non-mages to cast certain spells as if they were a wizard. Each one contains a spell and enough energy (or "charges") to cast the spell a certain number of times (typically 3d6 uses). When used, the item casts the spell on behalf of its wielder, and when all charges are used up it becomes inert (the GM may or may not allow it to be re-charged by a mage with the proper spells).

The spells they cast are cast at the level of the one who enchanted the item. If the level of the caster is unknown, assume it is the lowest level needed to cast the spell. When creating such an item, a mage may intentionally "dumb it down" to a level lower than his own.

A list of some of the more common items¹⁰:

- Wand of Magic Missile/Lightning/Fireball/Sleep/Light
- Staff of Paralysis (requires a successful hit against a target)
- Wand of Polymorphism
- Wand/Rod of Detect [Alignment/Metals/Magic/...]
- Wand of Healing (as per one of the clerical healing spells)

The vast majority of such items contain wizarding magics, as most clerical spells cannot be used for enchantments (for the same reason clerical scrolls do not generally exist – they require active participation of a deity). Such items almost always have an alignment and will only work for a wielder of the same alignment, or may even work only for a worshiper of a given deity, and may deal damage or apply a curse to anyone else.

15.3.3 Potions

Potions of all kinds exist to ease life's pains and ailments. Most come in a small glass bottle, enough for a sip or two, and some require large doses, up to half a liter or so.

¹⁰ This list was much longer until some editing snafu deleted it.

Some of the more common potions include:

- Potions of Healing are basically clerical healing spells in a bottle.
- Potions of Mana are herbal, non-magical potions which restore 1d6+1 levels of a spell caster's magical energy.
- Poisons – not all potions are helpful (or once were, but are well past their expiry date). The exact effect is up to the GM.
- Potion of STR/DEX/CON/INT/CHA increases an attribute by 1 point for 1d6 times 10 minutes.
- Holy Water is enchanted water created by the clerical spell of the same name.

GMs and players are encouraged to come up with their own.

15.3.4 Scrolls

Scrolls of all kinds exist. Most are mundane texts, legends of old, accounting information, and the like. Here we concern ourselves with magical texts of power...

Most wizard spells can be written down, using a long and tedious process, such that the written copy contains all of the energy needed to cast them. Such scrolls are valuable to adventurers because they do not drain the energy of the caster.

Clerical spells, being the direct channeling of godly energy, cannot be recorded on paper this way. They can be described on paper, or written down literally, but the words have no power. Clerical spells can only be cast by a cleric or channeled by a cleric through an enchanted item.

To use a scroll, it must simply be read aloud. Any scroll can be examined to determine its contents. A wizard who knows the spell written on it will automatically recognize it, and may (GM's call) be able to recognize a spell he does not know if he has had some exposure to the spell before.

While any being may examine a scroll, its magical effects can only be released by a wizard who is of high enough level to cast the spell scribed into the scroll. Reading a scroll is similar to casting a spell, requiring the same concentration, but the wizard must have the scroll in hand in order to be able to use it.

When a scroll is enchanted, its level of power is set. Spells which have effects varying on the level of the caster have the level of the caster who penned the scroll. If no level is specified when a scroll is found, assume it is of the lowest level necessary to cast the spell, or at least level five (the recommended level at which wizards can start to enchant items). The level of the reader of the scroll is not considered for purposes of the scroll's effect, except that the wizard must be of high enough level to understand and cast the spell.

Once a scroll is used, its power is gone. The text is still there, but it is inert. The scroll cannot be re-penned again because it's already all covered in ink.

GMs may allow wizards to learn new spells from a scroll. A wizard must spend some amount of time studying the scroll (as determined by the GM), after which the scroll loses its enchantment (as if it had been cast) and the caster adds the spell to his list of known spells. The GM may require a roll to determine whether the spell is learned, e.g. a contest of (Reader's Level+INT) vs. Spell Level. This makes learning low-level spells very easy and higher level ones will have a significant chance of failure.

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17 Index

This index is a work in progress. OpenOffice's index features have more than a couple bugs, and they may manifest themselves here.

Reminder to self: do not mark header text for inclusion in index entries. An OOo bug causes the header number to sometimes show up as part of the index entry text (but not all the time, and it might work fine and then suddenly revert to the broken behavior with no warning).

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