
Draft 0.4

RPG Rule Set

©1993 – 1998 Pitt Murmann <pm@ekkaia.org>

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Introduction

This package is conceived to provide a basic, yet multi functional, rule set for role playing games. Draft just comprises a small set of rules for character generation, abilities, and several skills. It does not cover any setting or scenario, but hopefully offers rules to integrate characters in predesigned worlds. The most important rule in Draft is:

Game masters should not hesitate to bend, break or drop any rule given in this text, if it (does not) pleases them.

Terms like “could” and “should” have been used as often as possible in conjunction with rules in preference for “is” and “has” to reflect the notion that game master are always encouraged to change or modify them.

1.1 Rules without a Game

It cannot be stressed enough: Draft is not a fully featured role playing *game*, but just offers rules for the latter. How is this supposed to work?

Usually, if you play a role playing game you use a book which contains both – a magnificent (or dark) story that describes a fictional setting in which the game takes part, and a handful of rules that are used to control the game and outline its characters. In many cases you are interested in this particular game, because its background pleases you, but not because you like the rules. Perhaps the rules are too complicated to be understood when reading them the first time or, say, you just do not like them for any reason.

This is where Draft enters the stage. Draft does not claim to offer better rules than most of the other systems. It just offers simple rules, which (hopefully) can be followed easily in a short period of time. The time you save by studying simple rules may be used to delve into campaign settings and source material. Additionally, Draft has been designed to be usable as a substitution for as many game systems as possible, which means that you have to comprehend it only once and may be able to use it furtheron for other systems as well.

1.2 Limitations

There are a number of limitation that could prevent you from using Draft as your rule set of choice.

First, and most probably, you do not like Draft. The rules are not logical, too hard to follow, badly described or you just do not like them. In this case there is probably no chance for a compromise.

Second, the setting of your choice is so special and unique that you feel unable to replace its rule set by Draft. Indeed, Draft has been designed with humans or at least human-like characters in mind to be as flexible as possible in that field. If your characters lack any similarity with human souls it will be difficult to integrate Draft into your favourite system. Even worse, by forcing Draft to substitute this system’s spine without fitting into its environment you will lose more than you would gain by using it.

This brings us to the third an last point – time. If it is likely to take more time to convert the original system to be usable with the Draft-rule set than to study the original rule set itself, you should probably stick to the latter, at least, if you do not shudder in disgust when having to go through the other system’s rules.

If any of the reasons above apply to your situation, Draft is probably not interesting for you.

Nevertheless, let us assume you do not fall in this category, which automatically renders you a potential user of Draft. What are the advantages of a detached rule set?

Draft has been developed for people who are not afraid of experimenting, either, because they are experienced players or because of their very nature. The set of rules is very small and competent game master should not hesitate to overrule certain die rolls with feasible verbal explanations. Often a game master’s narrative style is more valuable than die rolls. In the case of some basic rules being needed to determine the end of a situation, Draft could still serve you well.

Finally, Draft does not cost you anything. It has been written just to please you and me. Sure, it hasn’t got any illustrations in it, nor does it have an expensively designed hard cover wrapper, but if you just happen to need some raw feed stock to base your ideas on, why not have a look at it?

1.3 Score, Dice & Values

Draft uses one ten-sided die (d10) to determine random results. Most scores players have to deal with fit into a range of 1 to 10. As a standard practice, higher scores are valued better than lower

ones. The same rule applies to casting dice: a result of 10 is best while 1 represents the worst possible number.

When a die roll is modified by a bonus the total number may, of course, exceed the value of 10, for instance, if you roll a d10 and add one of your skill scores. The total result of the die roll and the score of the skill represent the quality of an action – the higher, the better. This procedure is called a *skill check*. The number of bonuses and penalties that apply to the roll depend on the situation and

the difficulty of the performed action.

Rolling dice is usually only necessary if characters would like to perform an extraordinary action, act under pressure or have to compete with an opponent possessing roughly the same qualities the character has. Most situations may also be settled without casting dice. Although dice may add some sort of exciting element to the game by generating random results it still interrupts a game session that is mainly based on narration and story telling.

Attributes

Atttributes represent a character's development and potential in certain fields. By specifying the preferences of one's nature they roughly describe the very fabric a character is made of. Of course, two different characters who possess exactly the same line up of attributes may behave totally different in daily life, but the individual values and nuances of both are based on a similar type of grounding.

Attribute values rarely change, at least for the better. Certain attributes may deteriorate if certain extreme circumstances occur, for instance, if a character acts in an unhealthy environment or takes a large amount of physical or mental damage. Such extreme circumstances can only be countered by respective extreme counter measures, if any, or have to be cured by time. Above all, attributes represent a character's prospects to do certain things. Once defined, they are more or less fixed, shaping and predestinating the character's life.

2.4 Main Attributes

Draft's main attributes are subdivided into three categories, each of which has three distinctive attributes.

Physical Attributes represent the character's potential to act physically, that is, to move, maneuver, run and hit, as well as his wellbeing, fitness and endurance. The three physical attributes are Strength, Dexterity and Constitution.

Mental Attributes describe a character's features to perform mental tasks, such as concentrating, solve logical problems and distinguish things that make sense from potential misleading alternatives. The three

mental attributes are Reason, Intuition and Willpower.

Interactive Attributes outline a character's relationship to the world surrounding her. This includes both ways: her perceiving her environment, as well as her ability to interact and get in contact with it. The three Interactive Attributes are Charisma, Perception and Empathy.

Mental Attributes are probably the most difficult category to be integrated into the game, because they are closest to the possibilities players actually have to bring themselves in. This is why some people think that mental attributes do not make sense in the field of roleplaying at all, because players should not be restricted to certain statistics, but rather play their characters according to their own abilities. Indeed, it is very difficult to play a bright character if you are a little bit slow and, maybe, even more difficult the other way round.

Yet, Mental Attributes have been included in Draft, because they depict a character as much as the other categories do, the latter of which would be incomplete without the former. Given a reasonable player, the method of distributing the strengths and weaknesses of ones character freely should grant enough freedom to even deal with this potential obstacle successfully.

Interactive Abilities sometimes yield the same problems as their mental siblings apparently do: they are claimed to be superfluous in respect of limiting the player's freedom of action. Nevertheless, they have been included into the game rules for the same reason that applies to mental abilities: their existence adds much to the comprehensiveness of the game as such, without dropping the possibility to interpret the values accordingly.

Strength (STR) A character's physical power and muscle including the ability to lift or tow objects and wield raw physical force effectively. Characters with high strength scores are strong, muscular, have broad shoulders and deliver destructive blows and attacks.

Dexterity (DEX) Dexterity comprehends agility and prestidigitation, that is, the ability to move and maneuver your body efficiently as well as knowing what to do with your hands and fingers. Characters with high dexterity scores move and turn gracefully, are capable of performing venturous acrobatics as well as pick pockets.

Constitution (CON) Constitution includes the development of one's body, health, endurance and physical condition. Characters with high constitution scores are tough and more resistant to injuries and illnesses than average persons.

Reason (REA) The ability to solve structured problems, apprehension of correlations and quickness of the mind. Characters with high reason scores are bright, fast thinking and excel in the field of logic and calculation.

Intuition (INT) Some coherences cannot be computed or yielded by means of logic, but rather require common sense and wisdom. While characters with a high reason score know how to analyze data correctly, characters with a high intuition score may be able to make the right guesses out of inspiration rather than of deep thoughts.

Willpower (WIL) Willpower comprehends steadiness of decisions and strength of the mind. Willpower also reflects the ability to concentrate and uphold concentration over a longer period of time. Characters with high willpower scores are capable of forcing themselves to do things that they actually do not want to do at the moment, but of whom they know that, if done once, will benefit them in the long term.

Charisma (CHA) Combined attractiveness of yourself, that is, beauty and handsomeness on the one side and the ability to express yourself on the other. Characters with high charisma scores have an outstanding presence and know how to transmit their message to their environment. Charismatic

characters may also possess an eye-catching appearance.

Perception (PER) The ability to see, hear, taste, smell and feel physical conditions, either intentionally or accidentally. Characters with high perception scores have keen senses. They are hard to surprise and things are hard to conceal from them.

Empathy (EMP) The ability to feel and sense things that lie beyond the perception of daily life. Empathic persons in general and characters with high empathy scores in particular, not only absorb the essence of all things, but also seem to be linked to it and are familiar with its ways and methods.

2.5 Attributes in the Game

In Draft, attributes for humanoid characters range from 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest possible attribute score. In respect of player characters, scores may never drop below 1 or rise beyond 10. If a character's attribute should ever drop to 0, which is equal to not being present at all, the involved character is rendered unplayable, although the actual situation depends on the ability.

A Strength or Dexterity score of 0 means that a character is paralyzed, that is, he is immobile and cannot move. A Constitution score of 0 means that a character has lost all his health and life energy. As a result he will die instantly. The absence of Reason or Willpower drives characters into irretrievably insanity. The entire loss of Intuition or Empathy takes away the human factor of a living creature. Charisma scores of 0 mean that characters behave as automatons rather than persons. The loss of Perception deprives characters of all senses and shuts them in from the world around them.

If a character is exposed to extreme physical or mental damage she may suffer from drains to corresponding attributes, either temporarily or permanently. Even more important than how much the remaining score actually is, is the question of how many points are lost at once. A character who loses half of one of his attribute scores all of a sudden is at least close to unconsciousness, regardless of how many points are left. Losses of attribute points can only be restored by magical or supernatural means. If the latter are unavailable the character has to rest for a long time without running the risk of suffering the same defeat again.

Physical attributes tend to deteriorate when characters reach old ages while mental attributes increase in the same proportion. The exact age when these changes occur heavily depends on the character's race and personal condition. Average humans suffer from the first indications around 30 to 35 years. This is when they start losing hair and the wrinkles grow deeper. In turn, they are more experienced and wiser. A game master should customize the changes in regard of the player characters. Losing one point of one physical attribute each 10 years beginning at the 30st or 35th year could be appropriate. The player should be entitled to choose the respective attribute himself.

When characters gain experience they may also gain points to be spent on attributes. Players who contribute well to the success of the game could be rewarded by permitting them to raise one of their most frequently used attributes by one point. However, rewards like this should occur rarely, because high attribute scores can easily influence the balance of the game to a great extend.

2.6 Ability Points

Average adult characters possess attribute scores of about 5 – sometimes a little bit more, sometimes a little bit less. This yields a total score of about 45 points (9×5) for all attributes added up. Player characters are considered to be above-average, that is, they are stronger, tougher, more intelligent, wiser more attractive – in few words, more capable than average persons. Because of this, game masters should grant players at least 25% additional ability points.

The actual amount of points being granted should depend on the setting and the world the character is supposed to survive in. If the game takes part in a dark, harsh world full of cruelty and agony, less capable characters won't survive very long, even if their players try hard. On the other hand, teenager characters in a modern, civilized world being provided with superhuman abilities will most probably tempt players to play their characters accordingly. Thus, as a rule of thumb, 55 ability points is a good point to start with.

2.7 Determining Attributes

One important aspect of Draft is that players are entitled to distribute their ability points more or less freely among all their attributes, determining their character's strengths and weaknesses as it

pleases them. This allows players to create (more or less) exactly the type of character they have in mind without having to rely on dice. In this way it should be possible to fulfill the needs for even the most flamboyant character designs.

What players actually have to do, after having worked out an imaginary sketch of the upcoming character, is to distribute all their ability points among the nine attributes. All points have to be spent. None of them may be saved or rearranged later. Once a character is created and her outline is designed in the terms of rules, her attributes are fixed.

Human attribute scores range from 1 to 10, with 1 being worst and 10 being best. However, the game master should keep in mind that 1 and 10 yield extreme characters. An attribute score of 1 will render a character close to useless (see above), whereas 10 describes a nearly superhuman ability. Because of this, players who create new characters should stick to a range of 4 to 8, at least for the beginning. To reflect the fact that extremely high scores, such as 9 and 10, occur rarely the game master could rule that scores beyond 8 take up two points each when creating a character. Thus, a score of 8 would cost 8 points, 9 would 10 points and 10, if possible at all, would cost 12 ability points.

2.8 Special Abilities

In addition to the three attribute categories explained above, a number of special abilities may exist. Contrary to the former, special abilities are just covered fragmentary by these rules, because they are heavily depending on the game's scenario and background. Indeed, special abilities reflect exactly that – abilities that are bound to a specific setting.

Draft's special abilities are optional to a great extend. They comprise features that are beyond a normal human being's possibilities, such as resistences or immunities from certain conditions and illnesses, special movement and maneuvering skills or other extraordinary powers. Some game masters avoid special abilities due to their exceptional nature while others think that using them might contribute additional spice to a game session.

Game masters who decide to allow their players to choose from certain special abilities should always weigh up these powers against the game setting. In a world that is mainly inhabited by normal human beings a flying human creature is

quite an extraordinary phenomenon. Game masters should think twice before granting their players such exceptional powers.

On the other hand, in a mysterious land where fiends and demons fight each other all day and night certain supernatural powers might be less exceptional or even common. Magic and psionic powers, which are common in most fantasy worlds, are also special abilities. Magic is dealt with in a separate chapter, *Magic*, as a representative example of how to include special abilities into the skill-based system.

2.8.1 Example: A Fantasy World

While playing in a fantasy world a game master allows her players to choose from certain special abilities, each of which have ability point costs according to the inherent power.

Special Ability	Costs
Exceptional good looking	2
Can run twice as long as normal	3
Can breathe water	5
Can talk to animals	6
Immune to fire	8
Has wings and can fly	10
Fast healing metabolism	12
Has sixth sense	15
Can change shape	20
Invulnerable	25
Immortal	50

The ability point costs listed above apply to humans only. If the players are about to play amphibian humanoids who dwell near or under water the ability to breathe water is less exceptional while an immunity to fire would be even more phenomenal.

If players choose to provide their characters with special abilities they have to save some of their ability points for these powers. Ability points for special abilities are usually not granted separately, but have to be distributed on attributes and abilities alike. Of course, if game masters prefer to grant their players a separate pool of ability points to build their special abilities from they are encouraged to do so.

Whether special abilities are selected en bloc, that is, by selecting them, you have them, or have to be quantized the same way as attributes, is up to the game master. The former method provides a simple, qualitative way while the latter is more

precisely and probably requires a larger amount of ability points to perfectly.

Example: *A player is granted 55 ability points by her game master, which she can spend on her abilities. She wants to play an agile, skilled character with sharp senses and wits. She spends her ability points as follows: STR 5, DEX 8, CON 6, REA 5, INT 7, WIL 4, CHA 5, PER 8, EMP 5, which leaves her 2 points for spending on special abilities. If special abilities are not available to her she has to spend the remaining 2 points on some of her main attributes.*

2.8.2 Disadvantages & Faults

Whether players are allowed to trade personal disadvantages of their characters for additional ability points is completely up to the game master. Usually, it is best to let your players have exactly the kind of character they want to have. Most players prefer potent characters without drawbacks. This is completely all right. On the other hand, if they would like to include some negative aspects to their protégé's characteristics, this should be fine, too. If they expect additional ability points in exchange for their voluntary disadvantages a game master should weigh up the severeness of the respective fault and could accordingly grant the player some ability points for it.

However, some game masters do not close bargains like this. They leave it up to the players whether their characters have any anomalies. If they have – fine: it will contribute to the depth of their background; but players may not expect any compensation for it.

2.9 Combined Attributes

From time to time, skills not only refer to one attribute, but to the combined value of more than one. To determine the score of a combined attribute, the involved attribute scores are summed up and divided by the amount of attributes being used. If the division should yield a remainder the total value is rounded accordingly. For instance, to determine the Stamina score of a character, which is composed of Strength and Constitution, the player adds her Strength and Constitution scores and divides the result by 2. Remainders less than 0.5 round down the total, while 0.5 or greater rounds it up.

Skills

Draft is a skill-based role playing system, that is, when a character tries to perform an exceptional action, which is beyond ordinary triviality, she has to make a skill check.

Game masters should ask players to make skill checks only,

- if the action is so difficult to perform that a check against the corresponding skill is necessary to see if it succeeds, or
- if a failure (or exceptional success) of the check would affect the situation itself to a great extent

Rolling dice too often, especially in situations of minor importance, may stagnate any interesting game session. Dice can help to resolve an action, but in some circumstances a game runs more fluently, if the players just use their own words to describe their actions extensively.

Skill checks are always based on the most appropriate skill to be found on the player's character sheet. If no appropriate skill is found the skill's value (which actually does not exist at all) counts as 0 for this particular attempt.

The player then adds any available bonuses to that score and subtracts any applicable penalties from it. Bonuses and penalties may be permanent due special objects being used or temporary due to certain circumstances or difficult conditions.

At last, the player rolls one ten-sided die (d10) and adds the result to the previously calculated sum and presents it to the game master.

Eventually, the game master decides, if the attained result is enough to achieve the character's aim.

$$\text{Result} = \text{Skill} + \text{Bonuses} - \text{Penalties} + \text{d10}$$

It is very important for the player to know his chances before he rolls any dice. Chances may be either described by the game master narratively or by naming an appropriate level of difficulty.

1. The player explains to the game master what her character is trying to do.
2. The game master evaluates the character's chances and tells the player the difficulty of the action, as well as the skill, which seems most appropriate.

3. If the character does not have the requested skill the player could ask the game master if another skill can also be used instead.

4. The player rolls a die and adds and subtracts any applicable modifiers.

5. The game master decides, whether the achieved result is enough for succeeding in the explained action.

Modifiers can apply, among other things, because the previous action has been particularly un/successful. For instance, a character gained the benevolence of a person he has been talking to in a friendly way for a long time. It will be much easier for him to draw a secret from his coaxed opponent, than from a person whom he just chatted up in a fatuous way.

To improve their chances in succeeding in an action characters usually have to prepare the upcoming procedure. Scientific analyses and aiming a ranged weapon at a moving target are both examples where a careful preparation (or sighting) can contribute a lot to the success of a plan. The field of magic (see chapter *Magic*) heavily depends on exhaustive preparation, too. Without certain prearrangements most effects would be unpredictable at best.

Some situations do not permit a character to prepare herself thoroughly for the impending action, but require instantaneous response. A combatant, for example, has no time to think the situation over, but has to act quickly. Yet, even here successfully performed actions can help to turn the situation to a good account. If the fighter just kicked dust into her opponent's eye the previous combat round, it will be considerably easier for her to strike him afterwards.

Game masters should grant their players bonuses (or penalties) according to the relationship of two or more successive actions. This way, players can benefit (or suffer) from stacked modifiers, which accumulated during several related actions. Successive actions become particularly important, if characters use the same or different skills after one another to achieve a specific goal.

Dedicated role playing can also be rewarded, since it contributes to the success of a game session as a whole. Players who phrase their plans in detail will certainly go better than those who "just

do it". Lame players are the pin in the flesh of any game session and should be treated accordingly.

3.10 Difficulty of an Action

Whether a player's announced action is successful or not, principally depends of the difficulty of the performed action. Covering 100 meters in 30 seconds is not worth talking about for a healthy person in good shape, but leaping from one edge of a chasm to the other when both are five meters apart and the runner carries a lot of equipment is quite difficult a task. The difficulty of the performed action and the overall conditions determine whether a skill check is needed at all and, if so, how difficult the selected goal is to achieve. Difficulties are rated by the game master in terms of levels: *Extremely Easy*, *Very Easy*, *Easy*, *Normal*, *Hard*, *Very Hard*, *Extremely Hard*, *Exceptional Hard* and *Beyond Imagination*.

The standard level of difficulty is Normal; difficulties are always Normal if not specified otherwise. Levels decrease and increase from Normal in both directions in equal steps. While Hard circumstances may occur from time to time, things rarely come too Easy. In all but the most extraordinary situations, it makes no sense to ask players to make Very Easy or even Extremely Easy skill checks. Such situations can be handled easier, although not always quicker, by talking things over.

A Normal level of difficulty requires a total skill check result of at least 10, that is, the sum of the die roll, the skill score and all modifiers has to yield 10 or higher to count as a successful roll. If the result yields 9 or less, the performed action has not been successful.

Levels of difficulty other than Normal can be evaluated in two different ways. The character can either be granted an additional bonus (Easy) or penalty (Hard) and still has to achieve a total result of 10 or more. Or the player makes his usual skill check and has to achieve a result less or greater than 10, respectively. Each level below or beyond Normal subtracts from or adds 2 points to the result, respectively. For instance, if a character tries to perform an Extremely Hard action, her game master could either ask her to subtract 6 points from her total result, or to make a normal skill check against a difficulty of 16 instead of 10. What variant you choose is completely up to you.

Level	Total	Modifier
Extremely Easy	4	-6
Very Easy	6	-4
Easy	8	-2
Normal	10	0
Hard	12	+2
Very Hard	14	+4
Extremely Hard	16	+6
Exceptional Hard	18	+8
Beyond Imagination	20	+10

3.11 Quality of an Action

The necessity to achieve a score of 10 or more on a skill check is not all that counts. To give qualitative evidence about a check the difference between the actual result and 10 has to be taken into account as well. A result of 10 is just enough to succeed under Normal circumstances, but a result of 15 is considerably better, of course. Similarly, a total of 9 indicates a failure, but a result of 3 means that the character failed miserably in all respects.

Interpreting the results is very important to be able to resolve the action that has been represented by a skill check. For instance, when applying a craft skill, a result of 10 usually indicates that the crafted object looks just about the way it is supposed to and functions the way it is supposed to do. Results greater than 10, however, indicate that the object looks especially beautiful or is more stable than normal, while results of 15 or more would create a masterpiece of work.

On the other hand, 9 or less does not yield the expected success, although it could be possible to have another try. Very low results, like 5 or less, could indicate that the material from which the object is crafted has been destroyed irretrievably while working on it.

Interpreting skill checks may demand some experience from a game master as no skill is like another. Making use of qualified results enables game masters to correlate and compare actions to each other. Two archers who yield different totals while using their long bows under the same circumstances, obviously achieve different results. If one of them, for instance, has a total of 14, he has succeeded in a Very Hard action, which is pretty good. If his challenger just got 11, he still achieved a Normal result, but not as good as his former's.

3.12 Opposed Rolls

There are two different possibilities to work against something or somebody else.

First, there are passive objects which possess a fixed level of difficulty or resistency, for example, climbing a wall or walking a tightrope. Resistencies come into play, when characters are trying to break doors or cut trees. Difficulties and resistencies are represented in terms of static levels.

Second, actions may be opposed by an other person or group of persons who actively try to prevent a character from doing what she is intending to do. Both sides are trying their best to either achieve the same or the opposite goal. This situation occurs, if two combatants are trying to hit each other while parrying the blows of their opponents. It also occurs on bazars where people negotiate with each other, or inside the mind of a victim which is penetrated by psionic powers.

Opposed rolls work much the same as normal skill checks. The only difference is that at least two parties have to roll dice whose results have to be compared. Opposed rolls are either settled by correlating a single pair of checks or by series of similar checks, if the opposed action lasts over a longer period of time. The party, who achieves the best combination of quality and quantity, wins. It makes sense to value both, quality and quantity, because a single result of 16 is better than a single 12, but two times 12 is better than 16 and 5 added up.

3.13 Skill Development

Unlike many other role playing games, attributes in Draft are rarely involved directly in skill checks. Being the fabric and glue of a character, attributes provide a potential for certain skills rather than being applied themselves. A character can be quite intelligent, but without training he won't be able to decipher even the most fundamental mathematical symbols. However, an intelligent character is more likely to excel in mathematics than a dump-ass. The same applies to a well-built, powerful character: without the proper technique she will never become a successful athlete, but has means and resources to prosper, if she wants to.

Attributes determine how capable characters are to learn certain skills. Because of this, skills always refer to one or more attributes on which they are based. If more than one attribute is involved in a skill the referred attribute is called a Combined Attribute (see above). When choosing

their skills for their characters players should take care of the attributes being involved. The higher the associated attribute is, the easier it is for the character to learn and improve the related skill.

3.13.1 Skill Difficulty

Every skill is assigned a difficulty class, which indicates how difficult it is to learn that skill. *Fractions* and *Linear Algebra in Multidimensional Spaces* are both chapters in a student's mathematics book. The reason for fractions being covered in earlier courses is that this topic is easier to understand than higher mathematics. Besides, higher mathematics is, among others, based on Fractions and therefore determine the order in which both courses have to be taken. In terms of the game, both disciplines are associated with Reason, but Fractions are easier to comprehend and therefore has a lower difficulty class.

The difficulty classes are *Easy*, *Normal* and *Hard*. Most of all available skills are Normal to learn, but some skills are easier or harder to incorporate. When assigning difficulty classes to skills game masters should always keep in mind the consequences for characters who choose that skill. While Normal skills are developed progressively at an average speed, Easy skills are learned discursively for almost no costs at all and Hard skills may require years of training without yielding any remarkable progress.

Note that the difficulty class of a skill has nothing to do with the level of difficulty of an action. The former describes how difficult it is to learn this skill and is assigned once when the skill is introduced into play. The latter describes the difficulty of one specific action.

3.13.2 Learning Skills

Just as ability points are spent on attributes and abilities, skill points are spent on skills. When creating a new character players are granted a certain amount of skill points by their game master. At this time, most characters already have a focus, be it in form of attributes or an attitude the player has designed for the new character.

Unlike ability points, skill points are also granted to the players during the game, although usually not while playing a campaign, but after completing it successfully.

To increase a skill players have to spend their skill points on it. Skills can only be raised by one

point at a time. The costs for the increment depends on its current value, the score of the associated attribute and the difficulty class of the skill.

Normal Skills:

] To determine the development costs for Normal skills players have to subtract the associated attribute score from the new value of the skill. The result can never be negative, so values less than zero are discarded. Eventually 1 is added to the result. To take into account the current score this process has to be repeated for any skill increment.

Example: *A player creates a new character and wants her to be able to sing. Singing is associated with Charisma. The character's charisma score is 7. To raise the singing score to 5 at the beginning of the game the player would have to spend 5 skill points (five increments, that is, five times subtracting 7 from a value less than 7, yielding 0, thence 1.)*

After numerous adventures and quests the character wants to improve her singing score to 8. This would cost her 4 additional skill points (2 points to raise the skill from 5 to 7 and 2 points to raise it from 7 to 8.) Because these increments are carried out after the character creation only one increment at a time is permitted. Increments of more than one point would take years of practice.

Skill development for Normal skills is cheap as long as it does not "surpass your forces", that is, your attribute score. Progressing beyond the associated attribute score is still possible, although at steadily rising costs.

Easy Skills:

Raising Easy skills to the same value as a character's attribute score takes only a single skill point. Any further development is handled the same way as Normal skills.

Easy skills are just that – easy to learn within your own limits. You can try to surpass these limits, but only at the expense of hard work. Easy skills have been included into this rule set to develop certain skills quickly, for instance, speaking (not reading or writing!) your mother tongue. Very few skills are Easy to learn.

Hard Skills:

Hard skills work exactly the same way as Normal skills, save for all costs being doubled. That is, any increment that would cost a player 1 point becomes 2 points, 2 points become 4 points, and so

on. If this is not difficult enough for certain skills a game master could decide to introduce Very Hard or even Extremely Hard skills, which allow skill development at the expense of tripled and fourfold Normal costs, respectively.

Hard skills have been designed to reflect a character's difficulties with certain skills that are harder to learn than standard skills.

Human characters are supposed to have skill scores from 0 (completely untrained) to 10 (unequaled expert).

Score	Meaning
0	Untrained
1	Knowing from hearsay
2	Beginner
3	Intermediate
4	Apprenticeship
5	Trained
6	Advanced
7	Adept
8	Expert
9	Mastership
10	Unequaled

It is up to the game master how often and how many skill points she grants to her players. Players tend to create specialized characters, that is, they develop a small number of skills to great expertise, while leaving others at the lowest possible minimum to survive. This is how characters complement one another best, covering several fields of expertise. If players are piled with skill points every here and then their characters develop quickly and it will soon become difficult to find a matching challenge for them.

It may be an appropriate scale to provide new players with an initial amount skill points of about half the amount of character points they are granted, yielding about 30 skill points in total. After having successfully completed a lengthy mission or quest they could be rewarded by 1 – 2 additional skill points.

Characters who enter the game at old age may already have suffered from certain attribute aging effects, but, on the other hand, had decades to learn and cultivate their skills. Thus, they should be granted a higher amount of initial skill points than their younger companions. 5 points per every 10 years beyond a characters 30th birthday could be appropriate. Again, these values apply to humans only. Creatures with lifespans of several centuries should be treated separately.

3.13.3 Prerequisites

Some skills require certain prerequisites in form of other skills. A character can not study Quantum Mechanics without having the slightest idea what Physics is. If a specific skill has more than one prerequisite the character has to accomplish all of them before being able to start learning the new skill.

3.14 Skill Groups

To make it easier for players to select the most appropriate for their characters all skills are subdivided into several groups. Characters tend to have an affinity to skills of certain groups while ignoring those of other groups almost completely. For instance, a character descending from a respectable, intellectual family living in a large town may have had access to various means to cultivate his intellect and social background, while having little experience in wilderless lore. He may have read several books about this topic, but will most probably never have set up a trap or bivouac himself.

His companion, a hunter who spent her life tracking down animals in the woods is exactly the opposite. When coming to town, she will find herself amidst growded streets and strange people, all of which she takes hardly pleasure in.

Artistic: Artistic skills include all skills that enable a character to express herself by using art, for instance, drawing, painting and playing an instrument. Note that some skills, like gem cutting and stone masoning, are covered by Craftsmanship rather than counting as an artistic skill. Most of these skills are based on Charisma.

Combat: Combat skills comprehend, above all, the handling of weapons and armor. Besides, some tactical and strategical skills

are also included. Associated attributes are most notably physical attributes.

Communication: Communications skills include all skills that enable a character to communicate with an other character, trying to persuade or fascinate the latter of something. Associated attributes imply, first of all, Charisma.

Craftsmanship: This group covers skills which deal with manufacturing, working on objects, handling raw substances and resources refining them. Many of these skills are based on Dexterity.

Knowledge: Knowledge skills comprehend most fields of theoretical thinking, including languages, science and philosophy. To be able to deal with the abstract thoughts of knowledge most of the skills of this group depend on Reason.

Movement: All physical maneuvers, like running, jumping and climbing. Nearly all of these skills are based on Physical Attributes.

Spells: Spellcasting is covered by the Branches of Magic. As Draft provides a separate chapter on spellcasting it is not covered within this section.

Transport: These skills comprehend all kinds of steering and controlling vehicles and means of transportation. Depending on the complexity of the vehicle most of these skills are either based on Intuition or Reason.

Wilderness: Wilderness lore consists more or less of "practical applied" knowledge skills in the field of wilderness. Contrary to knowledge skills wilderness lore depends mainly on Perception and Intuition.

Table of Exemplary Skills

Skill	Attr	Group	Skill	Attr	Group
Accounting	REA	Knowledge	Jump	STR	Movement
Acrobatics	DEX	Movement	Law	REA	Knowledge
Acting	CHA	Artistic	Leadership	CHA	Communication
Alchemy	REA	Knowledge	Library use	REA	Knowledge
Ambush	INT	Combat	Listen	PER	Miscellaneous
Animal lore	INT	Wilderness	Literature	REA	Knowledge
Anthropology	INT	Knowledge	Lock picking	DEX	Miscellaneous

continued on next page ...

Skill	Attr	Group	Skill	Attr	Group
Arcane lore	REA	Knowledge	Mathematics	REA	Knowledge
Archeology	INT	Knowledge	Medicine	REA	Knowledge
Architecture	INT	Knowledge	Meteorology	INT	Wilderness
Athletics	STR	Miscellaneous	Mining	INT	Craftmanship
Balance	DEX	Movement	Motorcycle	INT	Transport
Bargain	CHA	Communication	Move silently	DEX	Movement
Biology	REA	Knowledge	Navigation	INT	Knowledge
Bivouac	INT	Wilderness	Operate machinery	REA	Transport
Bluff	CHA	Communication	Orientation	INT	Wilderness
Botany	REA	Knowledge	Paint	INT	Artistic
Brawl	STR	Combat	Pharmacy	REA	Knowledge
Brewing	INT	Craftmanship	Photography	PER	Artistic
Camouflage	INT	Wilderness	Physics	REA	Knowledge
Car	INT	Transport	Pick pocket	DEX	Miscellaneous
Carriage	INT	Transport	Plane	REA	Transport
Chain mail	DEX	Combat	Plate armor	DEX	Combat
Climp	STR	Movement	Play instrument	CHA	Artistic
Combat tactics	PER	Combat	Programming	REA	Knowledge
Computer use	REA	Knowledge	Psychology	REA	Knowledge
Cooking	PER	Miscellaneous	Read lips	PER	Miscellaneous
Dance	DEX	Artistic	Read/Write	REA	Knowledge
Decipher	REA	Knowledge	Religion	REA	Knowledge
Diplomacy	INT	Communication	Ride	DEX	Movement
Disguise	INT	Communication	Rope use	DEX	Miscellaneous
Dodge	DEX	Combat	Run	CON	Movement
Electronics	REA	Knowledge	Runes	REA	Knowledge
Engineering	REA	Knowledge	Sailing	INT	Miscellaneous
Etiquette	CHA	Communication	Seduction	CHA	Communication
Evaluate	INT	Miscellaneous	Set traps	INT	Wilderness
Farming	INT	Craftmanship	Shield, large	DEX	Combat
First aid	INT	Miscellaneous	Shield, small	DEX	Combat
Fishing	INT	Craftmanship	Singing	CHA	Artistic
Fletching	DEX	Craftmanship	Skiing	DEX	Movement
Forgery	INT	Miscellaneous	Smithing	STR	Craftmanship
Gambling	CHA	Communication	Spacecraft	REA	Transport
Gem cutting	DEX	Craftmanship	Speak language	INT	Miscellaneous
General knowledge	REA	Knowledge	Speaking	CHA	Communication
Geography	REA	Knowledge	Spot	PER	Miscellaneous
Geology	REA	Knowledge	Stone masonry	INT	Craftmanship
Handle animal	INT	Wilderness	Story telling	CHA	Communication
Helicopter	REA	Transport	Streetwise	INT	Miscellaneous
Herbalism	INT	Wilderness	Swim	CON	Movement
Hide	INT	Wilderness	Teaching	CHA	Communication
History	REA	Knowledge	Throw	DEX	Miscellaneous
Hunting	INT	Wilderness	Tracking	INT	Wilderness
Interrogate	CHA	Communication	Tumble	DEX	Movement
Juggling	DEX	Artistic			

This table is intentionally fragmentary and incomplete. It is supposed to offer suggestions only.

3.15 Combined Skills

Sometimes more than one skill appears as a candidate for a skill check. For instance, if a sage tries to collect information about a certain type of monster, which rampages the outer planes of existence, she could make use of the skill *Knowledge about Outer Planes* as well as *Monster Lore*. If the character is in possession of both skills, her game master could grant her an additional bonus to her roll, depending on how deeply the topics are related to each other.

Skill scores usually do not stack, but overlay in fractions in regard of determining the total temporary skill score. First, the player should ask her game master which available skill fits best for the respective task. If more than one skill fits, the most specific is chosen as the primary skill. Any additional skill should grant no more than one additional bonus point, because most of the expertise required for this task is already covered by the primary skill. If one of the secondary skills happen to provide a higher score than the primary one, two additional points could be granted for combining this particularly helpful secondary skill. How many additional points are actually granted and whether or not they are granted at all, is completely up to the game master.

3.16 Combined Efforts

Combined efforts come into effect, if more than one person is trying to perform an action. Prerequisite for a combined effort is a decision of the game master ruling that this task may be carried out by more than on person. Contrary to Opposed

Rolls, where characters attempt to compete each other, combined efforts try to achieve a better result by applying common means.

To put such an plan into execution, each involved character has to determine his combined skill score (see above). The highest of these scores serves as the primary skill furtheron. How many additional characters may support their companion and how much they can contribute to the success of the action depends on the skill.

Tossing large boulders or wrecked cars out of the way is a good example for an effort where the results of additional participants more or less stack, as long as there is enough space for the latter to wield their power.

Crafting a small object, in turn, can not be handled reasonably by more than one person at the same time. The craftsman or artist can be supported by doing the preliminary work for him, but can not share the actual process of manufacturing. Since the process takes a long time to complete the assistent's help is negligible in comparison to the master's work. The help of one or more assistents should not be honoured by more than one or two additional bonus points, unless it contributes a lot to the final result like the operation of a doctor who relies on the steady assistance of a nurse.

Two or more scientists can work together and share their results of research. This is even possible if the scientists belong to different fields of knowledge, as long as their presence and cooperation contributes to the final result. Each additional scientist's cooperation beyond the team leader, who is expected to provide the primary skill, should be worth 1 or 2 additional bonus points.

Combat

Combat is a recurrent aspect of most role playing games. Solving conflicts by the means of martial disputes has always played in important role in "intelligent" beings' behaviour – at least, as long as humans have been involved. This is why a whole chapter has been dedicated to this special topic.

4.17 Tactical Actions

Game masters should switch from a narrative style of play to tactical actions, if many martial dependent or independent actions have to be resolved successively one after another. This can be espe-

cially helpful, if it is inevitable to determine the order of a number of actions.

As soon as combat rules apply time is subdivided in consecutive *combat rounds*, each of which takes 6 seconds. Within a combat round every character has a restricted number of actions. Some of these actions may take several rounds to complete. Possible actions include movement, melee combat, firing of ranged weapons as well as the use of magic or other supernatural powers.

Each combat round, in turn, consists of three consecutive *segments*, which take 2 seconds each. To simplify matters, any possible action takes at

least 1 segment – even if the action would merely take an instant to complete in real life. If an action takes more segments than are left in the current combat round it can not be completed within this round, but extends to more than one round. If, for instance, a character tries to cover a large distance while running, this will probably take him more than one round, while other characters can proceed with their actions meanwhile.

4.17.1 Order & Duration of Actions

At the beginning of each round all players state what their characters are going to do within the next six seconds. This means that they either commence a new action or sustain in doing what they started in one of the previous rounds.

The order in which the specified actions are performed depends on the actions themselves. Firing a readied missile weapon takes less time, for example, than running over to the next foe to attack him in close combat. First, quick actions are dealt with. After that, actions which require a longer time to complete are handled.

The following table lists some exemplary actions. The given order represents their order within a round and the amount of segments indicate how long it will take to complete them.

Action	Duration
Wield mental power	1
Trigger gun	1
Fire missile weapon	1
Use an item	1*
Melee attack/parry	1
Dodge/turn	1
Throw weapon	1
Draw light weapon	1
Normal move	2
Draw medium weapon	2
Stand up from floor	2
Pick up dropped weapon	2
Full move	3
Draw heavy weapon	3
Prepare bow	3
Prepare crossbow	6

* depends on the item itself

Under normal circumstances a character is capable to perform two actions per round, given that she has enough time (segments) left to finish the action in time before the round is over. She could, for instance, walk over to her opponent (which takes 2 segments) and hit him with her scimitar

(1 segment). Both partial actions can be completed within one round. If characters insist on performing a third action, it is modified by –1.

She could also attack one foe who is standing next to her (1 segment), turn round (1 segment) and make another attack against a second opponent (1 segment), if she took into account that her last action is modified by –1. However, she would be unable to move between her two attacks, since this would take her at least 2 segments. If she was attacked herself and had to block or dodge the blow (1 segment), her amount of remaining actions would have to be adjusted accordingly. The latter example makes it quite obvious that fighters who face a superiority of opponents will quickly run into difficulties regarding their chances of resistance in the long term (see *Fighting Several Opponents.*)

4.17.2 Striking First

After the players have specified their intentions for their characters and all plans for this round have been scheduled all actions are resolved one after each other – time-shared with those of their opponents.

If two antagonists are trying to do the same thing the one with the higher skill score strikes first. If two opponents fight each other in different ways, but their applied skills differ extremely, a wise game master could rule that the more potent opponent still strikes first. For instance, when The Lonesome Stranger, who is famous for this fast drawing, is attacked by an unaware farmer with his hay fork, the Stranger possibly still could draw his pistol and shoot the farmer down before the latter's flail even gets close to him. A game master could decide that, if two opponents' score differ by 5 or more points, the more potent fighter's action is scheduled one segment earlier.

If different types of weapons are wielded against each other longer weapons strike first, which is especially important for pole arms: it may be nearly impossible for a lone fighter to affect a close formation of warriors who are equipped with shields and pikes.

Since heavy weapons are also large very often, penalties, which could come into effect because of the weapons great weight, are usually canceled by the weapon's larger size. However, if the difference in weight is very wide, lighter weapons strike first. If, for instance, two opponents who are equipped with a claymore and a rapier, respectively, the fast rapier will probably pierce before the slash of the

two handed sword comes close to its target.

4.17.3 Weapon & Armor Types

Weapons are subdivided into several groups, each of which summarizes distinctive models which are similar to each other. For instance, characters who are familiar with long swords could also use a broad sword, if they do not have a long sword at hand. However, they would have difficulties in wielding a sabre, which is also a one-handed blade, but is curved, one-edged and possesses different slashing characteristics. The sabre, in turn, could be used by anyone who is familiar with a scimitar.

Of course, using a different weapon than the one a character is proficient with is not as good as having the familiar weapon at hand, but could represent a reasonable alternative to no weapon at all. Depending on how similar the models are to each other game masters should penalize actions by -1 or more on skill checks.

4.17.4 Weapon Impact

The *impact* of a weapon not so much stands for its length, size or largeness, but its weight and the damage it delivers. Larger weapons usually also have more impact than smaller weapons, but more often the type of the weapon is relevant. Yet, in terms of the game, the classes of impact are rated in sizes: 1 (small), 2 (medium), 3 (large), 4 (huge) or whatever it takes to describe even more devastating impact.

Weapon Type	Impact
Dagger	1
Small club	1
Mace	2
Flail	2
Giant's club	4
Short sword	1
Long sword	2
Two handed sword	3
Short bow	2
Long bow	3
Cross bow	3
Pistol	3
Rifle	4
Laser gun	depends

4.17.5 Armor Protection

Classical armor types are rated in the following types: cloth, leather, chain, plate and full plate.

Cloth include all types of *thick* cloths, padded clothing and furs. Leather comprehends hardened, boiled or even studded leather armor. If the metal components gain prevalence the armor is rated as chain mail. Chain also comprises scale mail and ring mail. Plate armor consists of superposing metal plates, which mainly cover the wearer's torso. Contrary to a full plate, a (halve) plate covers arms and legs by chain mail only.

Heavy armor interferes with its wearer's movements. Skill rolls, which depend on the unhampered movement of a character, such as fighting and running, are modified according to the armor type being worn. Actions like sprinting, leaping and swimming are not possible while wearing heavy armor.

Armor Type	Protection	Movement
Heavy cloth	1	±0
Leather	2	±0
Chain	3	-1
Plate	4	-1
Full plate	5	-2
Combat Suit	7	-2

4.17.6 Changing One's Mind

Often enough, a player explains her plans for the following round in detail, but when it is her turn to perform her action she changes her mind, for example, because her opponent has just been slain by an other party member. Now she has to think about an alternative action quickly. Otherwise her remaining segments would be lost.

The unsteadiness of changing one's mind, that is, one's refraining from the scheduled plan, is reflected by a penalty applied to the new action replacing the original one. The amount of this penalty depends on the type of the new action. If the type of the new action is Equal or Similar to the original one, the former is modified by -1 only. If the two actions Differ in regard of its characteristics, the new operation is aggravated by -2 or even more. The negative modifier of new actions reflects the fact that a fighter has to focus on a new opponent or adapt to a new situation.

Two attacks would represent Equal actions: the fighter who sees her primary opponent drop and who then goes for her bystander instead still performs an attack. She just changes her target. If she had to turn round to make her attack, the two actions would not be considered Equal, but Different, because she had to perform a movement first.

A Similar action would be, for instance, to change one's plans from attacking to parrying. A fighter who realizes that it would be better to parry her opponent's blow instead of striking him herself alters her tactics more extensively, but can still deal with it quite comfortably.

Different actions means to rearrange one's plans profoundly, for example, switching from a offensive tactic to a defensive position (see *Combat Options* below) or interrupting an initiated Charge (see *Combat Options* as well) once of a sudden in favor of a leap or jump. Even substituting an attack by a maneuver or vice versa is considered a Different action.

Dodging should always be considered as a Similar action when being performed as a result of an altered action and as such be modified by -1 only, because saving one's life is usually a very strong motivation. However, some actions, like using magic or firing missile weapons can not be abandoned so easily. These problems are dealt with in the respective sections.

4.18 Rolling Dice

Wielding weapons, that is, delivering blows, firing guns and knocking down foes are actions that are based on skills. A character who wants to use a weapon has to be proficient with this particular weapon. Of course, anybody can draw a dagger and kill a prone or otherwise helpless foe, but in the heat of the battle, where opponents offer resistance, some blows are blocked, parried or dodged.

4.18.1 Striking, Stabbing & Slashing

To hit an opponent a player has to exercise the appropriate skill. Of course, any bonuses, granted as a result of a successful ambush or surprise apply. The result of the skill check indicates the quality of the strike. Scores less than 10 are not necessarily missed. As a rule of thumb, values greater than 5 are potential hits – but the opponent will probably not stand still.

He can either try to parry or dodge the strike. Large weapons cannot be parried by light counterparts. In this case, defenders may only try to dodge the blow. Large shields can be used against most types of weapons effectively, except very large ones. Even small shields can parry most weapons effectively.

Attacking an opponent, whether successfully or not, takes one segment.

4.18.2 Parrying Blows

Defenders can only parry weapons that are at most one class beyond their own weapon's impact class, that is, a broadsword (medium) can parry a two handed sword (large), but a short sword (small) can not. Flexible weapons, like a ball & chain, nets or whips cannot be used to parry weapons, although they could be used to entangle an attacker's arm or weapon. Characters use their defending weapon's skill for checks; it is assumed that fighters learn attacking and defending themselves with their weapon equally well.

The most efficient method of actively counteracting an opponent's strike is using a shield. Shield skills have to be learned independently of weapons skills and, as such, count as separate skills. Shields can be combined with one handed weapons only. Small shields receive an additional +1-bonus against all attacks, while large shields receive +2.

If the total result of the defensive roll is at least as high as the attacker's result, that is, both rolls have the same quality, that attack has been blocked successfully.

Parrying blows, whether successfully or not, takes one segment, that is, a character who chooses to parry a blow loses one segment of the current round.

4.18.3 Dodging Blows

If characters either have no appropriate defensive weapon at hand, or expect the attacker's blow to be too powerful to be parried, they can try to dodge it, that is, lowering the head or step aside to avoid slashes and strokes.

To determine the quality of the dodge attempt the player has to roll a dodge skill check. If the total result is at least as high as the attacker's result the blow has been dodged successfully.

Regardless of the final result dodging a blow takes one segment.

4.19 Damage

If a defender is unable to achieve an equal or better result while trying to parry or dodge an attack, he is hit. To determine the amount of damage being taken, first of all, the defender's total result is subtracted from the attacker's total result.

Second, the attacker's strength bonus and her weapon's impact value are added to this difference.

Third and last, the defenders armor protection is subtracted from the value. This arithmetic yields a total result of damage being taken:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{result} &= \text{attack roll} - \text{defense roll} \\ &+ \text{strength bonus} \\ &+ \text{damage bonus} \\ &- \text{armor protection} \end{aligned}$$

It is up to the game master to decide how important a character's strength is when wielding a particular weapon, or whether strength modifiers are applied at all when determining the final amount of damage.

Draft's ratio of weapon impact and armor protection assumes bonuses of 1 – 2 points for especially strong characters. As an example, a game master could grant characters, who possess a strength score of 7 or higher a bonus of +1 and characters who possess a strength score of 9 or higher a bonus of +2. Besides, particularly weak characters, with a strength score of 2 or less, suffer from a –1 penalty.

4.19.1 Weapon Damage

The damage of a weapon indicates its ability to penetrate armor. Classical weapons cause damage to a target by three different aspects:

pointed weapons like daggers, short swords, spears, arrows and other thrusting or piercing weapons,

sharp weapons like swords, sabres, axes and other slashing or severing weapons,

blunt weapons like clubs, maces, hammers and other weapons which inflict damage due to their weight and kinetic energy.

Some weapons, like the halberd, can be wielded in several manners, thus enabling an attacker to inflict damage due to its pointed as well as due to its sharp characteristics.

The properties of an armor usually make it especially effective against one type of weapon damage, while leaving the wearer relatively unprotected against other aspects. For instance, the full plate armor, which knights wore in late medieval times, has been the result of a circular arms race of weapons and armor. It was quite effective at deflecting swords and axes, but still rendered its wearer helpless against heavy blunt weapons. To simplify matters, Draft does not take these considerations into account, but treats armor as "the heavier the better".

To determine the damage of a weapon the following algorithm is suggested:

$$(\text{impact} \times 2) + \text{bonus},$$

where *bonus* is any applicable bonus such as magic or supreme quality. It is also suggested to add a bonus of 1 for pointed and sharp weapons for their additional damage aspect against living beings beyond its impact itself.

This method rates a dagger at 3 (3×2 plus pointed blade), a long sword at 5 (2×2 plus sharp edge) and a two handed war hammer at 6 damage points (3×2).

4.19.2 Injuries

If a character takes more than 1 point of damage, he is wounded. Damages up to 1 point of damage are considered as contusions or scratches, which cause no severe consequences in regard of the victim's wellbeing. If, on the other hand, the attacker's blade has been poisoned, even minor scratches, such as 1 point of damage, are enough to make the victim suffer from the poison's effects.

Wounds up to halve of the victim's constitution score are *light wounds*.

Wounds up to the victim's full constitution score are *severe wounds*.

Wounds up to twice the victim's constitution score are *critical wounds*.

Damage beyond twice the victim's constitution score causes instant death.

Characters who suffer from one or more Light wounds have to take a –1 penalty on any movement-based skill check for each wound, that is, attacking, parrying, running and so on.

Characters who suffer from one or more Severe wounds have to take a –2 penalty on any movement-based skill check for each wound, that is, attacking, parrying, running and so on, if they are able to do so at all. They also suffer from a –1 penalty to all actions, which require manual dexterity. Victims of Severe wounds are not allowed to perform exhaustive actions, such as sprinting or leaping.

If the hit, which caused the Severe wound, has struck the victim's arm, he drops all weapons or objects he held in the moment of the impact. In any case, the hit fighter is driven backwards or, if this is not possible, suffers from an additional –1 penalty for the rest of the round.

Characters who suffer from Critical wounds suffer from a –4 penalty to all manual actions for

each wound of this type. Such victims drop helplessly to the floor and cannot move themselves, except crawling at a rate less than 1 meter per round. They are unable to defend themselves actively and also suffer from a -2 penalty to all mental actions, which require concentration, such as spellcasting.

The game master should determine whether limbs are severed or other bad things happened, which would render the victim to suffer from additional long term consequences. It should also be determined, whether the victim stays awake or faints due to a shock or the loss of blood.

4.19.3 Stacking Wounds

Average characters endure three Light, two Severe and one Critical wound.

Any additional wound of the same category automatically becomes a wound of the next worse category, that is, a person suffering from her fourth Light wound, takes a Severe wound instead, her third Severe wound causes a Critical wound instead, while more than one Critical wound kills the victim.

This may seem too hard for certain players. Of course, game masters are free to change this according to their needs, but should keep in mind, that combat is no fun and weapons are no toys.

4.19.4 Curing Wounds

Recovering from damage and injuries takes quite a long time for human beings. The game master should decide whether she would like to stick to a realistic kind of role playing or prefers increased healing capabilities for her characters, who are beyond average level anyway. The realistic approach would approximately look like this:

A Light wound should heal within one or two days, if treated accordingly and the involved body part is not strained.

A Severe wound takes about two weeks minus the constitution score of the character in days. If treated the right way, the wound will transform into a Light wound after two thirds of the time and may heal even faster.

A Critical wound takes at least three weeks minus the character's constitution score in days to convert to a Severe wound.

It takes longer for wounds to heal, if a character performs exhaustive actions meanwhile.

Optimized healing capabilities, magic and technology would decrease the time of recovery accordingly.

4.20 Special Types of Damage

Damage is not only inflicted by the aspects of sharp, pointed and blunted weapons, but also by certain other means of harmful circumstances. Characters who do not have special resistances against these effects take damage according to the latter's intensity as long as they are exposed to them.

4.20.1 Elements

Especially powerful monsters and magic users are sometimes capable of fighting their opponents with one or more the following special forms of attack: Heat/fire, cold/frost, acid and electricity/lightning. These attacks are either directed against individual combatants or cover whole areas to a certain extent. Characters who are exposed to the effect of the attack suffer from damage according to its intensity. Some damage is weakened by armor being worn by the victim. For example, thick clothing helps partially to resist against cold damage. However, most of these special attacks treats armor as if not being worn at all.

Human characters suffer from elemental damage according to its level of effect, that is, minor effects cause Light wounds, while medium and major levels cause Severe and Critical injuries, respectively. All damage is taken per round, that is, a character being covered by a dragon's breath is likely to tumble around as a living torch before the flames extinguish eventually, leaving nothing behind, but his ashy remainders. The same fate has to be accepted by characters who wade through or dive into ponds of acid the latter of which does not come off too easy without plenty of water.

Creatures who are related to a specific element usually do not take damage from this kind of element. However, to the opposite kind of that element they take the next higher injury level. For instance, Mr. Freeze is resistant to cold, but especially vulnerable to heat attacks and would take a Severe wound instead of a Light wound from this kind of attacks. If an element implies additional aspects of damage, for example, electricity causing burnings or combustions, the worst aspect should be applied and the others be left out.

Damage caused by elemental attacks may not fall off at the same rate as normal physical damage, but may take longer to heal, or can not be completely healed at all.

4.20.2 Suffocation

Suffocation occurs, if characters are unable to breathe for an amount of time exceeding their Constitution score in combat rounds. Of course, healthy characters are able to hold their breath for a longer time, but this value assumes that combat actions and quick movements consume more oxygen than sitting still – staying motionless doubles this value. After this time the character has to roll against his Constitution score successfully (Normal difficulty) or lose consciousness. In any case, he takes a Light injury of temporal damage.

In each following combat round he has to roll against Constitution again or faint. The difficulty of the rolls is increased by one level each time (that is, 2 points) until the character is able to breathe again or passes out. Eventually, after losing consciousness, he takes a Severe wound of temporal damage and may stay unconscious for an amount of ten times his Constitution score in combat rounds. After this he dies of lack of oxygen. If he is reanimated before this critical point of time he has to rest at least one day to recover from his state.

4.20.3 Falling

Falling down and hitting solid ground for more than two meters means to take one Light injury for any additional meter. Of course, the light injuries stack as usual and thus become Severe and Critical damages, respectively.

Being hit by heavy falling objects does not count as *falling*, but being struck by a weapon of the appropriate type (blunt, pointed or sharp.) When determining the type of weapon the game master should take into account the object's material, its weight as well as its height of fall.

4.21 Ranged Weapons

Although dispraised by honorable warriors, who favour close combat, ranged weapons are often preferred by lightly armored infantry troops. Furthermore, pistols, rifles and guns are standard weapons in modern-times role playing scenarios.

4.21.1 Preparation

It takes comparative long time to make ranged weapons ready to fire, in particular missile weapons. First, the marksman has to draw the arrow, bolt or stone and has to insert or apply it to the weapon's mechanic.

Second, he has to aim at his target. Skilled marksmen already follow their targets while loading their weapons, but still require an instant when the projectile is ready to be fired.

This is reflected in the table of actions within a combat round above: trained marksman (a score of 5 or more) can not shoot at a rate of fire of less than one missile per round. Less experienced shooters need even more time to draw and aim. The experienced archer, for instance, needs 3 segments, that is 1 round, to draw his bow, which he has already prepared so far, and aim his target, and 1 segment to fire, yielding three arrows per four rounds, if he is absolutely focused to his shooting. Of course, this also applies to modern guns to a certain extend, although, once loaded, their rate of fire is extremely high in comparison to ancient missile weapons.

Most of the common marksmen are not used to hectic melee combat, but prefer to take their time to eventually hit their target precisely rather than luckily. Thus, marksmen need a full round to aim at their target and perform a standard shot without any modifications. If he takes his time to adapt to his target's movements and aims for the duration of another round his roll is modified by +1. This bonus is not cumulative beyond one additional round, though.

Weapons which are thrown, like javelins, boomerangs and knives, go off hand much faster than missile weapons do, although it takes longer for them to reach their targets once they are thrown (see table above: Order of Actions.) The wielders of thrown weapons, too, can make use of the +1-bonus when aiming for one additional round.

Example: *An experienced gunslinger draws his colt (light weapon, thus takes 1 segment) and fires (1 segment). The shot goes off in the second segment and will probably hit its target before any other actions take place.*

His opponent, an unexperienced Roman legionary, begins the round with his pilum readily prepared. He could throw his pilum as soon as in the first segment of this round without penalties. He could also aim until the first segment of the successive round to gain a +1-bonus.

4.21.2 Distance & Size

Hitting a ranged target requires more precision than striking it in close combat, last but not least, because it is further away. Given a specific skill level, the chance for hitting mainly depends on the distance and the size of the target.

The distance between the shooter and her target may be measured in any common unit or scale. For the following considerations metrical units, that is, meters, have been used. If the distance between the shooter and her target is less than the weapon's point blank range, the shooter's skill check does not have to be modified. If the distance goes beyond that range the check should be modified accordingly.

Every weapon has its own characteristics of how precisely it hits on far-off targets. Knives' accuracy, for instance, deteriorates quickly for every additional meter beyond the point blank range, while a sniper's rifle may easily cover up to the double distance – although modified, of course. Game masters should apply appropriate modifiers for respective weapon types according to their own estimation.

Weapon	Point Blank	Max. Range
Dart/Knife	5 m	15 m
Javelin	15 m	40 m
Short bow	20 m	100 m
Long bow	30 m	120 m
Crossbow	30 m	100 m
Pistol	20 m	80 m
Rifle	40 m	200 m
Tank	300 m	10 km

The easiest way to classify target sizes is to use a well known scale. Thus, shooting a target of the size of an average human body is considered to count as a Normal difficulty – an unmodified check. Larger targets are easier to hit: every size factor of 2 grants the marksman an additional bonus of +1. Therefore, an average car, which is about five times as big as a human body (thus, roughly two times two) is modified by +2. Shooting a huge dragon, which is twenty times larger than a human body, would be modified by +4 ($2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 16 \approx 20$.) Respectively, smaller targets are modified by negative values.

Game masters should obviously cling to common sense when evaluating modifiers. Requiring a skill check from a trained character who wants to shoot a mastodon, which is just five meters away, makes probably no sense, whereas hitting the left

eye of a fly, which is 100 meters away, will challenge even the most experienced marksman.

4.21.3 Counteracting Ranged Weapons

Dodging thrown weapons is extremely difficult, if not impossible in the case of missile weapons. If a game master allows her characters to dodge thrown weapons she should apply halve of the character's dodge skill at most.

However, missile weapons move so fast and almost instantly reach their targets after being fired that it is practically impossible to dodge such objects. If a character belongs to one of these rare species who are capable of dodging gun bullets, their game master is probably used to applying appropriate skills anyway.

Shields, and shields only, can be used to parry thrown weapons. Again, it is recommended to modify the Shield skill accordingly due to the weapon's high velocity. If the skill check succeeds, the weapon has been blocked, given the quality of the shield is high enough to counteract the weapon's penetration power. If this should not be the case, the combatant is hit, but the shield's quality may be used in addition to the defender's normal armor protection.

Shooters, in turn, are relatively easy targets themselves, concentrated and unprotected as they are while wielding their weapons, because the process of shooting requires most of their attention. Thence, archers and snipers, who are completely dedicated to their targets, may be regarded as defenceless targets, if being approached silently. A stampeding rhinoceros, on the other hand, will alert even the most dedicated sniper.

4.21.4 Cover

Ranged targets are sometimes covered by solid, impenetrable objects, be walls or rocks. In this case the shooter may only hit a smaller portion of the target's body and therefore has to deal with a smaller target altogether. Because the target's movements are also concealed and harder to follow, the check should be modified at least by -2 in addition to the normal size modifier.

Determining the body location where a missile actually hits is particularly interesting for covered targets. For instance, a game master could decide that, because of the cover, the lower part of the body can not be hit at all and consequently has to hit upper parts of the body, if hitting at all. See the optional rules *Hit Locations* on this topic.

Using ranged weapons for targets who find themselves in close combat with other combatants can give rise to some obvious problems. While melee weapons usually just miss the selected target missile or thrown weapons not only miss, but fly beyond it and hit somewhere else. This is probably not too bad, if it eventually hits an other opponent, but could lead at least to misunderstandings, if members of the own party are hit.

To reflect this fact, game masters could extend a weapon's trajectory, which did not hit the selected target, beyond the target's position and roll on the following table to determine whether other bystanders are hit in his place. The same situation occurs, if the weapon is dodged successfully.

Roll	Result
1 – 3	Next target on the left side
4 – 7	Next target behind
8 – 10	Next target on the right side

4.22 Combat Options

Most combat scenes not only consist of opponents striking and parrying each other, but often include actions where combatants make use of special circumstances which occur due to certain previous actions.

4.22.1 Defensive Position

A fighter who prefers to take a defensive position rather than attacking actively or doing nothing at all may apply a +2-bonus to all parry and dodge rolls within this round. To maintain the defensive position the fighter may not attack herself or move more than a few meters in either direction.

4.22.2 Charge

Charging an opponent represents an offensive form of attack. Charging means to accelerate and run towards one's opponent in a straight line. After getting under way (which takes 2 segments) a single attack may be made at the end of the round making use of the additional impact gaining a +1-bonus. If the charger hits his opponent one additional point of damage is scored. However, being an offensive attack, charging prevents fighters from parrying and dodging their opponents blows: defensive actions are modified by -2.

Note, that longer weapons always hit earlier than shorter counterparts. This applies to both sides, attackers and defenders. This is why pole

arms are particularly effective for charging – as well as *against* charging attackers.

4.22.3 Using Objects & Items

The field of using objects and items, which are not primarily weapons, is too wide to be covered exhaustively here. When situations occur where characters choose to use improvised weapons, which include objects, game masters should evaluate the following aspects.

- When does the action take place?
This depends primarily on the size and weight of the involved object. Throwing heavy boulders, for example, takes longer than switching a lever or pulling a rug. If the used objects are comparable to certain weapons with regard of size and weight, the respective weapon's order can be used for determining when the associated action takes place. Although, comparable weapons should usually strike first, because improved weapons are less balanced and untrained.
- How is the object used?
Is a particular skill required to perform the action, for example throwing, mechanics, physics, etc., and, if so, is the associated skill check modified?
- How does the object affect the situation?
Game masters have to evaluate the consequences which arise due to using this particular object. Is damage caused to anybody? Does the battleground change? Do the combatants have to get used to an altered situation?

4.22.4 Using Magic

Magic is dealt with in a separate chapter, but some of its combat-related aspects are covered in this section.

Magic items, whose effects affect its targets instantly, operate similar to guns and other weapons, which work "at once". If, on the other hand, it takes time to summon or activate a certain effect, they may be simply considered as sources of magic spells.

Spellcasting takes time, usually even a lot of time, so it may well be, that a battle is already over or close to its end, when a desired effect comes into existence. Except for summoning the spell, which is usually based on a certain skill or power

(see chapter *Magic*), its effect should be evaluated in the same way as the matters covered in the *Object*-section above:

- What kind of attack is it (if any?)
Does the magic user have to touch her target? Is it comparable to a ranged attack, which affects a single target? Is it area-affecting?
- Who is affected and what type of effect does the target suffer/benefit from?
- How does the situation change after the magic has been cast?
- How long does it last?

4.23 Special Circumstances

The following section comprehend some special circumstances, which have not been covered yet, but could occur from time to time.

4.23.1 Small Creatures Fighting Large Creatures

Usually, larger creatures take advantage over smaller opponents, if the latter is unable to compensate the difference of proportions by means of speed or cunningness. Given, both opponents possess similar capabilities and practice a similar fighting style – for instance, a dwarf fighting a giant, thus both of them being humanoid – the larger opponent will usually take advantage eventually, because of his larger cruising radius, greater strength (thus being able to deliver more powerful blows) and his greater toughness (thus taking more damage before being knocked out.) Additionally, the opponent's weapon's and armor's size, impact and protection are adapted proportionally.

Very often, larger opponents do not even need to wield any weapons at all, but simply "walk through" smaller enemies and trample them down like grass. History has shown that mounted cavalry more than once has turned the battle.

In terms of the game, when it comes to traditional melee weapons, the normal rules for striking, parrying and dodging apply. If the order of size differs to a great extent, the smaller opponent may not even parry the larger's blow, but has to dodge it, because even a successfully parried blow would yield more impact than he could take.

Both opponents should suffer from a penalty when making attacks – the giant for having to hit

a considerably smaller target, the dwarf for covering the distance between the giant's weapon's length and his body. Of course, this distance has to be covered only once, but if the dwarf would hold his new position so close to the giant, he will probably suffer from all the consequences, whatever they may be.

While the dwarf's weapon has Small or Medium impact at best, the giant's weapon is probably Large, Huge or even greater, dealing damage accordingly. To be fair, the dwarf's weapon is smaller and thus hits earlier within the round, but taking into account that he may first move before he is allowed to attack, this advantage is rendered to thin air at best.

To hit the spot, smaller characters usually only have a chance to win such a fight, if they are especially quick and alerted (persistent bees or flies fighting nosy humans), possess other means of affecting the larger opponent (faery magic, poison, etc.) or attacking in groups.

4.23.2 Fighting Several Opponents

Fighters who face more than one opponent at once are obviously at a disadvantage. While his opponents may focus normally on their single target, the fighter has to deal with more than one at a time.

First, a game master has to determine how many opponents can effectively attack the fighter. In a narrow corridor, for example, not more than two opponents, one from either side, can attack effectively. On an open battleground, in turn, a large amount of gnome-sized characters can surround and attack a huge creature simultaneously.

Second, the lone fighter has to state exactly what his plans will be the next round. How does he distribute his available actions among his opponents? Is he trying to break through their lines or holding a defensive position? This is particularly important, if he chooses to change his mind and parry another strike, for example. His opponents will either just adapt to his moves or press forward themselves.

Third, the order of actions of all combatants is determined and all actions for one round are resolved. At the latest from this point on, the lone fighter will run into difficulties in regard of his available actions, most notably because he has got only three actions available at best (the last of which is modified by -1 anyway), when choosing actions, which take only one segment each.

4.23.3 Advantages & Hindrances

Some circumstances may yield bonuses or penalties for certain actions.

Action	Modifier
Opponent surprised	+2
Attacking from behind	+2
Standing on higher ground	+1
Opponent sitting or lying	+1
Being surprised	-2
Standing on lower ground	-1
Sitting	-1
Lying	-4

4.24 Optional Rules

Although all rules are free to be included or left out anyway, the following sections represent some even more optional rule sets.

4.24.1 Exhaustion

Wielding heavy weapons, dodging blows and taking little (that is, not lethal) damage can be quite exhaustive for fighters. Only few players are willing to reflect this fact by means of role playing, at least, if it is their character's lives they are fighting for.

For every round the character is involved in exhausting combat action, that is, attacking, defending and moving at high speed, he accumulates one exhaustion point. If the amount of exhaustion points is higher than his Stamina score, he has to suffer from the consequences of a Light injury. Note, that this "injury" represents temporal exhaustion damage only.

When accumulating more than twice the current Stamina score the exhaustion damage is rendered into a Severe damage with all its consequences. A successful Willpower check should precede further exhaustive maneuvers, like sprinting, jumping and so on.

If the exhaustion points should ever pile up to triple the amount of the character's Stamina, he will suffer from the consequences of a Critical injury, thus having difficulties to move at all.

For every two rounds the character not only does not accumulate further exhaustion points, but rests, he gets rid of one exhaustion point. While resting, the effect of the temporal injuries wears off peu á peu, if the amount of exhaustion points fall below multiples of the character's Stamina score.

4.24.2 Continuous Time

Probably the most complex part of Draft's combat system is the disposition of each round into several segments. Segments have been included to granulate the order of short actions more precisely. However, some game masters may prefer to abandon the skeleton of segments, because it does not please their needs in respect of a smoothly flowing order of events.

Segments may be abandoned quite easily by determining the order and duration of actions empirically, that is, by guessing based on common sense. The amount of actions being available to every character could either be limited to two actions (for instance, one attack/one move, one move/one attack, two attacks) or be left out at all.

If a game master dislikes discrete points of time and prefers a more continuous style of playing she could even leave out combat rounds, too. As a result, actions would have to be resolved still more intuitively. One problem, that could arise by pursuing a scheme of round-less time is the measurement of time itself. After a while it could become difficult to decide objectively whether a certain circumstance is still in effect or has already passed. The less backing in form of rules a game master accepts, the more work he has to invest in story telling – the more interesting part of role playing.

4.24.3 Hit Locations

Some game masters and players like to know where their blows and strikes actually hit. This can be particularly interesting for Severe and Critical hits, where it is important to determine which body part is rendered useless or is severed.

Attack front & back

- 1 – 2 Left leg
- 3 – 4 Right leg
- 5 – 6 Torso
- 7 Left arm
- 8 Right arm
- 9 – 10 Head

Attack from left/right

- 1 – 2 Left leg
- 3 – 4 Torso
- 5 – 7 Left arm
- 8 Right arm
- 9 – 10 Head

Attack from above

1	Left leg
2	Right leg
3	Torso
4 – 5	Left arm
6 – 7	Right arm
8 – 10	Head

Attack from below

1 – 2	Left leg
3 – 4	Right leg
5 – 7	Torso
8	Left arm
9	Right arm
10	Head

Magic

Using magic should occur rarely except for high fantasy worlds where adventurers will not survive the end of the day without blasting and burning their ways through hords of enemies. For all other scenarios magic becomes the more mystical the less frequently it is used. Because of this, access to magic as well as practicing and excelling at it is very difficult for characters using the Draft magic system.

5.25 The Source of Magic

The source of magic is represented by this very special, all-pervading substance called Ether, The Force, Source or Essence in one world or another, which mere-mortals can neither see, nor smell, nor feel. Magic users, on the other hand, are at least capable of feeling it. Apprentices learn to perceive it at all, while more experienced magicians are able to feel graduations, nuances and shades of its very presence and intensity.

The Source has an affinity to spread homogeneously, that is, if a drain occurs due to using or channeling magic, it is compensated more or less quickly by drawing Source from distant regions automatically. The process of offsetting the drain does not occur instantly, but takes some time.

Using magic means to channel and mold the Source to influence the fabric of mundane things. Doing this just yields an effect, the latter of which may occur in form of a variety things, for instance, annulling the principles of physics, reading one's mind or travelling through time. Therefore, "using magic" means to use and modify the Source, applying rules, Lore and art and creating certain effects.

Magic may be regarded and found somewhere in the middle of science and art. To create larger effects magic users usually have to rely on certain Lores, which their predecessors discovered aeons before. Without understanding these principles magicians just try and error by feeling some-

thing and, if luckily, result in minor cantrips. The feeling, in turn, is indispensable as well. Without feeling the nature of the Source and evaluating its effects coming into existence, numbers, gestures and words mean nothing. Although creating and interpreting the result of magical practices comes close to science magic is neither as reliable, nor as calculable as physics, for example. Because of this, magic is often claimed to be more art rather than being science.

In terms of the game, the ability to feel and interpret the Source is expressed by Empathy. Empathy is an Interactive Attribute, which comprehends both, feeling and influencing. What applies to Charisma in respect of a character's appearance to others and Perception in terms of perceiving one's environment, respectively, Empathy includes both with regard to things beyond mundane senses. Empathy represents a character's ability to interact with the Source.

On the other hand, Lore refers to the magic user's knowledge in the field of arcane arts, her experience and training. Magic Lore is a skill, which is based on Mental Attributes, that is, either Reason, Intuition or Willpower. Contrary to Empathy, Lore is a skill and can be developed when the magic user prospers in one of the Branches of Magic. Gaining experience in one of these fields provides the magic user with profound background knowledge. Consequently, this kind of knowledge is quite difficult to learn and apprehend and, depending on the Branch of Magic, represents at least a Hard skill.

5.26 Branches of Magic

The Art of Magic (the word "art" is used from now on, because it sounds more gracefully than "science") is subdivided into different Branches of Magic. A Branch of Magic comprehends a set of magic principles with related or similar behaviour or effects. Branches could also have been called

Schools, Spheres, Realms, Fields or Circles, all of which are often used in certain worlds of magic, but lack one important point: they do not punctuate that they have something in common – a collective relation and root, which is not reflected in all of the other disjunctive terms. Branch, in turn, reflects exactly that – a breakout of a common basis.

Game masters could introduce any amount of Branches, whichever makes sense and pleases them. The following exemplary Branches are just given to nurture their imagination:

Alchemy is the Lore of the constitution and alteration of matter. Although the name may sound mundane, Alchemy is still an Art (or at least a science) and alchemists all over the world keep trying to find a way to convert mud into gold on day.

Animation includes Arts, which animate the body of a person, for instance, healing wounds or modifying certain physical abilities and proportions temporarily.

Conjuration deals with summoning creatures and make them do certain things. Conjuration represents the most frequently used Branch of Magic when magic users intend to create major effects.

Divination enables mages to foresee events taking place in the future, detect ores of metal in stone and understand languages. It primarily comprehends the gathering of information.

Elementalism comprehends the conjuration and control of elements, that is, air, fire, water, earth, electricity and so on. To yield major effects, Elementalism is usually combined with Conjuration.

Mentalism is used to penetrate, control and heal other persons' minds as well as protecting the own mind against these effects. Mentalism must not be confused with PSI, the latter of which deals with certain "magical" effects by a psionic's concentration.

Necromancy includes animating and controlling dead beings. It is the first thing people think of when applying the term "Black Magic".

Thaumaturgy is the Art of controlling matter macroscopically, for instance, lifting rocks

from the ground, pushing things around and applying force to objects.

Transportation is used to transport magic users or other beings through space and time.

Example: *Several ways out of a prison*
While an alchemist would dissolve the bars of the window or the hinges of the door to escape silently, a thaumaturgist would bend the bars or burst the door open. A transporter, at last, would simply teleport himself to a more comfortable place.

5.27 Casting Spells

To cast a spell is usually considered the technical term of using magic. The properties involved in casting spells are Empathy, Lore and distinctive spell skills.

Empathy is used to determine whether the character is able to cast spells at all. It is also used to classify and limit the process of progression, that is, learning and improving of arcane Lore.

The Lore represents the characters understanding of this Branch of Magic. Lore is a skill and has to be developed as such. This means that characters have to improve, say, Divination Lore and Mentalism Lore independently. Game masters should evaluate the level of difficulty according to the power and possibilities inhered in this Branch. It is save to value Lores at least as Hard skills, because they open up the way to a whole Branch of Magic. Another reason for Lores being that expensive is because only a small number of magicians excel in more than one Branch.

After a character has selected one or more Lores and, by doing so, understood the basics of the involved Branch, she may learn and practice spells. The difficulty of spells is also valued by the game master according to its inhered power, much the same as the underlying Lore. The skill's score is finally used when casting a spell, that is, the player rolls a d10, adds her score and, if any, applies applicable modifiers to determine the result and quality of a spell.

5.27.1 Progression

Example: *A game master decides that his player's chosen Branch of Magic – Elementalism – is quite difficult to master, since it includes the evocation and manipulation not only of one element, but of at least four of them. Thus, he rules that Elemental Lore is Very Hard to learn, that is, the player*

has to spend the triple amount of skill points compared to a Normal skill. Up to the character's Empathy score the player has to spend three skill points to increase the Lore by one point. Beyond that, progression becomes even harder. If, on the other hand, this Branch would not be called Elementalism, but was split up to Air, Fire, Water and Earth Magic, the game master could rule that it just possessed Hard or even Normal difficulty.

By and by the player raised the character's Elemental Lore to a score of 4. Further on, this score is used to limit the character's progression within the Branch of Elementalism. If, for instance, the character wanted to practice a Part Water spell to imitate biblical effects, it could be rated as Water Elementalism and, as such, is available to him. His game master has to value the spell's inherent power, which would be used to develop and raise the skill up to a score of 4. He could not raise the score beyond 4, because he does not have the necessary understanding of the involved Branch.

5.27.2 Qualitative Analysis

Casting a spell is similar to using any other skill in respect of the quality of a skill check. When a player declares to solve a certain situation by the means of magic a game master has to value the difficulty of this action ranging from Very Easy to anything beyond Normal. Correspondingly, a total result of 10, less than 10 or more than 10, respectively, is needed to perform the action successfully.

The same applies, if two or more actions are compared in regard of the yielded quality – either independently or in the form of opposed actions, for example when two sorcerers duel one another by the means of magic. Here, too, higher results beat lower results.

5.28 Preparing Spells

Unlike PSI and other supernatural powers, spells cannot be cast instantaneous, at least, nothing beyond minor cantrips. Casting a mediocre spell may take anything from minutes to hours, or even several days. Often, magicians have to undertake extensive research or have to wait for star constellations to satisfy needs for certain spell variations. They may have to draw or line out pentagrams to concentrate Source or have to scribe runes to elaborated objects. Some magic may require special artifacts, which have to be either acquired or crafted. In the latter case, the magic user needs

the appropriate craft skill or has to instruct others to act accordingly.

To cut a long story short, using magic takes time, effort and sometimes lots of money. It does not come into being in the twinkling of an eye. Some few Chosen may possess the prerequisites, but lack the endurance to practice their talents and thus will stick to prestidigitation only. Magic does not come natural to human beings.

When a character starts learning a new spell and acquires the respective skill, she and her game master should exchange some words about the spell's powers, range of application and variations. They should also determine how long it takes to prepare the spell, whether it requires material components and how the preparation process looks like in general.

If a character spends extra time and effort to prepare spells, her game master could reward her with an appropriate bonus for the final skill check. On the other hand, hastily cast spells will most probably fail at best, or could even yield total unpredictable results. Merciful game masters could also decide to apply respective penalties instead. As always, game masters are encouraged to reward good role playing above all. Thus, if a player brings in a pleasing intermezzo of dramatic or mysterious play, upcoming skill checks could be facilitated to reflect it succeeding.

5.29 Conjunction

Conjunction deserves some special treatment in respect of being different from the other Branches. A conjurer does not create a certain effect directly, but leaves this task to another, usually supernatural, being. To achieve this, he has to do three things:

First, the conjurer has to select this being, which can be anything from a small imp to a god.

Second, he has to locate and summon the chosen creature. Locating means that he has to delve into Nothingness to find that creature. After having located it, he has to force it into his plane of existence. The difficulty of summoning depends on the creature being contacted, that is, its importance. To return to the example above, an imp is more likely to be summoned than a god, of course.

Third, the conjurer has to state his intention and either has to bargain with the creature or force it to do what he expects it do by any means. Even the lowest beings offer nothing for free, because it is assumed that they have better things to do.

Beings of higher status have less time to follow mere-mortal implementations, left alone that they are to proud to even think about it.

His Conjunction Lore helps the conjurer to select a specific creature for a specific task. It also helps him to locate it at its favourite dwelling place. To overcome the creature resistance and level a character uses his Willpower – his against the being's. If he fails to contact or summon the creature, the conjunction ends at this point. If the conjurer is unable to summon the creature, further attempt for the same creature should be modified accordingly – the respective being just turns its back to the summoner.

For the duration of the conjunction the game master should determine a level for the creature being summoned ranging from 1 for minor beings to 10 (or even more) for god-like creatures. The creature's level is applied as a penalty to all actions being performed to summon the creature and bind it to the conjurer's service.

When the summoned created has once been forced into the conjurer's own world the intrinsic hard part of the conjunction begins. Supernatural beings from remote places are usually short tempered and, if the conjurer is unable to put forward his intention quickly, tend to punish the trouble maker for them being summoned.

The process of summoning and the strike of the bargain are great scenes for role playing. Only lame players would rely on dice only to pass this situation quickly. Holy (wo)men, for instance, could try to persuade divine beings of the importance of an action, while evil demons could be lured by nasty presents. Often, devoted supporters offer quests and actions in return for the favour of the action being granted. A fair game master should reward players for skillful playing – and penalize their rolls for dumb behaviour, respectively.

Contrary to the other Branches of Magic Conjunction just uses Conjunction Lores; there are no additional distinctive skills. However, the Lore skill comprehends only a single type of creatures, for example celestial beings. To summon other beings the respective Lores have to be developed separately. The finer the Lores are distinguished, the easier they are learned.

Example: *A wizard plans to summon a fire demon, which he wants to send to attack his arch enemy. His game master values the powerful demon at level 6. The wizard spends weeks on preparing the conjunction, reading old scrolls and tomes about this kind of demons and drawing pen-*

tags as well as oktagons to protect him and his laboratory against the demon's scorching appearance. His Demon Lore of 5 is rewarded by a +2-bonus by the game master for the exhaustive preparation. The player's roll of 8, yielding a result of 15, is enough to locate a fiendish demon sitting in his favourite abyss having a good time. The game master also grants the player an additional +1-modifier for summoning the creature, because the wizard found this particular demon's name in an old tome, which yields a total bonus of +3. The player rolls 6, which is added to his Willpower score of 8, thus scoring a result of 17 – just enough to make the blasting creature appear in the center of the wizards pentagram. However, since the result is not overwhelming the wizard will have a hard conversation while trying to persuade this being to meet his plan.

Some game masters entirely ban magic from their settings, because the thought of characters being capable of doing supernatural things does not please them. What they sometimes include reluctantly is Conjunction magic, because in this case characters do not "use magic", but just apply Demon Lore and Willpower to force their accessories into place.

5.30 Exhaustion & Recovery

Although magic users do not raise the energy they use for their spells themselves, but rather channel the Source, the act of transformation and molding, is also quite exhausting.

Since the supernatural nature of magic is expected to be very powerful, it is suggested that magic users who wield magic suffer from the consequences of a temporal Light Wound (see section *Combat – Injuries*) at least. This kind of temporal "injury" represents the mage's exhaustion only and must not be mistaken for real wounds (see *Combat – Suffocation*.) Temporal damage does not have to heal, but simply wears off within a couple of minutes, although a victim still suffers from its consequences.

Magic users who cast very powerful spells should suffer from temporal Severe Injuries instead of Light Injuries. The effects of Severe Injuries wear off within a couple of hours. Mages who use magic beyond their capabilities, for instance, when successfully casting a spell just by rolling dice luckily, although their actual score is less than 5, could also suffer from Severe wounds instead of Light wounds. Going beyond one's capabilities is

called *overcasting* among magic users. Overcasting a spell is even more dangerous than magic in itself.

Extremely powerful magic even cause temporal Critical injuries to the user, rendering him helpless, gasping for breath or falling unconscious. It takes at least several hours, sometimes days, to recover from a Critical exhaustion damage.

Exhaustion damage is converted to the next lighter damage level after half of the total time has passed. For instance, Critical damage lasting for 8 hours is converted to Severe damage after 4 hours. After two more hours the character suffers 2 more hours from Light damage. Results and levels of temporal damage stack and advance just the same as real damage does.

Conclusion

Some minor reflections about Draft:

The current framework has been developed primarily with simplicity in mind, but is still trying to offer possibilities to latch more detailed rules or cut it down to an even simpler shape. The aspect of shapechanging is particularly important for a rule set, which is supposed to adapt to a large number

of different scenarios. This means, in turn, that it naturally won't work out as the best possible solution for a certain background or setting, but is trying to compensate this drawback by means of being applicable as universal as possible.

If this is what you also think both of us finally got what we wanted. Ω